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 palais 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-
mc in 1736. He had already had considerable experience in the making of the great Hapsburg cadastral plans of Lombardy and Savoy. He was taken under the wing of enlightened antiquarians like Cardinal Alessandro Albani and his librarian, the abbé Antonio Baldani, and he was especially cultivated by Diego Revillas, among whose many achievements were already several maps. Another personality in this world was Nicola Giobbe, the learned master


mason of the Trevi Fountain. Giobbe came from a neighboring town in the Valle d’Intelvi and welcomed his countryman with special warmth. We have already seen the young Piranesi making himself at home in Giobbe’s formidable library and dedicating the *Prima parte di architettura* to him in 1743. Nolli and Piranesi both frequented this library and perhaps came to know each other in it.

Nolli had been invited to Rome to survey and publish a major new plan of the city. A sympathetic banker, Girolamo Belloni, was enlisted to find the capital and organize subscriptions. In 1736, Clement XII issued a special pass allowing Nolli and his team into all ecclesiastical buildings, even convents and monasteries under strict clausura. The contract of 1736 specified that the plan would show all the antiquities of Rome, both those then visible and those that had been visible two hundred years before but had since disappeared. It would be color-coded to distinguish these two epochs and would have a “libretto” identifying all buildings by number. At first it was predicted that the plan would take a year to produce and would cover four folio sheets. Soon we hear of two years and eight sheets, but in the end the map was to appear in 1748, after twelve years, and would fill twelve folio sheets, supplemented by *four folios of index and two smaller plans*. 103

The contract of 1736 also called for a map in which Rome would be shown as it had been two hundred years earlier. By 1742, the reference to Bufalini’s map has become explicit and the reedition of his 1551 plan has become part of the Nolli project. However, finding a copy of this rare woodcut proved difficult. In 1742, Revillias was desperate to put his hands on a copy to help him illustrate the Marble Plan for a visit of the pope to the Capitoline Museum. A certain Domenico Quarteroni, recently deceased, was said to have owned a copy, and Nolli’s patrons thought it might have passed with Quarteroni’s inheritance to the library of the Madonna di Costantinopoli. When a search there failed to produce it, they shifted their focus to the library at Sant’Agnese in Agone, where some of the Quarteroni inheritance went.

Also in 1742 we have notice of a “giované” who was enlisted to run around for four days to find a copy of Bufalini for Nolli. This young man was also paid to measure the Theater of Marcellus and other ancient monuments to ascertain the scale of the Marble Plan.

He accompanied Nolli to the Pamphilj library to study Bufalini, as well as to the Vatican to study the Dosio drawings after the Marble Plan. In a happy intuition, Mario Bevilacqua has proposed that the "giovane" was none other than the twenty-two-year-old Piranesi. He perceptively points to the projects conceived by Nolli, with the encouragement of Revillas, as precisely the sort of thing to fire Piranesi's imagination: a plan of Pliny's villa, a plan of the fourteen regions of ancient Rome, and an edition of the fragments of the Marble Plan.104

Nolli published a rectified version of the Bufalini map in 1748, dedicated to Cardinal Silvio Valenti: *Urbis ichnographiam* a Leonardo Bufalino lignis formis evulgatam servata porpore etiam atque aeri incisam ("The Ichnographia of the Urbs published from woodblocks by Leonardo Bufalini etched on copper and compressed to conserve its proportions").105 Nolli, with two centuries of improvements in surveying behind him, redrew Bufalini to show sixteenth-century Rome with eighteenth-century accuracy. The Nolli-Bufalini plan makes a sharp distinction between the disabitato, rendered in white, and the abitato, rendered in black. As an etcher, Nolli had developed conventions that were far more subtle than those of a woodcutter, especially the delicate hatching he used to show the contours of the hills. Bufalini's exaggerations become evident in a comparison of his plans of the baths or the circus with those of Nolli. Bufalini had no convention to distinguish the buildings of modern Rome from the ruins. With modern discipline, Nolli uses black to show ancient walls, and only those stretches of them that were still visible, while he uses gray for the walls of modern Rome.

In 1748, after twelve years of work, Nolli published his famous large plan of Rome, as well as a small plan that had been in gestation since 1743. Piranesi was entrusted with etching the decorative elements of the "piccola pianta". He would thus have known all the productions of the Nolli shop, including the Nolli-Bufalini *Icb-

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104 Ibid., p. 46, nn. 18-20, and p. 186, docs. 9 and 10; *idem*, "The Young Piranesi", p. 25.

nographia. Indeed, this print was a standing invitation to the twenty-eight-year-old vedutista to come up with an ichnographic map of his own. Piranesi refined the challenge by concentrating precisely on the district whose crowding had stopped Bufalini from reconstructing it accurately, namely the Campus Martius. Bufalini had been content, like Marliani or Ligorio, to inscribe the names of the monuments he thought might be found there. Piranesi would make it a point of honor never to be content with mere names. Buildings had footprints and he vowed to show them, no matter how crowded it got.

The alchemy produced in Piranesi’s imagination by the combination of Nolli and the Severan Marble Plan can be palpably felt in the first volume of the Antichità romane. Many plates show pieces of the plan and one of them shows an outline of modern Rome, taken directly from Nolli, surrounded by some of the most promising fragments (Fig. 19). Here Piranesi is both posing a challenge and taking it up. By themselves, the fragments seemed to show a city “more clogged than adorned by splendid buildings”. But the great prize, out of reach of Raphael and Ligorio, would go to him who could place the ancient fragments accurately on the modern Nolli map. In the Ichnographia, Piranesi claimed that prize. He attempted to assign more fragments to specific sites than any previous topographer. His own reconstructions of large parts of the ancient city – the baths, the camp of the Pretorian Guard, the Capitol, the Fora, and the Campus Martius itself – were always presented as though they had been broken off an ancient marble plan. They have, in John Wilton-Ely’s words, the authenticity of a fragment.

106 Piranesi mentions Bufalini in Campus Martius, p. 23, note g.
107 One hears of skepticism toward this enterprise, however, on the part of the French geographer Charles Marie De La Condamine (1701-1774), who left Rome on 2 April 1756 with an early copy of the Antichità romane. He spoke to Nolli on the installation of the fragments in the Palazzo Nuovo, but criticized both Nolli’s brass scale and Piranesi’s reproductions of the Bellori prints of lost fragments. He was in general pessimistic about the value of the Marble Plan: “It affords a kind of consolation for the present perishing state of this monument, that it has little intrinsic value, and could not, had it been preserved entire, be of any use in the verification of the ancient measure” (An Extract from the Observations Made in a Tour to Italy, London, 1768).
The -LIA Fragment

One of the largest fragments of the Severan Marble Plan, reproduced several times in the Antichità romane, shows a massive portico, seven bays wide and twenty-six bays long. Since it was broken at both ends it must have been even longer, and a felicitous join added six more bays, with the letters -LIA. The fragment (really four fragments pieced together) shows three large courtyards separated from the portico by a street, and is so big that it was bound to play a key role in the reconstruction of the ancient city (Fig. 21). The trick was where to put it.

Piranesi thought he recognized the long portico as the saepta iulia, the voting precinct of Julius Caesar, finished and named by Agrippa (Fig. 9). He connected the image on the fragment with an underground portico of enormous length that ran along the Via del Corso and served as foundation to many buildings on its western side. This portico was built in the first century A.D. with massive travertine piers, and then readapted as a series of rooms of brick-faced concrete in the third century. The sections underneath Santa Maria in Via Lata were exposed in 1658, when Pietro da Cortona excavated the foundations of his new facade. At that time the structure was explored by Andrea Bufalini, whom we have seen above as the friend of Bellori. He measured the piers and explored the vestiges under Palazzo Aldobrandini-Pamphilj and neighboring houses. He concluded that it was a building of enormous length, extending from the vicinity of Piazza Venezia as far as Piazza Colonna.

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108 Forma Urbis Romae, fragments 23-24, tav. 24; a good photograph is in Nash, Pictorial Dictionary, I, p. 482.
110 On the identification of the Saepta, the -LIA fragment, and the porticus under the modern Corso, see the long note in Campus Martius, pp. 26f., note d. Piranesi "strips" the remains of the porticus from later buildings in a veduta in Campo Marzio, pl. 25, and gives the plan in Le antichità romane, IV, pl. 47. On the portico, see Erik Sjögqvist, "Studi archeologici e topografici intorno alla Piazza del Collegio Romano: Con un capitolo sulle pitture murali nei sotterranei della Chiesa di S. Maria in Via Lata a cura del Dott. G.J. Hoogewerff", Opuscula archeologica 4, 1946, pp. 47-155, especially pp. 48-52.
111 Bellori, Fragmenta Vestigi Veteris Romae ex Lapidibus Farnesianiis, pp. 41f.: "Andreas Bufalinius hujus aedificij [i.e., Saepta Iulia] reliquias agnoscit ad
Andrea Bufalini anticipated Piranesi in identifying the portico under the Via del Corso as the remains of the Saepta, and it is possible that he even went so far as to associate this structure with the one shown on the -LIA fragment, which was the only surviving piece of the Marble Plan that could represent such a huge building. Piranesi followed Andrea Bufalini's footsteps when he descended into crypts and basements all along the Corso. He etched a view of the massive portico freed of later superstructures. Knowing Andrea Bufalini's estimate of the length, Piranesi extrapolated the -LIA fragment to an amazing sixty-eight bays. This nearly endless series of underground rooms was interpreted as the Saepta, the pens used to count the votes of the thirty-five Roman tribes. Building on this initial insight, Piranesi placed the Diribitorium, the room where the votes were counted, nearby, just to the west of the Saepta.

Piranesi naturally looked for a function for other spaces on the -LIA fragment, especially the long, thin strip of rooms in the middle. Remembering the epithet Isis Campense, a temple that Juvenal placed near the Saepta, he invented a circular tempietto for the goddess, which he made fit neatly into a lacuna in the fragment (Fig. 9). The strip of rooms would be the cubicles of her many priests. Finally, Piranesi identified the narrow street between the great portico and the line of cubicles as the Via Lata. In this first short stretch, at least, it coincided with the Via del Corso. Only after it passed the Saepta, that is, after it ran off the top edge of the -LIA fragment, did the Via Lata, in Piranesi's vision, depart from its straight course and meander eastward toward Porta Pinciana.

viam latam, in substitutionibus aedium Aldobrandinarnam; etenim super toridem pilis ex Tiburtino lapide aedes ipsae constructae sunt, e fundamentis caput eratibus, quibus Arcus impositus fuisse apparer. Porticus sive ambitus primus viae latae conterminus patet latitudine sua palmis 26 & coeteris amplior est; quae maior latitudine etiam in nostro vestigio perspicua est. Porticus ipsae recta processisse, a macello, ut vocant Corvorum, ad Forum Antonini, tum ex reliquis, quae adhuc supersunt, tum ex aliis effossis in molitione vestibuli; & frontis Ecclesiae Sanctae Mariae in via lata proximarnum aedium constat. Septa locus erat, quo conveniebat populus ad ferenda suffragia in Comitiis....

4. Ancient Structures on the *Ichnographia*

*Bustum Caesaris*

It is time at last to return to the problem of the missing Corso. Why did Piranesi not show the Via Lata continuing on a straight course into the northern reaches of the Campus Martius? The answer is that he had a grander vision for this part of the city, one that can be summed up in a single monument, the Bustum Caesaris, the place of cremation of the Caesars (Fig. 6). More than a building, the Bustum Caesaris is a huge complex of porticoes, stairs, and open spaces that Piranesi locates to the north of the “double ax” sundial on the *Ichnographia*. It spans the low-lying area around the Mausoleum of Augustus, crosses what is now the trident of streets radiating out from Piazza del Popolo, climbs the Pincian hill, and stops only at the Muro Torto. The Bustum Caesaris is about three times as long as Piazza Navona and three times as wide, and climbs a rise in the terrain higher than the Spanish Steps. The designer’s compass has swung arcs and planted radiating walls of imperial majesty. It would have been unthinkable to have the Via Lata running through the middle of this monument, ruining its internal layout; it was better to think that the Via Lata in its northern reaches left the city by a circuitous route. The Bustum Caesaris is the answer to the riddle of the missing Corso. It was an idea long in gestation, and in retrospect we find it already delineated on the *Tavola topografica* (the *Tavola degli acquedotti*) of Book I of the *Antichità romane* (Fig. 15). The tiny plan on the “fragment” placed near the dedicatory inscription of the *Ichnographia* shows it as well (Fig. 3). It was clearly an obsession of Piranesi’s.

Piranesi had textual clues to guide his reconstruction. A *bustum* was an enclosure where a corpse would be burned on a pyre and the ashes then buried, an arrangement common in the funerals of the Republic. A *ustrinum* (or *ustrina*), on the other hand, was a place of cremation in situations where burial occurred elsewhere.

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113 *Le antichità romane*, I, pl. XXXVIII, but also the text on pp. 8f., nos. 46-48, where Piranesi’s concept of the Bustum Caesaris is already outlined: It stands between the two plains inside and outside the Aurelian Walls, which area writers have mistakenly identified as the palace of a fictitious Senator Pincio. The triangle formed by the Muro Torto and the Mausoleum is to be considered a single monument, as implied by Strabo; the gate of the Mausoleum “ferisce per retta linea l’angolo principale” of the Muro Torto.
The ustrinum of Augustus was thus near the Mausoleum but not inside it. The *consecratio*, or cremation of an emperor or imperial consort, was accompanied by an elaborate ceremony. A massive funeral pyre, looking like a permanent building or lighthouse but meant to be consumed by the conflagration, contained the corpse and sometimes a cage for an eagle to be released as a symbol of apotheosis. Around the pyre revolved a procession of priests, cavalry, infantry, and knights, perhaps even the whole equestrian order. The *decursio*, or mounted procession, would have required unencumbered space around the pyre, and the conflagration would have consumed everything within a considerable radius. The walls and fences mentioned in the sources may have been built afterward to safeguard a spot that had become sacred. Strabo, for example, puts the ustrinum of Augustus in the middle of the "plain" and says it was surrounded by a wall of white stone, which was in turn surrounded by a circular iron fence; in or around it there was a stand of poplars.114 The wall, fence, and grove are shown by many Renaissance topographers, but never as a major monument.

The texts on imperial cremation were given tangible form when Francesco Bianchini found the remains of what he believed was an Antonine ustrinum during the excavations around the Column of Antoninus Pius in 1703. He was intrigued by the combination of ustrinum and column, especially since he saw that the reliefs on the base of the column represented the decursio accompanying the imperial cremation. Column and ustrinum aligned made for a monumental complex. Bianchini thus paved the way for Piranesi's grander vision.115


115 Bianchini's notes remained unpublished until rediscovered in his papers in Verona by Christian Hülsen, "Antichità di Monte Citorio", *Römische Mitteilungen*
Piranesi had his eye out for texts that would inspire monumental reconstructions. He also had a tool unavailable to previous antiquarians, the Nolli map. Nolli was the first surveyor to record the exact angle of the Pincian walls at the Muro Torto. Most mapmakers made this a right angle, but Nolli made it acute. Piranesi noticed that if this acute angle were bisected and the line continued through the city, it would cross the Mausoleum exactly in the center.\(^{116}\) To Piranesi, for whom the paradigm of urban planning was Hadrian's Villa,\(^{117}\) this linking of monuments over distant lines of sight was too good to be a coincidence, and it had to reflect the grand planning of the Augustan age. He looked for confirmation in the physical fabric of the Mausoleum. The entrance in the Renaissance and in Piranesi’s day was on the north side, at a point that would be noon if the Mausoleum were a clock.\(^{118}\) Ever the contrar-

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4, 1889, pp. 41-64. Bianchini's book identifying the reliefs on the base of the Antonine Column as a funerary decurio (De Kalendar et Cyclo Caesaris ac de Paschali Canone S. Hippolyti Martyris: Dissertations duae ... quibus insertur Descriptio, et Explanatio Basis, in Campo Martio nuper detectae sub Columna Antonino Pio oliv dicata, Rome, 1703) is cited in Davies, Death and the Emperor, p. 40. Lately this and other Antonine monuments near Montecitorio, thought at first to be usitina, have been identified as ara consecrationis erected after cremation: Bochart, “The ‘Ara Ditis-Ustrinum of Hadrian’”, p. 493, n. 38; and A. Danti, “Arae consecrationis”, in Lexicon Topographicum, I, pp. 75f.

\(^{116}\) Bufalini had also showed the angle at the Muro Torto ("Paries Inclinatus") as acute, but its bisector runs much further east, toward Montecitorio.

\(^{117}\) See John Pinto, “Piranesi at Hadrian’s Villa”, in Studies in Memory of Frank Edward Brown, pp. 465-75; and the classic monograph by William MacDonald and John Pinto, Hadrian’s Villa and Its Legacy, New Haven and London, 1995, pp. 246-65 and 294f. Piranesi left graffiti in the Villa in 1741 and 1765, and drew a comprehensive plan of the villa in the years before his death in 1778, which was published by his son Francesco in 1781. The autograph drawing from the Certosa di San Martino in Naples, closely examined by Pinto, is also illustrated in Wilton-Ely, Complete Etchings, pp. 1098-1100 and 1125-30; and in La Roma di Piranesi: La città del Settecento nelle Grandi Vedute, p. 25, pl. X, and, in the same book, further mention of the Villa Adriana in Francesco Lui, “Des ruines aux bibliothèques: Piranesi et il mondo francese: fortuna, suggestioni, eredità”, pp. 82-84.

ian, Piranesi explored some underground warehouses on the opposite side, toward San Rocco, at six o’clock, and found what we would now call the original entrance. But he was not yet satisfied. If the bisecting line coming from the Pincio were to have any meaning, there should be a monumental entrance neither at twelve nor at six o’clock but somewhere along this line. Carried away by this insight, Piranesi depicted the entrance of the Mausoleum at eight o’clock, aligned with the bisector coming down from the Pincio.

Piranesi had a field day filling this enormous precinct. He set the two obelisks of the Mausoleum that had been known since the Renaissance (now at Santa Maria Maggiore and the Quirinal) at either side of the great cylinder. He placed the Index rerum gestarum of Augustus that Suetonius mentions in the context of the Mausoleum on sixteen radiating walls in a grove (“nemus”) near woods and walks (“silvas et ambulationes”). Piranesi provides space for similar res gestae of Tiberius and Claudius and, assuming continuity from the Julio-Claudian to the Flavian dynasties, for those of Titus and Vespasian as well. On the central axis, he places an elephant and a rostral column in honor of Augustus’s victory at Actium. The area at the summit of the Pincio is surrounded by an iron fence (“sepes ferrea”) of the most complex shape. A monumental staircase, two more obelisks, two phallus-shaped porticoes (“Porticus lugentium pro statione”), many cubicles, and two dining rooms are included. The Bustum itself is a sunken circle inside a circular colonnade. A temple dedicated to the manes, or ancestral spirits, of the family of Augustus is set at the topmost point, in the acute angle of the city wall, into which the Muro Torto is introduced as a tiny irregularity.


120 Hence the veduta of the Muro Torto in the Campus Martius (pl. xxii) is duly labeled “Reliquiae substructuum Busti Caesaris Augusti, ab Imp. Aureliano adhibitum pro Urbis moenibus”. On the Muro Torto, see Procopius, De bello Gothico, V.23,4-8 (St. Peter would defend the wall against the Goths); Poggio Bracciolini, “De Varietate Fortunae”, in Valentini and Zucchetti, eds., Codice
As if to show the grandeur of the empire, Piranesi places some earlier tombs nearby. That of the consul Hirtius is small, that of Julia the daughter of Caesar is larger, and that of the dictator Sulla larger still. But all are dwarfed by the Bustum Caesaris. There is hardly any open space for the decursio on foot and horseback that the texts describe, as ritual cedes to monumentality. Already in his *Prima parte di architetture* of 1743, Piranesi had dreamt of a grand imperial mausoleum, and now, his imagination fanned by Suetonius and Strabo, he created something unknown in the ancient world, at least at this scale: a multifunctional monument for one-stop imperial cremation, burial, and commemoration.

*Bustum Hadriani*

There were two imperial mausolea, and Piranesi saw immediately that the complex around the second, the Bustum Hadriani, would have to be grander than the first (Fig. 7). Castel Sant’Angelo offered an anchor for the whole composition, and several other antiquities offered points of departure from which the imagination of the baroque planner took wing. Piranesi deduced from its name and orientation that the Pons Aelius (Ponte Sant’Angelo) belonged to the same campaign as Hadrian’s mausoleum. However, his ideas about an unimaginably long triumphal route, stretching from a sanctuary of Mars on the site of the future Vatican to the Capitol, demanded a river crossing somewhere near this point, and this bridge would have to antedate Hadrian. Hence the *Ichnographia* shows an older Pons Triumphalis alongside the newer Pons Aelius. True to form, Piranesi even convinced himself that he had discovered its foundations in the mass of travertine blocks supporting the Theater of Tor di Nona.121

Piranesi assumed that ruins in the area of the Prati must go with the Mausoleum of Hadrian as parts of a grand complex. Many antiquarians, including Ligorio and Dupérac, had noticed the re-

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mains of a large structure for spectacles, which was usually assumed to be the Naumachia of Nero, to the northwest of Castel Sant’Angelo. The ruins were the object of renewed interest in 1743, when the learned abate Diego de Revillas directed excavations for Benedict XIV. He identified the structure as a circus of Hadrian, and it is included as such on Nolli’s plan (“Vestigie del circo d’Adriano scoperte l’anno 1743”), though Hülsen and after him Duchesne continued to identify the remains as a naumachia.\(^{122}\)

Nolli cautiously rendered only the walls he could see, putting the curved end of the circus toward the south. Piranesi, with no caution whatsoever, fabricated a full-fledged circus with an obelisk on the spina and incorporated it into his Bustum Hadriani. He inverted the orientation of Nolli, putting the curved end at the north. Then, with the instincts of a master baroque planner but without any archaeological evidence, he imagined a pendant Circus of Domitian. Between the two, he placed radial walls identified as the “Clitaeporticus ab Hadriano Dis Manibus dicatae”, leading up through a massive round “Basilica” to the cremation place itself, the “Cavea Busti” with its “Pluteus” for the corpse. All around he scattered tombs erected by Hadrian for illustrious men. He inserted two arches of Hadrian with his res gestae, in addition to arches of Antoninus Pius and Trajan.

Remembering the waterworks identified by recent excavations at Hadrian’s Villa, Piranesi surrounded the complex with a system of canals and pools.\(^{123}\) Perhaps the statues of wild beasts mentioned in the captions were inspired by the crocodiles of the Canopus. He then completed the complex with four pyramids located along the

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123 John Pinto, “Piranesi at Hadrian’s Villa”, p. 265, fig. 349.
canals on either side of the Mausoleum. One of these had a basis in fact; there had indeed once been a pyramid, the famous Meta Romuli, at the eastern end of the Vatican Borgo. Because of the famous phrase that Peter was crucified “inter duas metas”, it is shown in many medieval representations of Peter’s martyrdom, as well as on Filaret’s doors of St. Peter’s. The pyramid’s demolition began in 1499 under Alexander VI and was completed in 1512 under Julius II. Piranesi brought it back from the dead in its former location, measured with exactitude. But one pyramid was not enough, and the Ichnographia shows three other pyramids ornamenting the canals like jewels in a crown.

Piranesi was evidently proud of this magnificent composition. He illustrated the Bustum Hadriani in a bird’s-eye view on the second frontispiece, the one bearing the Italian title of the Campo Marzio. There, we are borne aloft as though in a flying time machine to survey the complex as it stood in the time of Hadrian, complete with tiny people and tiny boats on the river. The mausoleum reaches fantastic heights, like Brueghel’s Tower of Babel. The eliteaportici are shown as immensely long warehouses, while the round basilica to which they point is meant to outdo the Pantheon in complexity and height. Each of the two circuses has a spina overloaded with triumphal columns and statues, and the many basins have rows of statues of beasts set on top of waterspouting pedestals. There has never been a more magnificent image of the splendor of imperial Rome. It is with a sense of shock that one turns the page to find the Scenographia, in which the bridge and bare, ruined core of Castel Sant’Angelo stand alone in the great desert of the Prati.


125 MacDonald, in Piranesi’s Carceri, p. 25 and fig. 27, describes this with verve, concluding, “These marvelous prints seem barely contained by their borders. Seen abstractly, they appear to be diagrams of life-forces, cabalistic, cryptic statements of u-energies, a kind of frenzied completion of the incompleteness of life. And to fill them up, to make them readable, Piranesi called up his encyclopaedic knowledge of ancient architectural form.”
The Sundial of Augustus and the Amphitheater of Statilius Taurus

One of Piranesi’s hobbyhorses was that the monti of the Campus Martius were all artificial, formed on top of ancient theaters or amphitheaters. He did not want them to be natural hills, and made this point especially for Montecitorio. As we have seen, he spoke to older workmen who had excavated the site in the period of Carlo Fontana, and their testimony about marble steps buried deep underground convinced Piranesi that Montecitorio was the heaped-up ruins of an amphitheater. Since the Theaters of Balbus and Marcellus were already accounted for, by process of elimination this had to be the Amphitheater of Statilius Taurus, the first permanent amphitheater of Rome, built by Augustus but destroyed in the fire of Nero in 64 A.D.

On the Iconographia, Piranesi showed the amphitheater out of alignment with the nearby sundial, a stunning departure from his usual rules of composition (Fig. 5). This was not a lapse, but a clever use of two recent excavations, of the Gnomon Obelisk and of the Column of Antoninus Pius. The Gnomon Obelisk of the Augustan sundial lay in fragments under a house behind Montecitorio. It had been known since the Renaissance, and was finally excavated in 1748, under Benedict XIV. A young antiquarian from Fiesole, Angelo Maria Bandini, wrote a treatise on the sundial, joining forces with the Scottish architect James (later “Athenian”) Stuart. Stuart’s careful measurements showed that, curiously, the base of the obelisk was not aligned with the cardinal points of the compass, as one would expect of a gnomon, but instead was rotated


127 On Bandini, see Rosario Pintaudi, Un erudito del settecento: Angelo Maria Bandini, Messina, 2002; and Luca Scarlino, Le opere e i giorni: Angelo Maria Bandini collectionista e studioso, Florence, 2003.
fifteen degrees counterclockwise. Stuart made his observations before the base of the obelisk was moved, using a magnetic compass that was checked against the meridian in Santa Maria degli Angeli. He deduced that the obelisk had been put into place first, and only later was the sundial added. Piranesi took a different view. He respected Stuart’s measurements and showed the obelisk rotated by the same amount, but he rotated the amphitheater too, thus binding the small needle and the great building into a single complex, while also keeping the obelisk as part of the sundial.

In 1703 the Column of Antoninus Pius had been excavated and extracted, along with its fantastic base showing the apotheosis of the imperial couple. In Piranesi’s day, it was stored temporarily in a corner of Piazza Montecitorio. On the *Ichnographia*, he shows the column in its original position. It lies on the east-west axis of his amphitheater, while the Gnomon Obelisk lies on the north-south axis, and the two axes meet at right angles in the center of the amphitheater. The three monuments are thus parts of a coordinated system. Even though the obelisk and the column, when seen close up, were both massive monoliths, on the map they seem little more than needles used to pin down an exotic butterfly in an eccentric position.

*Small Maps on “Papyrus Scrolls”*

Before turning to the outlying regions of the Campus Martius, we might pause for a moment to consider the six small maps that

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128 Bandini, *Dell’obelisco di Cesare Augusto*, p. lxix, n. 2, with 105 pages of letters following p. cxiv. Stuart’s dissertation on the obelisk in the form of a letter in Latin and Italian to Charles Watson-Wentworth, Lord Malton, dated 1 April 1750, is given on pp. Ixiv-ci. Bandini was well informed in astronomy and aware of the modern opinion that the Horologium of Augustus was simply a meridian, useful for telling the length of days and nights but not for telling the hours, as Gaspar Ziegler had maintained already in 1531 and then more recently, as Bandini tells us, had Mercati, Pansa, Riccioli, Poleni, the Jesuit Boscovich, the Vallombrosan monk Ottaviano Camerini, the imperial mathematician Giovanni Giacomo Marinoni, Lodovico Antonio Muratori, and Scipione Maffei.

Piranesi used to show the organic growth of the city from Romulus to Augustus (Figs. 16, 17). They are “drawn” on what seem to be carbonized papyrus scrolls, like those found in 1752 in the Villa dei Papiri in Herculaneum. They simplify the infinitely complex network of buildings shown on the Ichnographia, making it easier to comprehend. In a fascinating way, they also show how urban form is tied to political structure. The first map (plate III.1) shows the Campus Martius of Romulus, with the primeval swamp, Palus Caprae, in the center. There are very few monuments: the Altar of Mars, the Tarentum, the Temple of Janus, and the Ovile, or voting pen of the first Republic. Tarquin removed the altar and the pen, both useless under a dictatorship (plate III.ii), but they were restored by the first consuls when the governing structure of the Republic was restored (plate III.iii). Buildings begin to multiply, such as the prison, the Villa Publica, larger voting pens, and various temples (plate IV.1). The consul Gaius Flaminius (plate IV.ii) added the Circus Flaminius. Then Pompey, the first axial planner, aligned his house, curia, and theater with it. Finally, planning on a grand scale arrives with Augustus (plate IV.iii), who added the Mausoleum and the great Bustum Caesaris, and of course the Pantheon, which Piranesi sets in the Lake or Stagnum of Agrippa, which he rightly intuits to be the Palus Caprae in disciplined form. The voting pens have evolved into the Sacpta Iulia as Piranesi knew them from the -LIA fragment. After Augustus, the empire would bring great buildings like the Stadium of Domitian, the Bustum Hadriani, the Column and Forum of Marcus Aurelius, and the Temple of the Sun of Aurelian, as well as hundreds of smaller monuments. No

130 David Sider, The Library of the Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum, Los Angeles, 2005. These plans are mentioned briefly by John Wilton-Ely, “Utopia or Megalopolis? The ‘Ichnographia’ of Piranesi’s ‘Campus Martius’ reconsidered”, in Piranesi tra Venezia e l’Europa, pp. 293-304, especially p. 299 (“a series of plans showing the dramatic flowering of urban magnificence from primitive beginnings on the banks of the Tiber”); by Wilton-Ely, Mind and Art, pp. 73f., figs. 121-122; by Francesco Dal Co, “Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-78): La malinconia del libertino”, in Storia dell’architettura italiana: Il Settecento, II, p. 598; by Baumgartner, “Topographie als Medium der Erinnerung” (a longer treatment though with minimal archaeological reference); and by Marcello Pagiolo, “Roma quanta fuit ... Piranesi, la rovina dell’antico e la profezia della città moderna”, in La Roma di Piranesi: La Città del Settecento nelle Grandi Vedute, p. 66 (“uno scavo storico all’indietro...”).
matter how complex it became, however, Piranesi makes the imperial Campus seem already programmed into the genetic code of the layout shown on the “papyrus scrolls”.

The Vatican Region

Piranesi rethought the whole area around the Vatican. His Via Triumphalis begins in a sanctuary of Mars, “Area Martis”, with monuments to Julius Caesar and Augustus.131 From here, a grand staircase ascends to a temple of Mars set on the hill now occupied by the Vatican Palace. On the site of the present Piazza San Pietro, Piranesi puts the naumachia of Nero, and on axis with it, the famous circus in the gardens of Nero where Peter was crucified. (In this case, the term metae of the phrase “inter duas metas” refers not to two distant monumental pyramids, but to the turning posts at either end of the spina of the circus). The Vatican obelisk is shown on the spina of the circus, where it stood until moved by Domenico Fontana in 1586. Thus Piranesi manages to squeeze in one of the most conspicuous monuments of Rome – indeed, one that appears in the Scenographia – at the very edge of the fictive stone slab on which the Ichnographia is engraved.

A temple of Apollo occupies the site of the future St. Peter’s. Nearby, Piranesi puts a rotunda labeled “Sepulcrum Honorii Imperatoris”, a reference to the late-antique rotunda usually attributed to Theodosius, which was demolished under Paul III to build the south apse of St. Peter’s. In 1544, while Antonio da Sangallo’s foundations for the church were being dug, the sarcophagus of Maria, daughter of Stilicho and wife of Honorius, was found, revealing, among other treasures, golden veils weighing thirty-five pounds laid over the empress’ face.132

Curiously, the rotunda is the only late-antique building indicated on the Ichnographia, although it is later in date than old St. Peter’s, which Piranesi chooses not to show.

Gardens on the Pincian

The largest buildings on previous plans of ancient Rome, such as Bufalini's, were the imperial baths, but on Piranesi's Ichnographia it is the gardens that leave the largest footprints. The Pincian, Quirinal, and Esquiline Hills were the garden zones of the ancient city. Piranesi seized the opportunity to design monumental garden complexes in this area. In place of the Spanish Steps, or a little farther to the north, he puts a complex he calls the "Horti Luculliani". (He puts the more famous Horti Luculliani just outside the Muro Torto, on the grounds of the modern Villa Borghese). Monumental semicircular steps lead up through the Horti Luculliani to an obelisk standing in front of more steps, then a great colonnade around a "vestibulum", and finally more curving walls and colonnades around an "Atrium Minervae", a circular building approximately on the site of the so-called montagnola in the Villa Medici gardens.

Anyone who looks out from the back of the Medici gardens today will see a precipitous drop into the deep valley that separates the gardens from the Villa Borghese, today traversed by a road and spanned by a bridge. Into this depression, where he found no ancient remains, Piranesi arbitrarily put a large ovoid garden called the "Villa L. Arruntii" (Fig. 11). Lucius Arruntius the Elder was a historical personage, a Pompeian proscribed under the Triumvirate who later joined forces with Augustus, served as an admiral at Actium, and became consul in 22 B.C. His son was a historian and wrote a history of the Punic Wars in the manner of Sallust; he was a devoted Augustean who helped plan the emperor's funeral. Augustus had even regarded him as capax imperii, which of course rendered him suspicious to Tiberius. In the reign of terror in the last days of Tiberius, L. Arruntius the Younger was forced to commit suicide. "My only regret", he stated, "is that insults and perils have made my old age unhappy.... [T]he young emperor, Gaius, will be worse than the last ... so from evils past and evils to come I escape". The burial place of the freedmen of the Arruntii was discovered near Porta Maggiore in 1736; Piranesi illustrated it lavishly in the Antichità romane (Fig. 18). This last noble Roman caught

133 Tacitus, Annals, 6.48; Martial 12.2[3].9-12; Ronald Syme, The Roman Revolution, Oxford, 1939, pp. 194 and 433f. The discovery of the Arruntius tomb is put into the larger context of excavations on the Via Appia in de Polignac, "La 'fortune' du columbarium". It appears in a Piranesi publication for the first time
his imagination and he produced for him a splendid villa, with pools and groves, appropriate to the status of his clan but made up of whole cloth.

_Domus Pinciana_

Today the Via di Porta Pinciana climbs up from Via Sistina behind the Villa Medici to leave the Aurelian Wall in the neighborhood of Via Veneto. This is, as we have seen, the route Piranesi chose for his Via Flaminia. He has it cut through villas and snake around walls, never an insignificant street, but not a straight one either. It cuts in two the "Horti Pincii" and "Domus Pincii", which together form an imaginary villa that Piranesi decided to put on the site of the modern Villa Ludovisi. For him, the Pincii were the eponymous family of the Pincian Hill, but here he sows confusion, since in fact the Pincii were a postclassical family of the fourth century and Domus Pinciana was simply the late-antique name for the great villa of the Acilii, which filled the whole Pincian Hill and included the Muro Torto as part of its substructures. Still, Piranesi's Hortus Pincii and Domus Pincii are magnificent creations, when joined together equalling the Baths of Caracalla in extent.

_Circus of Flora_

In the valley now traversed by the Via del Tritone and Piazza Barberini, Piranesi put the Ludus Florae and the Temple of Quirinus. The Floralia festival was celebrated in honor of the ancient divinity Flora, with _ludi scenici_ and _ludi circenses_. Combining this textual information with the old misidentification of this valley as the Circus of Flora, as on Ligorio’s map, Piranesi imagines a long and most unusually shaped circus called the Ludus Florae. It serves as a kind of vestibule to the Temple of Quirinus and the Porticus Quirini behind it. The Temple of Quirinus was one of the oldest

circa 1750: _Camere sepolcrali degli antichi Romani_; see Wilton-Ely, _Mind and Art_, p. 46f., fig. 69; Kantor-Kazovsky, _Piranesi_, p. 82 and figs. 7, 9, and 14. In the _Antiquitates romanae_, the Arruntius tomb is the subject of fourteen prints (vol. II, pls. VII-XX).

cult sites in Rome, and here Piranesi pays careful attention to the texts. According to them, when Romulus was assumed into heaven, he became the god Quirinus and demanded a shrine. We hear of a Republican temple in 293 B.C., and after lightning and fires, a complete rebuilding of it by Augustus in 16 B.C. Vitruvius tells us that the Augustan temple was Doric dipteral octostyle with seventy-six columns, and Piranesi follows this prescription exactly in his plan. There was a portico as well, which Piranesi has overshadowed the temple with its large circular spaces, calqued from the Serlio print illustrating the Porticus Philippi. To the left Piranesi sets the Capitolium Vetus, the Old Capitoline. The ancient substructures under Palazzo Barberini, long interpreted as part of the Circus of Flora, fed these fantasies.\textsuperscript{135}

Gardens of Sallust

Finally, just to the right of the "Domus Pincii", Piranesi put the largest of all his garden complexes, which he calls the "Horti Salustiani" (Fig. 10).\textsuperscript{136} He knew from texts that this had originally belonged to the historian Sallust, who may have incorporated into it the gardens of Julius Caesar. It passed by descent to Agrippina, Nero's mother, and thence into the imperial fisc. The horti were the favorite residence of Vespasian, and Nerva died there, so they were imperial gardens and had to be imagined on an imperial scale. Earlier antiquarians knew this; Biondo calls them "magnae autem et obstupendae", though he did not know where they were. Pomponio Leto placed them in the correct general area and said they

\textsuperscript{135} Vitruvius, II.ii.7; F. Coarelli, "Quirinus, Aedes", in Lexicon Topographicum, IV, pp. 185-87.

were surrounded by beautiful buildings and many trees; they also had an extensive network of irrigation channels, "aqua subterraneae manu factae irrigabunt Hortos". Piranesi took Leto more seriously than any other antiquarian and put more water in the Horti Sallustiani than in any other villa. Unfortunately, for once, Piranesi is hydrologically unsound; he takes the water out of the valley and sets it on the hilltop, where he puts four monumental fountains, three pools, and a circular basin.

It is instructive to compare two earlier renderings of the Horti Sallustiani. Bufalini attempted no reconstruction, but at least located the scattered ruins of the gardens in the right place, on the slopes above the circus where the "Ludi Floreales Meretricum Nudarum" were held. He also knew that there was an obelisk. Ligorio, in his large map of 1561, offered a more ambitious reconstruction (Fig. 29). He combined the Garden and Forum of Sallust and put a round temple of Venus in the center. The presence of an obelisk offered him the excuse to invent a circus, but since he located the whole grandiose complex in the Valley of Flora, it collided with a corner of the Baths of Diocletian. There was no room at all for the straight course of the Alta Semita.

Piranesi's Horti Sallustiani are conceived on a far grander scale than Ligorio's, but are built of Ligorian elements. The circus and obelisk he puts in the Valley of Flora, calling it the Circus of Apollo. Near the curved end is a theater with a round temple of Venus at the top of the seats (like Pompey's theater with its temple). At the foot of the circus, near the bottom of the map, he includes a ruin that still exists, the garden nymphaeum that modern scholars identify, in fact, as the Garden of Sallust. It is a small but complex structure (Nolli 208) of brick-faced concrete that comes close to the space-shaping acrobatics of Hadrian's Villa. It appears with its "pumpkin" vault in two of the most beautiful of the vedute that accompany the Campus Martius (pls. XLII and XLIII).

Piranesi doubled this small structure for symmetry to make his Domus Salustii, which is in turn just a part of the Forum Salustii,

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138 In these plates, Piranesi calls this structure the Baths of Sallust, a change from his early identification of it as a temple of Venus in the Opere varie (Wilton-Ely, The Complete Etchings, p. 131).
and this forum, though it is as large as the Forum of Augustus, is but a small part of the whole. Here Piranesi gives his imagination free rein, though as usual he follows the rule of bilateral symmetry. The two water basins, if put together, would fill Piazza Navona; the circular bath complex is twice the size of the Pantheon; the horti are as large as the entire Palatine complex plus the Circus Maximus. They are actually so large that they exceed the space available inside the Aurelian Wall, which is shown as a faint dotted line. Piranesi had no hesitation to extend the garden farther than the wall; it was, after all, a product of the heyday of the empire, whereas the wall ringed the city during a period of later decline. But still we must be alert to flaws in the artist’s working method. In his search for justifications for grandeur in classical texts, he came across the note in the *Scriptores historiae augustae* (Aurelian 49.2) that Aurelian had built a “porticus miliarensiis” in the Garden of Sallust. “A mile of portico” is not the sort of thing Piranesi was likely to omit. However, he had to imagine the same emperor, Aurelian, building such a portico and simultaneously cutting his gardens in half with a defensive wall. The Via Flaminia, the missing Corso, snakes its way around the perimeter of this grand garden in search of an exit from the city.

Tomb of Nero

Before we leave this part of the plan, the area of the modern Villa Ludovisi and the Pincian Hill, let us look at one detail that shows Piranesi’s unusual ability to combine text, topography, and the fragments of the Marble Plan. It is the triangular pyramid that he labels the “Sepulcrum Cnei Domitii Calvini”, which is placed next to a smaller building that Piranesi labels the tomb of Nero. It was totally unconventional to put the tomb of Nero on the Esquiline Hill. It flew in the face of two popular beliefs. One said that Nero was buried on the Pincian Hill, which he haunted until Pope Paschal II built a small chapel, the ancestor of Santa Maria del Popolo, to placate his ghost. Following the legend, most antiquarians, including Ligorio, Mariani, and Dupérac, put the tomb of Nero on the Pincian just above Piazza del Popolo, as did Bufalini in his map of 1551 (“Hic fuit Sepulcrv[m] Neronis”). Another medieval tradition identified a large sarcophagus five miles north of Rome on the Via Cassia as the Tomba di Nerone. As we
have seen, Piranesi shows this sarcophagus in a beautiful print but his skepticism is transparent in the caption: “called by the populace, Tomb of Nero”.

Piranesi chose to flout both traditions. In any case, he needed to make sure there were no tombs, especially one as prominent as Nero’s, in the area he had staked out for his Bustum Caesaris. From Suetonius Piranesi knew that after his suicide, Nero was buried in the tomb of his family, the Domitii, which stood on the “hill of gardens”, the Pincian, with a full view over Rome.\(^{139}\) This is exactly where Piranesi put it. He brought into play a piece of the Marble Plan showing a triangle. Although we still do not know what the triangular shape signified, Piranesi confidently took it as a pyramid and read the inscription “CA GD”, which he took as an abbreviation for Gnaeus Domitius Calvinus (Fig. 20).\(^{140}\) Rather than install Nero in this monument, however, he gave him a tomb nearby, approximately on the intersection of the modern Via Sistina and Via di Porta Pinciana, complete with a chamber for the porphyry sarcophagus that Suetonius mentions. Thus, Piranesi thought he could fully reconcile the description of Nero’s funeral in Suetonius, a fragment of the Marble Plan, and the topographical contours of the city as he knew it. Reading further in Suetonius he came across a passage that said, “Some say that Nero put Paris the actor to death as a dangerous rival”. With delicious irony, Piranesi put the tomb of this Paris a short distance from Nero’s own tomb.\(^{141}\)

On the very bottom of the Ichnographia, below the Horti Salustiani and just inside the Servian Walls, Piranesi put the Campus Sceleratus, the place where Vestal Virgins convicted of unchastity were buried alive, immured in a small chamber prepared for that purpose. Bufalini had situated it there (“Spelunca ubi virgines vestales in stupro depresnae defodiebant vivae”) and Piranesi fol-

\(^{139}\) Suetonius, Nero, 50. One article in the Lexicon Topographicum puts the Tomb of the Domitii once again behind Santa Maria del Popolo (A. Campese Simone, “Sepulcrum: Domitii”, IV, pp. 286-88), but this is not accepted by the authors of another article in the same volume (H. Broise and V. Jolivet, “Pincius Mons”, p. 90).

\(^{140}\) Campus Martius, XVIvii. Actually, the fragment reads not “CD” but “GR”, and has now been incorporated into the porticus meleusGRi. Thus the pyramid, if that is what the triangle shows, would have stood in or near the precinct of the Iseum et Serapeum; see Nash, Pictorial Dictionary, I, pp. 510-11; II, pp. 291-93.

\(^{141}\) Suetonius, Nero, 54; and Domitian, 3.1 and 10.1.
lowed him, both of them trusting in the ancient writers who put the
Campus Sceleratus just inside the Porta Collina. Modern topogra-
phers agree with this location. Piranesi envisages it as a depression
in the earth, surrounded by a wall, with a set of chambers reserved
for the terrible punishment that Livy tells us was first imposed on
the vestal virgin Minucia in 337 B.C.: "Minucia Vestalis ... viva sub
terra defossa Scelerato Campo". 142 The dark and depressed Campus
Sceleratus on the very edge of Piranesi’s stone plan makes a
tragic pendant to the great Campus Martius that is his subject.

Forum, Domus Aurea, and Nymphaeum Claudii in the Antichità
romane

Now that our eyes are attuned to the use of fragments monument-
alized in the Ichnographia, we can turn back to some of the
more ambitious plans of other parts of the ancient city that are
included among the plates of the Antichità romane. They, too, show
grand baroque planning pegged onto extant ruins.

One such plate shows the “antico Foro Romano”. 143 Like the
Ichnographia, it pretends to be a fragment of a lost plan on stone. It
includes not only the Forum Romanum (placed unconventionally
between the Palatine and the Capitoline), but also the Circus Maxi-
mus, the imperial fora, the Colosseum, and the Domus Aurea. 144 It
shares the same design principles of the Ichnographia of the Campus
Martius. On this “fragment”, the Basilica of Maxentius is antedated
by two centuries and made into the tablinum, or vestibule, of
Nero’s Domus Aurea. 145 Its entrance is via a magnificent triple stair-
case, “scale magnifiche in prospetto”, whose width equals the length

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142 Plutarch, Num. 10.6-7; Livy 8.15.7-8; Suetonius, Domitian, 8.3-4; F. Correli, “Campus Sceleratus”, in Lexicon Topographicum, I, p. 225.
143 Le antichità romane, I, pl. XLIII, in Wilton-Ely, Complete Etchings, fig. 357; Wilton-Ely, Mind and Art, p. 53, fig. 81.
144 Pirro Ligorio and Egio are Piranesi’s sources for this location of the Forum
Romanum; see Marc Laureys and Anna Schreurs, “Egio, Marliano, Ligorio, and the
Forum Romanum in the 16th Century”, Humanistica Lovaniensia: Journal of Neo-
145 Venuti, Descrizione topografica delle antichità di Roma, 1763, pp. 30-32,
praises Piranesi for discarding the old label of “Temple of Peace”: “Non so se tutto
ciò basti a persuadere il pubblico di mutare un’idea così inveterata, ma è certo che
queste osservazioni potranno dare motivo agli architetti di esaminare le congetture”.

of the Basilica of Maxentius, which descends from the Palatine. The staircase is so monumental that a street, the Vicolo Sandalario, runs underneath it. In the Domus Aurea on the Esquiline, the perpetually revolving dining room of Nero (number 48 on the plan), famous from the description of Suetonius, is given a diameter of four hundred palmi, almost ninety meters, nearly the length of the Basilica of Maxentius. It is made the center of a huge V-shaped complex as big as the Forum of Trajan. The double cella of the Temple of Venus and Roma, with its back-to-back apses, is imagined to be a pair of dining rooms for summer and winter. A matching pair is provided for symmetry, and together these four cellae frame a courtyard with the Colossus of Nero on its axis. Since the Basilica of Maxentius has become a tablinium, a new Temple of Peace has to be found, and Piranesi plants one deep in the Subura (number 298 on the plan). The Via Sacra is diverted so that it runs around the north side of the Basilica of Maxentius, coming back to its familiar path between the Temple of Romulus and the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina. This diversion of well-known streets presages the diversion of the Via Latina in the Ichnographia.

Other plates in the first volume of the Antichità romane also show a style of grand imperial planning that foreshadows the Ichnographia. Another “fragment” (pl. XLII), as though from a new marble plan, shows the “Ninfeo di Nerone”, a building that we know as the podium of the Temple of Divus Claudius on the Coelian. The complex includes the rustic arches on the western face near Santi Giovanni e Paolo, as well as the brick nymphaeum on the eastern face near the Colosseum. Still another “fragment” shows the Arx and Capitoline Hill, reconstructed with a forest of temples and porticoes.

The planning principles on these fictive fragments are all alike. Piranesi begins with thorough research on the site, including exploration underground, which he combines with a knowledge of the watercourses and the contours of the terrain. Numismatic images of temples and a barrage of ancient texts are also adduced as evidence. However, research is put in the service of a grand vision, where individual buildings merge into vast complexes designed

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146 Suetonius, Nero, 31.
symmetrically around long axes. The Palatine Hill had been recon-
structed earlier in the century by Bianchini, and the Capitol a
century before by Donati. Both had introduced the idea of axial
symmetry to order large groups of ancient buildings, which take on
a distinctively modern look. But the sheer scale of vision, combined
with a fanatic desire to investigate everything underground and an
insatiable appetite for texts, sets Piranesi’s “fragments” apart, mak-
ing them simultaneously more believable and more incredible than
anything that had come before.

Northern Campus Martius from Porta del Popolo to Ponte Milvio

Let us now return to the *Ichnographia* and look at its top, or
northern half. Usually the maps of ancient and modern Rome stop
at the Porta del Popolo. Between the Aurelian Wall and the Milvian
Bridge they envisage nothing but a few scattered tombs on the Via
Flaminia. Piranesi daringly fills up this whole region, effectively
doubling the size of the Campus Martius. He knew that previous
antiquarians envisaged a much more restricted Campus. The key
was the passage in Strabo’s *Geography* alluding to the many build-
ings of Pompey, Caesar, and Augustus, but also to chariot races and
large lawns for exercising and sport, all under the “crowns of hills”,
like a stage scene. Nardini claimed that by *hills* Strabo meant
Monte Citorio and Monte Giordano; however, Piranesi argued that
these were not hills, but rather piles of ruins. Of all the antiquari-
ans, it is Flavio Biondo who posits the largest buildings in the Cam-
pus, and Piranesi agrees with him:

... especially because he greatly aids my task, which is not to determine
the bounds of the Campus Martius, but to describe ancient monu-
ments whose vestiges have been studied by me with considerable
effort.

[... molto più che questo favorisce maggiormente il mio impegno, che
non è già di determinare i confini del Campo Marzio, ma piuttosto di
descrivere gli antichi monumenti, le cui vestigie con una ben grande
fatica da me ricercate].

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148 The three rooms discovered on the Palatine by Bianchini (Nolli no. 930)
are shown by Piranesi; however, contrary to his usual modus operandi, they are not
used in his reconstruction.

149 *Campus Martius*, p. 3.
Piranesi is the first and only antiquarian to fill up the northern Campus with monumental buildings. Still refusing to recognize the presence of the Via Flaminia, he thinks of the road running north as part of the Equirria, the track for races in honor of Mars. He puts a number of large tombs there, including the family tomb of Julius Caesar, a tumulus as big as the Mausoleum of Augustus. It was far-fetched to locate it so far north, but perhaps Piranesi enjoyed the play on names, since this depression was in his day called the Valle Giulia, after the Villa Giulia of Pope Julius III. What better destiny for the Valle Giulia than to hold Julius Caesar’s ashes? He also placed the military-industrial complex far to the north of the city, organizing it around an altar to Vulcan. A mere dot on his “papyrus scroll” map of the early Republic, by the time of the late empire, the period represented on the Ichnographia, the altar had been placed in a tempietto and surrounded by a star-shaped complex labeled “Officinae machinarum militarium” and “Officinae armorum”. Nearby are three large circles, each labeled Circulus and including Statuae Vrorum illustrium. These memorial circles are connected by two paths labeled Ludus (“place for public games”), to make an outdoor hall of fame for illustrious men.

Naumachia

The last structure I shall examine, the Naumachia of Domitian, is an impressive building, one of the most fascinating of those that Piranesi situates in the northern Campus (Fig. 12). It is like a spiral version of the Colosseum, twice the size of the theaters and amphitheater in the lower Campus. Suetonius says that Domitian built a naumachia next to the Tiber, the stone of which was later used to repair the Circus Maximus but this naumachia is nowhere near the Circus Maximus. Piranesi puts it up here by pure bluster, simply because it needed space; possibly he also felt in competition with Ligorio, who situated a naumachia, one of the the largest buildings on his map, alongside the Tiber at Porta Portuensis.

150 The sources are assembled in Davies, Death and the Emperor, pp. 8ff.; and F. Coarelli, “Seplurum: Julia (Tumulus)”, in Lexicon Topographicum, IV, p. 291.

Let us examine the hydraulic functioning of this amazing spiral amphitheater.\textsuperscript{152} The water level inside it is higher than the level of the Tiber. To fill it, Piranesi invents a spring called the Aqua Appia.\textsuperscript{153} Water flows out in spiral courses to a canal, or euripus, which is kept higher than the Tiber by a lock. To enter from the Tiber, ships could, it seems, pass through the lock and sail under the spirally arranged seats until they arrived at the arena. In the eighteenth century, there were no locks on the unregulated Tiber. Here we see the hand of Piranesi the Venetian, who grew up with water regulation and was inspired by Canaletto, probably by his beautiful etching of the Lock at Dolo (Fig. 23).

5. The Text of the Campus Martius

The Campus Martius is not only a beautiful book, it is also an erudite bilingual publication. The Italian text runs to thirty-one large folio pages of dense prose, full of learned Latin quotations as well as passages from Strabo in the original Greek; a Latin translation was meant to give the book international circulation. The text draws extensively on dozens of ancient authors, including Pliny, Varro, Livy, Cicero, Suetonius, Martial, Tacitus, Virgil, Ovid, Vitruvius, Frontinus, "Publius Victor", and the Scriptores historiae augustae. A catalogue lists 312 monuments along with the authors who mention them, like an early version of a topographical dictionary in the manner of Platner and Ashby. Among modern antiquarians we find Flavio Biondo, Fulvio, Nardini, Donati, Bianchini, and the Jesuits Kircher, Hardouin, and Boscovich. The text represents a quantum leap in erudition over Piranesi's earlier writings, worthy of an honorary fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, to which Piranesi was elected in April 1757 in recognition of the importance of the Antichità romane. The Campus Martius was the first in a spate of learned books that Piranesi wrote between 1761

\textsuperscript{152} Perhaps Piranesi recalled that the naumachia of Julius Caesar was built \textit{in morem coelaeae} (A.M. Liberati, "Naumachia Caesaris", in Lexicon Topographicum, III, p. 338).

\textsuperscript{153} Richardson, \textit{New Topographical Dictionary}, pp. 15f., for the textual sources from Frontinus and others regarding the Aqua Appia, which was not itself a spring but the oldest Roman aqueduct (312 B.C.), conveying water from a source near the Via Prenestina. An Aqua Appia near the Tiber has no basis in the sources.