poses a Campus twice as long as that of even his most expansive predecessors. Since the Campus had begun as land seized by Tarquin the Proud, and since Tarquin was a tyrant with unlimited power, it had to be large - "un gran podere dei tiranni." When Tarquin fell and the grain harvested from his campus was thrown into the Tiber, there was enough of it to form the Tiber Island; one cannot believe that it was a small estate. Piranesi also needed room for the many buildings that he knew from texts had been there. And many of these would need vast and elaborate settings, on the scale of the great thermal complexes and indeed of Hadrian's Villa. The word *longitudinem* thus prepares us for a Campus Martius unparalleled extent.

**Campus Martius: Scenographia**

The most eloquent ancient description of the Campus Martius is in Strabo's *Geography*. For all Piranesi's wide reading in the ancients, a source, Strabo remains his master text. Indeed, he took pains to reproduce Strabo's Greek in an elegant cursive font. Strabo spoke of two plains, one grassy and reserved for sports, the other full of magnificent buildings, so many that it seemed another city. Here he saw three theaters (which he does not name but which are always

15 Flavio Biondo (Roma triumphant, Book VI, p. 128) had extended the Campus to the flat land under the Pincian, but Donati pulled it back to the region of the Pantheon, while Nardini is more restrictive still. According to Angelo Maria Bandini, in *De Obelisco Caesaris Augusti et Campi Marci Ruderibus nuper et Commentariis: Dell'obelisco di Cesare Augusto scolato dalle rovine del Campo Marzio commentato*, Rome, 1750, p. 40, n. 9, many authors had written on the extent of the Campus, especially one Giovanni Vignoli, in *De Columna Imperatoris Augusti et Pii dissertatio*, Rome, 1705, chap. II.

16 *Idiomographia*, p. 4.


18 *Le antichità romane*, I, p. viii.
read as those of Pompey, Marcellus, and Balbus), an amphitheater (assumed to be the Amphitheater of Statilus Taurus), close-packed temples, groves, honorary statues, the Saepta Iulia and other porticoes, the great Augustan sundial with the Gnomon Obelisk, the Aqua Virgo, the Mausoleum of Augustus, the Villa Publica, and various curiae, fora, tabernae, and triumphal arches. All this was laid out like a stage scene, says Strabo, a skenographikēn opsin, between the river and “crowns of hills”, tòn lophōn stephanai.

Strabo uses the plural for these hills and so does Piranesi. He reasoned that Strabo cannot have meant mere mounds like Monte Giordano and Monte Citorio, as some antiquarians had argued, But must have meant the chain of hills beginning with the Pincian and extending over the hills of Parioli as far as the Tiber on the north. The common name for the Pincian was collis Hortulorum ("hill of gardens"), but Piranesi inevitably uses the plural colles Hortulorum ("hills of gardens"), echoing Strabo’s “crowns of hills”. Indeed, the Scenographia of the Campus Martius (Fig. 13) could almost serve as the frontispiece for an illustrated Strabo, bringing his “stage scene” to life.

Piranesi’s Scenographia is a stage scene in another sense as well. It introduces in the foreground of the print the principal antiquities, like actors sitting on a stage before the curtain rises. All, from the obelisks to the drainpipes, were famous. The Column of Marcus Aurelius (caption number 1 on the Scenographia) stands tall on the right, as do four obelisks: the small obelisk now borne by Bernini’s elephant in front of Santa Maria sopra Minerva (5), the small obelisk of San Macuto now on the fountain in front of the Pantheon (6), the large obelisk without hieroglyphs from St. Peter’s (4), and the obelisk from the Garden of Sallust (7). This last obelisk now stands in front of the Trinità dei Monti, but in 1762, as Piranesi notes, it was lying on its side in the piazza in front of San Giovanni in Laterano, awaiting erection there.40 Neither St. Peter’s nor the Garden of Sallust were in the Campus Martius, but these

39 Piranesi is here criticizing Famiano Nardini, Roma antica, ed. O. Falconieri, Rome, 1666.
40 Bandini, Dell’obelisco di Cesare Augusto, p. xiv. The Salustian obelisk had been excavated in Villa Ludovisi and given by Ippolita Ludovisi Boncompagni to Clement XII, who transported it to the Lateran, though his project for erecting it there was cut short by his death; see Erik Iversen, Obelisks in Exile, Vol. 1: The Obelisks of Rome, Copenhagen, 1968, pp. 128-32.
two obelisks and their respective circuses would find a place in Piranesi’s expansive plan.

Dominating the bottom of the Scenographia are the shattered fragments of a fifth obelisk, the gnomon of the Sundial of Augustus (8). It is also shown in the distant view, like a tiny stick lying on its side (31). The original base appears upright in front of the obelisk, with its proud inscription, Augustus ... Soli Donum Dedit [“Augustus gave this as a gift to the sun”]. The obelisk was first discovered in the basement of a house to the north of Montecitorio during the reign of Julius II, along with gilt bronze lines of the sundial and mosaics depicting the winds. It is present on the Nolli plan of 1748 and was extracted in pieces in that year, but not erected in Piazza Montecitorio until 1792.

In addition to these obelisks, the Scenographia shows some smaller fragments: a porphyry column with an imperial bust (2), then in Palazzo Altemps but now in the Louvre; a lead drainpipe with a stamp identifying the temple of Hadrian’s mother-in-law, Matidia (15); and an elaborate trophy capital in the Massimi collection (12). On the far right is the famous “Reges Brit...” inscription from the Arch of Claudius (3). It had been built into the arches of the Aqua Virgo to commemorate Claudius’ triumph over Britain. Excavated for Cardinal Francesco Barberini in the Piazza Sciarra on the Corso in 1641, in Piranesi’s day it was displayed at Palazzo Barberini; today it can be seen in the courtyard of the Palazzo dei Conservatori. On the far left are entablature fragments (14) that came originally from the Temple of Marcus Aurelius in the Piazza di Pietra (shown as number 27 in the distant view). These blocks bear the dedicatory inscription “D. Roberto Adam Arch”, a playful pendant to the “Reges Brit” inscription on the right.

Campus Martius: Ichnographia

Even when we are prepared to accept the long Campus Martius, the first impact of the Ichnographia is overwhelming (Fig. 1). “It takes patience to walk through the Piranesian city”, said an early Piranesi scholar.41 The print itself is gigantic, etched on six large sheets that measure 1.35 by 1.17 meters when assembled. It

includes far more terrain than the Campus Martius as normally conceived, even by the most expansive writers. The Campus occupies only the lower left quadrant of the plan, while the upper left quadrant is occupied by the Prati behind Castel Sant’Angelo, the upper right by the Via Flaminia north of Porta del Popolo, and the lower right by a vast villa quarter built up around the Horti Salustiani and sprawling through the modern Ludovisi and Borghese villas. The bottom boundary of the print is the Servian Wall, separating the Campus from the Capitoline and Quirinal hills, which were inside the Republican city and not in the Campus Martius. The huge mass of fallen masonry at the back of the Pincio, known as the Muro Torto, is present, but not the Aurelian Wall into which it was later built. There is no city gate where the Porta Flaminia (Porta del Popolo) would later stand. Like a modern conurbation, a boundaryless city has filled up the whole floodplain of the Tiber.

The monuments within the Campus Martius as we know it, that is, in the area shown in the lower left quadrant of the print, seem diminutive. We naturally tend to search first for the largest and most famous of the surviving buildings. The Pantheon is not difficult to locate, but it is dwarfed by extensive porticoes and pools around it, representing the Stagnum Agrippae, the artificial basin built by Agrippa near his bath (Fig. 4). Piazza Navona appears, according to the common wisdom, as a circus, but in addition, Piranesi adds a huge circular precinct to the left. We now know, as Piranesi did not, that Piazza Navona was a stadium.\(^{42}\) Piranesi knew from Suetonius that there was a stadium somewhere, and he had to find room for it. He eventually put it in the westernmost part of the Tiber bend, to the west of Piazza Navona and parallel to it.

The Augustan sundial looks like a two-headed ax in Piranesi’s rendering, with the Gnomon Obelisk as a tiny point below its central axis (Fig. 5). Below this is an amphitheater that looks at first glance like the Colosseum but is actually the Amphitheater of Stabius Taurus, put by Piranesi on the site of the hill of Montecitorio. Just below this amphitheater is the Column of Marcus Aurelius, the

center of a complex forum. The Mausoleum of Augustus was one of the largest surviving monuments and is easily recognizable on the Ichnographia. Houses encroached upon it in Piranesi’s day, but he clears all these away and makes it the center of an enormous complex that he calls the Bustum Caesaris, the place of cremation for the Julio-Claudian emperors (Fig. 6). Walls radiate out from the mausoleum and run over enormous distances, spanning the heights of the Pincian before coming to an end at the Muro Torto. The theaters of Pompey and Marcellus are also easy to find. To these Piranesi adds a third theater, that of Balbus (Fig. 8). He places it next to the upriver point of the Tiber Island, which, by being conjoined to a number of small islets, appears far larger on the map than it was in the artist’s day.

Piranesi also found room on the Ichnographia for dozens of statues. This should not surprise us. In earlier vedute, he was fond of inserting famous statues like the Farnese Hercules, the Dioscuri, the Belvedere Tiber, the Capitoline Roma, and the bronze Brutus, as well as modern works like Michelangelo’s Bacchus. Given the great sweep of the Ichnographia, statues have to be shown as dots on tiny square bases, as in a satellite photograph. He carefully noted many of the Greek statues mentioned by Pliny, realizing that they had been uprooted from their Greek contexts and were on display as plunder in Rome. When Pliny gives the exact location of a statue Piranesi respects it, but otherwise he feels free to place them according to his fancy. They come thick and fast in the crowded area of the lower Campus Martius, just outside the walls of the Campidoglio. Some are freestanding statues, out in the open or in porticoes. Piranesi often provides identification. We find the bronze Hercules (“signum Herculis”) in the Porticus Minucia Vetus, the statue that was said to have sweated in the days before the assassination of the emperor Commodus. Another is the Lysippus statue of an athlete scraping himself (labeled “destingentem se”, “status abstergentis”) – the famous Apoxyomenos, which Piranesi puts in the Baths of Agrippa. Pliny tells how Tiberius so coveted this statue that he took it for himself, but the crowd shouting “Apxoxyomenos” in the theater forced him to give it back. Piranesi locates a statue of Julius Caesar inside the Pantheon, with

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Augustus and Agrippa in the porch; he adds a Hadrianic vestibule with statues of Hadrian and Trajan. Behind the Theater of Pompey he puts three statues in a row: Janus, probably the statue made under Numa, where the god is signaling 365 (or 355) days by the fingers of his hands; Pompey; and a “Colossum Iovis Pompejani”. He does not understand the difference between the statues of the Fourteen Nations that Coponius made for Pompey’s theater and the Porticus ad Nationes of Augustus, where he puts the “Statuae XIV Gentium”. At the end of this long portico he puts Hercules Punicus, the statue of Hercules to which the Carthaginians used to offer an annual human sacrifice, and which Pliny said lay near this portico, dishonored and without a temple.

Piranesi makes the Basin of Agrippa behind the Pantheon into a waterborne museum, with two rostral columns of Augustus in templi on little islands, and statues of beasts and reptiles (“simulacra quadrupedium et reptilium”) on long, thin bases (Fig. 4). He puts the lion of Lysippus (“leo Lisippi opus”) in the terrace (“Nemus Agrippae”) that protrudes into the basin behind the Pantheon.

As all antiquarians knew, the Portico of Octavia was located in the extensive ruins between the ghetto and the church of Sant’Angelo in Pescheria. Piranesi also had a sizable fragment of the Marble Plan to aid him in his reconstruction. He fills the portico with statues. Aside from the large bases for statues of Octavia and Augustus, Piranesi positions eight statue bases in front of each temple and four more behind. He doubtless relished Pliny’s story of a mix-up in delivery, made permanent by cultic awe, that led to the statues appropriate for Juno being put in the Temple of Jupiter and vice versa. Pliny records a number of temples “in circo Flaminio”, and Piranesi tries to find a place for them in this crowded area. They include the temple (“delubrum”) of Gnaeus Domitius, the temple founded by Brutus Callaicus with a statue of Mars inside, and the Temple of Bellona with the Columna Bellica in front. Interspersed with these named monuments are dozens or hundreds of tombs, temples, porticoes, aqueducts, fountains, canals, naumachiae, natationes, staircases, “sylvae et ambulationes”, statues, triumphal arches, walls for monumental inscriptions, voting precincts, baths, gymnasia, and six bridges over the Tiber.

Yet there are practically no houses in Piranesi’s Campus Martius. We know from the fragments of the Marble Plan that private buildings existed in all quarters of Rome, antedating the larger public
structures. There are also houses mentioned explicitly in the texts, such as the house of Pompey, near his theater. But Piranesi shows an overwhelmingly monumental Campus, as though the legislation of 397, which banned private dwellings, had been observed retroactively throughout history. Instead, there is no shortage of brothels, or lupanaria, lodged in tiny, ramshackle buildings here and there, but especially in the entertainment district near the great theaters.

3. Earlier Plans of Ancient Rome

It is time to step back from the Campus Martius and look at Piranesi’s predecessors in the enterprise of mapping ancient Rome. The earliest of them left no drawings or prints that Piranesi might have known and so can be surveyed quickly. Vasari says that Brunelleschi, after profound study, became capable of seeing Rome in his mind’s eye, just as it was before it was ruined. However, even if Brunelleschi did spend time in Rome, no trace remains of his studies and at best we might say that he stands at the beginning of a process that would soon make his insights seem primitive. In the next generation, Flavio Biondo took a giant step forward in his work of 1444-46, De Roma instaurata. “I restored Rome myself in my writings” was his proud boast, though his was a philological exercise and no plans were provided. Plans of sweeping imagina-

44 Wiseman, “Campus Martius”, p. 222.
tion, on the other hand, were the legacy of Francesco di Giorgio Martini. In his manuscript treatise the *Codex Saluzzianus*, now in Turin, he shows the ancient Capitol as an enormous complex designed in strict symmetry around two axes that meet at right angles, with a circular Temple of Jove in the center. We are left with a warning, however: "In great part I make my way by imagination, since in the mass of ruins very little can be understood" ("In maggior parte ito immaginando che per le molte ruine pocho comprendar se ne po"). He tells us that the "Palazzo Maggiore" on the Palatine (the whole vast layout of which is governed by symmetry) is "in part copied and in part added according to fantasy, since one cannot understand it all because of the quantity of ruins" ("In più parte chopiato et parte agionto a fantasia che per le molte ruine in tucto comprendar non si puo").


Raphael 1514-20

Raphael, in his famous letter to Pope Leo X (r. 1513-21), describes an antiquarian project designed to outdo anything that came before. The initiative, he says, came from the pope:

pp. 250f., fig. 64, for the plan of the Capitoline Palace: "... his reconstructions of ancient buildings ... are in fact his first exercises in design ..."

As I was bade by your Holiness to put ancient Rome into drawing, as far as one could know it from what one can see, with the buildings whose remains can be seen and plotted with certainty, making those members that are completely ruined or vanished from sight correspond with those still extant.

[Essendomi adonque comandato da Vostra Santitate ch’io ponghia in disegno Roma antichia, per quanto conosere si pò da quello che hoggi di si vede, con gli edificii che di sé dimostrano tal reliquie, che per vero argomento si possono infallibilmente ridurre nel termine proprio come stavano, facendo quelli membri che sono in tutto ruinati, né si veggono punto, correspondenti a quelli che restano in piedi].

The project, John Shearman thinks, would have begun at the outset of Leo X’s pontificate, around 1514-15. The first of the three surviving drafts of the letter, written in the hand of Castiglione, would date to before June 1516; two other drafts would date to 1519. As Raphael himself tells us, aside from the cumulative body of ancient texts on Roman topography, he had the advantage of a new source, the catalogue of the regions of Rome attributed to Publius Victor. In it the city is laid out in fourteen regions, as in


Shearman, Raphael in Early Modern Sources, p. 503.

The regionary catalogue composed between the time of Diocletian and the mid-fourth century has come down in two versions, known for short as the Notitia and the Curiosum. Flavio Biondo knew the text in manuscripts and attributed it to an otherwise unknown Sextus Rufus. However, around 1476-88, Pomponio Leto assembled a personalized version larded with erudite references from other texts to monuments that he thought should be in each region. This “interpolated”
the time of Augustus, with the names of the most prominent landmarks given for each region.

To marry this text to the actual ruins, Raphael proudly used a modern instrument, a circular surveyor’s plate marked in angular degrees and equipped with a magnetic compass (“la bussola de la calamita”). Raphael remarks that, like artillery or the printing press, the instrument was unknown to the ancient world, though in modern times he was not the first to use it. Leon Battista Alberti employed a similar instrument to draw a plan, or as we might say, a circular graph, of modern Rome, probably around 1432-34; Leonardo used something like it for his plan of Imola in 1502; and Antonio da Sangallo used a plane-table to survey fortifications. But no one before Raphael had used a transit equipped with a compass to plot ancient ruins. The cartographer Leonardo Bufalini gives us a picture of such an instrument on his map of 1551, while a more accurate illustration is included in Vincenzo Scamozzi’s treatise of 1615.

regionary catalogue was published by Aulo Giano Parrasio, who had been a member of the Accademia Pomponiana from 1497 to 1499; circa 1503-04 he published De Regionibus urbis Romae libellus aureus, which he attributed to a fictitious personality, Publius Victor. Editions followed in 1505, 1509, 1510, 1518, 1519, 1520, 1521, 1523, and 1538, but the fictitious Sextus Rufus and Publius Victor were only exposed in the nineteenth century. See Valenti and Zuccheti, Codice topografico, I, pp. 62-102 for the regionary catalogues, and pp. 193-258 for the “Descrizione interpolata”; for their origins in urban regulation under Augustus, see Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, Rome’s Cultural Revolution, Cambridge, 2008, pp. 290-301.


Pedretti, A Chronology, p. 157-162; Pinto, “Ichnographic City Plan”.


Pedretti, A Chronology, p. 159, fig. 86, from Vincenzo Scamozzi, L’idea dell’architettura universale, Venice, 1615, ed. Werner Oechslin, with preface by Franco Barbieri, Verona, 1997, I, viii, p. 143; Pinto, “Ichnographic City Plan”, p. 44, fig. 6;
Raphael's premature death in 1520 was a blow to painting, but also, many felt, to the project of resurrecting ancient Rome. In a diary entry of 7 April 1520, when he first heard of the artist's death, the well-informed Venetian Marcantonio Michiel, then living in Rome, hints that Raphael had obtained the famous papal brief of 27 August 1515, which made him "prefect" of all ancient marble and masonry in the city, not only to obtain supplies for St. Peter's but also to help him in the enterprise of drawing ancient Rome. Then in a letter four days later (11 April 1520), Michiel elaborates:

Just as Ptolemy mapped the world, [Raphael] drew up the ancient buildings of Rome in a book, showing the proportions, forms and ornaments with such clarity that whoever saw it could be excused from seeing ancient Rome. He finished the first region. He not only showed the plans and site of the buildings, mapped with great effort from the ruins, but also their outer aspect, and when the ruins had not kept their ornament he filled it in on the basis of Vitruvius, the rules of architecture, and the ancient sources.

[“e stendeva in un libro, siccome Ptolomeo ha isteso il mondo, gli edificii antichi di Roma, mostrando si chiaramente le proporzioni, forme e ornamenti loro, che averlo veduto haria iscusato ad ogniuno haver veduta Roma antiqua; e già haveva fornita la prima regione. Ne mostrava solamente le piante delli edificii et il sito, il che con grandissima fatica et industria de le ruine saria raccolto, ma ancora le facia, cum li ornamenti quanto da Vitruvio e dalla ragione de la architettura e da le istorie antiche, ove le ruine non le rintenevano, havea appreso, expresissimamente designava.”]

Michiel says that Raphael showed both plan and site for the ancient buildings, which would seem to imply locating them in terms of their surroundings, perhaps even in a measured way. Another witness to Raphael's project is Girolamo Aleandro, who addressed a Latin poem to Leo X and Raphael sometime between 1516 and the artist's death in 1520. Aleandro mentions arches, circuses, fora, pools, baths, storehouses, nymphaea, figures, tombs, cisterns, encampments, houses, hills, temples, theaters, and streets, as well as the materials and dimensions of the structures and their ori-


36 Shearman, Raphael in Early Modern Sources, I, p. 581.
entation. The humanist Celio Calcagnini, in a letter of 1519 or 1520, also stresses Raphael's ambition to resurrect the city, not merely individual buildings: “the City itself restored to its ancient appearance, greatness, and symmetry” (“ipsam plane Urbem in antiquam faciem et amplitudinem ac symmetriam instauratam magna parte ostendit”).

Seven years after Raphael's death, just before the emperor Charles V's sack of Rome in 1527, other voices begin to be heard from the team of which he had been “principal investigator.” Andrea Fulvio of Palestrina, a disciple of Pomponio Leto, published his *Antiquitates Urbis* in 1527, as a prose expansion of his earlier Latin poem *Antiquaria Urbis* of 1513 on the ruins of Rome. In the *Antiquitates*, he tells us about expeditions with the painter among the ruins during which he would identify the monuments while Raphael drew them.58

Then exploring the city region by region I observed the ancient sites that Raphael of Urbino (whom I mention to give him credit and me honor), a few days before he departed this life, drew with brush as I pointed them out.

[Priscaque loca tum per regiones explorans observavi, quas Raphael Urbinas (quem honoris causa nomino) paucis ante diebus quam e vita decederet (me indicante) penicillo finxerat].59

Another member of the team was Marco Fabio Calvo (Marco Fabi or Favio of Ravenna, who adopted the humanist surname Calvus). After a life devoted to medicine and the translation of the Greek medical corpus, Calvo entered Raphael's circle with a trans-

57 Ibid., pp. 257-59 and 546-50.
lation of Vitruvius finished for the painter in 1516. In 1527 he published a book on ancient Rome, the *Antiquae Urbis Romae cum Regionibus Simulacrum*. Unfortunately, the stock was almost all lost in the sack of the city and only three copies survive; more common is the edition of 1532.

At first sight, Calvo’s *Simulacrum* seems like the strangest book, with beautiful type by one of the great calligraphers of the age, Ludovico degli Arrighi, but primitive images. The Roma Quadrata of Romulus and the Rome of the Servian Wall are simple diagrams filled with tiny hills topped by small schematic buildings. Augustan Rome is shown as a circular wall with sixteen gates, while the interior is divided like the slices of a pie radiating from a column, the “Umbilicus Urbis”, planted in the center (Fig. 24).


62 Calvo announces fourteen Augustan regions but shows sixteen, adding the Vatican and “Campus Martius Maior”. In actuality, the Campus Martius was included in Regio VII (Via Lata) and Regio IX (Circus Flaminius).
The final image, showing the city's development at the time of Pliny the Elder, is as schematic as any medieval city view. It compresses into a narrow compass the vast terrain between Ostia and the Milvian Bridge, and crams the seven hills and a few other monuments into a circle of walls with thirty-four gates.

What makes the Calvo woodcuts interesting, however, is the way they reflect the fascination with coins and late-antique manuscript illustrations that was current in Raphael's circle. To take the most obvious example, Calvo's Colosseum, complete with the Meta Sudans on one side and the Nymphaeum Publicum on the other, is taken directly from a coin of Vespasian. Other buildings reflect the highly simplified building types or townscapes that could be found in late-antique manuscripts like the Vatican Virgil, and in the collections of the writings of Roman surveyors, or agrimensores.63 Calvo's book is a florilegium of ancient sources quaintly rendered and explained in beautiful calligraphy. It gives us nothing like Raphael's final goal, a plan of Rome at the end of antiquity, but it does provide a glimpse of the raw material that Raphael was accumulating. One might entitle Calvo's book, fancifully, as "The Regionary Catalogues made Palatable" with iconic placeholders for monuments that a future topographer would someday place on a map.

However, Calvo's complete disregard for measured mapmaking is a reminder of the critical flaw in Raphael's own enterprise, namely, the lack of an accurate map of the modern city onto which the ancient city might be projected. In Raphael's letter to Leo X, after the initial description of the transit and compass, we hear no more about a larger urban plan. Instead, the artist writes at length about the three kinds of drawings useful for an architect: plan, elevation, and section. All refer to buildings in isolation from their urban context.64 Pianta in the letter will henceforth mean the footprint of an

63 Frazer, "A Numismatic Source", shows Calvo's use of the consecratio coin of Antoninus Pius (d. 161) for the "Meta Pii" in his "Regio XV Vaticana"; Nash, Pictorial Dictionary, I, p. 269, fig. 317, shows the coin of M. Antonius Gordianus III Pius with the Colossus and Colosseum; Jacks, "The Simulacrum of Fabio Calvo", p. 462, n. 69, gives examples of coin types used by Calvo, and on p. 459 cites the Codex Arserianus in the collection of Angelo Colocci as the main source for ancient literature of surveying.

64 Shearman, Raphael in Early Modern Sources, I, pp. 507-9. Raphael is not exactly following the Vitruvian triad (Lii.2) of ichtnographia, orthographia, and scæenographia, since, at least in the first two drafts of the letter, he mentions two dif-
individual building, not a map.\textsuperscript{65} The missing ingredient in the Raphael project would have to wait until mid-century, when the military engineer Leonardo Bufalini would produce in 1551 the first surveyed map of the Urbs incorporating old and new buildings alike.

The Raphael letter to Leo X was published for the first time in 1733 in a collection of the Italian works of Baldassar Castiglione. Scipione Maffei of Verona had discovered the manuscript and showed it to Castiglione’s editors, who, although their edition was already in press, had time to include it at the very end.\textsuperscript{66} It was still considered by all of them to be a work of Castiglione; the debate that pushed the attribution into the Raphael camp did not gather momentum until 1799.\textsuperscript{67} Long before this, however, there was a lively interest among antiquarians in the Raphael project. In 1754 and 1757, an account of the collections of Baron Philipp von Stosch (1691-1757), an antiquarian and spy residing in Florence, mentions autograph drawings after antique buildings done by Raphael for Leo X. In 1738, Johann Joachim Winckelmann came to Florence to catalogue Stosch’s gem collection, and wrote that he had held in his hands Raphael’s drawings after the antique. Stosch also owned a copy of the Calcagnini letter of 1519-20 mentioning the project to map all of ancient Rome, described above.\textsuperscript{68}

\textsuperscript{65} “E chiamasi questo disegno pianta, quasi che come el spacio che occupa la pianta del piede ch’è fondamento di tutto el corpo. Fatta così, questa pianta sia fondamento di tutto lo edificio” (from the first, or Mantuan, draft of the letter in Shearman, Raphael in Early Modern Sources, I, p. 508).

\textsuperscript{66} Baldassare Castiglione, Opere volgari, e latine del Conte Baldesar Castiglione, novellamente raccolte, ordinate, ricorrette, ed illustrate, come nella seguento lettura può vedersi, ed. Giovanni Antonio Volpi and Gaetano Cristoforo Volpi, Padua, 1733, pp. 429-36: “Lettera non più stampata del Conte Baldessar Castiglione a Papa Leone X. Comunicataci dopo finito il Volume, dal Sig. Marchese Scipione Maffei, presso il quale si conservava”.

\textsuperscript{67} Raphael’s authorship of the letter was first argued by Daniele Francesconi, Congiuratura che una lettera creduta di Baldessar Castiglione sia di Raffaello d’Urbino, Florence, 1799 (copy in the Biblioteca Berenson); the early bibliography of the letter is studied in Di Teodoro, Raffaello, pp. xx-xxvii.

\textsuperscript{68} Campbell and Nesselrath, “The Codex Stosch”, p. 15; Bevilacqua, Roma nel secolo dei lumi, p. 22. Stosch also copied out the letter of Calcagnini cited above, mentioning the Raphael plan. A group of drawings that was acquired in Rome during his grand tour by Thomas Coke (1691-1759), made Earl of Leicester
The Raphael project was thus well known in learned circles in Florence and Rome. Was Piranesi aware of it? He does not mention it expressly, but a copy of the letter to Leo X was easily available to him. Nicola Giobbe, the master mason of the Trevi Fountain, owned the 1733 edition of Castiglione, in which the letter appears. Giobbe was an important presence in the life of the young Piranesi during his early years, and the artist made himself at home in the learned mason’s formidable library. In gratitude he dedicated the Prima parte di architettura e prospettive to Giobbe in 1743. Whether Piranesi came across the letter to Leo X in Giobbe’s library and associated it with Raphael remains an open question, but if he did, the last line, added to Raphael’s text by the editors in large type, would have sounded as a challenge: “The drawing and description of ancient Rome are lacking” (“Manca il Disegno, e la Descrizione di Roma antica”).

The kind of sources that Raphael and Calvo appreciated would be collected in still greater numbers by Pirro Ligorio and used to

in 1744, was mentioned in 1754, and its fame kept alive by a note in Roscoe, The Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth, p. 501. Preserved in the library of Holkham Hall in Norfolk, these drawings have been downgraded in the recent literature; see the entry by Arnold Nesselrath in La Roma di Leon Battista Alberti: Umanisti, architetti e artisti alla scoperta dell’antico nella città del Quattrocento, exh. cat., ed. Francesco Paolo Fiore and Arnold Nesselrath, Rome, 2003, pp. 268f., cat. II.10.9.


flesh out his strange maps of ancient Rome. Piranesi admired Pirro Ligorio and Leonardo Bufalini, and realized that if the erudition of the one and the surveying skills of the other were to be combined, then a project like the one described in the 1733 Castiglione edition could be brought to fruition. We will review the cartography of both Ligorio and Bufalini before turning to the sources that Piranesi incorporated into his original synthesis, the fragmentary Marble Plan and the map of Giambattista Nolli.

Pirro Ligorio 1553 and 1561

The Neapolitan antiquarian and architect Pirro Ligorio published two plans of ancient Rome, issued in 1553 and 1561. The first was small, the second large and ambitious. In the small 1553 plan, Ligorio illustrates only a few of the great monuments. Instead,
he gives the names of monuments as placeholders in their probable locations. The small map is thus a kind of notebook with the crowded captions presaging the wild crowding that will come in the larger map. It already gives clues to Ligorio’s unconventional thinking. For example, he puts the usitinum or cremation place of the caesars next to the Mausoleum of Augustus and gives it two obelisks.72 He turns the great temple on top of the Quirinal into the Senaculum Mulierum.73 He puts the Horti Sallustiani in the Valley of Flora. He interprets Piazza Navona as a circus unmentioned in any ancient source, the Circus Agonalis, which we now know is wrong, and he re-identifies the brick amphitheater at S. Croce as the Amphitheatrum Castrense, which we now know is right, correcting its misidentification as the Amphitheater of Statilius Taurus, held by all previous antiquarians.

Ligorio’s large map of 1561, the Anteivae Vrbis Imago, is his final word on the topography of the ancient city (Fig. 27). It is one of the most fantastic of all antiquarian productions of the sixteenth century, gripping and imaginative, but not divorced from research. It is not an ichnographic or “footprint” survey, but rather a compromise between such a plan and a bird’s-eye view. Ligorio names

his sources: the ruins themselves, the testimony of ancient texts, and ancient images in bronze, lead, stone, and terracotta. We also know he read and used the regionary catalogues that went under the names of Sextus Rufus and Publius Victor, as had Raphael. Like Calvo and his pie-shaped Rome, Ligorio was a serious student of Roman coins. He had a collection of his own, and in his manuscripts in Turin and Naples he drew many more from Roman collections, especially those of the Farnese, Fulvio Orsini, Annibale Caro, Raphael, Giulio Romano, and Sansovino. He used coins on an unprecedented scale, and they influenced the way he saw the Colosseum, the Domus Aurea of Nero, the round Temple of Mars Ultor, the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, and the Villa Publica. Ligorio respected the ruins that he saw in front of him, but used the evidence of coins to add decorative details, and when buildings had disappeared, he let images on coins guide his imagination.

Howard Burns has suggested that Ligorio used other sources as well, now mostly lost to us. There is something oddly authentic about his rendering of ancient Rome: the mad crowding of buildings, the small schematic renderings that eschew Renaissance perspective in favor of much simpler conventions, and the constant repetition of loggias and exedras. Perhaps he knew ancient reliefs showing cities. A classic example, the Torlonia relief, was only discovered in the nineteenth century, but other such images may have been available to Ligorio. Although he knew the ruins better than any of his predecessors, his aim was to show the Urbs through ancient conventions of depiction, as though he, the artist, were an ancient Roman.74

Piranesi would be inspired by Ligorio in many ways. His Campus Martius shares with Ligorio a sense of the crowding of ancient Rome. For both, the city was a megalopolis of incalculable density and variety. Piranesi would also adopt many of Ligorio’s unconventional placements of monuments. If Pomponio Leto had larded the regionary catalogue of “Publius Victor” with erudite interpolations of monuments he knew from other texts, Ligorio’s Rome, and later Piranesi’s, might be described as maxi-interpolated texts, showing

the tight space of the Urbs filled with placeholder buildings, most known only by name. The difference is that Piranesi chose to depict ancient Rome not as a bird’s-eye view but as a precisely measured map. In this he had two modern predecessor images, the Bufalini map of 1551 and the Nolli map of 1748. He also had the benefit of the one ancient plan that survived, at least in a fragmentary way: the Marble Plan of Septimius Severus, which was discovered in 1562. Bufalini, the Marble Plan, and Nolli—these were the fairies who bent over the crib of Piranesi’s Ichnographia and gave it something special. Let us look at each in turn.

Leonardo Bufalini 1551

Leonardo Bufalini of Udine published a map of Rome in 1551 that differs from all known city views up to that time (Fig. 26). Instead of offering another bird’s-eye view or a symbolic reconstruction based on coin types, Bufalini actually surveyed the city, measuring the footprint of every modern block and the plan of every major building to survive from antiquity. His is an austere map, but one of unprecedented accuracy. It offers no architectural pictures, just measurements, outlines, plans, and streets, along with hundreds of identifying inscriptions.

Bufalini himself looks out at us from a self-portrait at the bottom of the woodcut, surrounded by the tools of his trade: compasses, a mason’s level, rulers, and especially a transit equipped with a magnetic compass. He is anxious to let us know that he used not only the usual surveying tools but the mariner’s compass.

Addressing us in the language of gravestones ("Siste viator"; "Halt, traveler"), he tells us that he is giving the world twin Romes—both the new city, which we see as we walk through the streets, and ancient Rome, the former master of the world—all as a result of his immense effort, great expense, and daily rigors, so that the city might rise as from the tomb. Indeed, there is a mild schizophrenia to Bufalini’s enterprise, a double standard by which the green spaces and the crowded urban fabric or, to use Richard Krautheimer’s terms, the disabitato and the abitato, are rendered differently. Bufalini treats the disabitato as a space for antiquarian reconstruction, for showing Roma vetus, while in the abitato he gives us Roma moderna with almost no antiquities.

In the disabitato, Bufalini situates the most important ruins in reconstructed form. Five imperial bath complexes (Titus and Vespasian, Diocletian, Caracalla, Constantine, and the "Baths of the Decii" on the Aventine) dominate the empty land, growing in size and complexity and acquiring wings and exedras that the more careful antiquarians, like Giuliano da Sangallo, Sebastiano Serlio, or Andrea Palladio, do not record. The garden pavilion commonly called the Temple of Minerva Medica is reconstructed as the Basilica of Gaius and Lucius, a building known only from texts, with its concrete rotunda given a double curved facade and placed at the end of a long courtyard, almost a prophecy of Borromini’s Sant’Ivo alla Sapienza. The early Christian basilicas in the outlying districts are shown relatively accurately in plan; the Lateran in particular is rendered in great detail, complete with Baptistry, Patriarchate, and Scala Santa. The Temple of Diana on the Aventine, for which no ancient remains were ever found and which is known exclusively from literary sources, is reconstructed as a large basilica with forecourt, like an early Christian church.

Among the largest buildings of the disabitato are the Colosseum, with the Meta Sudans alongside it, and the ruinous brick Amphitheatrum Castrense, which Bufalini reconstructs in plan and labels as the Amphitheater of Statilius Taurus, following the consensus of antiquarians. The largest ruin of all is the Circus Maximus, which Bufalini stretches to enormous length and makes more imposing still by its being closely linked with the house of Augustus on the Palatine, shown as a huge palace with twin courtyards. Bufalini does not show a spina in the circus, although the obelisks that had stood on it and later sunk into the mud had been known
since Alberti's time. He improperly gives the circus two curved ends, squeezing the starting gates, or carceres, into the left end in an unthinking way. Just a few years later, Ligorio revolutionized the way antiquarians thought about the Circus Maximus in a famous print that includes a spina, obelisks, metae, lap counters, and a number of statues known from literary sources.

In contrast to his treatment of the disabitato, Bufalini surveys the crowded warren of streets in the Campus Martius and in Trastevere with a modicum of accuracy for the first time. Here he minimizes antiquarian reconstruction and turns mapmaker. The map shows the straight streets most clearly, especially the Via Giulia and Via della Lungara. The trident of streets radiating from Porta del Popolo had only been laid out a decade or two earlier and the blocks had still not been built up. The Via Frattina, Via Borgogna, and some smaller streets do not appear because they were not yet laid out, and the monastery of San Silvestro in Capite, through whose lands they would cut, is shown isolated amid fields. The Vatican Borgo is depicted with considerable accuracy, including the newest street, the Via Alessandrina, laid out in 1500 by Alexander VI and pointing at the portal of the Vatican Palace.

In the older parts of the Campus Martius, Bufalini shows the curving streets that radiate from Ponte Sant'Angelo with relative accuracy. He leaves most blocks in outline and provides crude plans for only the largest buildings, such as Palazzo Altoviti at Ponte Sant'Angelo, Palazzo Sforza Cesarini, Palazzo Farnese, the Cancelleria, Palazzo Medici-Madama, Palazzo De Cupis in Piazza Navona, d'Estouteville's palace at Sant'Apollinare, and the unfinished Tribunali on Via Giulia. Opportunities that would tempt later topographers into a reconstruction are passed up: The Tiber Island is not shown as a ship, nor is there any indication of ancient structures under Piazza Navona or the Theater of Pompey. In the abitato, Bufalini shows only the most obvious ancient monuments, such as the Pantheon with the Baths of Agrippa behind it, the Mausoleum of Augustus, and the Theater of Marcellus. The Porticus Octaviae is shown only as a portico (“Arcus L. Sep[tim]ii Severi”), with no attempt to indicate the temples within it.

76 Piranesi noted the vestibule of the Pantheon as shown by Bufalini in Campus Martius, p. 23, note g.
In his double standard of rendering Roma moderna and Roma vetus, the mapmaker reveals his double persona, both the experienced military engineer and the amateur antiquarian. All the known facts about Bufalini can be found summarized by Cardinal Ehrle in the 1911 edition of the plan. From the testament drafted when he was already ill, on 18 July 1552, the year after the publication of the map, we know that Bufalini came from Udine, was a woodworker (faber lignarius), and lived in or near Palazzo Brancionio dell’Aquila in the Vatican Borgo. Other documents show that he had worked for the printmaker Antonio Blado, possibly cutting woodblocks as well as designing them; Blado would be the printer of the first edition of his map.

Bufalini was also a military engineer of some standing. This emerges from the writings of Francesco De Marchi, himself a celebrated military engineer, active in the fortification projects of Paul III (1534-1549). The two men were friends. In 1535, Bufalini helped De Marchi descend in a diving bell to recover the Roman ships sunk at the bottom of the Lago di Nemi. De Marchi lists Bufalini among the experts who debated the merits of the Sangallo bastions around the Vatican in front of Paul III. As might be expected from such a professional, the new fortifications around the Vatican are shown on the map with great accuracy. When the engineer Count Mario Savorgnan visited the fortifications of Rome in 1548, he was critical of what he saw and of Roman professional standards in general, and to reinforce his opinion he cites Bufalini.

Bufalini took pains to measure the Aurelian Walls accurately. Previously the standard had been to measure the distance from one city gate to another, but for Bufalini this was not enough. He gives the width of every tower and the distances between them, all calibrated in a scale of their own. (Strangely, he omits the dimensions of the walls of Trastevere and the Vatican Borgo). After Bufalini’s death, Onofrio Panvinio claimed, though he did not know Bufalini

78 Ehrle, Bufalini, p. 19.
79 As in the lost Francesco Rosselli view of Rome of circa 1482, which is reflected in the Mantua map and six or seven other sixteenth-century views; see Hulsen in Ehrle, Bufalini, pp. 60f.; and Frutaz, Le piante di Roma, I, pp. 151-55, cat. no. XCVII, and II, tav. 167-169.
personally, that the mapmaker spent twenty years of incredible, persistent labor measuring. Antonio Trevisi, the editor of the second edition of the plan, says he took seven years. The lion’s share of the measurements must have been those to determine the relative position of the landmarks in the crowded center of Rome and the course of the streets. Even if Alberti had already conceived of a way of rendering the position of city gates and the tallest monuments on a circular graph, he had never published it. Bufalini had to lay the foundations of a measured city on his own.

Unlike most military engineers, however, Bufalini had a humanist and antiquarian dimension. He absorbed information from antiquarian writers, especially Bartolomeo Marliani, whose digest of the texts on the monuments of ancient Rome was published in two editions, in 1534 and 1544. Marliani appended to the latter book three woodcut plans of ancient Rome: Roma quadrata, as in the time of Romulus; the Rome of the kings, bounded by the Servian Wall; and imperial Rome, bound by the Aurelian Wall. This last map, Marliani’s largest, is rightly called by Ehrle the embryo of Bufalini’s map (Fig. 25). The orientation is the same, with north to the left. Marliani cleverly uses hatching to show the topography of the hills, which are rendered as long, gnarled fingers with valleys in between, looking like thin fjords. Onto this primeval terrain Marliani draws the plans of only a few large buildings: the Colosseum, three imperial baths, and Castel Sant’Angelo, all crudely rendered. He shows the Pantheon as a large dot. In his learned text, though, Marliani discusses many ancient buildings for which he had no plans. Bufalini’s map is four or five times larger than Marliani’s and has room for many more inscriptions, some in Latin and some in Italian. More than half of these denote ancient monuments for which Bufalini gives no plan. The Capitoline Hill, for example, is replete with inscriptions indicating temples that Bufalini, following Marliani, thought should be there: Iove Feretrius, Iove Tonans, Iove Optimus Maximus, Iove Custodius, Fides, Concordia, Fama, Sa-

turn, and Ops, plus the "Carcer Divi Petri". Similarly it is with inscriptions, not plans, that Bufalini records the Fora of Trajan, Julius Caesar, and Nerva, even though there were considerable remains standing. In the built-up areas of the Campus Martius there seem at first glance to be almost no ancient remains, but on closer inspection we find many inscriptions alluding to their presence. In the end there are eight hundred inscriptions on the map, about a third for the modern monuments and the rest for the ancient.

Bufalini seems to have been too poor to print a full edition of his map. No copy survives of the original of 1551, even though the paper had been paid for. The three surviving copies reflect a reedition of 1560.\(^{81}\) Bufalini's heritage is to be found less in Rome than in the central and northern Italian city maps made by military engineers who worked out new techniques of triangulation and trigonometry. Exact maps were made of Parma in 1589-1592,\(^{82}\) and of Milan in 1577-79.\(^{83}\) They are part of the tradition of accurate surveying that would eventually produce Giambattista Nolli and the famous map of Rome of 1748, as we shall see below. During the seventeenth century, however, Bufalini's severity was rejected by the map-makers of the Roman baroque, who turned their attention to Roma moderna and preferred the bird's-eye view, such as in the plan of 1618 by Mattheus Greuter\(^{84}\) or its specious descendant, the plan of 1676 by Giovanni Battista Falda.\(^{85}\)

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\(^{82}\) L’Icnografia della città di Parma was initially drawn by the ducale engineer and cartographer Smeraldo Smeraldi in 1589-1592, in conjunction with the planning of the new citadel ordered by Duke Alessandro Farnese; as the name implies, it was an ichnographic plan, showing the city as on a modern map. It was finally published in 1601 and dedicated to Duke Ranuccio Farnese, but the single surviving copy was destroyed in the Second World War and is known only from a photograph. See Bruno Adorni, L'architettura a Parma sotto i primi Farnese 1545-1630, 2nd ed., Reggio Emilia, 2008, pp. 388-9 (information kindly provided by Carlo Mambrani).

\(^{83}\) Drawn probably by Giovanni Battista Clarici and now preserved in the Accademia di San Luca in Rome; see Gisberto Martelli, La prima pianta geometrica di Milano, ed. Silvio Leydi, Milan, 1994.


\(^{85}\) Giovanni Battista Falda, Nuova pianta et alzato della città di Roma ...
The Severan Marble Plan and Its Rediscovery 1562

Bufalini surveyed modern Rome more accurately than anyone had up to his time and also included plans of many ancient buildings. Ligorio collected information from coins, manuscripts, inscriptions, and reliefs to lend his *Anteiquae Urbis Imago* verisimilitude. However, as chance would have it, the discovery that would eventually change the course of Roman topography was made in 1562, a decade after Bufalini and a year after the Ligorio plan. One Torquato Conte, excavating behind the church of Santi Cosma e Damiano, found fragments of an ancient plan engraved on stone slabs, “in centumila pezzi”. Had it been preserved intact, this would have been the key to unlock instantly all the secrets of ancient topography.


Ligorio later saw the fragments but made little use of them; see Jacks, *The Antiquarian*, p. 220.

The plan was executed on 150 large marble slabs arranged in eleven rows and attached by iron clamps to the wall of a room in the Forum Pacis. Modern researchers tend to believe that the plan is a copy of cadastral, or property, plans on papyrus or bronze kept in this room, which was possibly the office of the praefectus urbi. It was a magnificent display, measuring about 60 by 43 Roman feet, showing all of Rome at a scale of 1:240. It dates from the reign of Septimius Severus and was done in 203-211. No ancient writer mentions it, and the name by which it is known in scholarship, the Forma Urbis Romae, is a modern invention. A small proportion of the whole survives. With each new archaeological sweep more fragments emerge, and at last count there were 1,186, but the recovered fragments still represent no more than 10-15 percent of the total, and very few of the joins match perfectly.

In the Dark Ages, the slabs were pried off the wall and robbed for building material or burned to make lime, or they fell into the rising swamp that engulfed the area. After their discovery, the remaining fragments were taken by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese to his palace, where they excited the interest of a generation of antiquarians. Giovanni Antonio Dosio studied them, and his drawings are now preserved in the Vatican Library (Vat. lat. 3439). The French printmaker Étienne Dupérac claimed to have studied the fragments as well. In the dedication to Charles IX of his larger plan of ancient Rome, the Scetiographia of 1574, Dupérac vaunt's knowledge of the fragments, and indeed John Pinto's sharp eye has discerned the influence of the Ludus Magnus fragment on the Dupérac map.88 It must be said, however, that aside from this one instance, Dupérac's was an empty boast. His map is nothing but a simplified copy of Ligorio's 1561 Anteiqueae Vrbis Imago. Fulvio Orsini, as resident librarian in the Farnese palace, took an interest in the fragments, too, but after Orsini's death in 1600, they were ignored by the various Farnese cardinals and were eventually built into the wall of the Farnese garden along the Tiber.

After a century of neglect, the fragments were rediscovered in the 1660s by an appealing if little-known architect named Andrea

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Bufalini. (He was not a relation of the Leonardo Bufalini of Udine who did the 1551 map discussed above). Andrea Bufalini realized that he could use the fragments to recreate the plan of ancient Rome. More serious than Dupéral, he knew that this would be a huge task, which would have to combine exploration under the ruins with careful analysis of the fragments. It was his great, never-finished project. To that end, he began systematic exploration of the ruins, beginning in 1658 with the cryptoporticus under Santa Maria in Via Lata, and the Mausoleum of Augustus.

Andrea Bufalini soon developed a friendship with the Croatian letterato Stefano Gradic, who was both custodian of the Vatican Library (1661-83) and ambassador of the Ragusan Republic to the Holy See. Gradic was instrumental in procuring help for Ragusa (now Dubrovnik) when the city was destroyed in an earthquake in 1667, which aid included sending architects and engineers for the reconstruction. It is not known if Andrea Bufalini ever went to Dalmatia in person, but through the good offices of Gradic he was chosen as the architect of the new cathedral of Ragusa, for which he prepared a design in 1672-73.  

Andrea Bufalini’s close relationships with the Dalmatian community in Rome allowed him privileged access to the monastery of San Girolamo degli Illirici (or degli Schiavoni), and in particular to that part of the Mausoleum of Augustus that lay within its precincts. In fact, in 1673 he supplied Bellori with a plan of the Mausoleum, “every part measured with the greatest diligence” [“con somma diligenza misurato in ogni sua parte”]. When Bellori published his book on the fragments of the Marble Plan in 1673, he said that Andrea Bufalini was about to publish a plan (ichno-

91 Pietro Santi Bartoli, Gli antichi sepolcri ovvero mausolei romani et etruschi trovati in Roma et altri luoghi celebri, Rome, 1697, p. 71; Andrea Bufalini’s study of the monument is omitted from the otherwise complete list of post-antique investigators in H. von Hesberg, “Mausoleum Augusti: Das Monument”, in Lexicon Topographicum, III, pp. 234-37.
graphiam) of all of Rome: “In addition to modern buildings he had measured all of the surviving ancient buildings and had thought at length about the marble fragments, sharing his insights with Bellori”. It is possible that Andrea Bufalini had already conceived the idea of a map that placed the fragments in their correct position, and should thus be considered a direct forerunner of Piranesi’s Iconographia. Whatever his goals, his work never saw the light of day, and it is only Bellori’s generous acknowledgment that preserves the memory of Andrea Bufalini’s grand project from oblivion.

Francesco Bianchini 1738

In 1738, when Piranesi was eighteen, a reconstruction of visionary grandeur was published showing the palace of the Roman emperors spreading over the Palatine and Esquiline Hills. We have seen Francesco di Giorgio fantasizing about giant buildings on the Capitol and the Palatine, though he of course admitted they had no foundation in fact. In this case, however, the reconstruction of the “Palazzo dei Cesari” came from one of the most prestigious scientists of the day, following a five-year campaign of excavation that had produced sensational finds. One can easily imagine the young Piranesi’s excitement as he leafed through this grand tome and unfolded its plates, each larger and more amazing than the last.

The author, Francesco Bianchini (1662-1729) of Verona, was sent, after a Jesuit education in Bologna, to study astronomy in

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Padua in 1680. In 1684 he went to Rome, where he moved into the circle of Cardinal Ottoboni and the Accademia Fisico-matematica of Giovanni Giustino Ciampini. His observations resulted in a comet being named after him. While cataloguing the Ottoboni library he developed an interest in chronology and history, wrote on the Julian calendar, and in 1697 published the first part of his monumental work, *L'istoria universale provata con monumenti e figurata con simboli de gli antichi*. It covered four thousand years of ancient history, beginning at the Creation; the volumes that were to cover the last seventeen centuries of "modern" history were planned but never finished. Like Vico, who knew his work, Bianchini historicized myths and looked for their scientific core. He attempted to tie history to artifacts and to test the texts against them. He flourished in the Rome of Clement XI Albani (r. 1700-1721).

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1721) and Cardinal Alessandro Albani, with its emphasis on science and sacred erudition. In his capacity as secretary of the Congregation of the Calendar, Bianchini laid out the meridian of Santa Maria degli Angeli in 1701-2. In 1707, he became the first continental scientist to verify Newton’s experiments on the refraction of light, and he was granted three interviews by the great astronomer when he visited England in 1712-13.

Bianchini saw the need to study a society as a whole using an array of monuments. He was one of the antiquarians who inspected the newly discovered funeral chamber of the freedmen of Livia, wife of Augustus, on the Via Appia in 1726. With inscriptions and decoration intact this was a sensational find, one that showed the grandeur and orderliness of the household that staffed the imperial palace on the Palatine. Bianchini realized, however, that excavation was tantamount to destruction and that the find would be lost to science unless published. Faithful to his discoveries in excavations, Bianchini nevertheless believed that imagination had a role in the pursuit of historical knowledge. Piranesi, who reproduced the plates of Bianchini’s book on the tombs of the freedmen in his own works, shared a belief in what we might call imagination grounded in the monuments.

When Duke Francesco Maria Farnese undertook the Palatine excavation, if such a term can be used for what was basically a treasure hunt for statuary to fill the Farnese palace at Parma, Bianchini legitimized the operation with his presence from 1720 to

1725. Three vast rooms were discovered during this time which, taken together, were larger than the nave of St. Peter's. The vaulted basilica found in 1724 produced two colossal statues that were immediately sent to Parma: a Youthful Hercules and a Bacchus, each twenty palmi (four and a half meters) high. The statue niches and doors were flanked by sixteen fluted columns of pavonazzo marble twenty-eight palmi high. Bianchini dated the sculpture and ornament to the Flavian period and compared the grotesque ornament of the colossal tribune niche to the paintings done by Lucius for Augustus. He interpreted the semidome over the tribune as a symbol of the royal tent of the prince as supreme commander. As expert as he was on both style and iconography, Bianchini did not let us forget that the excavations were carried out under the watchful eye of an astronomer; he observed that the structures he was studying aligned with sunset on 25 July 1725, the date of writing.

When it came to putting the new rooms into a larger context, Bianchini saw that past reconstructions of the Palace of the Caesars were unreliable. Although Bufalini's 1551 map was large, his image of the Palatine was only one foot square and Bianchini found it useless. The plan in Panvinio's De ludis circensibus at first seemed better, but soon Bianchini grew skeptical. The master masons who gave Panvinio his information were uneducated and filled in the plan with buildings they never saw. They did see a building, like a circular Temple of Apollo, but Bianchini felt it was really a late-antique overlay on top of earlier imperial baths. Thus Panvinio's plan was to be redone completely.

Furthermore, Panvinio had no knowledge of the sumptuous rooms that Bianchini had discovered. These were so majestic, Bianchini reasoned, that they demanded a processional approach from the Forum, and this is exactly what he provided on the sweeping foldout print at the end of his book. Bianchini imagined that one would reach the rooms by going up a grand ramp flanked with exe-

97 Bianchini, Del Palazzo dei Cesari, 1738. Although Bianchini was present from 1720 to 1725, excavations are documented from 1716 to 1739, by which time the hill had been entirely mined and stripped of antiques. See Olivier Michel, "Les fouilles Farnèse dans les jardins du Palatino", Gli Orti Farnesiani sul Palatino, ed. Giuseppe Morganti, Rome, 1990, pp. 187-223. Michel remarks that with Bianchini's death in 1729 the scientific character of the enterprise ended.

98 They are shown on the Nolli plan, no. 930: "Ruine dell'antico Palazzo de Cesari".
dars, like the approach to St. Peter’s, then through a vaulted vestibule and a magnificent courtyard until one reached the newly discovered hall. If, as all antiquarians acknowledged, there was a hippodrome inside the palace, with an exedra attached to its eastern (right-hand) side, then Bianchini thought there should be a second, matching hippodrome with an exedra attached to the western (left-hand) side. This long space would serve not only as a pendant to the extant hippodrome but as a magnificent forecourt for the new hall. The exedras attached to both hippodromes should, Bianchini thought, be covered with half-domes, like modern orchestra shells.

Each emperor who added to the palace, from Augustus to Tiberius and Caligula, built with “più esatta simmetria” and more magnificent ornament; then, after a fire, Domitian rebuilt the palace still more elaborately. This succession of events, carried out by architects who were willing to bind themselves to schemes established long before their time, explains the repetitions and symmetries in the overall design. Nero’s Domus Aurea on the Esquiline was thus in no way a radical departure but rather a twin of the earlier Palatine complex, in which the architect renounced innovation in order to match the earlier palace in mirror symmetry. To create a hinge between these two vast complexes, Bianchini would duplicate the Temple of Venus and Rome and place a centralized half-tholos (a half-dome he labeled the “Macellum Augusti”) between the two. He gives the Colossus of Nero a twin and the Arch of Titus pendants galore.

How did the scrupulous scholar come up with this fantastic image? Henry Millon is certainly right to see Bianchini evolving from skeptical archaeologist into grand planner in the last year or so of his life, as he hastened to prepare his book for publication under the shadow of approaching death. He passed away in 1729, but his nephew and editor claims that he had prepared all the visual material except the large foldout plate at the end. This “mega-veduta” was engraved in Verona under the nephew’s care, on the basis of a drawing prepared in Rome by Francesco Nicoletti (1703/09-1776). This well-prepared young architect from Trapani had just won first prize in the Concorso Clementino of 1728 with a design for a palace and piazza overlooking a port city.⁹⁹ Nicoletti

⁹⁹ Paolo Marconi, Angela Cipriani, and Enrico Valeriani, I disegni dell’archivio storico dell’Accademia di San Luca, 2 vols., Rome, 1974, 1, nos. 330-335. Nicoletti
was versed in Bernini’s grandiloquent style, which explains the references in his reconstruction to Piazza San Pietro and to Bernini’s designs for the Louvre. An extremely high podium, ramplike stairs, courtyards surrounded by pavilions arranged in symmetry around a central axis – such features are typical of the international palace style, represented in the realm of built architecture, for example, by Fischer von Erlach’s Schönbrunn in Vienna. The young Sicilian architect gave flesh to the vision of the elderly scholar. The foldout plate affirms the principles of baroque design as a way of accelerating discovery and seeing what one might find, if one could live many lifetimes and dig up all the hills of Rome.

**Giambattista Nolli 1748**

During Piranesi’s first stay Rome in 1741-42, the Marble Plan and the Bufalini map were already being studied in learned circles. The once neglected fragments achieved celebrity when they were given by the king of Spain (owner by then of Palazzo Farnese) to the Popolo Romano and moved to the Capitoline. A learned Hieronymite abate, Diego Revillas, and the director of the Capitoline Museum, the Marchese Capponi, advised Benedict XIV to install them in the staircase of the Palazzo Nuovo. The pope entrusted the project to the famous mapmaker Giambattista Nolli. Piranesi’s biographer Legrand, writing in 1799, names “le savant Nolli” as one of the formative influences on the artist. Indeed, it was Nolli who inspired the young Piranesi to dream of an accurate plan of ancient Rome and who laid the cartographical basis for it. It is time to examine their relationship more closely.

Giovanni Battista Nolli (1701-1756) of the Valle d’Intelvi in the diocese of Como, “geometra di Sua Maestà Cesarea”, came to Ro-

shared first prize with Carlo Marchionni and Giovanni Maria Guagli; the subject was “una gran Piazza situata in elevazione a vista di un Porto di Mare, di figura, parte in semicircolo, e parte retta...”; Tommaso Manfredi, “Francesco Nicoletti”, in *In Urbe Architectus*, pp. 409-10; Millon, “Reconstructions of the Palatine”, especially pp. 487-90.