

Piranesi's Campo Marzio Plan

The Palimpsest of Interpretive Memory

By

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Chandigarh College of Architecture

Submitted to the Department of Architecture
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
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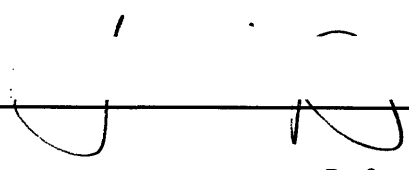
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The Palimpsest of Interpretive Memory

Rupinder Singh

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Abstract

This paper examines Piranesi's use of imagination in the ichnographic reconstruction of the *Campo Marzio* area of Ancient Rome. This plan was issued in 1762, but as the structures in the plan appear non-Roman and without apparent historical evidence, this work is termed non-archaeological. Piranesi's polemical activities in the pan-Grecian debate between 1758-1765 appear to confirm such readings. By 1765, Piranesi stated an argument against rigid rules in architecture. The *Campo Marzio* plan is seen as a precursor to these later critiques against rules, and hence the product of a free run of imagination.

This study reveals that some of the imaginative forms of the plan was shown by Piranesi in other plans issued before 1756. It is possible that in 1748 Piranesi aimed at an overall plan of Rome, which was later abandoned. The *Campo Marzio* plan evolved from this endeavor. This paper also shows the extensive use of historic and literary sources in the *Campo Marzio* plan. This use, and the continuous development of the plan from before 1756 renders a polemical reading of the plan untenable. In the eighteenth century, the scientific objectivity of archaeology was not codified. The Renaissance's objective of urban reconstruction was to provide an 'image' of ancient Rome, and thus imagination had a role in urban reconstruction. Piranesi's aim in *Campo Marzio* was thus to provide an 'image' of ancient Rome.

The main sources of imagination in the *Campo Marzio* plan were the images of ancient Rome provoked by the existing ruins. As most of these ruins were incomplete, they gave Piranesi only fragmented images. Piranesi's memory fragments are not unique; Montano, Peruzzi, Ligorio, and even Palladio's study of antiquity shows similar collection of images. Hence there was a similar image of ancient Rome in the historic consciousness of the Renaissance and the Baroque.

In the use of these memory fragments, Piranesi employed the inference that innovation within rules was a trait of the ancient Roman architecture. This inference stemmed from Lodoli's critique of Vitruvius and the Baroque use of ancient models considered not confirming to the Vitruvian rules. Thus Piranesi's argument against rules in the pan-Grecian debate stemmed from similar convictions. Hence for Piranesi, the memory fragments became malleable, to be extended and interpreted within the innovative boundaries of the rules of the ancients.

The underlay of *Campo Marzio*'s forms is platonic geometry, primarily due to the ichnographic format of the plan. The *Campo Marzio* plan is then the ichnographic geometric iterations of the transformation and collaging of memory fragments, similar to other works in other genres.

As the culmination of Piranesi's study of the Marble Plan and antiquarian work in *Antichita Romane*, for an overall plan of Rome, *Campo Marzio* plan can be termed as *the* palimpsest of Piranesi's interpretive memory.

Thesis Supervisor: Julian Beinart
Title: Professor of Architecture

To
Mother
my mother

Piranesi's Campo Marzio Plan

The Palimpsest of Interpretive Memory

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But have we a right to assume the survival of something that was originally there, alongside of what was later derived from it? . . . It is hardly necessary to remark that all these remains of ancient Rome are found dovetailed into the jumble of a great metropolis which has grown up in the last few centuries since the Renaissance. . . Now let us, by a flight of imagination, suppose. . . in Rome the palace of the Caesars and the Septizonium of Septimius Severus would still be rising to their old height on the Palatine and that the castle of S. Angelo would still be carrying on its battlements the beautiful statues which graced it until the siege by the Goths, and so on. But more than this. In the place occupied by the Palazzo Caffarelli would once more stand – without the Palazzo having to be removed – the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus; and this not in the latest shape, as the Romans of the Empire saw it, but also in its earliest one, when it still showed Etruscan forms and was ornamented with terra-cotta antefixes. Where the Coliseum now stands we could at the same time admire Nero's vanished Golden House. On the Piazza of the Pantheon we should find not only the Pantheon of today, as it was bequeathed to us by Hadrian, but, on the same site, the original edifice erected by Agrippa; indeed, the same piece of ground will be supporting the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva and the ancient temple over which it was built. . .

*Sigmund Freud
Civilization and Its Discontents*

Preface

With only these last words of acknowledgment left to be keyed in, words that a reader may read first, my fingers grow heavy. I pause, perhaps for the first time since beginning this research. Or perhaps for the first time since I entered MIT to experience the infinity of knowledge embodied in its corridors. My paroxysm of nostalgia and sentimentality would be irrelevant to record here, although it may make an interesting reading. But there is one question I wish to touch upon, which may provide a reference to the work above which this paper will eventually sit. This is a simple question, and often asked: 'How did I begin such a research?'

The genealogy of this research goes back to a paper I began writing for Prof. Julian Beinart's class called 'Theory of City Form.' I hoped to examine the perception and conception of an urban environment by its daily users, not in terms of the everyday use of the city, but in terms of the user's existence, or as Sartre put it, in terms of the user's project of Being. The underpinning of my work was Existentialism and Phenomenology, but in terms of perception and conception I hoped to work close to Kevin Lynch's position. This seemed perfect, for what better place to begin such a research than the class once taught by Kevin Lynch himself. The debate after the 'Image of City' however had moved in two directions, one into path or way finding, and the other into cognition. The inquiry in Way-Finding did not seem relevant. The inquiry in cognition, however, had become reductionist. Vision and perception had become mechanical, there was no place for imagination, and consequently no reason to ask questions about how the user may use an imagiability of an environment. I then turned to semiotics and semantics, but the structuralist base of these inquires again proved detrimental in asking my question. It almost appeared as if the issue of 'imagination' had been exorcised from most of these inquiries. Imagination had become an element of caprice, to be used by artists and similar other people, innate ideas or thoughts that had no business in serious questions of perception and semantics. Prof. Michael Dennis summed

up my dilemma in his own characteristic way: standing at an angle of 5 degrees inclination, with a mockingly serious expression on his face, and a pretended stiffness, he said, 'Rupinder, you may not have heard about it, but we changed the model of the Cosmos some hundred years ago.' Yes, the city is no more the model of Cosmos, but why was it a model of the Cosmos once upon a time, even if that once upon a time was a long, long time ago. And how did people understand their models of Cosmos when they could not lift themselves in the air. They imagined it. Imagination belongs to our perception, it is part of our existence. We once circumvented our finite existence by creating a built environment which not only transversed our own temporality, but also provided a fixed reference in an ever changing world.

As I dug deeper into the question of imagination, it became clear that what I sought was not an individual's creative abilities, but a collective imagination. For example, the city as a model of the cosmos would have to be collectively imagined. Such an image would then rest in a collective consciousness. At this stage M. Halbwach's notion of collective memory provided a possible basis for an inquiry into a collective imagination and perception. Many new questions arose with these new thoughts, but perhaps the most difficult one was how to ground this research into something tangible. Some of these problems seemed unresolvable then, and I was nearly ready to abort the whole project. At this time, Prof. Attilio Petruccioli introduced me to the Campo Marzio plan. Assuming the plan was totally imaginative, the question was where did this imagination arise. I hoped to compare the Campo Marzio plan with Nolli's plan, and ultimately hoped to understand how a historical consciousness and imagination of the past, a collective memory, had shaped the plan. I do not pretend the lineage of my work has been straightforward. Many new issues arose, and at one point I nearly gave up my initial objectives and sat down to a straightforward investigation. Perhaps the turning point was the fact that archaeology had not been canonized in Piranesi's time, and imagination and history were operationally linked, perhaps even conceptually linked. As this paper has eventually shaped, I believe it has established for me a point in the inquiry into a historical consciousness, and thus collective imagination.

My greatest debt is to my thesis committee and the milieu in the school here which has shaped this work, as well as the initial concerns that led to it. Prof. Julian Beinart has overseen this research from the time when it was a paper in his class. He has combined his erudite knowledge with a patience not commonly suspected in him in shaping many unfocussed thoughts. He has also lent support for the research by releasing me of many duties as a teaching assistant in his class. Similarly the support and enthusiasm for the project by Prof. Petruccioli at most times far outstripped my own zeal for the same. Prof. Petruccioli was also the first one who insisted that I not only look at Piranesi's figures, but also redraw them. He ensured that these figures were so well etched in my mind that whenever I saw another drawing or etching by Piranesi, I could see the links and relations with the Campo Marzio plan. He also provided me the

funds for research work in archives in Rome and London.

Please excuse my sentimentality if I attribute to fate the fact that Prof. Ackerman would happen to be associated with MIT during the semester of this research. Prof. Ackerman not only guided me in the methodology of the work, but also insisted that I would arrive at a new interpretation of the argument principally from the Campo Marzio plan itself. Similarly the initial parts of this research were guided by Prof. Henry Millon, especially his insistence on an overall understanding of the historiographies and criticism connected with the plan.

Many other people have also contributed in great measure in this work, and without whose help this project could never have been undertaken. One such person is Carla, who carried the cross for my illiteracy in the language that Piranesi wrote most often in, that is Italian. Carla is a born historian, and running many first ideas to her was a great help. Similarly, Wolfgang Jung was instrumental in streamlining the project and provided many valuable suggestions. His dogmatic belief in Umberto Eco's method would have found mistakes in Eco himself, in any case he helped me stack my ideas in some order, as well as formulate them.

There are other people in the school and outside, who though not directly linked with this research, were of great help. One such person is Annie Pedret; there is very little that I have done in this school that has not been guided by her. I am also indebted to Wendy, Vivek, and Birgul (in reverse alphabetical order) for assistance in formatting and proof-reading this paper just when it all seemed beyond me.

A last acknowledgment relates to the best part of the research. This is the support and hospitality provided by my friends in Rome, particularly Genaro, Sandra, Paola and Genni. They proved to me that beautiful monuments belong to beautiful people.

The last, although the most, any work as this has to acknowledge, is the eternal monuments of Rome. As they stood there, they poised more philosophical questions to me than historic ones.

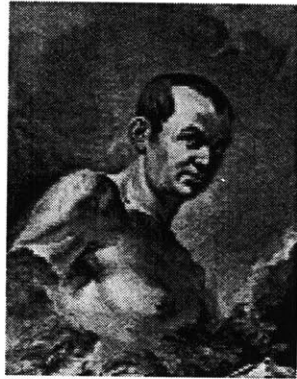
*Rupinder Singh
Cambridge, May 9th, 1996.*

Note

All references to Piranesi's drawings are either through John Wilton-Ely's or Hind Focillon's catalogue. References to Wilton-Ely's catalogue carry the affix W-E before the actual number. References to Hind Focillon's catalogue carry the affix F before the actual number.

I

Piranesi Earlier Work and the Issue of Fictive Memory



Giovanni Battista Piranesi was born on October 4, 1720, in the small village of Maghano Veneto, near Trevesio.¹ His father was a stone mason, and Piranesi's first twenty years were spent in Venice. Piranesi learned Latin from his brother Angelo, whose descriptions of the stirring and legendary exploits of ancient Rome, left a permanent mark on Piranesi. He received his professional

training in his uncle Matteo Lucchesi's studio. It is now accepted that through his exposure to the hydraulic works for the city, a project in his uncle's studio, the young Piranesi acquired a familiarity with engineering works, construction techniques, and materials, as well as an inclination for dramatically under lit spaces. Piranesi also worked as an apprentice in Giovanni Scalfotto's studio. In these early years, Piranesi received training in stage-design and was schooled in perspective theory by Carlo Zuchi, and was influenced by the perspective principles of Ferdinando Bibiena.² By the eighteenth century, stage-design was one of the most receptive mediums for new ideas. From Bernini to Juvarra, some of the most imaginative architects had been involved in this medium and the prolific activities of Bibiena had expanded the imaginative scope of the field. In this period Piranesi was attracted to the work of the painter Marco Ricci.

In 1740, Piranesi arrived in Rome and was immediately attracted to the ancient ruins. John Witlon-Ely has com-

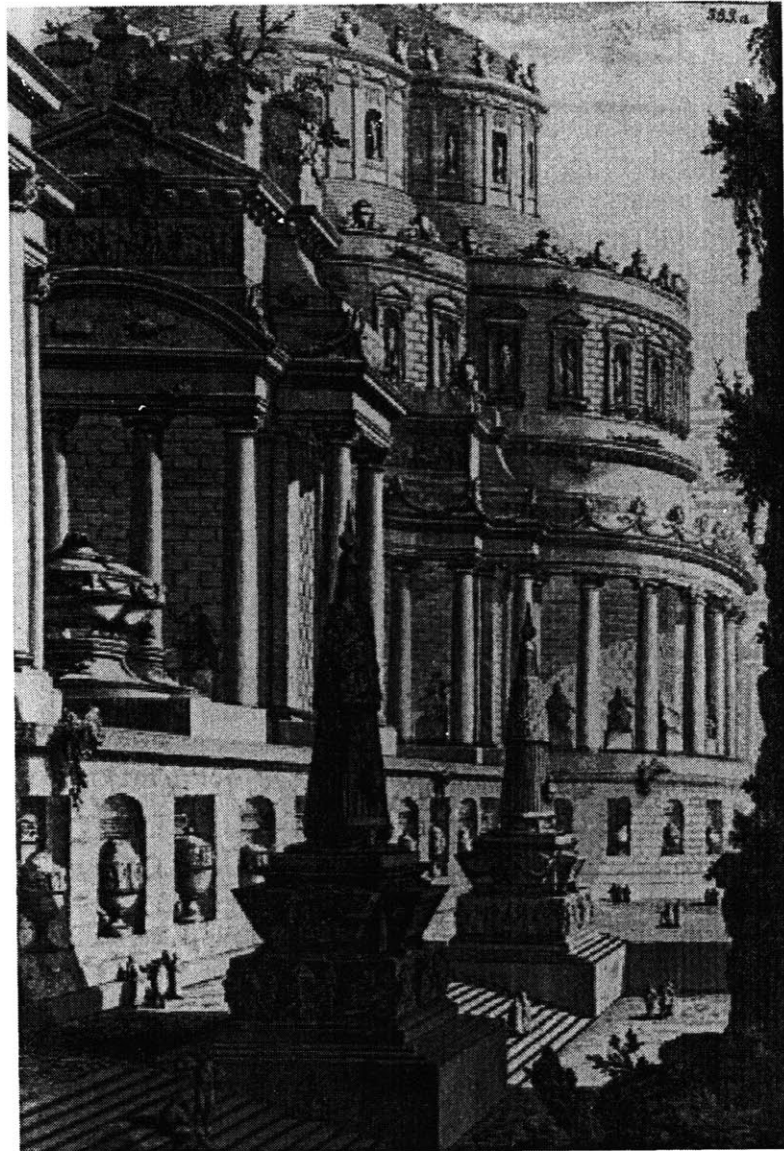


Figure 1.01 Plate from *Prima Parte di Architettura e Prospettive*

pared this impact of the ruins on Piranesi with Brunelleschi's first encounter with the Roman past⁴. In Rome, Piranesi was also exposed to the work of Giovanni Paolo Pannini, who had developed the highly imaginative *vedute* style of *al capriccio*, which put various fragments of the ancient ruins in an imagined composition. At that time, Pannini was the Professor of Perspective at the French Academy, and Piranesi began to be involved in the activities of the *pensionnaires*, mainly with Jean Laurent Le Geay. Pannini's and the *pensionnaires* work exposed Piranesi to new

and creative representation of the ancient ruins. In 1741, within one year of his arrival in Rome, Piranesi entered the studio of Giuseppe Vasi, a former pupil of Juvarra, and the foremost engraver in the city.⁵ From Vasi, Piranesi learned the rudiments of etching. By 1743, Piranesi had produced his first independent publication, *Prima Parte di Architettura e Prospettive* (Figure 1.01).

In 1744, due to lack of funds, Piranesi left Rome for Venice. But he first journeyed south to Naples to visit the discoveries made at Herculaneum,

under excavation since 1738. In Venice Piranesi worked in the studio of Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, from whom he may have acquired his peculiar taste for drawing odd figures. In this period, or perhaps earlier, Piranesi may also have been the pupil of Carlo Lodoli. In any case, he was acquainted with Lodoli and Piranesi's early work⁶ reveals Lodoli's influence. Also crucial to Piranesi's artistic development in Venice was the *vedute* art of Antonio Canaletto.

Piranesi soon managed to return to Rome, where he lived till the end of his life. Piranesi's return to Rome is often taken as indicating his disinterest in architectural practice.⁷ Work in Rome was scarce and by 1750, both Luigi Vanvitelli, and Ferdinando Fuga, two of the foremost architects in Rome left for Naples.⁸ Piranesi did not have the requisite patronage for commissions, nor did he participate in competitions or made strong attempts to acquire commissions. It was only well into the 1760's that Piranesi received his first major architectural commission. Nevertheless, Piranesi's work in the 1740's and 1750's involved both architectural investigations and *vedute* art, and both these activities inform each other. Soon after his return to Rome, Piranesi drew the *Grotteschi* and the *Invenzioni Capric di Carceri*, both significant works. Piranesi also contributed to the series of *Varie Vedute* (Figure 1.02). Thereafter, Piranesi began work on the *Vedute de Rome*, to which he continued to contribute all his life (Figure 1.03).

Piranesi's activities in this period were not exclusively centered around *vedute* or etching. In 1741, he had collaborated with LeGeay in the realignment of the Roman quarters or Rionis. When Giovanni Battista Nolli installed the Forma Urbis or the Marble Plan in 1743, Piranesi was immediately attracted to it, severely criticizing Nolli's method of exhibition. The Forma Urbis was a large two-dimensional plan of the city,⁹ an ichnographia, incised on about 150 close-fitting slabs of marble in the reign of S. Severan. In 1562, fragments of this plan, approximately ten percent of it, were discovered. But it was only in 1743 that the plan was publicly displayed. Piranesi's main contention was the random treatment of the fragments in their composition. Piranesi, how-

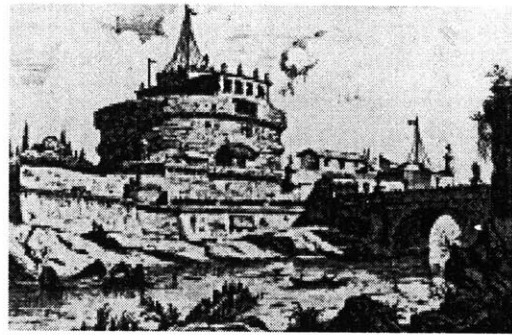


Figure 1.02
View of the Castel S. Angelo (W-E 81, F 118)

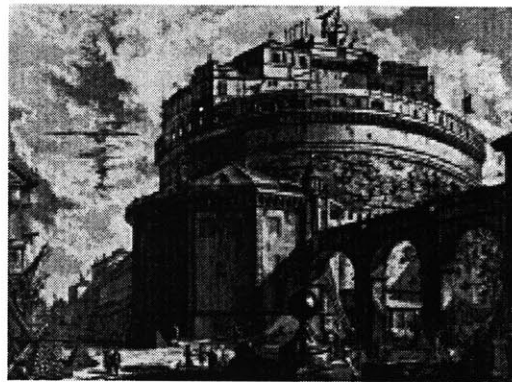


Figure 1.03 View of the Mausoleum of the Emperor Hadrian (now called Castel S. Angelo) from the rear - *Vedute di Roma* (W-E 170, F 743). Notice the difference with figure 1.02.

ever, collaborated with Nolli in 1748 in the etching and the *vedute* for the Nolli's smaller *pianta* of Rome. Nolli's plan of Rome became a key document for Piranesi, and was reissued by him in a revised version around 1774.¹⁰

After his return to Rome, Piranesi's interaction with the French Academy continued and he worked with Le Lorrain and Challe among others. Piranesi's influence is evident in the work of the subsequent generation at the French Academy, most notably Marie-Joseph Peyre (Figure 1.04). In this period, Piranesi also produced an imaginary design for a magnificent college (Figure 1.06), which in 1748, was part of the precedents for the competition at the Academy of San Luca.¹¹ In May 1756, Piranesi issued his first complete antiquarian work, *Antichita Romane*. The distinctive feature of this work was the combination of Raphael's prescribed technique of

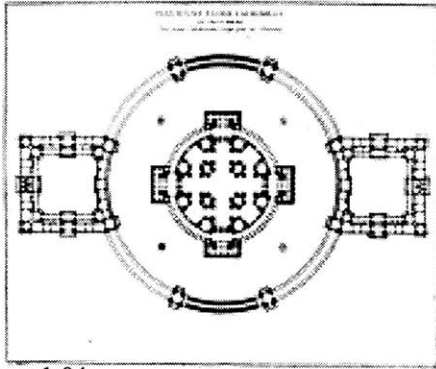


Figure 1.04
Plate from Marie-Joseph Peyre's
Oeuvres d'architecture, 1765

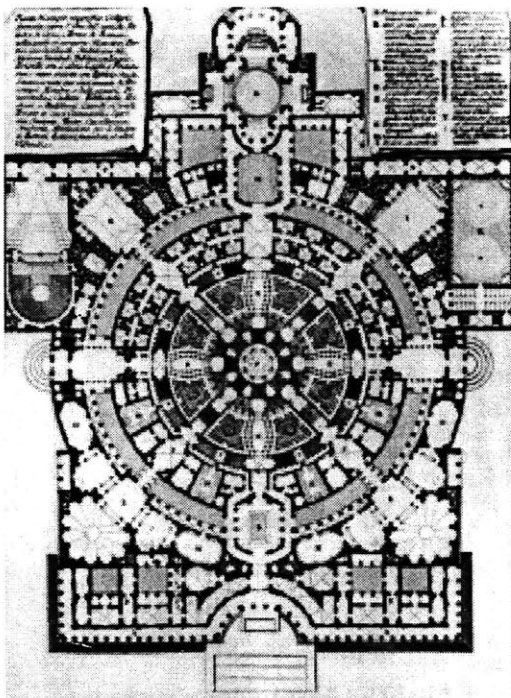


Figure 1.05 Plan of a large and magnificent
college, from *Opere Varie*

representing the ruins in plan, elevation, and section, with elaborate construction details and the dramatic use of the *vedute* art form. The other distinctive feature of the study was Piranesi's emphasis on rendering the structures in reconstructed form¹² and not as bare surviving fragments. This treatment was not limited to single buildings, but also applied to larger ensembles, notably the *Forum Romanum*. Piranesi also emphasized that any study of the antiquities must continuously refer to the *Forma Urbis*. Therefore in the beginning of the *Antichita Romane*, is a plan illustrating a barren topography of Rome, stripped of its Renaissance and Medieval fabric, as if to provide a template on which the fragments, which are shown surrounding it, need to be fitted (Figure 1.07). This emphasis on *Forma Urbis* is further elaborated in the etchings for Theater of Pompeii issued later in the *Il Campo Marzio dell' Antica Roma*.

By 1758, *Della Magnificenza ed Architettura de' Romani*, a treatise on architecture was also nearly complete. This work was eventually issued as a book of 200 pages of text and 38 plates in 1761, enlarged to address the Greco-Roman controversy. It would prove to be the first salvo in a long and protracted debate. The pan-Grecian theory, developed mainly in France, asserted that it was the Greeks who had invented architecture, and the Roman's were mere copyists who had led to the decline of architecture. This theory was first developed by artist and writers. In 1758, the Frenchmen Le Roy published *Les Ruines des plus beaux Monuments de la Grece*. This publication presented the first illustrations of the Greek Architecture of Athens, and was exhibited as conclusive proof by the protagonist of the pan-Greek theory. The basic impulse for these pan-Grecian theories was to search for Newtonian rules for architecture. In this search the pan-Grecian theorists were only extending the classical dogmas that art reveals absolute values which can be expressed in immutable rules. For the Grecian theorist, however these rules had to be far more rigid, and based on a solid foundation which did away with the inherent inconsistencies of the Renaissance treatises. *Della Magnificenza*, and Piranesi's later writings were directed towards this debate. It was, however, only in his later



Figure 1.06 Nolli's smaller *pianta* of Rome, 1748. Piranesi did the *vedute* at the bottom, as well as the etching of the plan

writings that Piranesi states a clear critique against rules.

The theoretical position of *Della Magnificenza* appears to confirm Vitruvius's basic tenants of Solidity, Commodity, and Beauty. But Piranesi also asserted that the early Roman structures were unadorned. On the other hand, the majority of the plates of *Della Magnificenza* were dedicated to ornamentation. Hence a discrepancy is often seen in Piranesi's theoretical position and his predilection for ornamentation in *Della Magnificenza* (Figure 1.08). In 1765, as a continuation of the Greco-Roman debate, Piranesi would write *Parere su l'Architettura*. This writing not only laid a harangue against the rigid rules that the Grecian theorist wanted, but also criticized Vitruvius. Ornamentation and innovation were stated as the key elements of architecture. Among the plates of *Parere su l'Architettura* were

imaginary drawings of facades that broke classical tenets and were eclectic and highly ornamental compositions. Hence, in 1765 in *Parere su l'Architettura*, Piranesi appears to have completed the shift discernible in *Della Magnificenza*, to a free run of imagination, one based on ornament. Wittkower thus concludes, "Parere represents the conscious transition from archaeology to imaginative art. Archaeological material now becomes a weapon in the hands of a revolutionary modernist."¹³

In 1762, Piranesi issued *Il Campo Marzio dell' Antica Roma*. The subject of the publication was the *Campo Marzio* area in ancient Rome, which was drawn on a large ichnographic map. The nature of the figures in *Campo Marzio* plan, as well as its timing, has led most commentators to assume this work was not a careful archaeological study, but a part of Piranesi's polemical arguments



Figure 1.07
Plan of Rome with the Marble Fragments, issued in *Antichita Romane* (W-E 288, F 153)

in the Greco-Roman debate. Moreover *Il Campo Marzio* is often read as *the* instrumental project in Piranesi's development towards a freer imagination. John Wilton-Ely thus notes about the plan, "Among these polemically directed treatises of the 1760's, there is one which stands apart by virtue of its originality as well as its intimate connection with Piranesi's artistic development - *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma*."¹⁴ Principally, the criteria for such a categorization of the plan was one of degree. The imaginative reconstruction in *Antichita Romane* is often accepted within the archaeological apparatus of the time, but the forms of *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma* appear to harbor on the fictive, a product of a free run of imagination. Tafuri in his commentary on Piranesi is perhaps the most categorical in rejecting the archaeological bases of the plan. Tafuri notes "The archaeological mask of Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* fools no one: this is an experimental design"¹⁵

This paper examines Piranesi's use of imagination in making the *Campo Marzio* plan. The use of imagination in the reconstruction of an ancient area of Rome, appears paradoxical and fictive. This paper will attempt to understand why and how Piranesi used imagination in making the plan, and if such an imagination is fictive.

As methodology, the paper begins by examining the actual publication, not only the principal plan, which has received some attention before, but also the *vedutes* and the accompanying text. The representation format provides insights on Piranesi's process of envisaging ancient Rome, hitherto ignored by most commentators. The date of publication of the plan is critical to the assumption that a fictive imagination was operational in the making of *Campo Marzio* plan. The paper therefore examines the chronology of the plan, including its imaginative figures. This study is followed by a comprehensive study of the sources

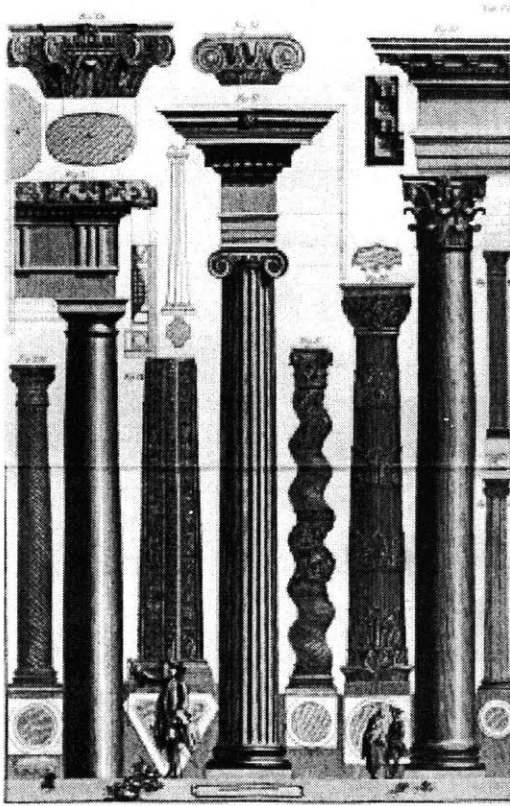


Figure 1.08

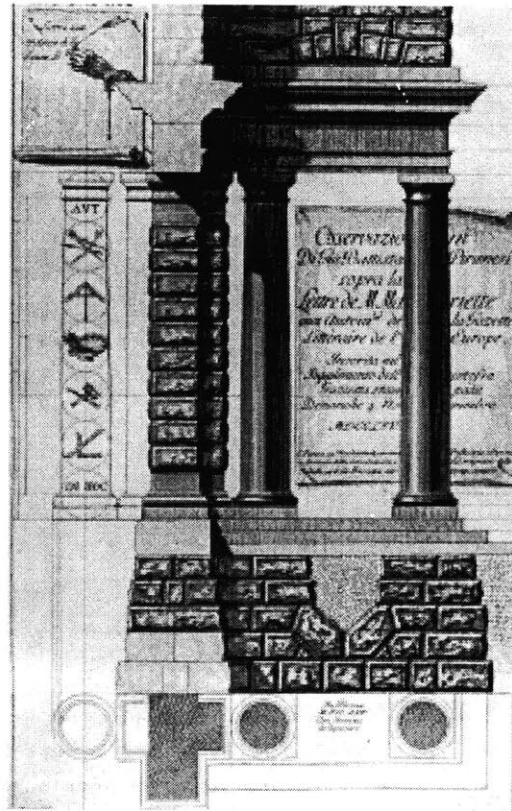
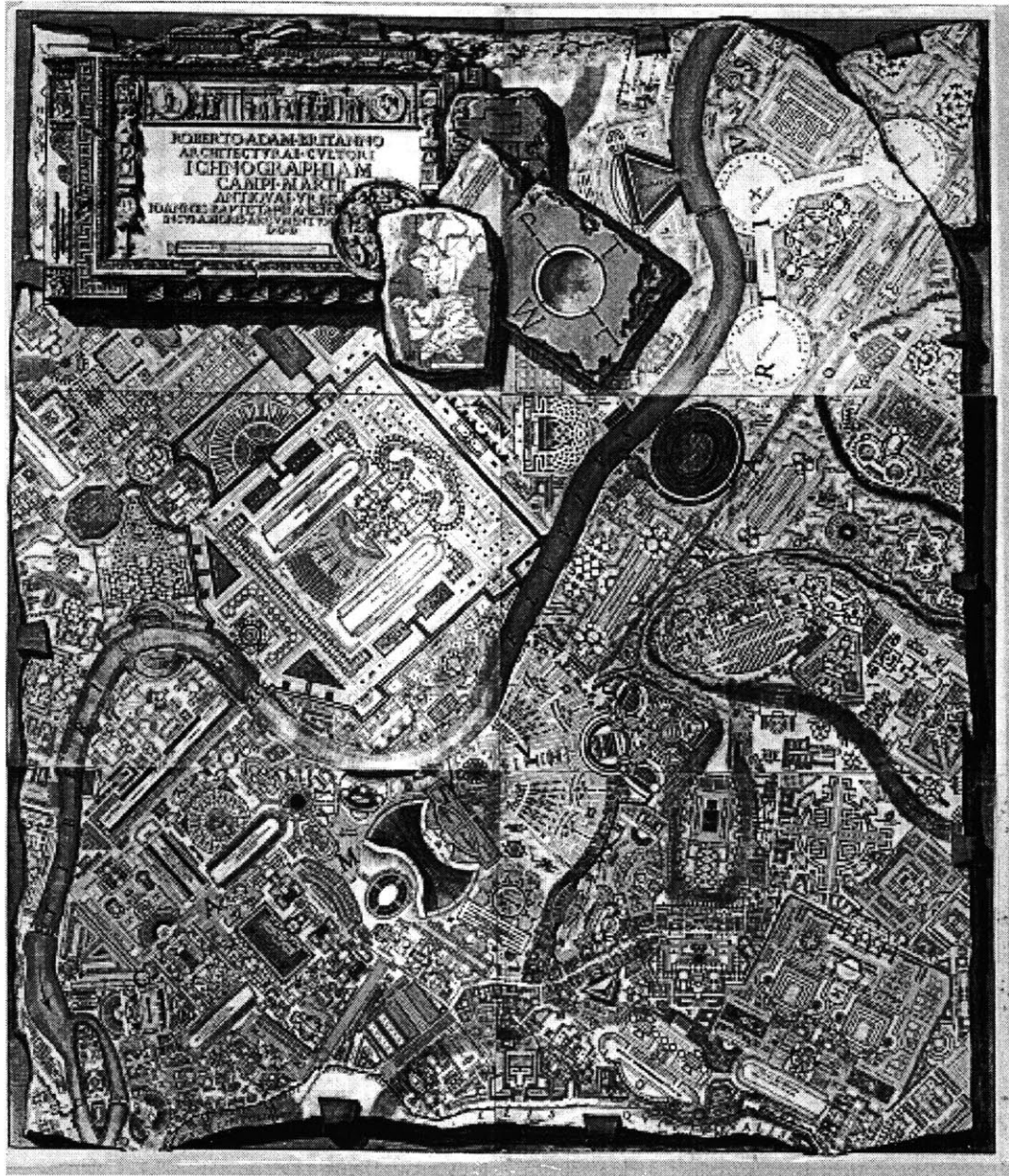


Figure 1.09

of the *Campo Marzio* plan, including historical and literary ones. In many ways this is the first comprehensive study of the *Campo Marzio* plan, and most observations and inferences are new. From these new observations a different reading of the *Campo Marzio* plan emerges, with a different understanding of the use of imagination.



I

The *Campo Marzio* Plan

Piranesi issued *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma* in 1762. The subject of the publication was the development of the *Campo Marzio* area of Rome from a virgin area to the most important development in ancient Rome. The principal piece of the treatise is a large map of the *Campo Marzio* area, dedicated to Robert Adams, the British architect whom Piranesi accompanied on many explorations in Rome, notably to the Baths. Most historiographers, including Wittkower,¹ have assumed Robert Adam to be instrumental in forming Piranesi's historic conception.

The large plan of *Campo Marzio* is divided into six large fold out plates and measures 1350 x 1170 mm totally. The minor elements of the plan, such as foliage or some smaller structures, which fall between two sheets have discrepancies between their separated parts (Figure 2.01). Thus, these plates may have been the work of more than one draughtsmen, although the overall plan was authored only by Piranesi. Such discrepancies could be the result of later addition of the minor elements on the final sheets and not transferred from an original drawing. Such an original drawing must have existed, and may have been similar to the one on Hadrian's Villa.² But such a drawing has not been found so far.

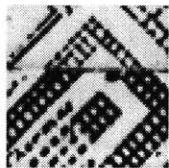


Figure 2.01
Part of the
Campo Marzio
Plan at the edge
of two plates

A well footnoted, erudite text of 32 pages explains the development of the *Campo Marzio* site in ancient Rome based on various ancient written descriptive historiographies. This reference to literary sources is prescribed by Piranesi him-

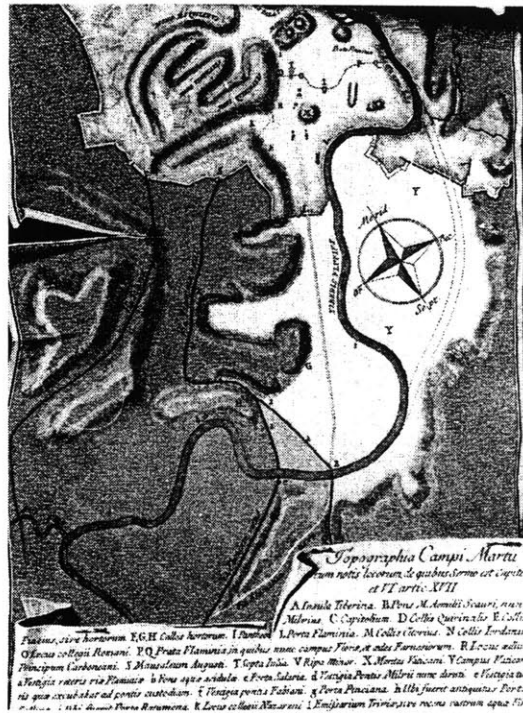


Figure 2.02 Map of the Campo Marzio Plan

self in the introduction to *Antichita Romane*. The main aim of the text is to delineate the temporal development of the site. But in the first chapter of the text Piranesi also shows how he had attempted to resolve the contradictions of the various descriptions of *Campo Marzio* to fix the boundaries of the site, which in the eighteenth century were not accurately known. This temporal development of the site is illustrated and indexed in the three plates with smaller plans that precede the larger ichnographia of the *Campo Marzio* (Figure 2.02- 2.04).

In addition to the plans, there is a perspectival birds-eye view of the site, including some key monuments. The view is drawn from a high vantage point, one of the hills of Rome, perhaps the Capitoline, and the foreground is closed by obelisks and other fragments which are numbered and indexed, and appear to belong to the *Campo Marzio*. A closer inspection of the foreground reveals three human figures, two on the right hand



Figure 2.03 Maps of the ruins of the old city and of the *Campo Marzio* (W-E 569, F 438)

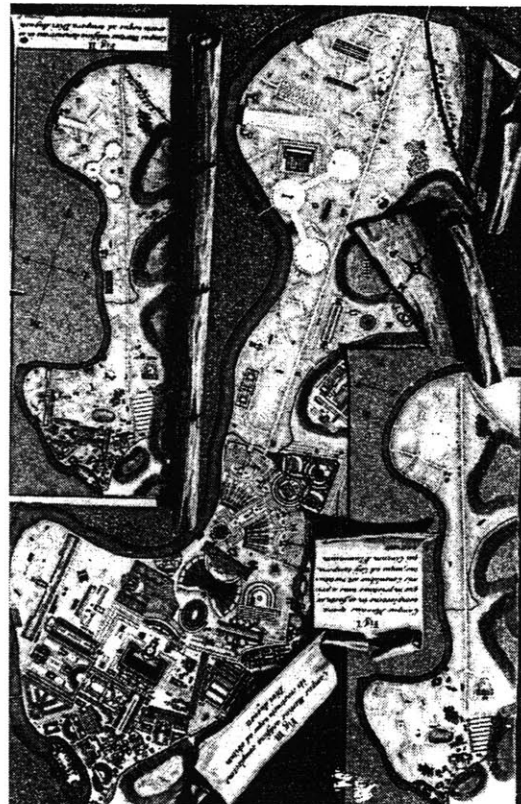


Figure 2.04 Three Maps continuing the evolution of the *Campo Marzio* (W-E 570, F 439)



Figure 2.05 Town View of Florence

side and one on the left hand side, which suddenly change the scale of the fragments, as well as disturb the depth of the view. One of the fragments prominently also displays the name of Robert Adams. This plate can be understood to be similar to the plan of Rome (W-E 288, F 153) in *Antichita Romane*, in which Rome is presented as a blank topographical template, surrounded by fragments of the Marble plan as the pieces that need to be fitted in it.

These plans are followed by 42 plates, which are mainly *vedutes* by Piranesi. The *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma* also contains one work, Plate XXXI by a different author. This is a large fold-out image by Vesterhout of Domenico Fontana's technique for raising the Antonine Column in 1705. The significance of this plate is revealed by the accompanying text of the publication, mentioned above, which gives an extensive description of the history of the column and its importance.

The Representational Language of the *Campo Marzio* Plan

The representational language of the *Campo Marzio* map is ichnographic, that is, a planimetric section through all the structures. In the his-

tory of urban reconstructions of Rome, the use of an ichnographic drawing convention by Piranesi represents a significant change. Although Raphael in a letter to Leo X in 1510 canonized the representation mode for the individual ancient monument as a measured plan and section,³ urban reconstruction continued to be in the mode of town views or maps. The preferred language of the town views was the perspectival birds-eye view. These views were taken as a 'true picture' which the eye could see, and the town views would often include the draftsman making the view within its picture frame (Figure 2.05). The emphasis on a true image lead to the rejection of the ichnographic plan, as the abstract nature of the ichnographic view did not fulfill the pre-requisite of a 'true picture' as seen by the eye. The 'reality' of the ichnographic plan could not even be theoretically seen by an observer from any single point, accessible or imaginable. Therefore, antiquarian urban reconstruction, such as Pirro Ligorio's reconstruction of ancient Rome, employed a bird's eye-view. Reciprocally, map-making in the sixteenth and seventeenth century also continued largely to be perspectival bird's eye views.

The ichnographic form was deployed for military or service maps, where measurability was important.⁴ Buffalini's map in 1551, is the earliest ichnographic map of Rome.⁵ Buffalini's plan,

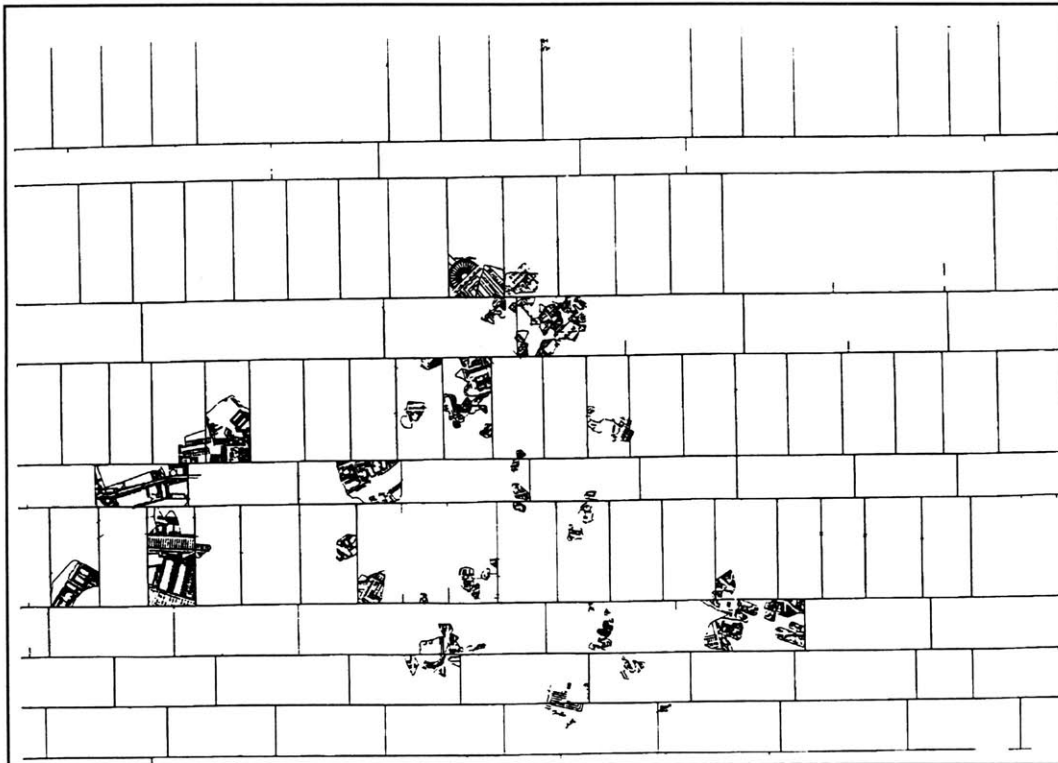


Figure 2.06 Modern Reconstruction of the Marble Plan fragments

however, does not carefully follow the ichnographic conventions. His depiction of contours is a cross hatching, a visual effect which attempts to shade the bottom to differentiate elevated areas.⁶ Similarly the statue of Marcus Aurelius in the Capitoline is shown in elevation, as if lying flat on the ground. The discovery of the *Severean Forma Urbis* fragments in 1562, a two-dimensional, ichnographic plan, had little impact on the representational language (Figure 2.06). This was partly because the fragments were not publicly available. In 1673, G. P. Bellori published a book on these fragments, but the Marble Plan still continued to be ignored.

By 1736, when Giovanni Battista Nolli began to survey the city of Rome for a new map, the accent appears to have shifted to scientific objectivity, accuracy and measurability,⁷ as the measure of truth. Nolli's map of Rome, issued in 1748, was an ichnographic map, attempting to now present ichnographia as the scientifically true

representational language for town views⁸ (Figure 2.07). In 1741, under the aegis of Pope Benedetto XIV Lambertini (1740-1758), Nolli was also assigned the task of rearranging the fragments of the *Severean Forma Urbis* on the wall of the main stairway of the Capitoline museum. Nolli completed this task in 1743, filling in fresh marble pieces to fit in the fragments, although the actual fragments are treated at random. The exhibition of these fragments seems to have attracted Piranesi immediately. Piranesi, however, criticized Nolli's method of randomly displaying the fragments of the Marble plan and not attempting to integrate them within the topology of Rome. Since only about ten percent of the map's surface survived, and even at present, not all the pieces have been identified, it must have appeared reasonable to Nolli to treat these fragments at random. In spite of Piranesi's criticism on Nolli's handling of the Marble plan, Piranesi collaborated with Nolli on his smaller *pianta* (plan) of Rome (Figure 2.07). Piranesi worked

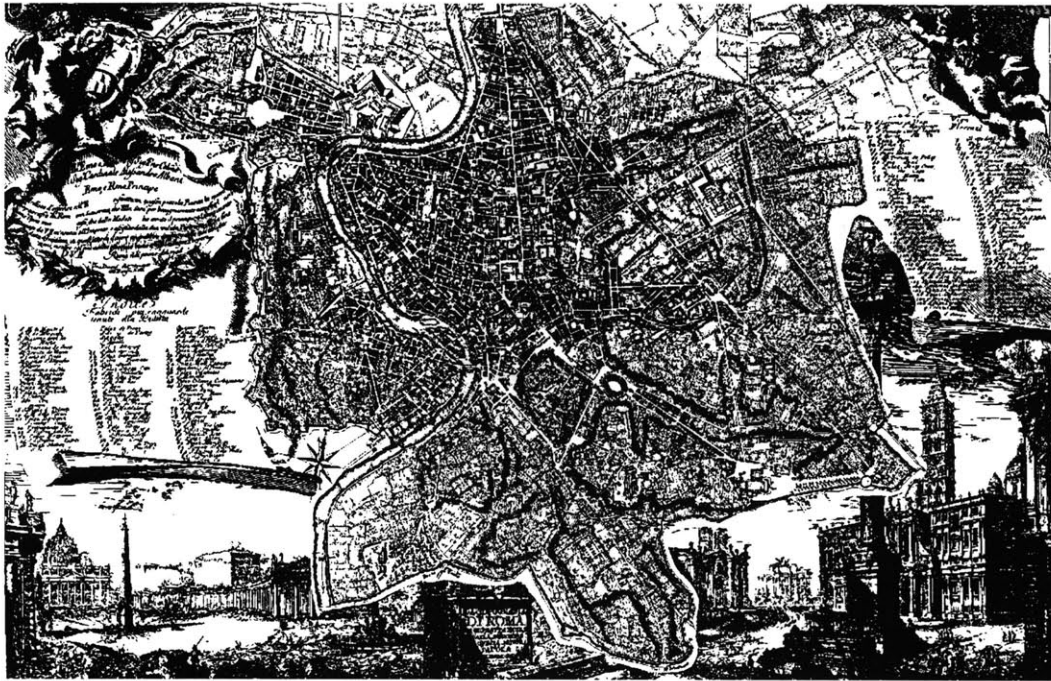
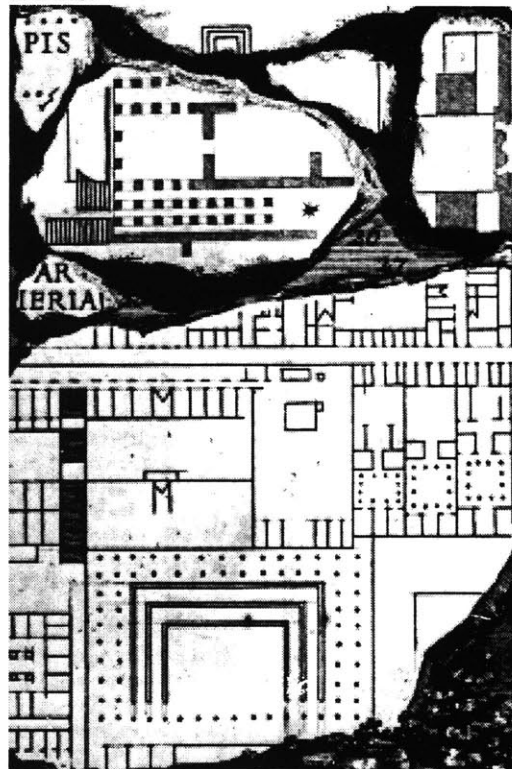


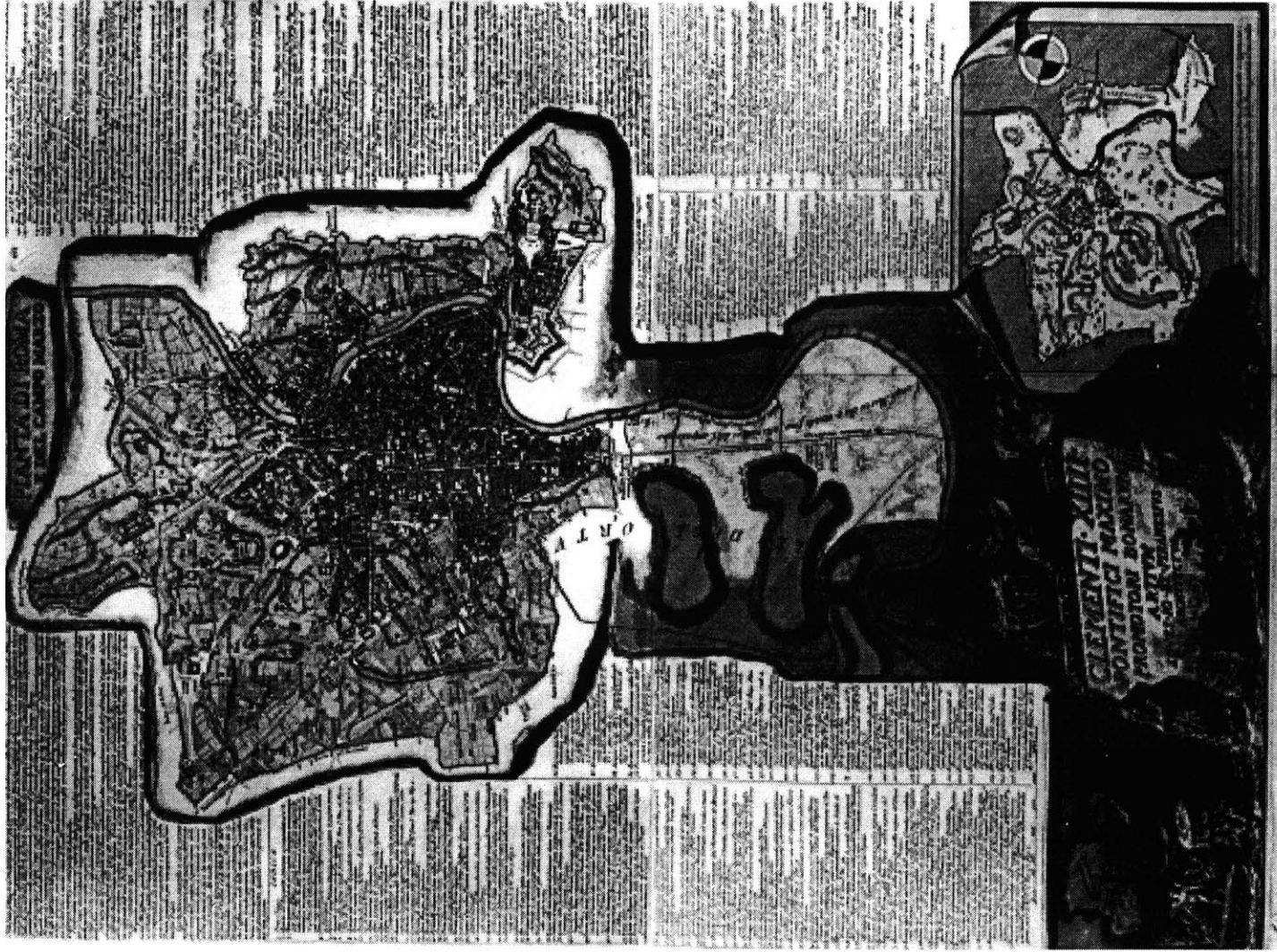
Figure 2.07 Nolli's Plan of Rome, 1748.

on both, the etching of the plan and the *vedute* at the bottom. In his own antiquarian work Piranesi would regularly use Nolli's plan as a reference, and reissued a revised version of the plan. Wilton-Ely dates this plan to be around 1774, but it may have been issued earlier. Hence within a period of five years, Piranesi was exposed to two important examples of an ichnographic map.

It is not untenable to suggest that the desire to integrate the marble fragments in an overall plan of Rome fueled Piranesi's archaeological studies, which begin in 1748. In the introduction to *Antichità Romane*, issued in 1756 and his first published archaeological work, Piranesi emphasized the role Marble Plan must play in the study of ancient monuments. All reconstruction should refer to the Marble Plan and the ancient literary texts. In *Antichità Romane*, however makes no reference of the individual structures studied to an overall plan of Rome. Piranesi explained such a plan was to follow in a subsequent publication. Such a subsequent publication was *Il Campo*

Figure 2.08
Detail of a Marble Plan fragment, drawn by Piranesi





Prohibita Roma Aeterna Pontifici Maximo Clementis XIII Pontifici Maximo Prohibita Roma Aeterna
1758

Figure 2.09 Piranesi's Reissue of Nolli's Plan, 1774

THE CAMPO MARZIO PLAN

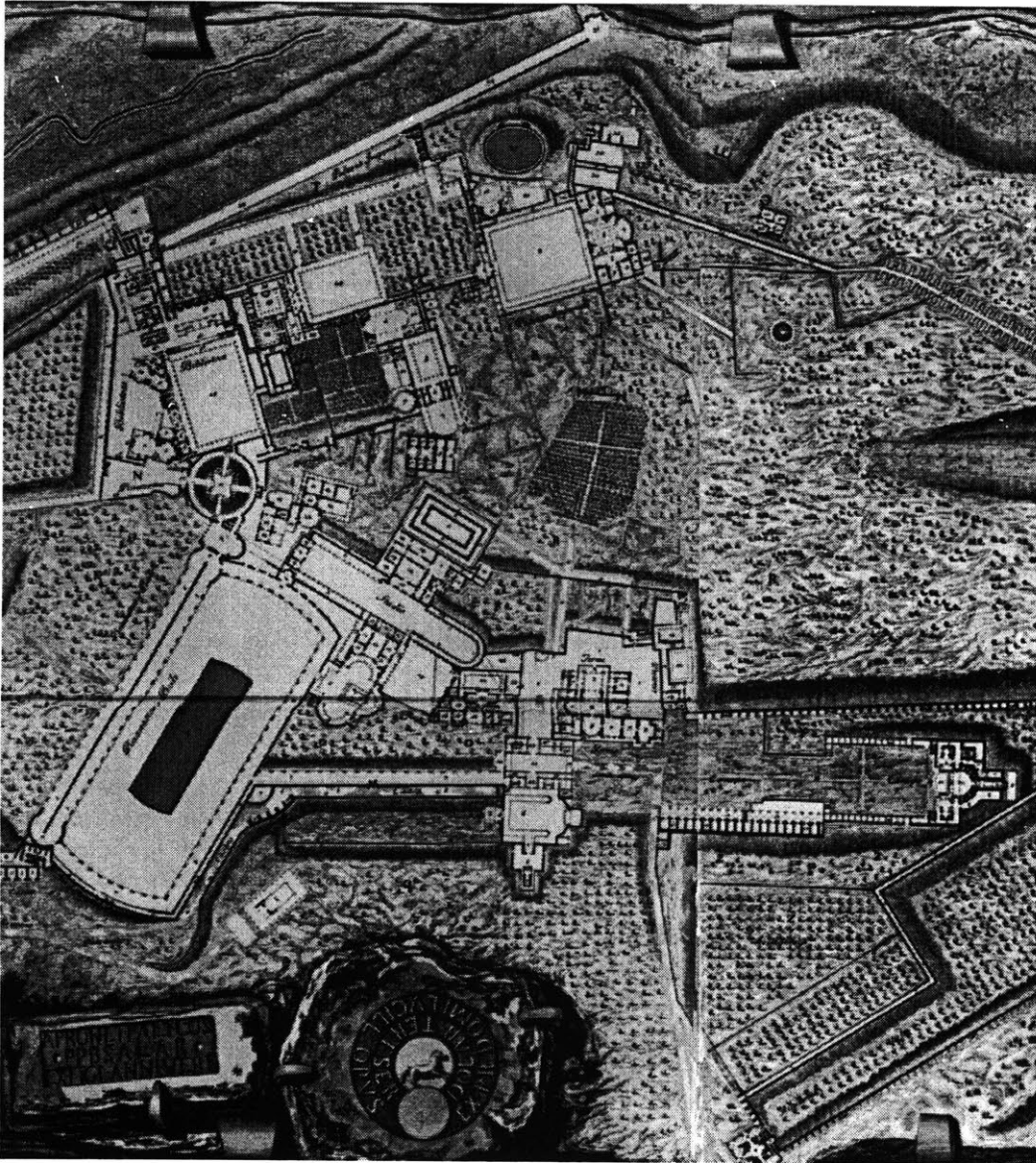


Figure 2.10 Part of Hadrian's Villa, as surveyed and drawn by Piranesi, but published by his son Francesco Piranesi in 1781.



Figure 2.11 Hadrian's Villa, as surveyed and drawn by Piranesi, but published by his son Francesco Piranesi in 1781.

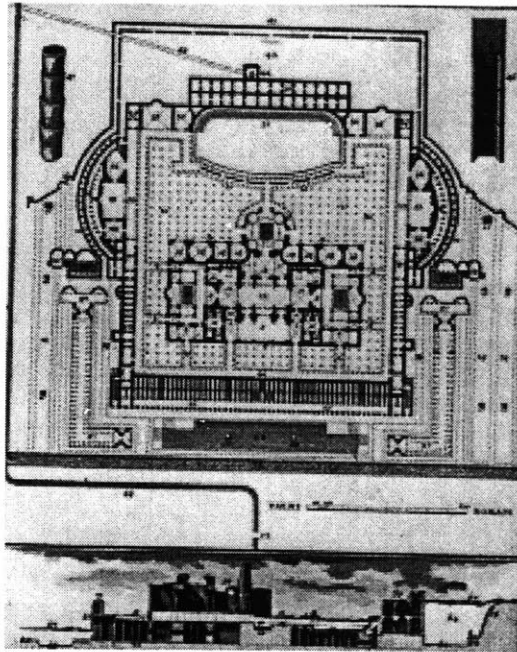


Figure 2.12 Baths of Caracalla, *Antichita Romane* (W-E 354, F 219)

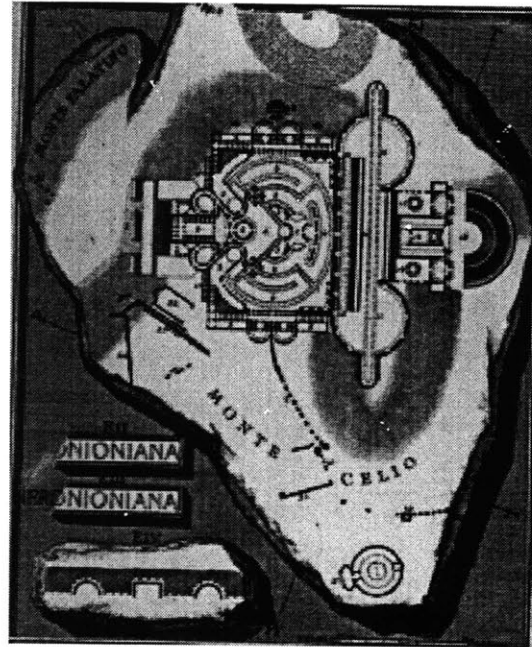


Figure 2.13 Nymphaeum of Nero, *Antichita Romane* (W-E 355, F 220)

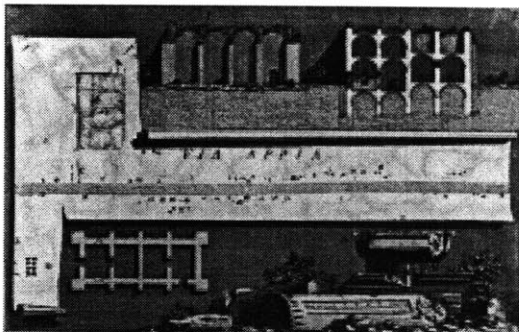


Figure 2.14 Part of the Ancient Appian Way *Antichita Romane* (W-E 423, F 288). Notice the use of scroll as a device.

Marzio, although it covered only a part of ancient Rome.

In *Antichita Romane*, the reconstructed plans of individual structures were sometimes depicted as if on a marble fragment, and thereby perhaps suggested as a reconstruction of one of the lost fragments of the *Severean Forma Urbis*. For example, the Baths of Caracalla, (W-E 354, F219, Figure 2.12) is not shown as a marble fragment, while the very next plate, the *Nymphaeum of Nero*, (W-E 355, F 220, Figure 2.13) is shown as if on a

marble fragment. The larger ensembles, such as the Roman Forum, however, were always in the form of a marble slab. Similarly, later in 1762, the larger ichnographia of *Campo Marzio* is depicted, on a large marble slab with one fracture. This rendering is lend a realism by the large metal clamps which hold down the weight that such a stone would have.

The ichnographic conventions of the *Campo Marzio* plan, and of the plans of *Antichita Romane* were not solely derived from the Marble plan. The Marble plan makes a distinction between important public structures, which were rendered as proper plans with wall thickness shown, while less important or smaller structures, like the houses are only schematically elaborated as single line diagrams (Figure 2.07). In *Campo Marzio*, Piranesi makes no such distinction, and the wall thickness are relatively proportional to the structure, and only in two structures, located in the *Valli Vaticana*, the wall thickness appears to be noticeably larger. This variation in wall thickness is not implying a distinction as to the importance of the structure as implied in the Marble plan, but appears to resemble the old basilica of St.

Peters. The Marble plan also does not indicate any topographical feature, like contours, while Piranesi's map does. The depiction of contours in the *Campo Marzio* is derived from Nolli's plan of Rome. Nolli's plan, however delineates the fields and gardens very carefully, and the trees are shown as if in a perspective view, very similar to the graphic notations of present survey plans. The *Campo Marzio*, as well as the plans in *Antichita Romane*, appear in their use of symbols to be more authentically ichnographic, landscape is shown by a gradation of dots, and trees are totally omitted. In all the plans of *Antichita Romane* and *Campo Marzio* not a single tree is shown. This absence appears as a discrepancy, as some of the reconstructed birds-eye views of *Campo Marzio* clearly delineates trees as design elements, planting them in rows and surrounding pathways. The trees in these birds eye-views may have been an afterthought, and thus did not prefigure in Piranesi's earlier 'image' of ancient Rome, or the making of the *Campo Marzio* plan.

Only in the ichnographic plan for Hadrian's Villa, issued in 1781, are trees shown (Figure 2.10, 2.11). These trees were shown in oblique elevation, similar to Nolli's plan. This plan was etched by Piranesi's son, Francesco Piranesi, and it may very well be Francesco Piranesi who introduced the trees in this manner. In the reissue of Nolli's plan by Piranesi, landscape is depicted in a mode similar to the *Campo Marzio* plan and not the Hadrian's Villa. In this reissue of Nolli's plan the main body of the plan remains nearly the same, although the orientation is reversed. The plan is now depicted on a Marble fragment, and more noticeably the landscape elements have now been changed and subdued. All landscape elements outside the walls have been erased. A different orientation to Via Flaminia is shown, and the Baths of Caracalla, Baths of Tito and others are also depicted differently. Some of these changes will be discussed later.

Also of note is the representational mode of the smaller plans in the *Campo Marzio* series. On the whole, the ichnographic conventions of these plans remain the same as the large ones, but these plans are not shown as marble fragments, but as if on scrolls. This is because the smaller plans

were not intended to be part of the *Severan Forma Urbis*. They represent the development of the site in the pre-Severan period, and hence the use of a scroll like device. The use of a marble fragment, however, always did not imply a reference to the *Severean Forma Urbis*. The reissue of Nolli's plan, as well as the Hadrian's villas are both depicted as marble fragment while it is obvious they did not refer to the Severean Forma Urbis (Figure 2.09). In his later work Piranesi often used both these modes, a marble fragment and a scroll.

The Representational mode of the *Vedutes*.

Of the 53 etchings in the *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma*, 31 are *vedute* and 4 are birds-eye view reconstructions of the ancient *Campo Marzio*. The 31 *vedutes* are in the form of normal eye views of Rome. Most of these only showed the extant remains of ancient Roman monuments. These remains were shown in ruined state after the later accretions have been dramatically stripped away. These *vedutes* can be termed as 'purged' *vedutes*. Such a mode of representation not only presents us with the basic skeleton of evidence, but also their relationship with other existing remains of ancient Roman monuments in eighteenth century Rome. Plate XXXIV (W-E 595, F 464, Figure 2.15) shows not only the remains of the pseudo-dipteral temple of Antoninus Pius,⁹ but also its relationship with the Pantheon that is shown in the background, and further in the background in the right-hand side are other, only partially visible, Roman structures. Such a relation between the Pantheon and these columns was obscured by the later fabric, and could not be easily discerned in eighteenth century Rome or for that matter present Rome. Piranesi actually drew such a *vedute* in *Antichita Romane*, Plate XIII, Vol. I (W-E 303, F 168, Figure 2.16), which shows the same set of columns of pseudo-dipteral temple of Antoninus Pius, but within the existing fabric of Rome, and its relation with the Pantheon obscured. The 'purged' *vedute* format was first used in *Antichita Romane*. For example Plate XXIV (W-E 324, F 189, Figure 2.17) in *Antichita Romane*, which shows a

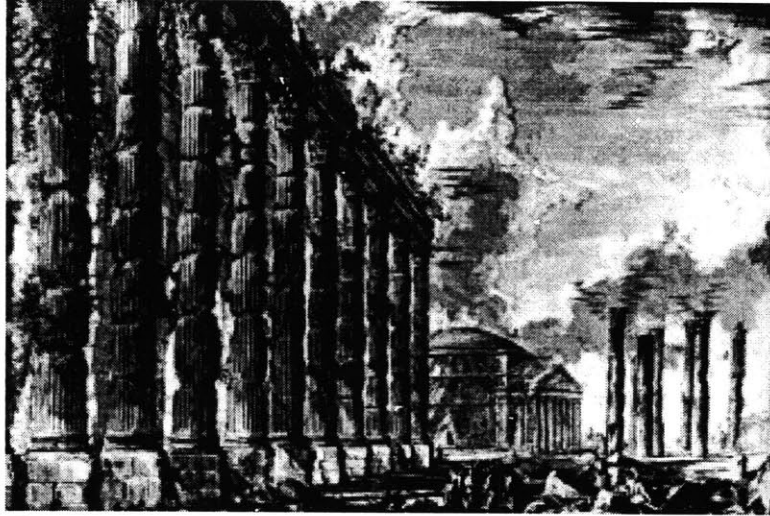


Figure 2.15 (W-E 595, F 464)



Figure 2.16 (W-E 303, F 168)



Figure 2.17 (W-E 324, F 189)

view of the walls enclosing the slopes of Caelian Hill. This is a purged *vedute*, deleting many additional features that could be seen in eighteenth century Rome.

Piranesi, however, is inconsistent in the use of the purged *vedute* format and Plate XXXIV (W-E 597, F 466, Figure 2.18) in the *Il Campo Marzio* depicts the arch of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius as a normal *vedute* with the existing fabric shown. Piranesi also does not restrict the use of this purged mode of representation for fragments that were known and verifiable. He also uses this mode in an additive manner, depicting structures of which there was no known evidence. Plate XXII (W-E 584, F 453, Figure 2.19) shows the remains of the substructure of the *bustum* of Caesar Augustus, incorporated into the walls of the City by the Emperor Aurelian. Piranesi had no evidence of such a structure, although the Aurelian walls, which are not shown, did exist. This structure can only be termed additive, as the site was an open green space in eighteenth century Rome. Piranesi may have assumed this structure to be still buried under the open green space, and may have thus stripped away the earth, as well as any other accretions to show what he thought would be there. Similarly Piranesi shows other structures, like the seating remains of Cir-



Figure 2.18 (W-E 597, F 466)

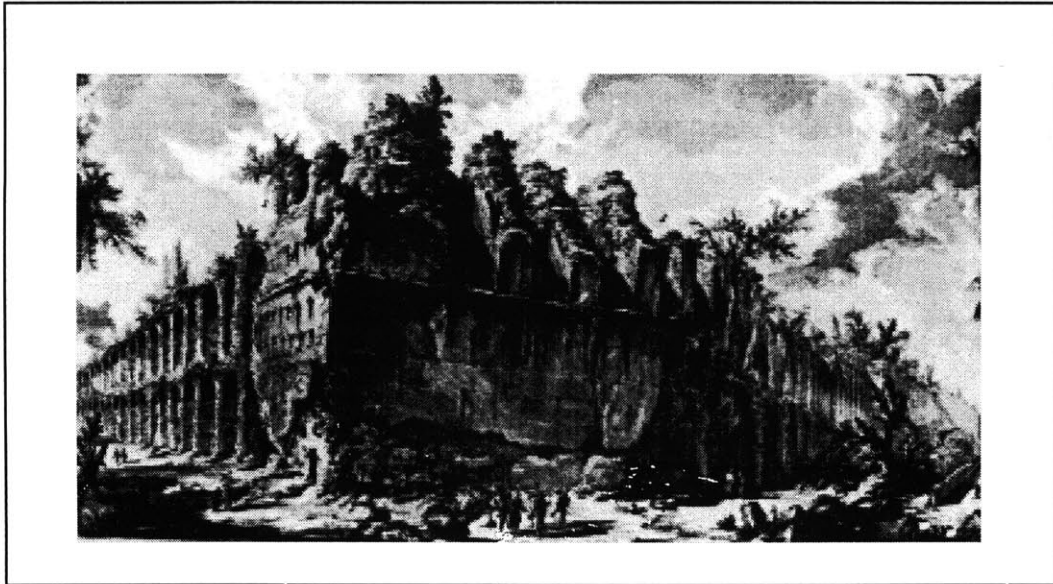


Figure 2.19 (W-E 584, F 453)



Figure 2.20
W-E 325, F 190

cus Agonalis, for which he did not have complete evidence. Again there is a precedence for these views in *Antichità Romane*, Plate XXIV, (W-E 325, F 190, Figure 2.20) is not only a purged view, but also additive.

The purged *vedutes*, the additive purged *vedutes*, and the other views in the *Campo Marzio* publi-

cation then indicate what Piranesi's mental eye could discern or imagine within the topography of eighteenth century Rome, and hence used in the plans of *Campo Marzio*.

The other kind of views that Piranesi made were birds-eye view reconstructions of the ancient *Campo Marzio* site and were based on the large plan of *Campo Marzio* (Figure 2.21). These reconstructed views can be marked for the absence or subduing of characteristic Piranesian elements, like the dramatic play of shade and light, the prominent foreground, the diametrically set background, or the human figures. This representation language is unprecedented and was never used again by Piranesi. The scale of these views is small, such that the details on the buildings could only be shown on a general level, although Piranesi had abundant details for at least the view around the Pantheon. The overall effect of the view is then not of a 'real' scene, but of a model in spite of the presence of humans and trees. Thus these views can be termed as 'schematic' *vedutes*. It is baffling that Piranesi did not draw any eye-level views, perhaps of the kind that he had drawn in many earlier fantasies and drawings. Such a view of the Pantheon from a view-point similar to one of the many 'purged' view would have only reinforced his claim of authenticity. Such a representation format would have also helped him create an 'image' of ancient Rome, just as the 'purged' views helped form an 'image' of what can be deduced about ancient Rome from the fabric of the eighteenth century version of the city.¹⁰

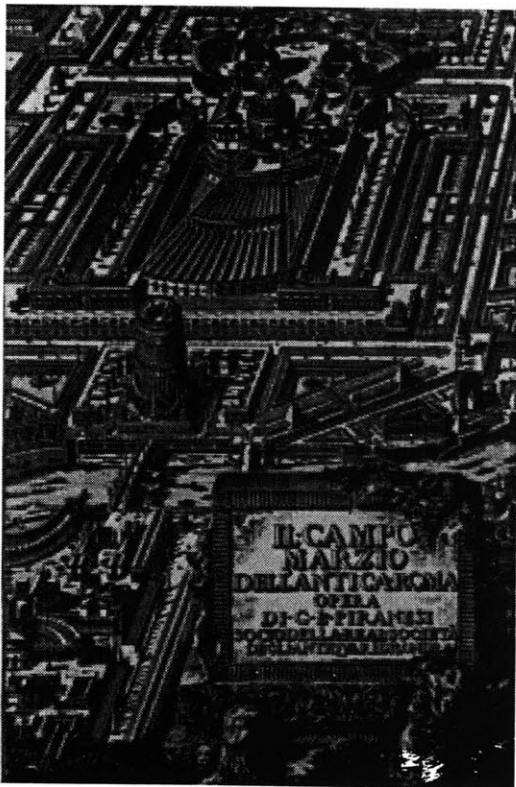


Figure 2.21
Campo Marzio's Frontispiece

III

Chronology of the *Campo Marzio* Plan

The dating of the *Campo Marzio* plan is important in understanding Piranesi's use of imagination in the plan. Piranesi's work from 1748-1756 is marked for its archaeological study. From 1758, onwards as Piranesi became more involved with Pan-Grecian debate, his attitude appears to have become more polemical.¹ *Campo Marzio* issued in 1762, is then read as part of Piranesi's polemical activities. Work on *Campo Marzio* plan, however, began much earlier. The chronology of the *Campo Marzio* plan and its evolution can be established to some extent by Robert Adam's, and subsequently by his brother James Adam's, correspondence from Rome to Edinburgh.² The first mention of a plan of Rome appears in a letter of June 18, 1755, by Robert Adam to his family. Robert Adam mentions his growing friendship with Piranesi, who he adds 'threatens dedicating his next plan of ancient Rome to me, but of this I have no certainty.'³ Piranesi thus appears to already have been either working on a plan of Rome, or at least have such a project in mind. Another point to note is that the plan mentioned here is a plan of Rome and not clearly *Campo Marzio*. Adam's correspondence of July 5, 1755, triumphantly notes, 'You will soon see my name in print as Piranesi has absolutely rejected the Cardinal he intended to dedicate his plan of ancient Rome to and has dedicated it to me under the name of Architect, Friend and Most Knowing in and Lover of the Antique.'⁴ On August 1, 1755 Robert Adam notes, '(Piranesi) in a month will expose my illustrious name to the world in the plan he dedicates to me. . .'

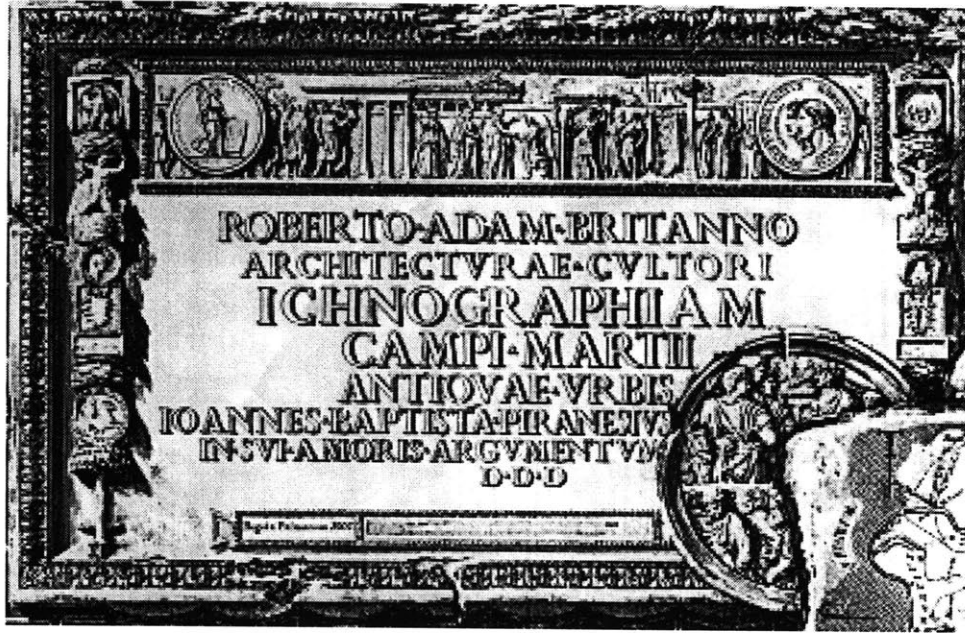


Figure 3.01 The dedication plate as it finally appears in the *Campo Marzio* plan



Figure 3.02 The medallion described by Robert Adam

Such a plan, if it were to be published in a month, must have been part of the *Antichita Romane*, and again the mention is to a plan of Rome. On September 13, 1755, Adam wrote that he had 'got' Piranesi 'to finish *the whole of Rome* and to publish it alone without joining it in a book whose principal dedication was to my Lord Charlemont, which made mine less regarded. . .'⁵ Adam here again emphasizes on a plan of *the whole of Rome*, and not on the Campus Martius only. From Adam's letter it is unclear if the separate publication he maneuvered for in September 1755, was based on extending a smaller plan to '*the whole of Rome*,' or the scope of the plan remained unchanged.

In 1756, in the introduction to *Antichita Romane*,

Piranesi mentions this forthcoming publication. In this introduction Piranesi emphasizes on the continual reference of all antiquarian investigations to the ancient sources, most notably the Marble Plan. He concludes that a sum total of these inquiries would contribute to a complete plan of ancient Rome. Such a plan, Piranesi declares was due soon, as the 'great ichnographia of ancient Rome which I am about to publish.' This is, in all likelihood, was the plan to be dedicated to Robert Adam. Again the plan is referred to as of ancient Rome, considering all the antiquarian investigations done by Piranesi, and with continual reference to the Marble plan, and other literary sources. In *Antichita Romane*, Piranesi also furnished a witty honor to Robert Adam, as Adam notes in a letter of April 1756, 'In one of the frontispieces representing the Appian Way in all its ancient splendor, with all the mausoleums of the Consuls, Emperors etc. he (Piranesi) has taken the occasion to put in Ramsay's name and mine, with our Elogiums, as if buried in theses tombs.'⁶ Allan Ramsay would later turn out to be the author of 'The Investigator,' which was to propagate the superiority of not only the Greeks over Romans, but also Gothic over post-Renaissance classicism.

Soon after the publication of *Antichita Romane*,

some friction appears to have developed between Robert Adam and Piranesi, perhaps because of Ramsay or for other reasons.⁷ In a letter in October 1756, Adam notes, ‘I believe jealousy may now prevent his (Piranesi) doing what may be to my honor and advantage.’⁸ These fears were set at rest when Adam visited Piranesi before leaving Rome to find him working on the promised dedication. In a letter of April 9, 1757, Adam’s mentions the dedication as engraved ‘in the most simple way could be invented in Latin . . . to Robert Adam, Britain, Patron of Architecture, This plate of Campus Martius is dedicated by John Battista Piranesi.’⁹ Adam also describes in detail the dedication piece, ‘Then on a frieze above is a medal, where Fame points to a piece of architecture and leans on my shoulder in the attitude of going off to proclaim my praises. Round the medal is this inscription: Robert Adam, Architect, Member of the Academy of St. Luke at Rome and of Florence and of the institute of Bologna - all in Latin. In another medal Piranesi has put my head and his own joined, forming a Janus or double-faced head, with both the names of dedicator and dedicated on it, but this was not finished when I saw it’ (Figure 3.02) Adam also reports to have convinced Piranesi to mention his name in the preface of the work. On another visit to Piranesi’s studio, perhaps the last, Adam was happy to read the very handsome compliments paid by Piranesi to him.

Adam’s letter of April, 1757 is the first clear mention of the plan as ‘*This plate of Campus Martius*’, and not as a plan of Rome. The *Campo Marzio* plan, however, cannot be justified as the plan of ‘whole Rome’ mentioned earlier by both, Adams in his correspondence, and Piranesi in the introduction to *Antichita Romane*. A possible explanation can be that in June 1755 when Piranesi first ‘threatened’ to dedicate the plan to Robert Adams, this was the plan of *Campo Marzio*.¹⁰ In September 1755, Adam may have convinced Piranesi to print a complete plan of Rome as a separate publication. Piranesi, thus, also mentions this plan of ancient Rome in the introduction to *Antichita Romane*. By 1757, Piranesi seems to have either abandoned the larger project, or decided to only dedicate the *Campo Marzio* to Adam. Did Piranesi have a

larger plan of Rome in mind?¹¹ The *Campo Marzio* plan (the larger ichnographia), the plan of Ancient Forum Romanum (W-E357, F 222), and the plan of the Capitoline Hill, both in *Antichita Romane*, are coordinated works and can be stuck together as one single entity. The Capitoline Hill plan even repeats some figures from the plan of Forum Romanum, and the fortification shown in the same plan corresponds with the one in *Campo Marzio* plan. The Forum Romanum however distinguishes between actual existing fragments and Piranesi’s additions, with a different hatching tone. In the Capitoline plan the distinction is not so clear, leaving only some dotted line structures. In the *Campo Marzio* no distinction is made between such structures. If such a project did exist, it was definitely abandoned by Piranesi at some point.

From Robert Adam’s letter of April 1757, it also appears that Piranesi was engraving the dedication. Therefore it would not be incorrect to assume that the *Campo Marzio* plan, as it appears now, must have been completed by 1757. The dedication, however, as it appeared in the Ichnographia in 1762 is different from the one described by Adam in the letter and simply states ‘Robert Adams, Britain, Architect . . .’ (Figure 3.01). The graphic of the dedication piece is also different from Adam’s description, now filled with the double-head medal which according to Adam’s account was still incomplete in 1757. It is possible that Adam saw Piranesi working on the drawing and not the actual engraving sheets, and incorrectly reported this drawing as engraving, or simply assumed the drawing would naturally lead to the engraving.¹² Adam also does not mention having seen the actual plan, or any detail of the same.¹³ Also if the plan was completed by 1757, Adam and Piranesi should have discussed the publication of the plan. As customary of a dedication in the eighteenth century, Adam was required to buy several copies of the map. Adam was in fact hoping to buy the earliest set and sell them for profit in England before the publication actually hit the market. Hence in 1757 the plan must not have been ready for publication. The plan would however have been in an advanced stage, as from Adam’s letter of August 1, 1755, it appears that Piranesi was nearly ready

to print the plan in a month.

After Robert Adams return to Scotland, his brother James Adams was in Rome in 1761-62, and his correspondence sheds further light on the *Campo Marzio* plan. In a letter of July 18, 1761, he reports having met Piranesi about the plan. On January 16, 1762, James Adams in his letter reports 'Piranesi is advancing the *Campo Marzio* as fast as the distressed situation of his private affairs will allow him.'¹⁴ There are later other discussions of adding Robert Adams portrait as a frontispiece which Robert Adams declined. The eventual frontispiece is a bird's eye view, and therefore must have been made in 1762. As James Adam mentions, due to his domestic problems, Piranesi does not appear to be completely inclined to work. Thus James Adam's prodding for an early publication may have led to the bird's-eye view instead of the more laborious normal-eye views. The treatise was finally published and dispatched for Scotland by James Adams on May 21, 1762.

Due to the timing of the publication of the *Campo Marzio* plan, historiographers have always assumed that it belongs to the polemical sect of Piranesi's work, and the intention of the 'original' figures of the plan was to address the Greco-Roman debate. From the correspondence of the Adam brothers it is clear that by April 1757, the *Campo Marzio* plan was not complete. On the other hand, it is also clear that the work on the plan began at the same time as *Antichita Romane*, and *Campo Marzio* plan was to be part of the same. The key question, which also makes the chronology of the plan so crucial, is what are the changes that were made in the plan between 1757 and 1762. According to traditional historiography, Piranesi's work between 1757 and 1762 begins to acquire a more polemical overtone. In 1761, Piranesi issued *Della Magnificenza ed Architettura de' Romani* to counter the theories of Allan Ramsay, LeRoy and later Winckelmann, who argued the superiority of Greek architecture over the Romans. *Della Magnificenza* was planned as a treatise on architecture, and was nearly complete in 1758, when Piranesi decided to extend it to become a mouthpiece for the superiority of the principles of Roman architecture

and their origin from the Etruscans. Thus, did Piranesi also change the *Campo Marzio* plan, adding more original, and polemical structures to the plan, tailoring it to his new polemical theories, as he did with *Della Magnificenza*.

The comparison of some of the plates in *Antichita Romane* with the *Campo Marzio* plan allows us to answer this question much better, although such a study falls far short of a complete reconstruction of the plan as it stood in 1757. Plate XIV, Volume IV (W-E 482, F 349), of *Antichita Romane* is a plan of the Tiber island in ancient Rome, with the two bridges, the *Quattro Capi* and the *Ferrato* (Figure 3.03). This plan was a reconstruction, and the temple shown in the southern edge of the island is approximately similar to the actual one, as in Lanciani's plan. The rest of the reconstruction can be termed conjectural. A comparison of this plate with the corresponding area within the *Campo Marzio* reveals them to be identical (Figure 3.04). Hence the *Campo Marzio* either borrowed this reconstruction completely, or was existing in this same period and contained these pieces. Hence some of the conjectural pieces of *Campo Marzio*, as the Tiber island, stemmed from studies done before 1756 when *Antichita Romane* was issued, and hence before Piranesi active participation in the Greco-Roman debate.

Similarly Plate XXXVIII, Volume 1 (W-E 352, F 217), of *Antichita Romane* is a large topographical map of Rome showing the hydraulic and defensive systems (Figure 3.05). Here the fabric of Rome has been stripped away in a manner similar to the plan of Rome with the Marble plan fragments (W-E 288, F 153). In comparison to this earlier plan, Plate XXXVIII can be said to have progressed further in figuring the jigsaw puzzle created by the incomplete information available on ancient Rome from the Marble plan. The fortification of the city is now completely shown, and so are some of the main pathways, as well as the Aqueducts. The regions or rionis of ancient Rome are also identified. Besides this, the plan shows 26 monuments, as hatched footprints and spread over the topography of Rome. These monuments include structures like the Baths of Diocletian (W-E 356, F 221), Baths of Caracalla

Chronology of the *Campo Marzio* Plan

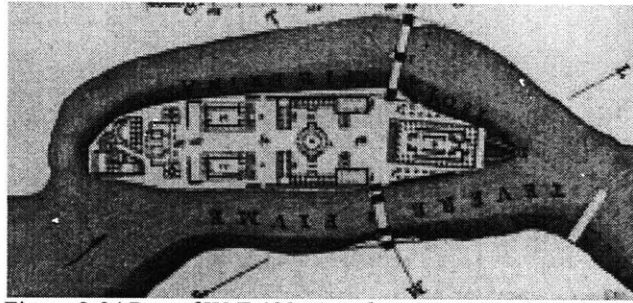


Figure 3.04 Part of W-E 482, *Antichita Romane*. Plan of Tiber island in Ancient Rome

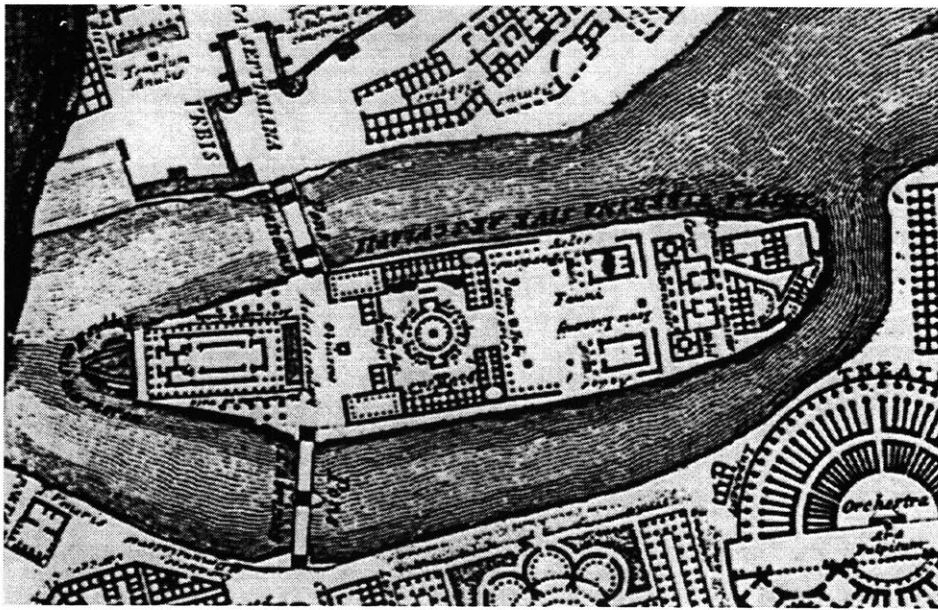


Figure 3.04 Tiber island area in Campo Marzio plan

(W-E 354, F 219) etc. which were in themselves subjects of study of *Antichita Romane*. What is also curious is that these monuments were not the first structures known to have been erected in ancient Rome, and not all of these structures can be termed as key structures of ancient Rome. Some of them cannot be even identified. These structures can only be understood as some of Piranesi's investigations in the period 1748-1756 referred to the overall plan of Rome, just as Piranesi had prescribed and suggested would eventually yield a complete plan of ancient Rome in the introduction to *Antichita Romane*. In the *Campo Marzio* area of the plan, which is correctly mentioned as region IX, fourteen structures are shown. Most of these structures, such as

Hadrian's tomb, Augustus tomb, the Pantheon, were well known. Other structures like the Circus Flaminius were known to have existed, and Piranesi could simply have designated them a place. There are, however, at least five structures which Piranesi could not have had known from existing monuments or literary sources, or be explained as originating in some other work in *Antichita Romane* or before. These structures are conjectural or imaginative pieces. These five structures, as well as the other nine ones, when compared with their corresponding location in the *Campo Marzio* plan, are found to be identical and similarly located (Figure 3.06). Hence Plate XXXVIII provides us with some idea of how the *Campo Marzio* plan may have looked before



Chronology of the *Campo Marzio* Plan



1767. The existence of such imaginative structures, such as the *bustum* of Augustus, in this map of Rome also reveals that such imaginative pieces were part of Piranesi work before 1756, that is before his active participation in the Greco-Roman debate. Hence *Campo Marzio*'s 'original' or imaginative structures cannot be simply understood as part of a post-1757 polemical shift of the plan.

In Plate XXXVIII, Via Flaminia has also been moved from its known or accepted position as Via Corso, and its extension in the North. Via Flaminia is shown as moving in a circuitous manner, and towards the end combining with Aqua Virgo, while the small portion of Via Corso shown is correctly referred to by its ancient Roman name, Via Lata. This position of Via Flaminia is

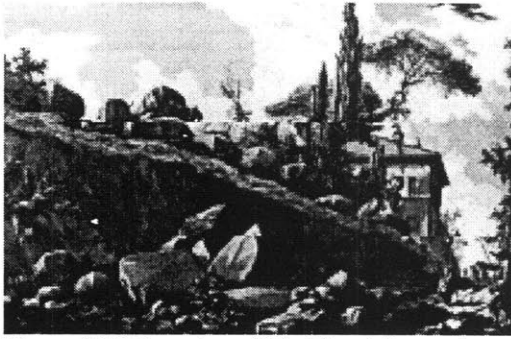


Figure 3.07 Remains of Via Flaminia, as shown in the *Il Campo Marzio*

maintained by Piranesi in the *Campo Marzio* plan and all the maps of Rome drawn by him after 1756. In the *Il Campo Marzio* publication, a 'purged' *vedute* (W-E 599, F 468) illustrates the remains of this Via Flaminia (Figure 3.07). The lack of any remarkable feature in this *vedute* thus fails to provide any information as how Piranesi may have conjectured such a remarkable geography for Via Flaminia. Some clue to this particular shape of Via Flaminia is provided by Piranesi's reissue of Nolli's plan. In this plan, the Via Flaminia is shown in the same circuitous path, but is now shown entering the eighteenth century fabric of Rome, and the vestiges of such a Via Flaminia could be seen in the eighteenth century Rome. Thus such a position for Via Flaminia was not without reason, Piranesi appears to have linked fragments of ancient Roman roads now known for his Via Flaminia. Piranesi may have had some evidence of these fragments, and may have also reasoned that Via Flaminia could not have been so close to the banks of Tiber river, as it would have been always threatened by floods. Although it must be the actual evidence of the fragments of a single road that made Piranesi so confident in his alignment of Via Flaminia, which he consistently used till the end of his career.

Also, in position in Plate XXXVIII, the plan of waterworks, is an extra bridge called the Triumphal bridge, to the North of Hadrian's tomb. This bridge is again similarly placed in the *Campo Marzio*. An ancient Roman road is known to have existed from the existing bridge in front of Hadrian's tomb, and the present *Via Giulia* ap-

proximates this road. In Plate XXXVIII, Piranesi has moved this road to the new bridge. In the *Campo Marzio* plan, this road is called as *Via triumphalis ubi dicebatur recta*. In the *Campo Marzio* plan this road actually begins from the Area Martius, south of Hadrian's tomb. It then goes through the new bridge in a straight line till it hits the river again and then zigzags between structures, including the Theaters of Marcelli and Theater of Balbi, till it exits out of Porta Campentalis¹⁵. In Plate XXXVIII only the straight segment between the bridge and the other end up to the river is shown. Also, while in Plate XXXVIII *Acqua Virgo* is shown cutting through Villa L. Arvntii, indexed as number 29, in the *Campo Marzio* plan only the portion of *Acqua Virgo* that corresponds with Via Flaminia is shown. Thus, some development from this earlier plan to *Campo Marzio* can be noticed.

Plate XXXVIII, therefore, links many of the themes and structures of *Campo Marzio* plan to a much earlier period, although it is difficult to say how many more structures may have existed before 1756. Some other figures in other areas of Plate XXXVIII also reinforce the possibility that a larger map of the whole of Rome was being attempted by Piranesi. In the Region XIV, Piranesi shows a figure titled *Naumachia* of Augusto, given an index number 31. No other detail of such a figure is known, nor were there archaeological reasons for such a structure. Like the *Campo Marzio* area, in 1756 Piranesi may also have been aiming to work more on these other areas. Such a hypothesis was first raised in this paper while discussing Robert Adam's correspondence and Piranesi's introduction to *Antichita Romane*. Similarly, in the lower right hand of Plate XXXVIII is a hatched structure indexed number 21. This structure in all probability was one of Piranesi's earlier studies of the Fountainhead of *Acqua Giulia* which was the subject of a 1761 publication titled, '*Ruins of the Fountainhead of the Acqua Giulia in Rome, near S. Eusebio and incorrectly called the Fountainhead of the Acqua Marcia, with a discussion of one of the celebrated passages from the commentary by Frontinus and an explanation of the manner in which the ancient Romans distributed the water for the use of the city. . .*' There are other



Figure 3.08 Plan of ancient Roman Streets known in late Eighteenth century

indexed structures in Plate XXXVIII, for example the structure 27, which may also have been a Fountainhead. The index numbers on this plan also remain unexplained. The index numbers on the smaller plans of earlier development of *Campo Marzio* were quoted in the accompanying text and used as a guide to illustrate the text. It is possible that the index numbers of Plate XXXVIII may also refer to a similar text, which would have been a compilation of literary reference to the monuments of ancient Rome. Hence this plan further raises the possibility of Piranesi having aimed at creating a large overall plan of Rome, in scope similar to Pirro Ligorio's map of Rome, but later aborted this larger project.

Conclusion

Comparison of the topographical plan of Rome (W-E 352, F 217) and the *Campo Marzio* plan leads to the conclusion that the development of the *Campo Marzio* plan began well before 1755. It is also possible that the reconstruction of a Plan of Rome was been thought of by Piranesi as early as 1748, when he earnestly began to work on *Antichita Romane*. The work on *Campo Marzio* definitely continued till 1767, when the publication was issued. More importantly, Piranesi's 'archaeological studies' were initiating the imaginative forms as well as the overall plan.

IV

Sources of the *Campo Marzio* Plan

The last chapter proves that *Campo Marzio*'s imaginative forms stemmed from earlier archaeological work, and started well before 1756. There are other sources which provide similar valuable insights into the making of the *Campo Marzio* plan. Piranesi himself quotes some of these sources in the commentary to the plan: "What I must fear here is that certain aspects of this delineation of the *Campo* might seem inspired by mere caprice . . . But whoever he is, before condemning anyone of imposture, let him observe the ancient plan of Rome (Marble Plan) mentioned above, let him observe the ancient villas of Lazio,¹ the villa of Hadrian in Tivoli, the sepulchers, and the other buildings in Rome that remain, in particular outside of Porta Capena."² Some other sources which Piranesi does not include are the Nolli's Grand Pianta of Rome of 1748, constantly used by Piranesi as a reference, and the literary references mentioned in the text accompanying the plan. This chapter will show Piranesi's use of existing monuments, the topography of eighteenth century Rome, the Nolli's plan, the fragments of the Marble Plan, and the ancient Roman literature in the *Campo Marzio*'s plan.

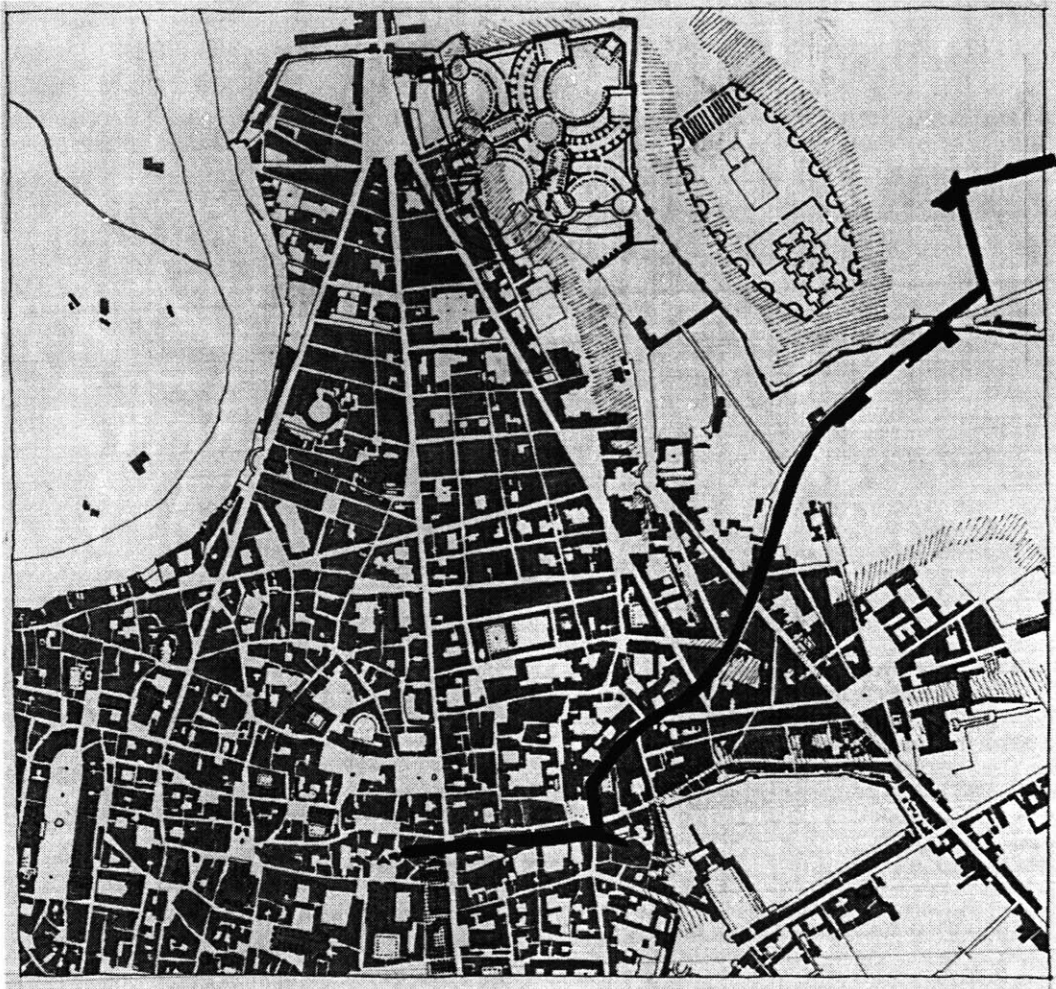


Figure 4.01

Nolli's Plan

From Nolli's plan Piranesi acquired the form of the river Tiber, the hilly topography of Rome, and the location of the key monuments including the Pantheon, Hadrian's and Augustus's tomb, the Circus Agonalis (Piazza Navona) and Theater of Marcelli. Nolli's plan terminates after Porta del Popolo. Thus the additional survey of the river Tiber, and the surrounding area was probably Piranesi's own work, and would have been undertaken just after 1748, when he began to work on the aqueducts of Rome. Also mentioned earlier is the position of Via Flaminia which Piranesi

most probably deduced from the topography of Rome itself, but must have used Nolli's plan to confirm the same. From the combination of Nolli's Plan and the existing Rome, Piranesi appears to also have deduced some more structures. The *Bustum* of Augustus in the *Campo Marzio* ichnographia, as shown earlier in the discussion of the topographical plan of Rome (W-E 352, F 217) had evolved by 1756 or before. This structure when overlaid on Nolli's plan corresponds to an angular open space inside the Aurelian walls, just above Villa Medici (Figure 4.01). A purged *vedute* of the same structure, Plate XXII in the *Il Campo Marzio* series (W-E 584, F 453), further

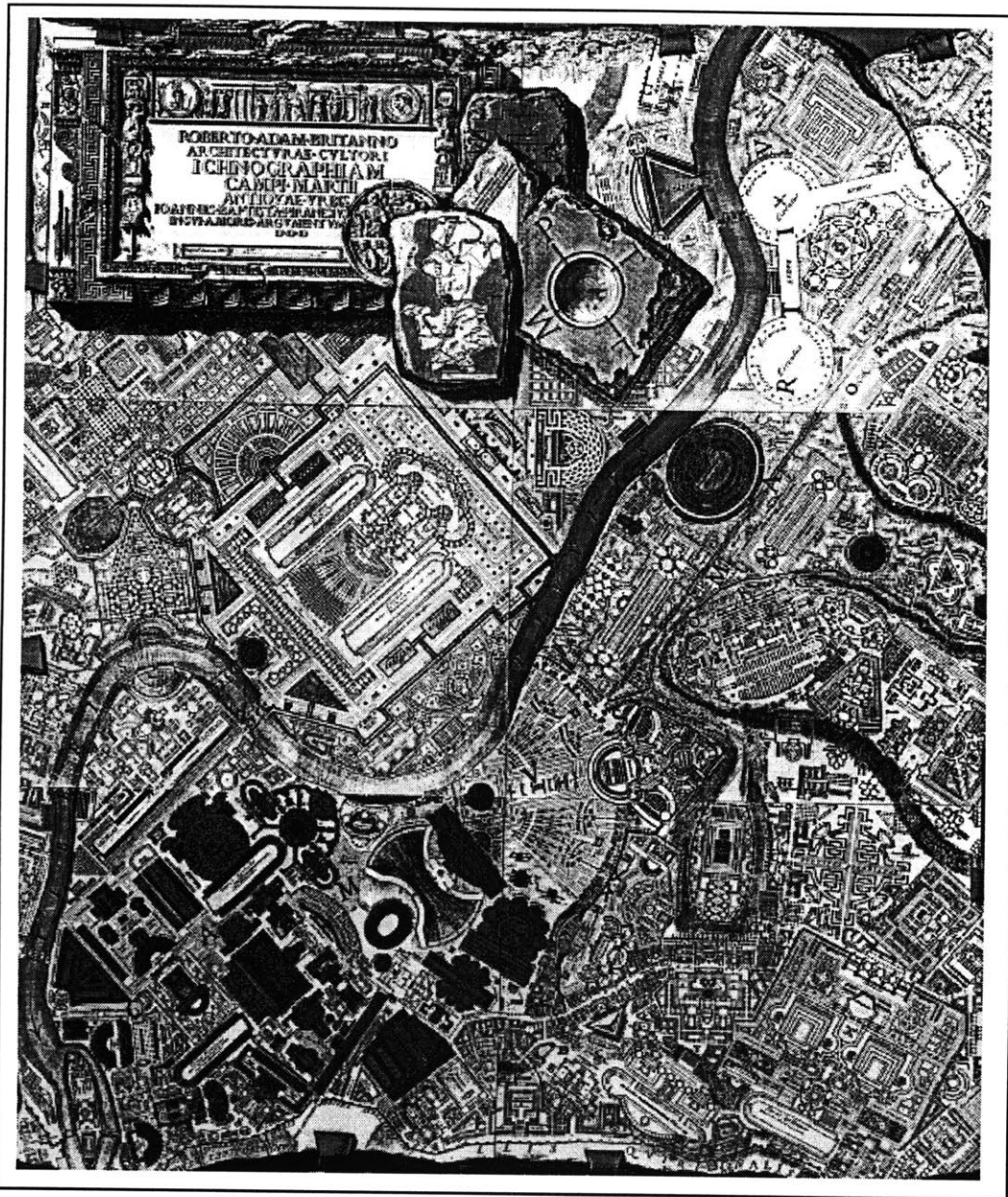


Figure 4.02

substantiates the thesis that Piranesi's mental eye saw this structure within the fabric of Rome, and its correspondence in plan with Nolli's plan is no mere coincidence. Just below the *bustum* of Augustus is another structure called *Villa i Arvantii*. This structure when overlaid on Nolli's plan fits in a green space in Villa Medici, surrounded by hilly contours and

Piranesi may have therefore given this structure the enclosing walls.

Other than these examples Piranesi appears to have not have used the actual street pattern or the fabric of Rome, as no other road or structure appears to correspond with the *Campo Marzio*. The only other series of structures that

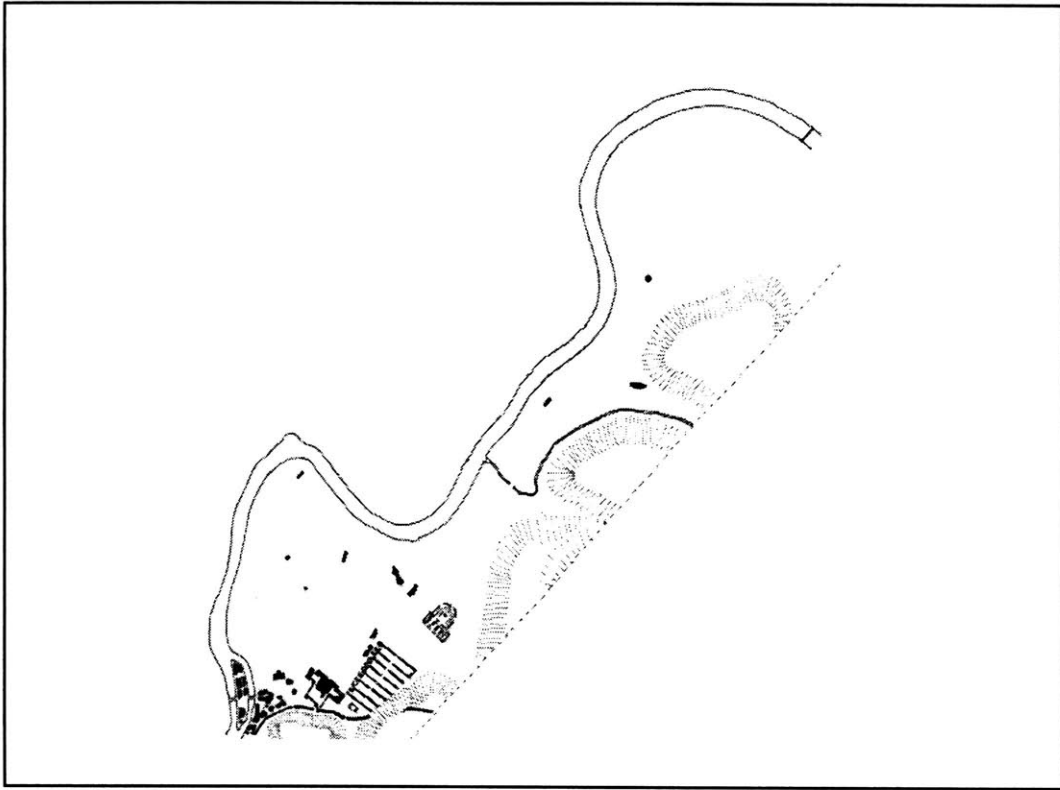


Figure 4.03

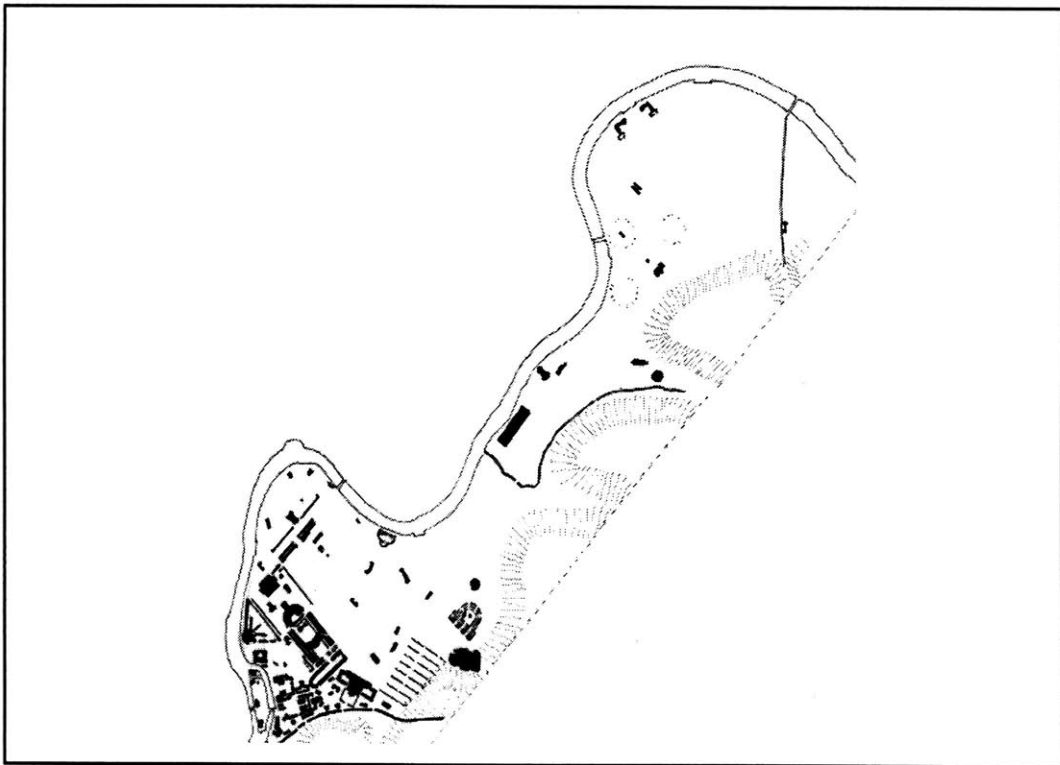


Figure 4.04

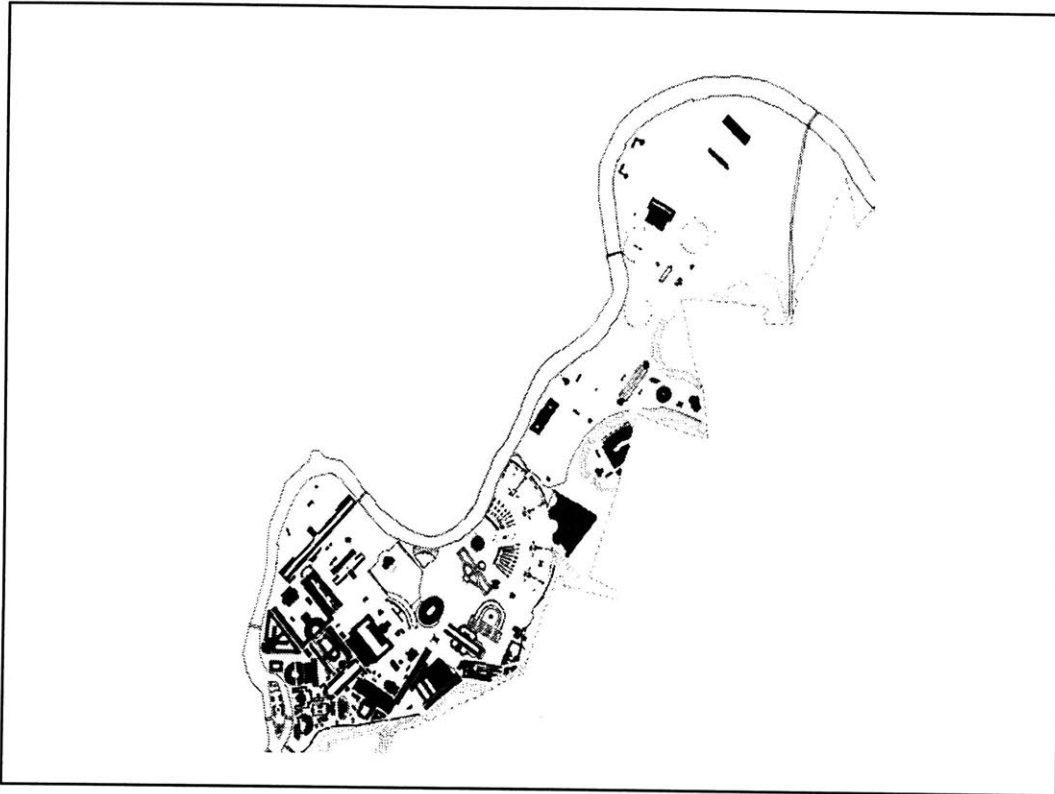


Figure 4.05

Piranesi may have developed from the combination of the existing topography and Nolli's map is the series of structures behind Hadrian's tomb, which extend up to Mount Vatican.

These structures include *Nymphaeum Neronis*, a pyramid, the structure defined *Neroniani*, and the area *Martis* from which the *Via triumphalis* began or terminates. Piranesi may have evolved such a sequence from the topography of Rome, and then developed it completely over the Nolli's plan. The placement of these structures also appears to be part of other rationale, as the edge of the plan indicates another identical *Neroniani*. Such a structure would make the overall composition of this area similar to *Horti Domitiae* above Hadrian's tomb. The *Porticus Septorium Juliorum* placed on one side of *Via Lata*³ may have also have been deduced from the existing Roman fabric and placed using Nolli's plan. Its placement was crucial as it also defined *Via Lata* which would later become *Via Corso*.

Literary References, Existing Structures, and Development of the *Campo Marzio* Site

Piranesi's text in the *Il Campo Marzio*, and the temporal sequence of the development of the site as delineated by the series of smaller plans (W-E 570, F 439) is also a source of information on the making of the large ichnographia (Figure 4.03-4.05). Chapter 1 of the text of *Il Campo Marzio* goes to considerable length to fix the limits of the site. Piranesi presents us with the contradictory account of Pliny, and others. These accounts, as Piranesi presents them appear to differ on the size of the *Campo Marzio* and its boundaries. Piranesi then assumes a much larger boundary for the site from the description of the hills, arguing that from a much smaller site all the hills mentioned in the historic accounts could not be seen. As will later become apparent in this



Figure 4.06 The figure-ground of Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* Plan

paper, the much larger boundary that Piranesi fixed for the site proved critical.

Figures I, II, and III, in Plate IV (W-E 570, F 439) lay out the temporal development of the site from the time of the Etruscan ruler, *Tarquinio the supereme*. The indexed figures of these plates are mentioned in the text which

provides the commentary on them from literary sources, and in some cases how their placement can be deduced from these sources. In spite of the very credible basis of the text, not all the figures are from literary sources and these three small plans were perhaps made after the main *ichnographia*. These smaller plans are not as



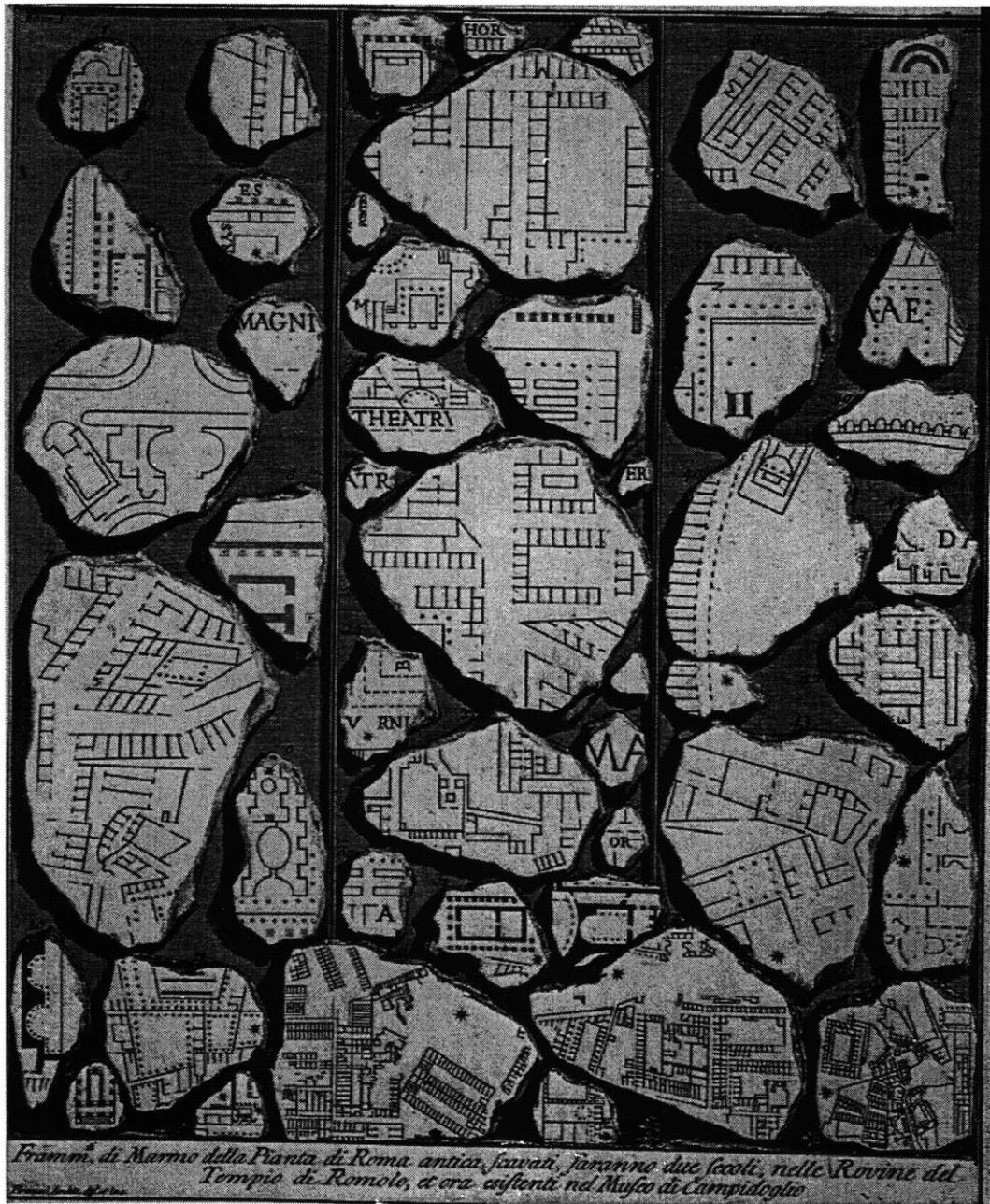
Figure 4.07

accurate as the larger ones and have discrepancy with the larger plan, especially when one attempts to trace *Via Corso* on them.

As the plans show, Piranesi traces the earliest development of the *Campo Marzio* to the area around the Pantheon, Theater of Marcellus, Portico of Octavia, and *Via Lata*. These structures were accurately located in the *Campo Marzio* plan. Therefore in locating other structures from literary sources, Piranesi's margin of error was not very large. Hence, the plan of *Campo Marzio* till Fig III, Plate IV (Figure 4.05) does not appear incorrect, and roughly similar to the Forum Romanum. Piranesi has, however, fixed a larger boundary of the site, and once all his sources were exhausted, he still does not obtain the mental image he has of *Campo Marzio*. Fig 4.02 shows all the literary sources as they are located in the larger map. As this figure shows, most of Piranesi's literary sources were positioned close to the now accepted position

of *Campo Marzio* site. Hence, after exhausting his literary sources, Piranesi was compelled to add more structures to complete the large plan according to his image to fill in the large site. It would, however, be incorrect to assume that Piranesi first placed all the structures from literary sources, and then went on to add others. As the topographical plan of the Roman water works (W-E352, F217) shows, Piranesi from an early point was deducing structures from non-literary sources. Piranesi also added other structures to the plan believed in the eighteenth century to have existed in ancient Rome, like the amphitheater, and the solstitium. The solstitium, as we now know, existed farther north than Piranesi's location and was much smaller.

Fig 4.06 is a figure-ground of the larger *Campo Marzio* ichnographia. As it shows, most of the structures in the plan are located in the area around the Pantheon and the actual *Campo Marzio*. These were primarily structures from



Historic Sources of the *Campo Marzio* Plan

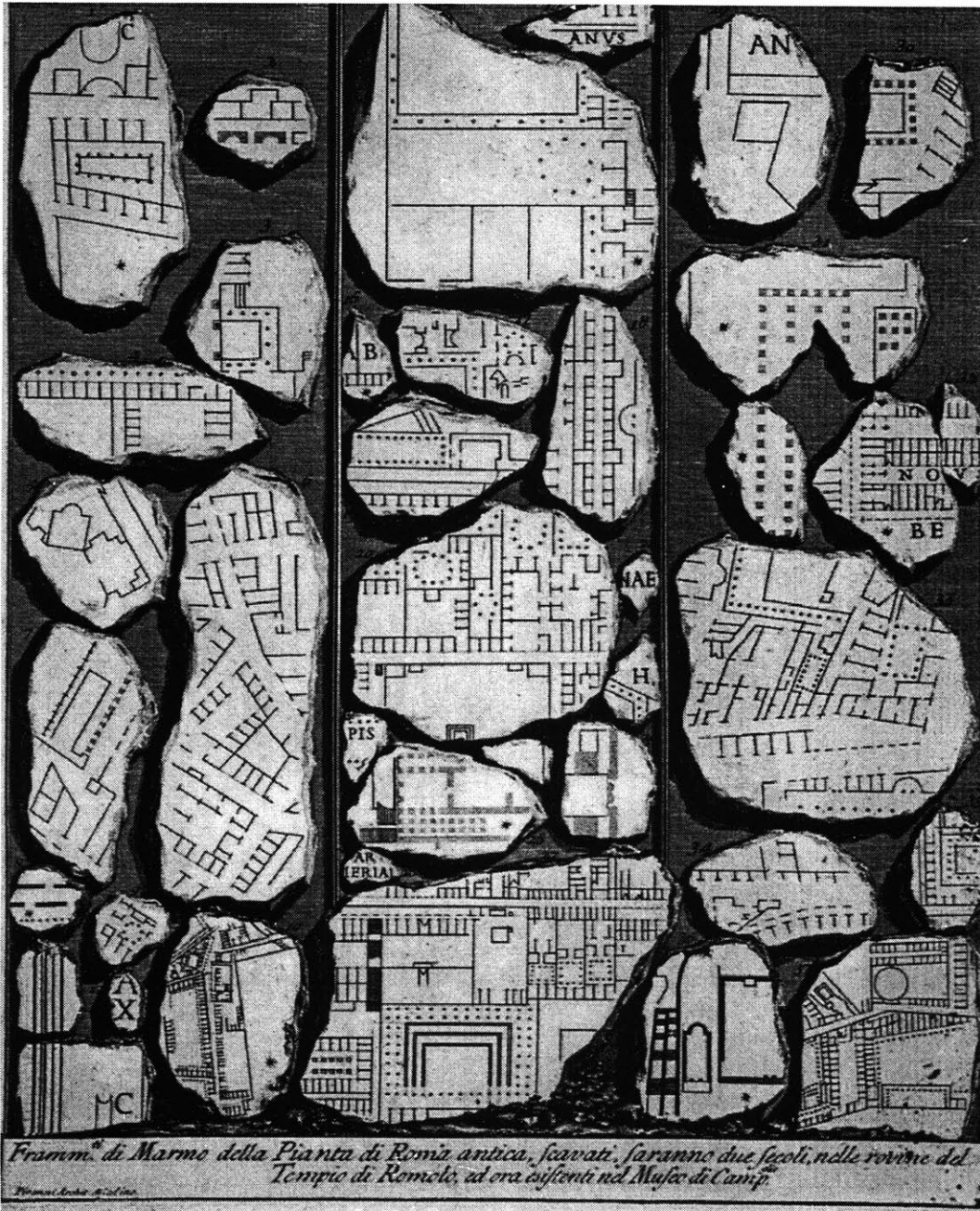


Figure 4.09

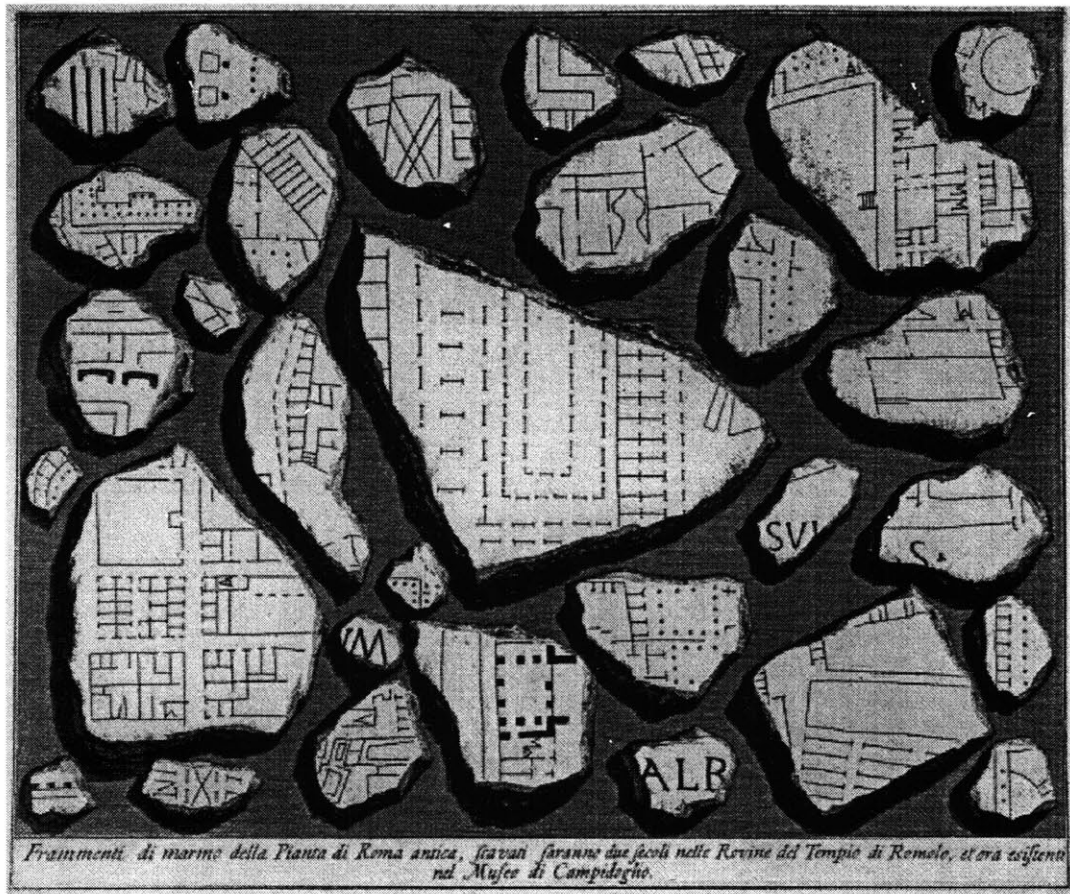


Figure 4.10

the literary sources. A second string of structures is located along Piranesi's Via Flaminia. This development evolved from the particular shape of Via Flaminia. While most structures located in other areas exhibit an orthogonal relation to each other, structures around Via Flaminia can only be explained from their alignment to this road. The constellation of the figures called *Porticus Neroniane*, *Horti Valeriani*, *Horti Salistiani*, and *Horti Pincii* may also have been influenced from the angular layout of the elements of Hadrian's Villa. A third zone is spread on the *Campo Vaticano*, which was not legitimately part of the *Campo Marzio* site, even in Piranesi's

extended version. This area sets an orthogonal cross axis, just above Hadrian's tomb. One of these axes is on a part of *Via Triumphalis*, discussed earlier, which visually terminates in the *Nymphaeum Neronis*. The cross axis also sets out the *Horti Domitiae*, with the *bustum* of Hadrian. As the figure ground shows, the area in the North is covered by a very small number of figures, which include a Villa, and a tower of defense among other structures. A comparison between the figure-ground and the actual plan also reveals that the larger map appears so figural simply due to the rendering technique used by Piranesi, which makes landscape appear as figural structures.

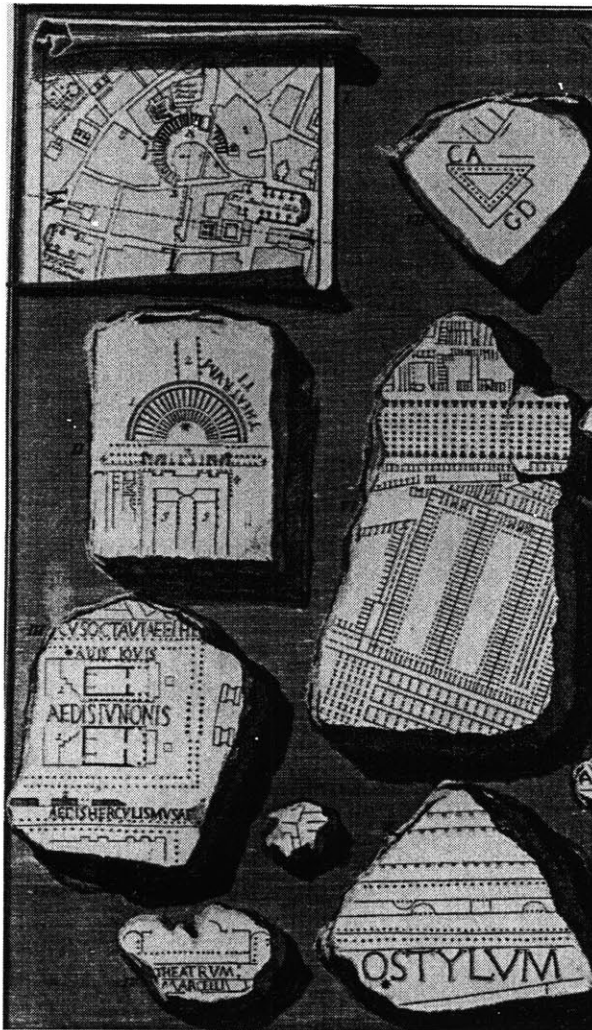


Figure 4.11

The Marble Plan

As has been mentioned earlier, in the introduction to *Antichita Romane* Piranesi emphasized reference to the Marble plan, stating that such continuous reference would yield an overall plan of Rome. In the first volume of *Antichita Romane* (W-E 288-291, F 153-156), Piranesi published all the fragments of the Marble Plan, including an index (Figure 4.08 - 410). In *Campo Marzio* plan, Piranesi directly used the fragments that he could identify, while using other fragments as basis for some other structures. If an overall plan of Rome was Piranesi's initial objective, it is possible that

many other fragments were marked for use in other parts of Rome.

In Plate XVI (W-E 578, F 447) of *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma*, entitled *Ichnographia of the neighborhood containing the remains of Theater of Pompeii*, Piranesi illustrates many, though not all, fragments of the Marble plan used in the *Campo Marzio* plan (Figure 4.11). One of the structures shown in this plate is also not in the vicinity of the Theater of Pompeii in the *Campo Marzio* plan.⁴ The most prominent and perhaps the largest fragment, as shown in Plate XVI, is a series of colonnades called *Saepta Julia* (Figure 4.13).

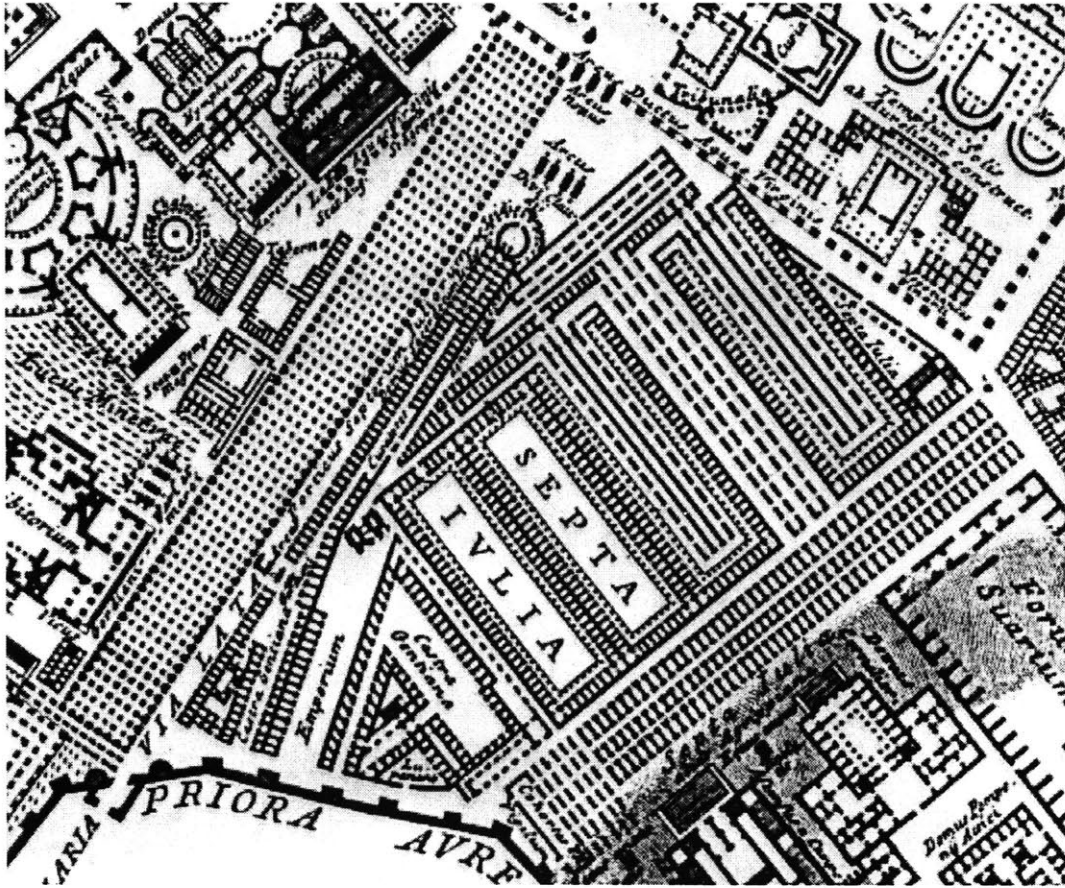


Figure 4.12

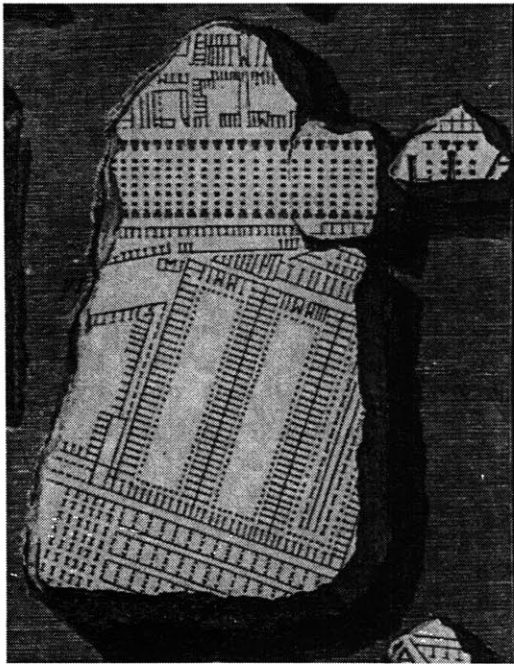


Figure 4.13

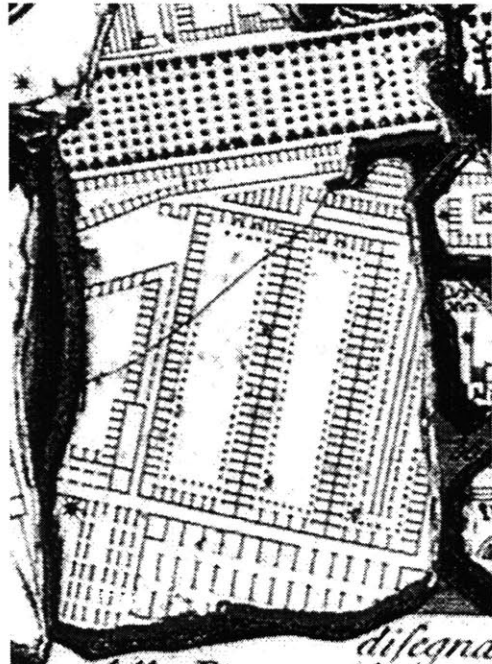


Figure 4.14

Historic Sources of the *Campo Marzio* Plan

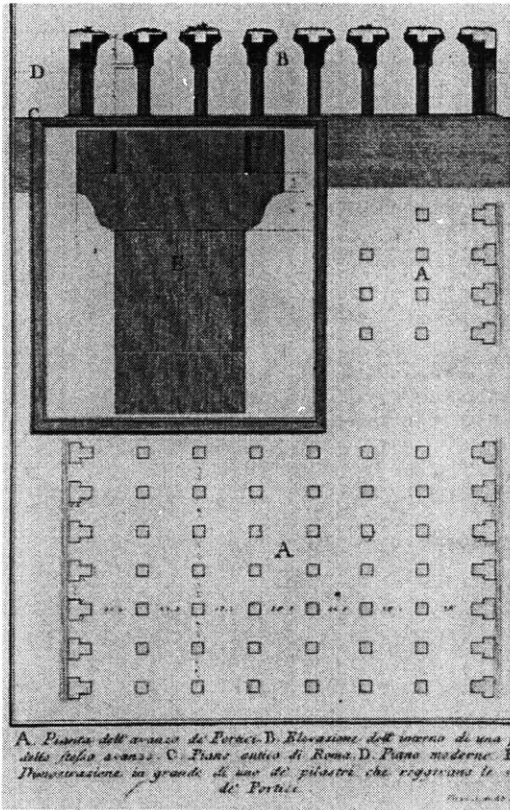


Figure 4.15



Figure 4.16

While incorporating this fragment in *Campo Marzio* plan, Piranesi has made additions to it, apparently in an attempt to complete the fragment (Figure 4.12). With deftness, Piranesi has also aligned this fragment to the segment of Via Lata that he acknowledges in the plan, in such a way that Via Lata runs through it. Plate XXV (W-E 587, F 456) is a purged *vedute* of the same, showing the remains of the Portico of Saepta Julia, that Piranesi discerned within the eighteenth century fabric (Figure 4.16).

Similarly the plan of Rome, Plate XXXVIII, Volume I of *Antichita Romane* shows part of this portico, on the left hand side of Via Lata (Via Corso). Piranesi may have first determined just part of this structure, and then matched it with the marble fragment. This is confirmed by a plate (W-E 518, F385) in *Antichita Romane*, which titles this segment of the structure as an arcade in front of Saepta Julia (Figure 4.15). There was also some archeological evidence for such an arcade in eighteenth century Rome, although not in the length and eventual shape that Piranesi gave it.

In Plate XVI, the structure to the left of Saepta Julia is the fragment of Theater of Pompeii (Figure 4.18). The fragment also shows a temple inserted in the seating tiers of the theater. In front of the seating is a double row of columns, facing a series of Arches, in front of which is a portico. The Theater of Pompeii part of the fragment is itself incorporated without variation in the *Campo Marzio* plan. The portico indicated in front of the theater in the fragment is called Pompeiane Porticus in the *Campo Marzio* plan. The structure shown to one side to this portico in the fragment, is now added to, and duplicated on the other side. The inside of this Portico is also changed, and a new structure added here. The portico is also extended on the other side, and culminates in four temples, including a large one called temple Apollinus. Plate XVIII (W-E 580, F 449) in the *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma*, is a purged *vedute* of the Theater of Pompeii (Figure 4.19). Inset in the plate is a detail of the stone seating of the theater, and in the foreground, just ahead of the theater is an arch or the remains of a large arch. In the plan itself, this arch called the Arch of Tibery, is located in front of the temple incorporated into the theater, and placed after three statues, including one of Pompeii. Plate XXXVIII in Volume IV of *Antichita Romane* (W-E 507, F 374), is a similar study of the Theater of Pompeii except the representational form is a plan and section (Figure 4.21). This plate must be a prior work, not only because it was issued earlier,⁵ but also the study still appears to be incomplete. The plan clearly shows one row of seating tiers and

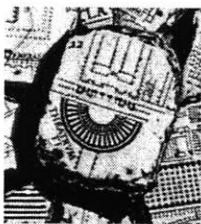


Figure 4.17

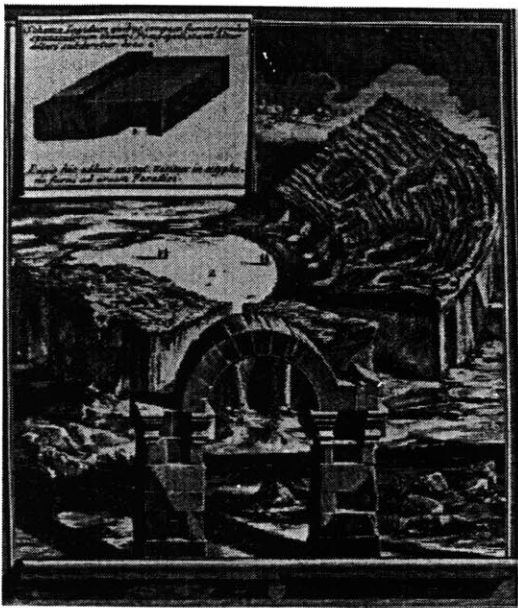


Figure 4.19

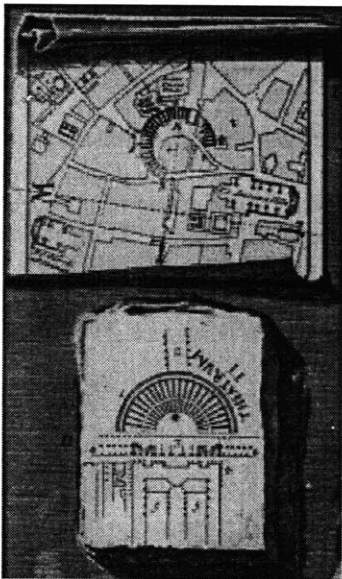


Figure 4.18

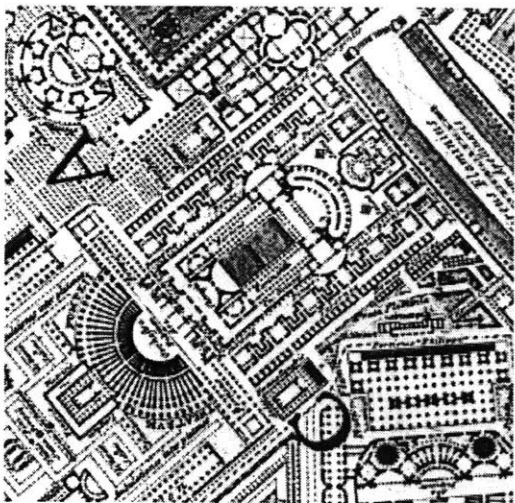


Figure 4.20

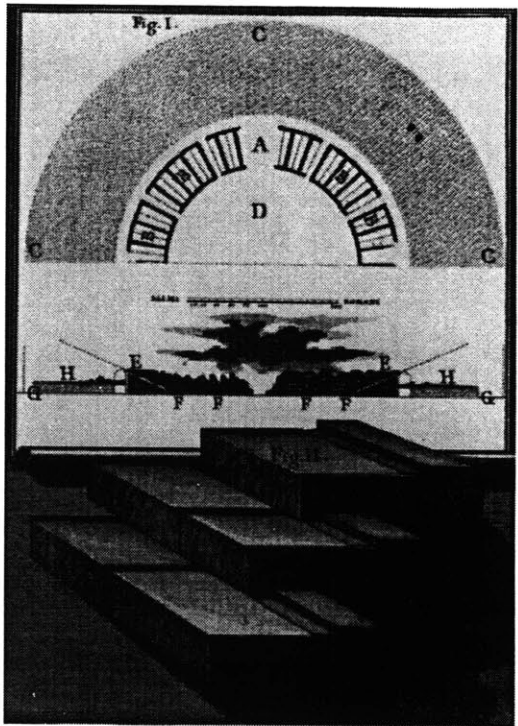


Figure 4.21

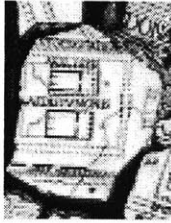


Figure 4.22

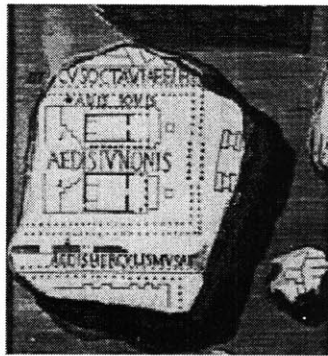


Figure 4.23

a hatched circular area around it, and the section indicates a circular corridor around the structure and a low wall extending from it. The temple, the arch, or the portico in front of the theater are neither shown nor indicated. In the foreground are the stone tiers, while the inset of the later purged *vedute* only shows a single typical stone piece. In Plate XVI (W-E 578, F 447), above the marble fragment of Theater of Pompeii, is a scroll showing a segment of Nolli's plan with the Theater of Pompeii. Given that the form of Theater of Pompeii can be deduced from the existing fabric, Piranesi may have used Nolli's plan in locating the Theater of Pompeii. The scroll here with Nolli's plan is however to indicate the incorrect shape that Nolli gave to the Theater of Pompeii, which Piranesi has now corrected.

In Plate XVI (W-E 578, F 447), just below the marble fragment of Theater of Pompeii is another fragment with the recognizable letters 'CVSOCTAVIAEE' (Figure 4.23). This is the fragment of Portico of Octavia. In the *Campo Marzio* plan, Piranesi correctly locates the Portico of Octavia in front of Theater Marcellus (Figure 4.24). The two temples inside the Portico are identified as temple of

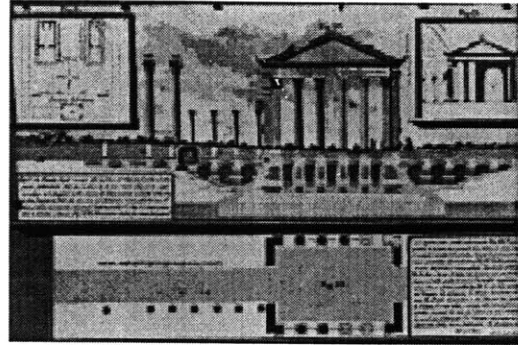


Figure 4.24

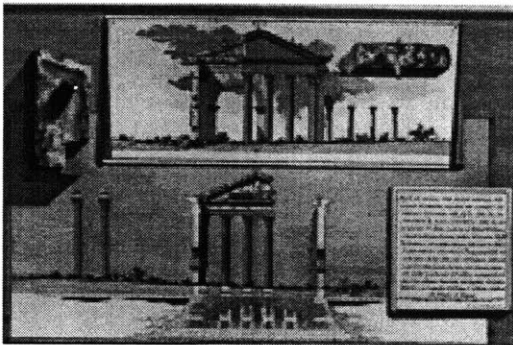
PIRANESI'S *CAMPO MARZIO* - THE PALIMPSEST OF INTERPRETIVE MEMORY



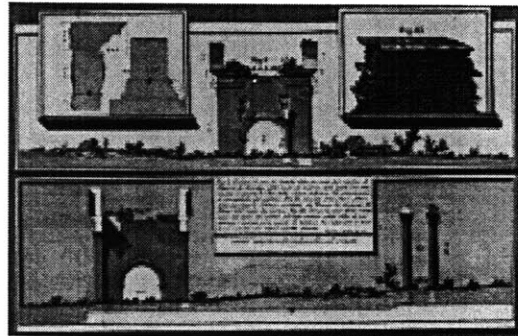
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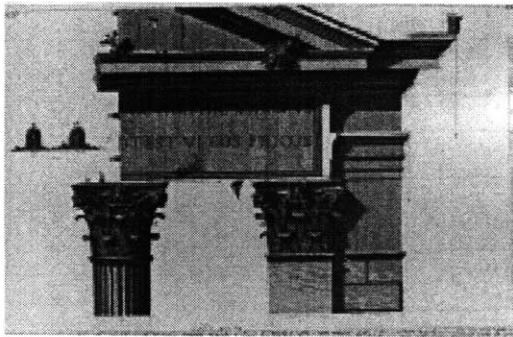
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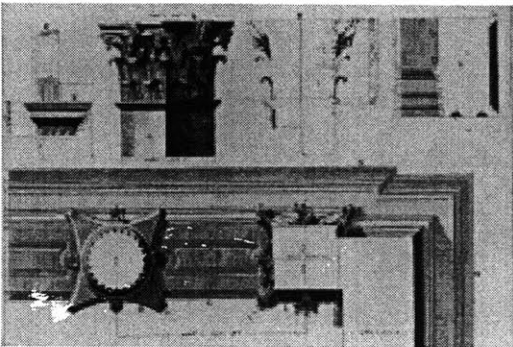
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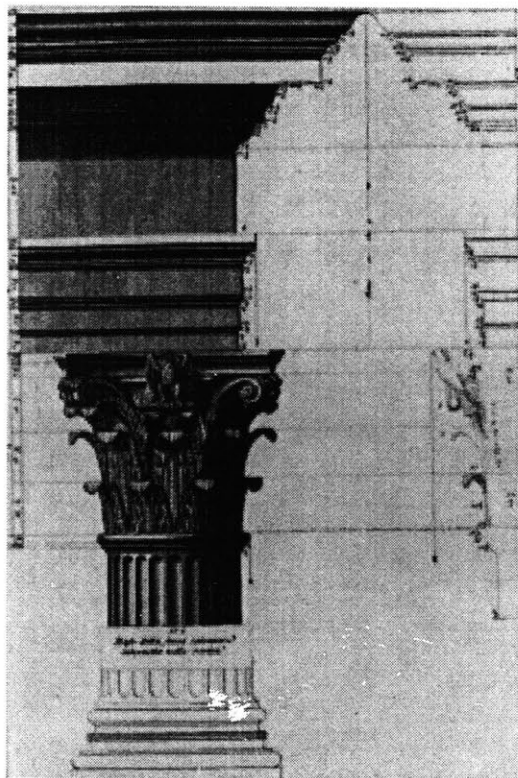
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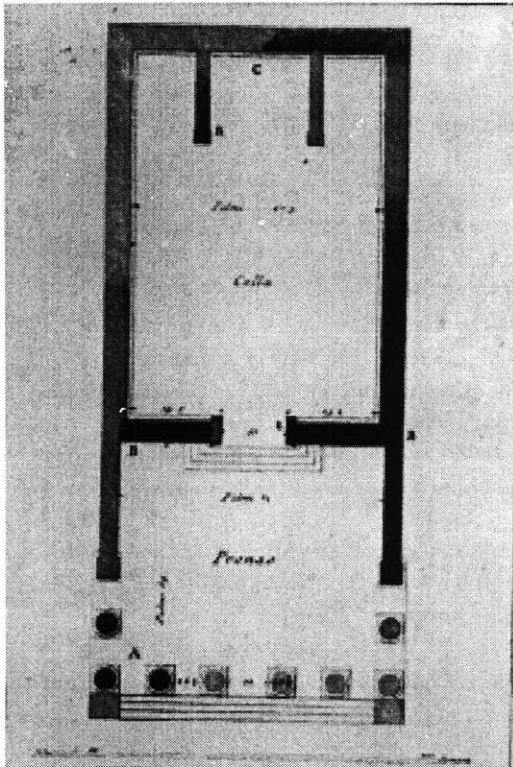


Figure 4.32

Juno, and temple of Jove. The location of the Portico is approximately correct according to present archaeological reconstructions. In the integration of this fragment into the plan, Piranesi omitted the small structure indicated in front of the Portico at the edge of the fragment. He also introduced two small rows of colonnades inside the Portico, in front of the two obelisks, which have now moved to the footsteps of the temple facade. At the rear end of the Portico, Piranesi again appears to have ignored the circular end indicated, extending the Portico to end into another temple. This temple is then flanked by two other symmetrical structures. At the very rear end of the composition is another structure, Curia Octavia. Piranesi had literary references to all these additions but their particular location in the plan was Piranesi's own conclusion. Plate XIX (W-E 581, F 450) in *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma* is again a purged *vedute* of the remains of Portico of Octave (Figure 4.25). The stray columns in the foreground belong to the peripheral columns, and the main structure

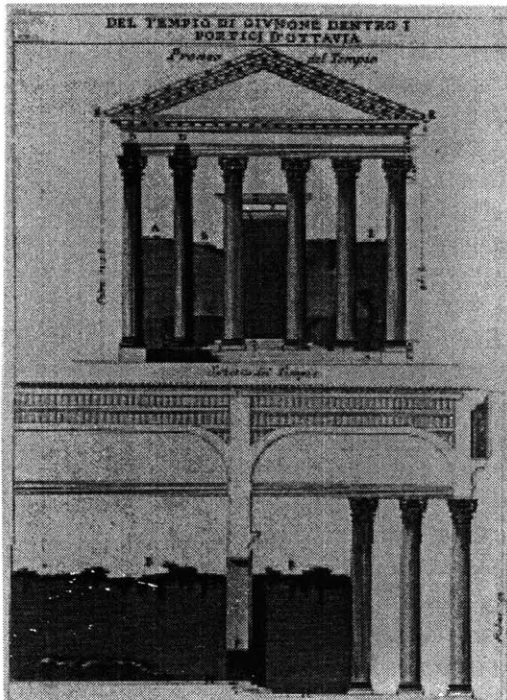


Figure 4.33

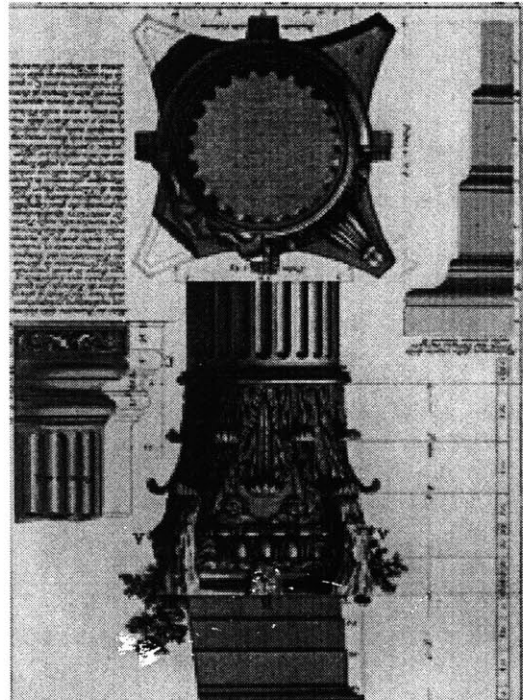


Figure 4.34



Figure 4.35

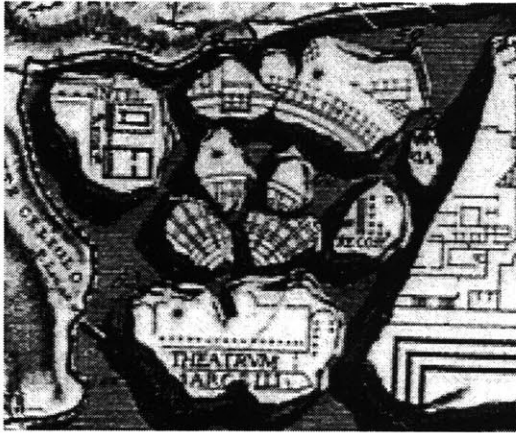


Figure 4.36



Figure 4.37

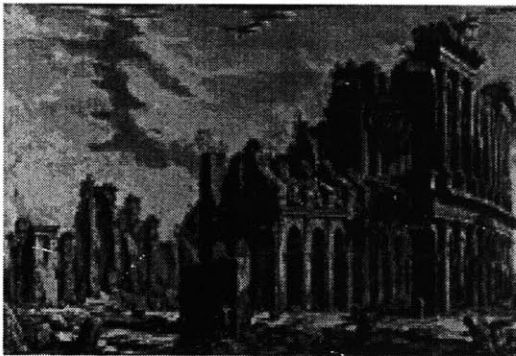
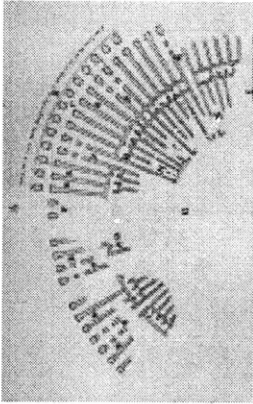


Figure 4.38

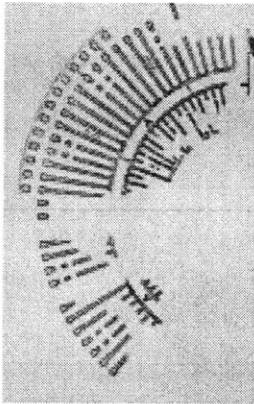
shown is the remains of the entrance Portico. The careful delineation of the details of this structure becomes evident by comparing this *vedute* with Piranesi's earlier study of Portico of Octavia in *Antichita Romane*. There are nine plates (W-E 508-516, F 375-383) in that series that show a careful study of this structure (Figure 4.26-4.34). Plate XXXIX (W-E 508, F 375) shows as an inset the marble plan fragment, but here delineated as a simple plan, with a reference scale (Figure 4.26). The front section shown complete with wall section is cut in front of the main facade of the entrance portico. Below it is a part plan of the structure, its hatching tone indicating the fragments for which Piranesi had evidence. A part of the wall and column area is left clear to indicate where the structure may have been, but does not exist anymore.⁶ The next five plates (W-E 509-513, F 376-381) carefully delineate the interior facade, side facades and details of the main facade, including a study of the column and cornice (Figure 4.27-4.31). The next three plates (W-E 514-516, F 380, 382-383) are devoted to the Temple of Juno (Figure 4.32-4.34). The first of these plates (W-E 514, F 380) delineates a plan of the temple of Juno, and through a gradation of tones in the plan Piranesi again indicates the existing part of the structures. In the other two plates, one shows the facade, and the other the details of the column in the temple. It was careful study like this in *Antichita Romane* that brought Piranesi recognition as an antiquarian, but which should actually be understood as part of the overall project that led to the *Campo Marzio* plan.

Returning to Plate XVI (W-E 578, F 447) with the Marble fragments, below the Portico of Octavia is another recognizable fragment belonging to Theater of Marcellus (Figure 4.35). In the plan of Rome (W-E 288, F 153) which also shows this fragment, there are ten more small fragments shown within the composition of this structure (Figure 4.36). Four of these fragments appear to show the seating, and the remainder a circular space around it. One of the small fragments on the left shows two temples. As it appears from Piranesi's later etching, he abandoned this combination simply

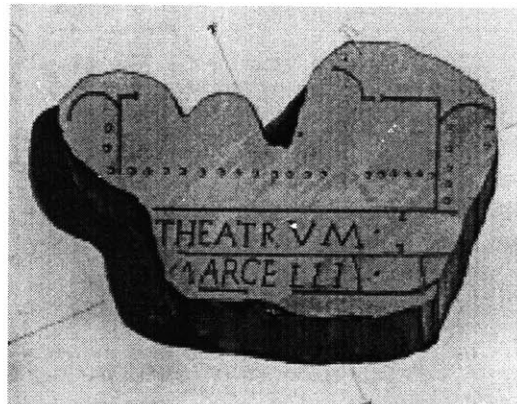
SOURCES OF THE *CAMPO MARZIO* PLAN



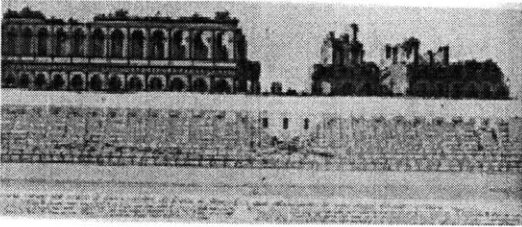
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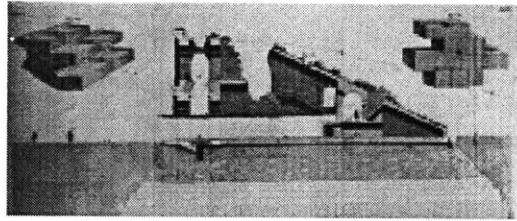
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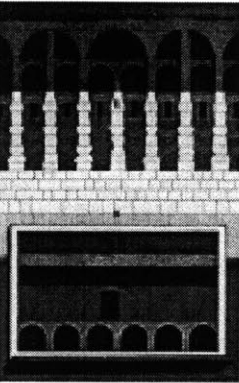
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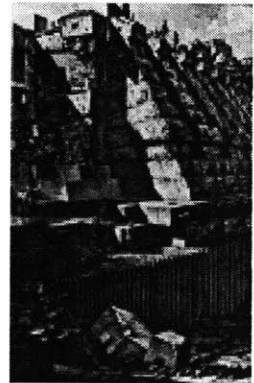
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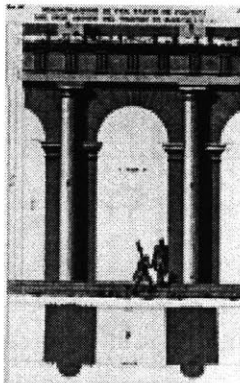
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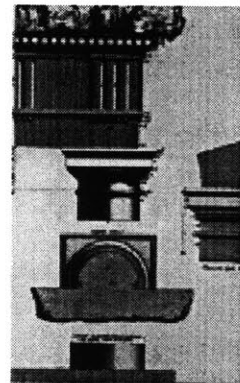
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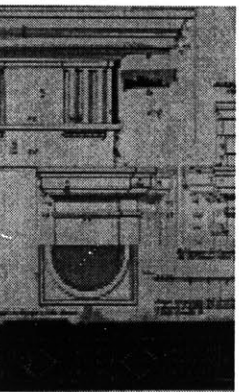
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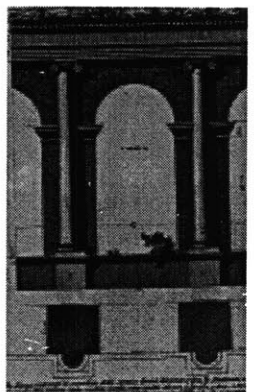
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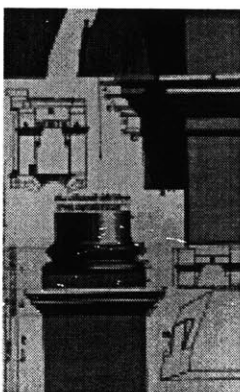
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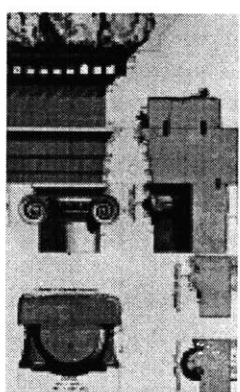
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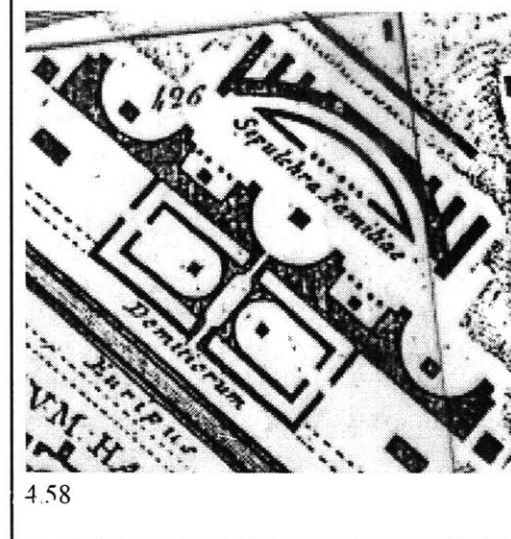
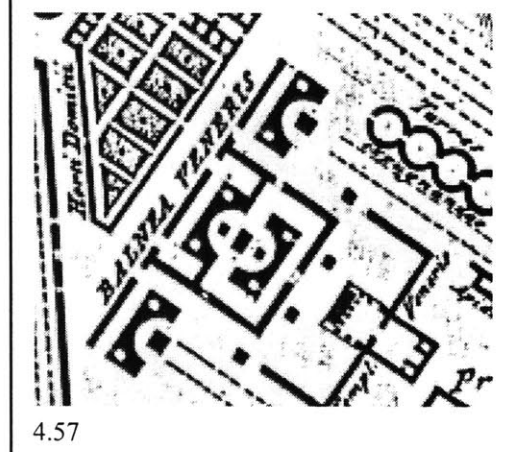
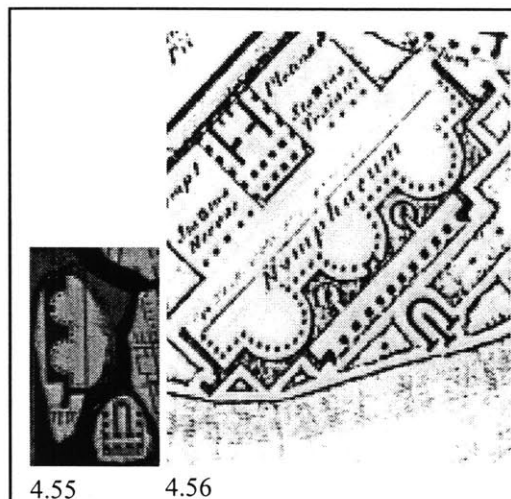
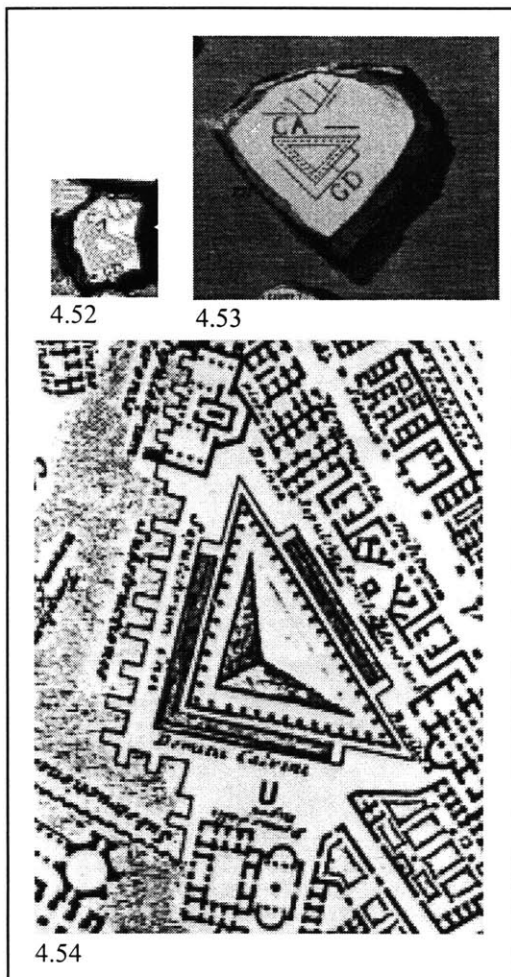
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4.51



because he could not accommodate it in the *Campo Marzio* plan without the outer ring hitting Portico of Octavia (Figure 4.37). The seating tiers shown in the *Campo Marzio* plan however do reflect the seating fragment identified in the plan of Rome (W-E 288, F 153). Plate XXVII (W-E 589, F 458) is a purged *vedute* of the remains of the theater of Marcellus (Figure 4.38). Just as in Portico of Octavia, this *vedute* is based on a careful study spanning 14 plates in *Antichita Romane* (W-E 493-506, F 360-373, Figure 4.39-4.51). The first of the two of these plates is a reconstruction of the plan, based on the Marble plan fragment shown in the plan of Rome (W-E 288, F 153). The next two plates are sectional studies, followed by a section through the foundation. These two plates are followed by a

SOURCES OF THE *CAMPO MARZIO* PLAN

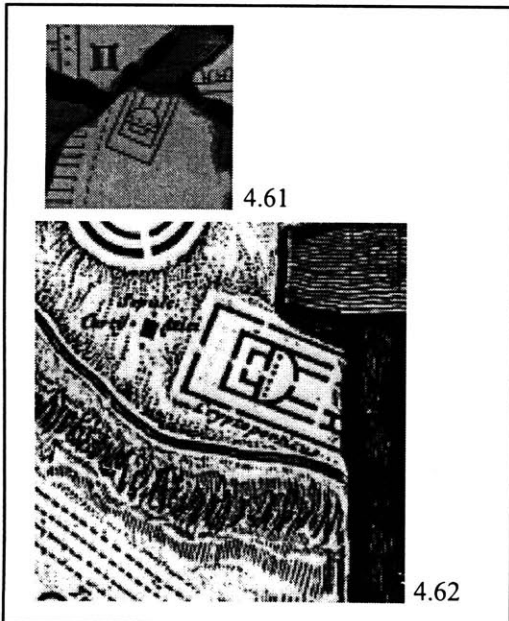
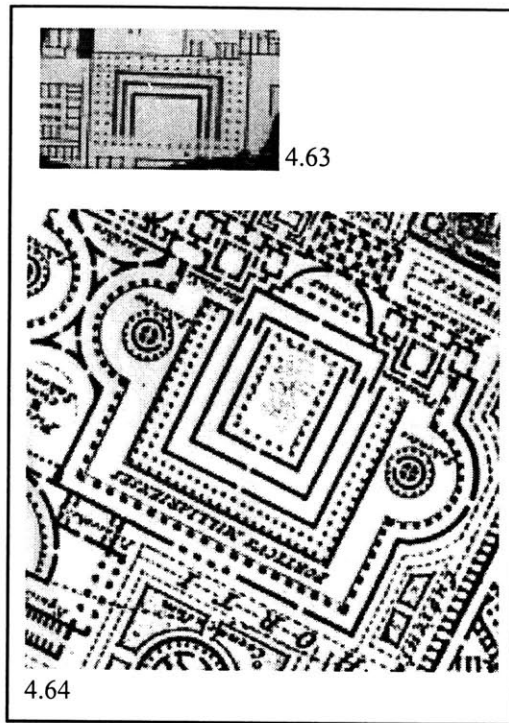
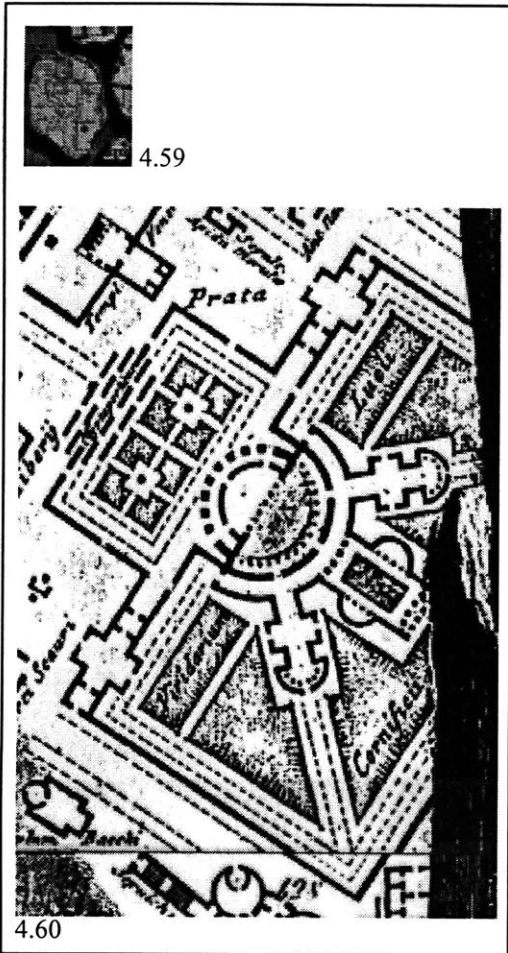


plate illustrating a part of the foundation in a *vedute* form. The remaining plates show the facade of the arcade of the first order and second order and details.

All the Marble plan fragments discussed so far, were either by themselves identifiable, or as in the case of *Saepta Julia*, based on Piranesi's earlier work within the fabric of Rome. There are some other fragments which Piranesi used in the *Campo Marzio* plan. The rationale of their selection is untraceable, although it may very well have existed. The top right hand corner of Plate XVI (W-E 578, F 447), shows one such structure (Figure 4.52-4.53). This is a small triangle, surrounded by a row of columns, which again appear to be outlined by another triangle. The fragment also has two sets of letters, the first 'CA', and the second 'GD.' This fragment is reproduced near Via Flaminia in the *Campo Marzio* plan (Figure 4.54). The structure is now shown as a pyramid, and the columns appear as if on a podium reached by

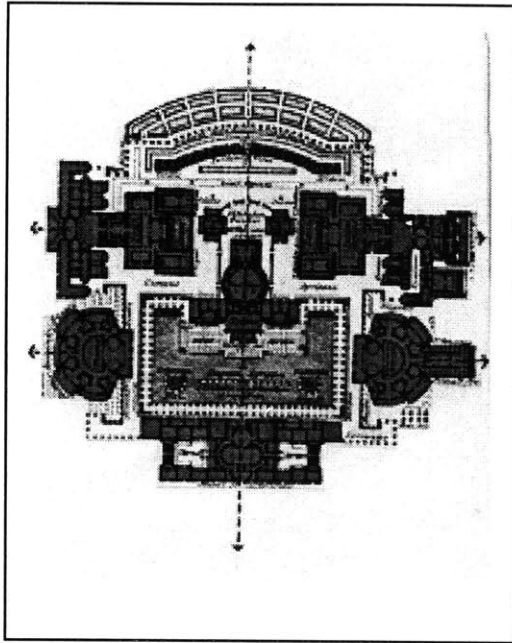


Figure 4.65

two sets of steps.

Other fragments of the Marble Plan are similarly used in the *Campo Marzio* plan. In the bottom left hand corner of Plate III in Volume I, *Antichita Romane* (W-E 289, F 154) is a small incomplete fragment, which shows two half-domed open spaces, surrounded by columns (Figure 4.55). This fragment is used in the northern part of the *Campo Marzio* plan, to the right of Hadrian's tomb (Figure 4.56). A third bay has been added to this structure. This addition appears plausible as the actual fragment was broken at that point. Two small circular staircases have also been introduced in the masonry mass of the structure. At the rear end of the structure, a colonnade which may have formed a facade facing the river has been added. These additions are hypothetical and the relation to the actual Marble Plan fragment can be termed as reference to a type. This structure is called nymphaeum. There are two other structures in the *Campo Marzio* plan, shown in Figure 4.57-4.58 which were also modeled on this fragment.

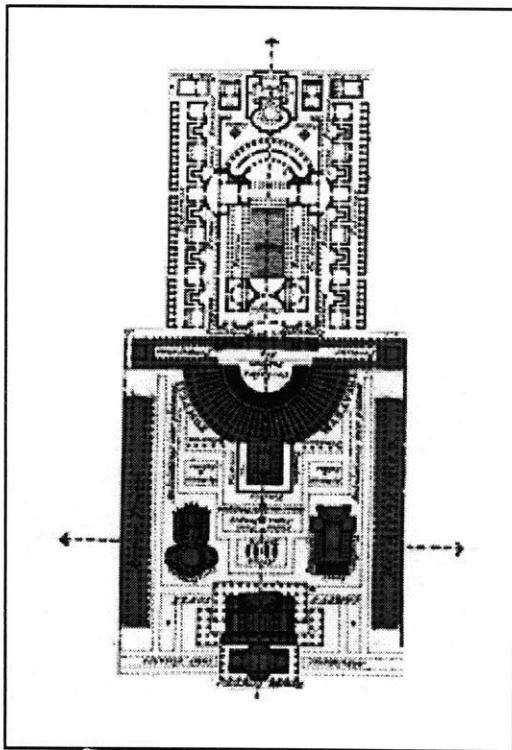


Figure 4.66

In the left hand corner of Plate II of Volume I of *Antichita Romane* (W-E 288, F 153) is a small structure, shown only as a diagrammatic figure (Figure 4.59). This fragment, which obviously delineates a minor structure served as a model for the structure called *Viridarium Luci* in the *Campo Marzio* plan (Figure 4.60). The main central structure as well as the three arms which extend out as spokes are detailed elaboration of the fragment. The whole structure appears to sit in a landscaped garden and the apparent reference here is to the typology of a villa. Similarly, in the bottom of Plate IV in Volume I, *Antichita Romane* (W-E 290, F 155) is a large marble fragment, which shows a large colonnaded structure, and a series of walls (Figure 4.63). This fragment served as a precedent to the central structure in *Horti Salvstiani* in *Campo Marzio* plan. While in the fragment this structure is shown as part of a well-packed orthogonal city fabric, in the *Campo Marzio* plan, Piranesi has set it free from the fabric, making it part of the *Horti* (Figure 4.64). Another small structure appear-

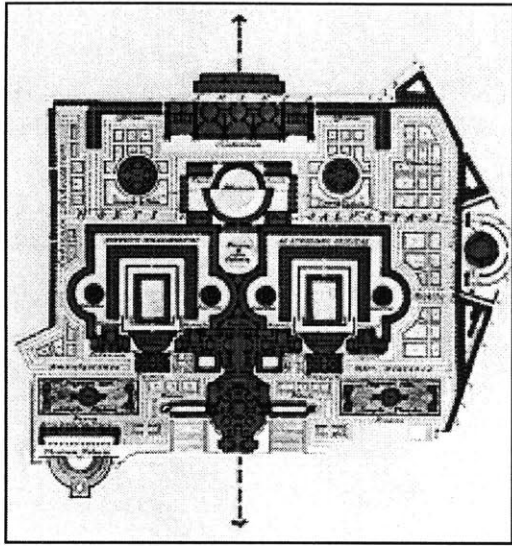


Figure 4.67

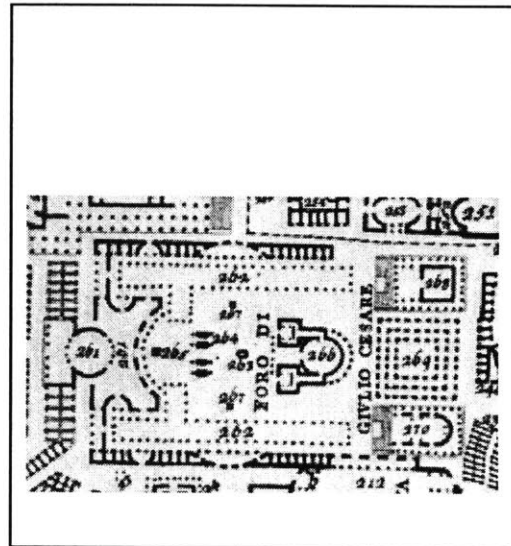


Figure 4.68

ing at the edge of a fragment in Plate III (W-E 289, F 154, Figure 4.61) is produced just as it is at the edge of the *Campo Marzio* plan (Figure 4.62). The structure is named *Cryptoporticus*.

Other than these structures, Piranesi used the many temples, circular as well as rectangular ones shown in the Marble plan fragments. Although given the simplicity of their plans, these are difficult to match. One of the small fragments (in W-E 288, F 153) also shows a part of a circular structure, which may have been used by Piranesi in many places. What is also noticeable are the many atypical forms in other Marble plan fragments left unused by Piranesi. These fragments may have been marked for use in other parts of Rome for an overall plan of the ancient city.

Compositional System of the *Campo Marzio* Plan: The Horti Format

Piranesi used a formal device in arranging the various individual structures of *Campo Marzio* Plan, including the structures established from literary references. For example, the Pantheon sits as an important central element of a larger

complex whose pieces appear to tightly sit on an axis drawn from its center (Figure 4.65). The space in front of the Pantheon is defined by two identical structures. These structures, both identical in their facade that faces the Pantheon house two temples each. Only their rear ends differ as variations of one plan. Within the walls now defining the perimeter of the Pantheon are two smaller temples, and an existing obelisk. The perimeter wall appears to anticipate the housing fabric around the eighteenth century Pantheon. The rear end of the circular form of the Pantheon is inset into a structure with a facade on lake Agrippa. The existence of the lake was known but not its location and exact shape. The lake's edge is defined by a double row of colonnades, which seem to recall the open colonnades in Hadrian's Villa. On both ends of this ensemble are located identical baths. The plan of the baths appears as a cross between a theater and a temple. Again the facades of the therme or baths facing the ensemble are identical, while their rear ends vary. At the far end of the lake is located the Bath of Agrippa, a structure known to have existed. Piranesi locates the structure in such a manner, that it lies on the axis one can draw from the center of the Pantheon, and whose facade on to the lake is made up in such

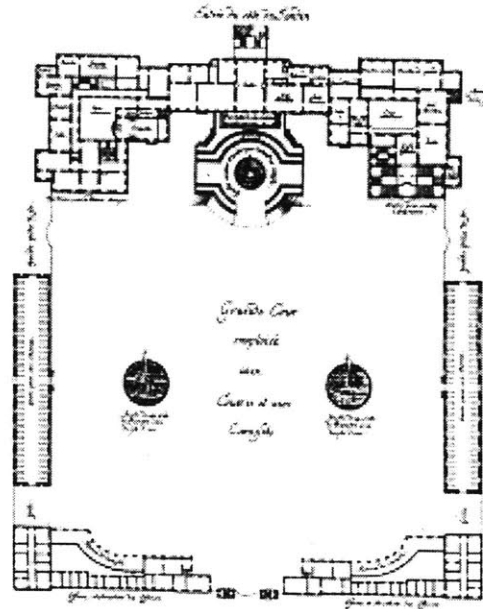


Figure 4.69

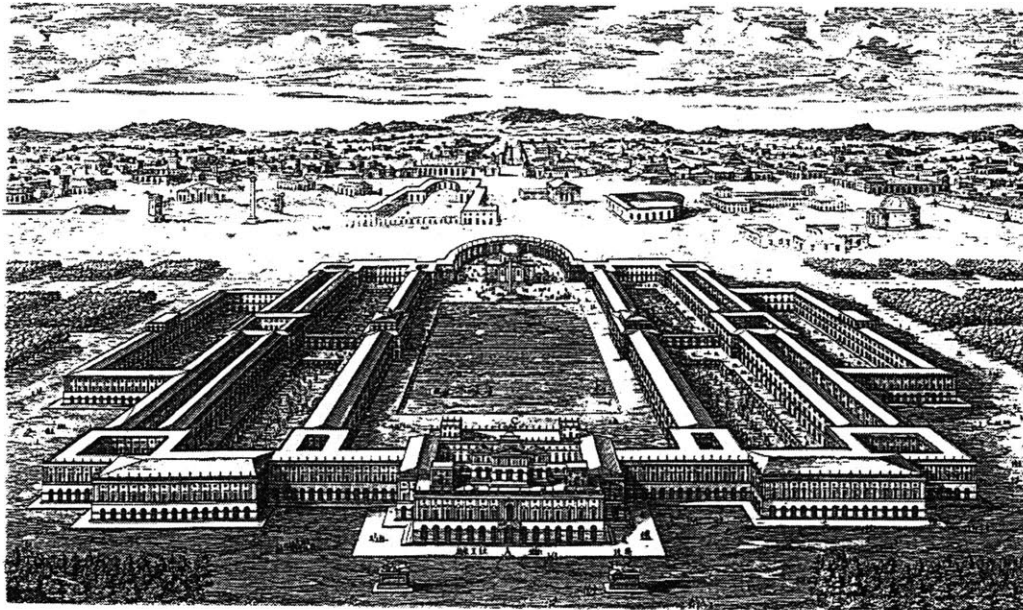


Figure 4.70

a manner that it becomes the end piece of the whole composition. Thus, the Pantheon complex is a very clear and carefully worked out formal arrangement.

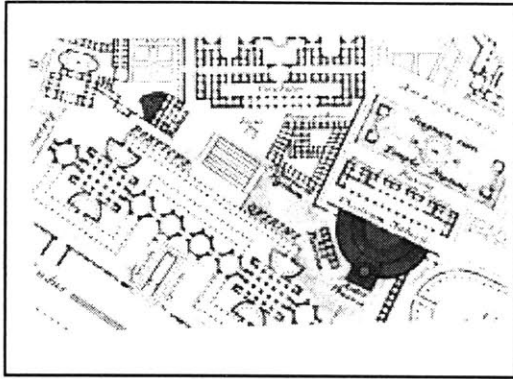
Another version of the Pantheon complex is the formal arrangement of the pieces behind the Theater of Pompeii, which appears to be devised around a central axis drawn around it (Figure 4.66). Already inset into the theater was the Temple of Minerva, which accentuates this axis, and whose facade can be said to have formed the central piece of the axis. In front of the temple is an arch described earlier, and shown by Piranesi in one of the purged *vedutes* (W-E 580, F 449). Two structures, Curia Pompeii, and an Ionic temple of Pompeii, are located on either sides of this axis. Both these structures are figuratively equal but different in design and function. The end piece of the composition is Pompeii's house, which again sits on the axis. The perimeter of the whole composition is brought about by two double rows of columns on either side of the composition, and a series of pathways shown in dotted line. The Theater of Pompeii was probably the first structures Piranesi knew in this composition, as the Pantheon was the first known structure in the upper one. It is then correct to assume that Piranesi progressed from these known structures to the overall composition. The extension to the portico of Octavia can be explained similarly.

The abstract model for this formal arrangement is one central axis with two end pieces, or one end piece and one central piece. The overall composition is defined by a perimeter and inside there is usually one or two sets of symmetrically located pieces on either sides of the axis. The clearest, the most diagrammatic and the largest example of such formal arrangements is provided by the Hortis, *Horti Salvstiani*, *Horti Valeriani*, and the largest *Horti Domitiae*. Two edges of *Horti Salvstiani* cut into Via Flaminia, making it deflect around its well-defined perimete (Figure 4.67)r. The entry from Via Flaminia is clearly marked by an entry structure, which also sets up the axis. On either ends of the axis are two small

structures set in elaborate Renaissance like gardens. The central structure again appears like a large ensemble, with two symmetrical pieces, which earlier in this paper were identified as abstracted from the Marble Plan. The end piece, or what appears more like a front piece is an elaborate circular structure, termed as a Bath. The complex inner ring divisions of this Bath appear to recall the island in Hadrian's Villa, except in this case the water element is created in two separate rectangular ponds on either side of the Bath. Below the Bath is located the *Circus Apollinaris*, which could be approached from above by two grand staircases, located on either side of the Bath, thus accentuated the axis location of the Bath.

Horti Domitae appears to take its cue from Hadrian's tomb, although the tomb itself appears as if partially outside the formal arrangement, as if it came later. The perimeter of the composition appears to be a water channel or a moat. On the other end of the central axis drawn from Hadrian's tomb is a large ensemble with a similar formal arrangement, and named bustum of Hadrian. On either side of this axis are located two circuses. The central piece is a subterranean crypt. Remains of such crypts were known, but none in the angular manner shown here. What is also puzzling is the central location of these crypts, which would easily have been space for some central structure. In *Horti Domitiae*, Piranesi also explodes the scale of the composition. The perimeter of the structure covers a ground visibly larger then the area around the Pantheon. The elaborate gardens that extend beyond the perimeter, which was a water channel, is the only indication that this area is associated with Hadrian. In other respects, the formal arrangement of the Horti stands in contrast to Hadrian's Villa.

The formal arrangement used in these examples mentioned above is very Roman, especially the care taken to establish the axis. The Roman Forum exhibits this formality. Ceaser's Forum, (W-E 357, F 222) as Piranesi reconstructs has a defined perimeter, additionally brought about with pathways that Piranesi



4.71

shows in dotted lines (Figure 4.68). There are two end pieces, one central structure, and a triumphal arch. Similarly, such formal arrangements exist in other parts of the Forum, and Piranesi may just have accentuated this formality. Piranesi also used the circular apses of the Trajan's Forum, in the structure inside Horti Salvstiani, and in making the formal arrangement of at least two other structures.

Another source for this formal arrangement is J. B. Fischer von Erlach's *Entwurf einer Histrioschen Architektur* (1721).⁷ Figure 4.69 shows a plan from Fischer's book for a grand house with a similar formal arrangement. There is a clear periphery, a formal axis, two structures on either side of a formal axis, and the end piece or the eventual structure as a climax. Fischer's whole book, with illustrations of architecture and urbanism from many parts of the world is full of such formal arrangements. Figure 4.70 shows another ensemble in a perspectival view, with a similar formal arrangement. Fischer's book also contains many other variations of the same formal arrangement, some even shown as sitting in huge gardens extending beyond the periphery.

Piranesi also miniaturized and simplified this formal arrangement for many smaller ensembles like the *Forum Suarium*, *Portico Constantine*, and *Forum Marcus Aurelius*. The technique of miniaturization was not only used in just setting up the ensembles. Figure 4.71 shows the miniaturization of a theater, now

made part of a house.

The Historic Sources of the *Campo Marzio* Plan:

Conclusion

The layout of the *Campo Marzio* plan takes its cues from the existing monuments, the topography of eighteenth century Rome, the fragments of the Marble Plan, and the ancient Roman literature.⁸ Still there is a gap between the information provided by these sources and the actual interpretation in the *Campo Marzio* plan. Sometimes this gap was filled by accurate work at corroborating various sources. The structure of Portico of Octavia is an example of such thinking. At other times, Piranesi drew conclusions from one source, and found confirmation in another. The portico and arcades of *Saepta Julia* is a good example of this category. Piranesi first found remains of an arcade from the actual examination of the physical fabric around Via Corso, and later found a confirmation of the same in a larger piece in a fragment of the Marble plan. Another such element is the Via Flaminia, which Piranesi deduced from various segments of actual Roman roads, although no other source confirms this road. At other times, Piranesi conjectured structures from the eighteenth century Rome. Such structures could have existed and explain anomalies of, say, a sharp bend in the Aurelian walls, or some atypical feature of the topography. The *bustum* of Augustus and the *Villa Arvntii* are two such structures. Piranesi did not have any confirmation of these deductions from any other sources, but his belief in them led to their inclusion in the *Campo Marzio* plan. Moreover, some of these decisions led to other aspects in the map, for example the displacement of Via Flaminia led to the angular, non orthogonal development along it.

Another reference used in making the *Campo Marzio* plan, which did not always provide concrete articulate information was the ancient Roman literature. Some of the references were

to temples and their approximate location, and the role of imagination in locating and articulating these structures was minimal. There were, however, other structures, such as the magnificent house of Alexander Severi whose luxuriant nature was described in the ancient literature but the actual articulation of these structures was a task for the imagination. There are still other structures, though not as large a number as is usually assumed, in the *Campo Marzio* plan, to which Piranesi had no literary or other evidence. One explanation for including these structures in the plan was that after exhausting all information from the sources mentioned above, Piranesi still may not have arrived at a satisfactory map, and therefore filled in gaps and empty areas with these structures or by rendering landscape elements with a figural quality. Some of these structures were definitely modeled after the sepulchral monuments that still dotted the eighteenth century Roman landscape. A large number of such structures were drawn in the *Vedute di Roma* and *Antichita Romane*. Piranesi thus appears to be simultaneously building a mental 'image' of ancient Rome while working on the various pieces of the mosaic. This image led to the imagination of actual plans of the structures in the *Campo Marzio* plan. As this image was formed from existing fragments and literary accounts, it can be understood as historic-imagination.

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V

Campo Marzio's Imaginative Figures A Reading within the Pan-Grecian Debate

A cursory glance at the *Campo Marzio* plan makes the assertion that its forms and layout come from careful antiquarian study, as made in the preceding chapter, appear debatable. The forms of the various structures do not appear Roman, look definitely inventive, and seldom repeated. In fact, except for the forms that sit on either arms of a symmetrical axis of a composition, virtually none appear to be repeated. The visual overload of the forms as well as the fantastic image of an ancient Rome of public buildings appears not to be strictly historical work. This has led commentators to assume the plan to be a polemical, and part of Piranesi's efforts to oppose the theory that architecture reached its pinnacle in Greece and Roman architecture was a decadent derivative of the same.

The model of the Pan-Grecian theories is the extension into history of art the theory of the succession of world empires. This led to the postulate that the arts have been carried from one empire to the next, but also changed their basic character in the process. Thus, history of art is understood as a linear development. Implicit in the theory is another assumption, arising from the historical consciousness of the fall of Roman Empire. This was the understanding that in the linear development of civilization, a high point had been reached in ancient Rome and Greece, and was followed by a long period of decadence and barbarism. The Pan-Grecian theories were first developed in France by art-

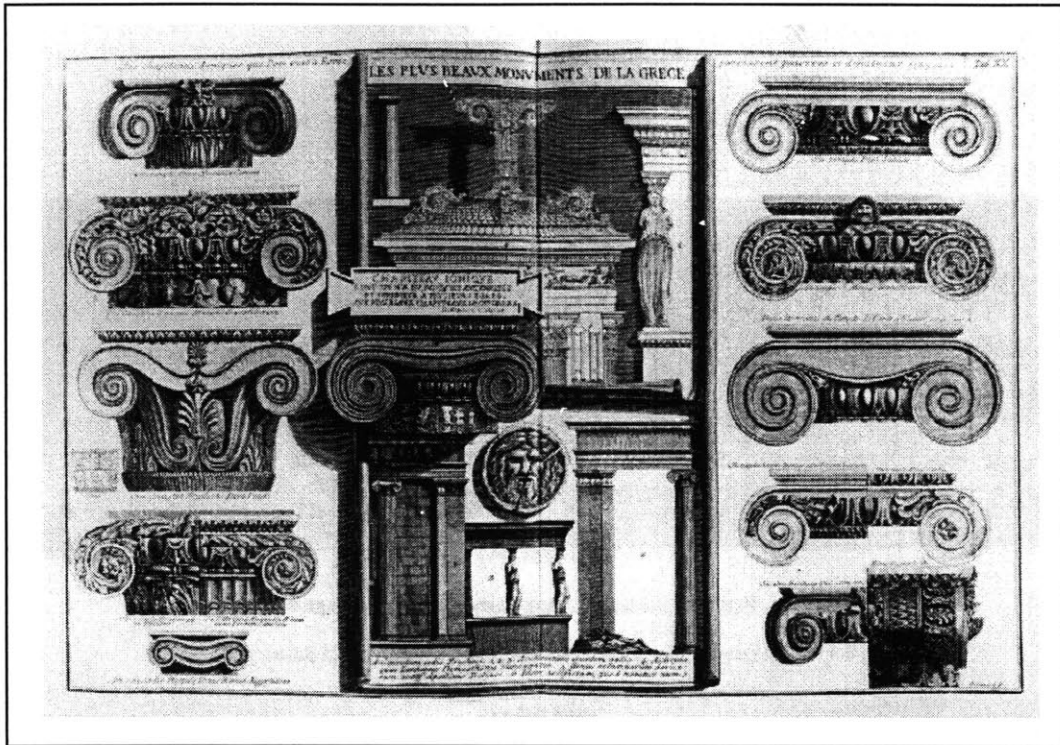


Figure 5.01 Plate XX in *Della Magnificenza* comparing a page of Le Roy's rendering of the Greek orders with Roman ones.

ists and writers. In 1752 Comte de Caylus, an enthusiastic French collector and dilettante began publishing a seven volume work on the history of art¹ titled *Recueil d'Antiquite's Eguptiennes, Etrusques, Grecques, Romains, et Gauloises*. The basic thesis of the work was that Egyptian art, whose essence was massiveness, bareness and grandeur, was succeeded by the Etruscans. From the Etruscans, arts reached Greece, where they achieved perfection. Roman art, derived from Greece, was an anticlimax and decline. Caylus's work was speculative and mostly based largely on literary accounts. Caylus's thesis, however, had implications for architecture as it was among the arts that achieved perfection in Greece. Caylus had little factual evidence of the ancient Greek architecture. Antiquarian studies of the ancient Greek architecture had been restricted as Greece was under the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, Caylus's work was influential in forming the French theories in architecture. In 1753, Marc-Antoine Laugier wrote

Essai sur l'architecture, which advocated a specific philosophy of design in support of Greece. Laugier endeavored to base architecture on the fundamental principle of nature, and like Rousseau, Laugier advocated a return to the beginning to unearth the fundamental rules of the perfection of architecture. Thus Laugier stressed on a return to the primitive hut and to its perfection in the Greek architecture, for according to him 'architecture owes everything that is perfect to the Greeks.'² The basic visual evidence on Greek architecture was minimal, and it was only in 1758 that Le Roy published *Les ruines des plus beaux monuments de la Grece*.

Le Roy's publication was a major achievement, as it was the first large comprehensive presentation of visual evidence of ancient Greek architecture. It was this publication which set Piranesi into taking active part in the debate. Piranesi, however also knew an earlier, 1755 publication *The Investigator* by an anonymous English

writer³ that advocated a similar Pan-Grecian theory.

To advocate the superiority of the architecture of the ancient Romans, in 1758 Piranesi decided to extend his nearly complete treatise on architecture titled *Della Magnificenza ed Architettura de' Romani*. This work was published in 1762. Piranesi's basic assumptions were the same as his opponents, in that he too believed in the succession of the world empires. But Piranesi asserted that the Etruscans were the sole masters of the Romans. Thus in the succession of the civilization, the Etruscans were the true progenitors of the Romans. Piranesi further emphasized that what marked the perfection of the Etruscans was their technical abilities, such as the water-works of the Lake of Albano, the Cloaca Maxima, aqueducts, circuses, roads, etc. More importantly, Piranesi emphasized that the key elements of the Etruscan aesthetics were grandeur and massiveness, the qualities of usefulness and the structural rational of material in construction. Thus, the Etruscans did not adorn their buildings, and similarly the earlier Roman structures too were unadorned. The Greek architecture was inferior simply because it adapted wood construction to stone, adding a vain prettiness to architecture. In the later Roman Empire, when the architects accepted many things from the Greeks, even then they corrected many of the Greeks' faults.

In the plates of *Della Magnificenza* Piranesi then went to great length to show the superiority of the Roman orders as well as ornament over the Greek ones. The full sharpness of Piranesi's attack is made clear in Plate XX of the book, where Le Roy's plate of the Ionic capital of the Erechtheion is compared with a great number of similar Roman capitals (Figure 5.01).

We know that *Della Magnificenza* was first written as a treatise on architecture and only later, in 1758 Piranesi decided to extend this work to counter Le Roy's arguments. But what were the changes made in this text by Piranesi between 1758 and 1762, and what was the earlier thesis of the book? From Piranesi's correspondence with Robert Mylne we know that the text of the treatise was nearly complete by 1758,⁴ but the actual

additions and enlargements in the text remain unclear. Furthermore, why should Piranesi undertake to write a treatise on architecture, when he himself has not built anything?

The architectural theories of the Venetian Carlo Lodoli (1690-1761) provide a partial answer. Piranesi was influenced by the methods and theories of Lodoli, although the evidence of Piranesi being a student of Lodoli is circumstantial.⁵ We have however clear evidence of Lodoli and Piranesi's interaction in Andrea Memmo's mention that Lodoli received a copy of *Della Magnificenza ed Architettura Romani*, from 'his friend and author, Cavalier Piranesi.'

For Lodoli, the expression of architecture had to have a direct relation with the logic of the material of construction, and emerge through the mechanics of the building. The architectural Orders were imitation in stone of wood construction and therefore not appropriate.⁶ Memmo, in his writing on Lodoli states the latter's theories as, 'the straight function and representation are the two final scientific objectives of civil architecture.' These objectives translated into solidity, analogy and commodity as the essential properties. Solidity was proper construction dictated by the nature of the material and derived from Galilean solids, employing the principles of xylology for wood construction and lithology for stone construction. Analogy was the relation of the whole to the parts, the relation being hierarchical and harmonic. This in itself may not appear radical, for from the time of Alberti there had been an emphasis on the harmonic relation of the parts, just as parts of the human body relate to each other. Lodoli's emphasis on this relationship was partly from the perspective of the whole to the parts, and partly on geometry and structural mechanics. Convenience or commodity as the third principle was design had to be based on the rational consideration of the cost of building, customs, functional needs and the needs of taste. Ornamentation was accepted, but had to stand true to these three principles.⁷

Piranesi's entrenched emphasis on the unadorned early Roman buildings, as well as the overall argument of *Della Maginificenza* comes from

Lodoli's theories, and not Vitruvius as is often assumed.⁸ Because of Lodoli's ambiguous stance on ornamentation, Piranesi did not see his predilection for ornamentation as an inherent discrepancy in the argument. According to Lodoli, as long as ornamentation stemmed from the logic of material, it was not incorrect. Thus Piranesi's belief in the Roman ornamentation⁹ to be superior than the Greeks also emanates primarily from the same criteria of the logic of structure and material.

Hence the basic thesis of *Della Magnificenza* is an apparent restatement and extension of Lodoli's arguments. It is possible that in the beginning Piranesi simply undertook to publish Lodoli's architectural theory, perhaps under his own name. In 1758, Piranesi may then have decided to enlarge or adopt Lodoli's theories to the pan-Grecian argument.

Della Magnificenza was not left unanswered and in 1764 Mariette published a letter against Piranesi in the *Gazette Litteraire de l'Europa*.¹⁰ In this letter Mariette even denied the position accorded to the Etruscans by Caylus. For him the Etruscans are Greek colonists. All Roman art had its origin in Greece, was executed in Rome by Greek slaves, and thus declined under Roman patronage. Mariette also attempted to reverse Piranesi's idea on ornamentation, stating that it was the Greek art that had pursued 'une belle et noble simplicité.' Mariette, however appears to have misread *Della Magnificenza*. Piranesi's basic thesis, as evident in the plates, was that the Roman order and ornamentation were superior as it arose from the logic of structure and construction, and not simply a noble simplicity.

Piranesi's replied to Mariette's letter in 1765. This publication consisted of a title-page, twenty-three pages of text and nine plates. The text was divided in three parts. The first was titled *Osservazioni di Gio Battista Piranesi sopra la Lettre de M. Mariette* and restated the argument of *Della Magnificenza*. The next part with the title *Parere su l'Architettura*¹¹ is written as a dialogue between a friend of Piranesi, Didascalò, and an opponent, Protopiro. Whereas *Della Magnificenza* is primarily a defense of ancient

Rome over the Greek, in *Parere* Piranesi's makes a larger critique of the Newtonian rules that the French theorist sought. There were thus two main themes of argument between Didascalò and Protopiro, ornamentation and rules. The dialogue begins by intentionally restating Mariette's argument, and in some sense the argument of most present commentators, that there was an inconsistency between Piranesi's predilection for ornamentation and the thesis of *Della Magnificenza*. Piranesi's defense surprisingly begins by adopting an argument based on the principle of universal consent,¹² although the principle itself is never mentioned. Piranesi then goes on to repeat the argument of *Della Magnificenza*, and Lodoli's theory, that ornamentation must be an integral part of the structure. Thus Greek ornamentation was incorrect because one should not 'place dentils on the cornice under the frontispiece of a facade, because they don't belong there.'¹³ The argument against rules is directed against Laugier's theory. As a reply to Laugier, Didascalò asserts 'severity, reason and the imitation of huts are incompatible with architecture?'¹⁴ Rigid rules were never part of architecture and such rules would only lead to monotonous buildings, which could easily be done by bricklayers and other craftsmen. Innovation is necessary and thus Bernini, and Borromini emerge as some of the greatest architects. Piranesi's arguments against rules like Laugier's, and a critique of Vitruvius is not a reversal of his position from *Della Magnificenza*, as often assumed. *Parere su l'Architettura* argument is still an exposition of Lodoli's theory, especially Lodoli's desire to reassess the ancients due to the discrepancy in Vitruvius. As will be shown later in this paper, some of Lodoli's models were distinctly non-classical. Hence Piranesi's critique of classical canons is not a break from earlier work.¹⁵

Hence Piranesi's position in the pan-Grecian debate from 1758-1765 cannot be simply read as a shift into imaginative art from archaeology. The theoretical position of *Della Magnificenza* stems from Lodoli's theories. Thus both, the stress on ornamentation in *Della Magnificenza*'s plates, and the critique of Vitruvius in *Parere su l'Architettura* is in keeping with Lodoli's ideas. Piranesi's critique of rules in *Parere su*

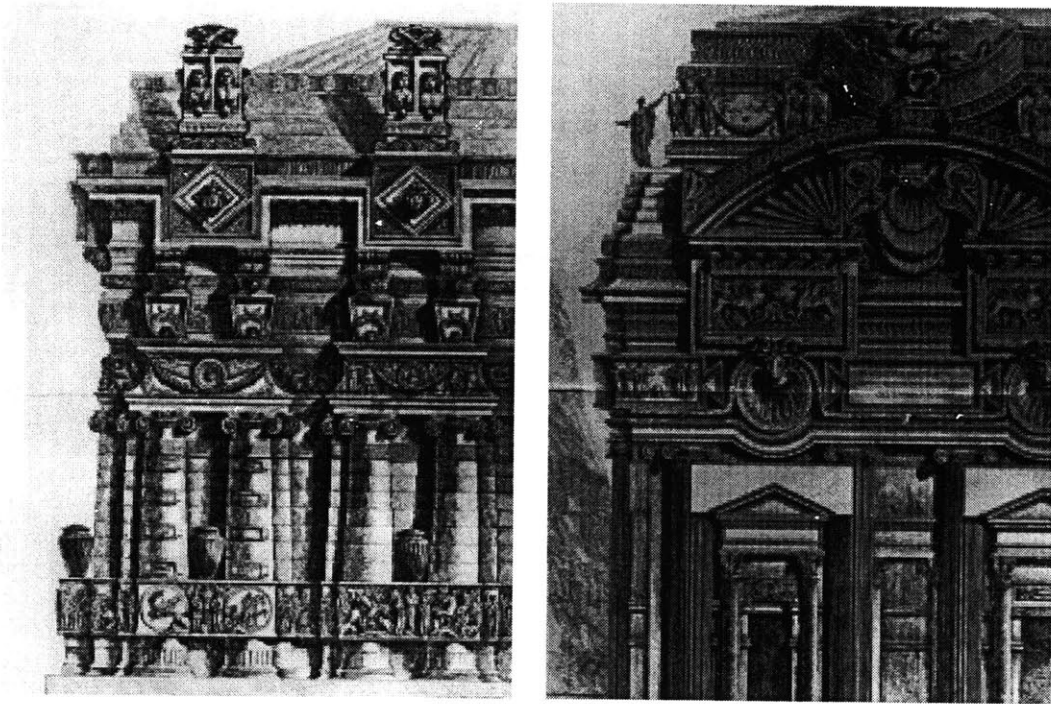


Figure 5.02 Plates in *Parere su l'Architettura* (W-E 810-811)

l'Architettura must also be understood within the post-Baroque perspective. In *Parere su l'Architettura*, Piranesi is primarily addressing to the aspersions cast at innovation, and at Borromini and Bernini. He repeatedly points out that such rules would lead to a monotonous architecture, and eventually make the architectural profession redundant. The critique of rules then is not that there be no rules, or to do away with the ancient models themselves, but that the Baroque innovations be continued. The critique is thus targeted towards an operational architectural theory, that is, towards the eighteenth century itself. At no point does Piranesi mention that liberties should be taken in reconstructing the ancient models, or even suggest that the ancients themselves did not have any fundamental rules. As will be shown later in this paper, Piranesi in his commentary of the ancient Roman architecture in *Campo Marzio* emphasized that the ancient Romans did not always follow the rules as Renaissance had assumed them. But the innovations of the ancients were, still within rules.

Piranesi, however, even does not mention this issue in *Parere su l'Architettura* where it may have given his argument further credence. Also conspicuous by its total absence is the *Campo Marzio* plan. Furthermore, the polemical plates of *Parere su l'Architettura* are not given any connotation to the ancient times, but mentioned simply as drawings by Piranesi. Hence the harangue against rules, as well as the argument for an eclectic ornamental architecture, was aimed at the eighteenth century. There is nothing to suggest that Piranesi had either changed his vision of the ancients or now intended to pursue more imaginative reconstructions. In fact the antiquarian work of Piranesi after *Campo Marzio* became more accurate.¹⁶ Also, the freedom exhibited in the plates of *Parere su l'Architettura* went far beyond Piranesi's own architectural work in the 1760's that followed *Parere su l'Architettura* (Figure 5.02). Piranesi thus may even be overstating his position in the plates of *Parere su l'Architettura*, and hence it would be incorrect to read an overall shift in Piranesi's imagination

based on *Parere su l'Architettura*.

Reading the Polemical 'Original' in *Campo Marzio* Plan

As *Campo Marzio* plan is assumed to date from a similar period as *Della Magnificenza ed Architettura de' Romani*, its forms are often understood to be part of Piranesi's polemical debate against the pro-Grecian theories. As this paper has so far shown, the *Campo Marzio* is a continuation of much earlier work and is far more closely related to *Antichita Romane* than has been generally assumed. Nevertheless the forms within *Campo Marzio* still appear to substantiate the assumption that it is original, and therefore may have other significance. The *Campo Marzio* plan unambiguously portrays itself as a plan of a part of ancient Rome, unlike the many other simple temple facades or other drawings furnished by Piranesi in the Greco-Roman debate. The first order meaning of the *Campo Marzio* work is then that it is a plan of Rome. If the plan is part of the polemical debate, its polemic would be a second order meaning, based mainly on these figures.

Manfred Tafuri in his critique of the *Campo Marzio* plan¹⁷ constructs such a second order meaning and provides the reason for the use of the *Campo Marzio* format. According to Tafuri, the *Campo Marzio* is a metaphorical representation to ridicule the many theories of Piranesi's opponents by projecting the debate into the past. The *Campo Marzio* plan, is a stage on which Piranesi sets a satire on language, on the eighteenth century, or Enlightenment's quests for Newtonian rule. On the *Campo Marzio* 'stage' Piranesi therefore lays an elaborate catalogue of forms, so diverse and so rich that they defy rules or categorization, 'a typological sample book of models based on an *exception* that very effectively gives the lie to the *rule* . . .' Piranesi, then, is the wicked architect, stating with his *Campo Marzio* a negative utopia against the "naïve dialectic" of the Enlightenment. Implied within the 'visual noise' of the plan is a statement, 'no single foundation for architecture is possible, the search

for such rules will be interminable.' Therefore, Tafuri asserts, 'the *Campo Marzio* precisely because of the absurdity of its *horror vacui*, becomes a *demand for language*, a paradoxical revelation of its *absence*. . . The "great absentee" from the *Campo Marzio*, then is language.'

Tafuri thus reads an extensive and incisive critique by Piranesi in the *Campo Marzio*, not only of the Pan-Grecian theory, but its very roots in the French Enlightenment. The aim of the French theorist in propagating the Pan-Grecian theory was not so much to disparage Roman architecture as to search for clear Newtonian rules for architecture. For the French intellectual consciousness the search for rules was an important and pressing issue. After the golden age of Louis the XIV, unless architecture was based on such clear rules, it would return to a barbarism, a *gothic* barbarism. This assumption was based on a cyclical understanding of history, where peaks of achievements were followed by long periods of barbarism. The specific model for such assumptions was the Imperial Age of Rome, which had led to a luxurious decadence that eventually gave way to the fall of Rome. The French emphasis, therefore, was on the simplicity of the Greek architecture, on a return to the noble primitive hut. The appearance of the Rococo style in the French interiors, with its luxurious eclecticism, only appeared to confirm the worst fears of these French theorists. Barbarism must have appeared as threateningly waiting just around the corner.

Thus in Tafuri's critique, the *Campo Marzio* site, the reference to ancient Rome, and the use of any real fragment is only a construct to lend an irony to the critique against the seventeenth and eighteenth century predilection for rules. As Tafuri quotes from the accompanying text, Piranesi himself appears to lend substance to this reading, 'if someone compares these aspects with the ancient manner of architecture, he will see that many of them break with tradition, and resemble the usage of our own time.'¹⁸ The French theorists would not only have opposed but also have feared the very freedom that Tafuri asserts is at the heart of the *Campo Marzio* plan.

In constructing such a second order meaning in

the *Campo Marzio* plan, Tafuri has assumed the plan to be a construct of the same open-ended progressive notion of history that was the basis of Enlightenment and the French search for Newtonian rules. By comparison, the Renaissance consciousness and imagination was based on a closed-ended conception of history. Renaissance consciousness assumed an unsurpassable pinnacle of human achievement in the past, more specifically in the ancient Roman Civilization. This world view was partly substantiated by the biblical interpretation of the world. After the Fall, the physical world is considered in an advanced state of degeneration. The Renaissance also looked at the past to recover technical knowledge and in architectural theory to reinstate the perfection of the past architecture. The Renaissance architecture, however, did not take a recourse to duplicate the architecture of the past, but imagination was linked to history and had to arise within these forms.

The idea of progress beyond the Ancient first gained force in the seventeenth century, primarily due to the work of Bacon¹⁹ and Descartes.²⁰ This progressive world view led to more inductive questioning, leading to an Empirical epistemology. By the end of the seventeenth century, the debate between the Ancients and the Moderns took over most spheres of knowledge, although Ancient Rome and Greece still continued to be understood as the golden age and the pinnacle of human achievement. Newton's work would further the cause of the Moderns, or more accurately *be* the very cause of empiricism. The accent was now on observing nature for the immutable laws that governed the world. Most intellectuals hoped to do for their field what Newton had done for his, that is find the absolute laws and rules as the very foundation of knowledge.²¹ Alberto Perez-Gomez²² has contended that by 1800 a Newtonian framework completely took command. Scientific thought and reason were seen as the only legitimate interpretation of reality; "Faith and reason were truly divorced." These epistemological changes, and the conception of an open-ended history, were the foundations for the changes been sought by the French architectural theorist.

These conceptual changes, and notion of an open-

ended history would also have to be the basis of *Campo Marzio* as Tafuri reads it. Because only in an open-ended historic world the relation between history and imagination becomes incidental, and the *Campo Marzio* plan could use history as a metaphor, as a heuristic device. For although scenography did roll back on history, and was one of the most experimental mediums in Piranesi's time, the stage as a device clearly showed its intentional construct, unlike the *Campo Marzio* plan. Furthermore, the imagination in scenography was still clearly in the topos of history, and not casually set against it. Imagination in a close-ended system as Renaissance, could not display the casual freedom with history that Tafuri's critique of *Campo Marzio* assumes. Thus for *Campo Marzio* to be a heuristic device, displaying an endless hedonistic game against Newtonian rules, it had to be the product of the very notion of history that it set out to critique. But some of the inventive figures that Tafuri asserts lie at the very core of the *Campo Marzio* plan as a polemical device, like the *bustum* of Augustus, were shown in Piranesi's earlier topographical plan illustrating the hydraulic and defense systems of ancient Rome (W-E 354, F 217). If the *Campo Marzio* forms arise out of an intentional critique of the Enlightenment, how could such forms have arisen in an etching done before a critique of Enlightenment could have become imminent for Piranesi. It is possible then that in the period between 1758-1762 Piranesi decided to twist an incomplete plan of a part of Rome to tailor to the polemics against the French, but then why should the imaginative forms exist in a plan done before 1756? The imaginative forms in the topographical plan may perhaps prove that Piranesi began building his critique against the French much before 1756. But if the *Campo Marzio* plan was an intentional heuristic device, and its figures an intentional negation of language, then why should Piranesi put similar figures in other plans of Rome, especially earlier ones that were a result of careful antiquarian study?

Furthermore, if *Campo Marzio* plan was the heuristic device that Tafuri makes it out to be, why is it then that Piranesi never mentions it in any of his subsequent correspondence or polemical

work? In *Della Magnificenza* the reference to Le Roy is embarrassingly direct, and Piranesi even inset Le Roy's drawings in his own compositions, and made many disparaging references to Le Roy. If Tafuri's reading of *Campo Marzio* is to be correct, then the way *Campo Marzio* is set up, it would be uncharacteristically subtle, and the lack of its reference would lead to its total ignorance in the debate. This is exactly what happened, there is no mention of the *Campo Marzio* plan by either Piranesi or his detractors in their arguments. It seems unlikely that Piranesi would create such a work, which in its creation would literally twist into caricature careful study of perhaps 14 years, and not mention it at all; hoping for his detractors to discover the truth of the plan themselves.

We know from *Della Magnificenza* that Piranesi's intent was not only to critique the 'naïve dialectics' of the Enlightenment, but also to show the perfection of architecture of ancient Rome. By using *Campo Marzio* as a showpiece of endless and rule-less architecture, did Piranesi then not run the danger of providing his opponents another proof of the degeneration of architecture by the ancient Romans? One can just imagine Laugier or Winckelmann retorting at Piranesi, 'Now the noble ancient Greece can not be even reduced to such a hedonistic game!'

The repercussions of the French theories, and later Winckelmann, was two folds. First, is the assumption that art reached its perfection in ancient Greece. Second, employing the Enlightenment consciousness to postulate austere and simple rules for architecture, as Laugier did by basing them on the primitive hut and thereby on the Noble Savage. Why should Piranesi base his critique of these theories on a geometric critique in plan form? The crux of the debate between Piranesi and the pro-Grecian theories was that the latter wanted to base architecture on clear, rigid rules. This argument was not principally on plan form or typology. The argument of such rigid rules was principally in the composition of the facades and its ornamentation. In some of the facade drawings that Piranesi produced in *Parere su l'architettura* he creates an eclectic, not strictly classical, and highly ornamental facades that were legitimately part of the debate. It seems unlikely

that Piranesi would extend the debate into the ichnographic format, into the plans where the basic instrument of departure was geometry. In the four schematic *vedute* that accompany the *Campo Marzio* plan, the scale of the *vedute* is so small as to be unable to render any specific details.²³ It seems odd that Piranesi would devise the *vedute* format to be of such a manner that it could not be used as a polemical device at all. Furthermore some of the details of these *vedutes* show Greek ornamentation, as in the structure just in front of the Pantheon.

One last criticism of Tafuri's attempt to read the *Campo Marzio* plan as a negation of the Enlightenment, as well as of other critiques that the *Campo Marzio* is a polemical device, is furnished by the way eighteenth century actually received the plan. As Jonathan Scott points out, 'The work (*Campo Marzio*) was favorably received although, not surprisingly, the reconstructions were taken with a pinch of salt. Natoire writing on April 7, 1762 to Marigny, the Director of the King's Buildings in France, said, 'This industrious artist is flattered by the kind letter which you wrote to him, and asks me. . .to send you the Campus Martius which has just been published. His fantasy has had something on which to work in those imaginary spaces but, despite his theories, I think that one can gain some insights from them, and his method of execution is always a pleasure to the eye.'²⁴ The *Campo Marzio* was thus received as another reconstruction of ancient Rome. That the correspondence cited here is to the Director of the King's Buildings in France also shows that Piranesi's ideas were still well received in France and were not taken as a critique of Enlightenment. The French Enlightenment period itself, at least in architecture, was also not so ideologically cohesive, and irrational strains such as the Rococo, were present.

VI

Campo Marzio's Imaginative Figures A Post-Baroque Framework

If Tafuri's reading of *Campo Marzio* appears dissatisfactory and flawed, one returns to the original question: What is the basis for the imaginative forms of the *Campo Marzio* plan?

The *Campo Marzio* plan comes at a critical junction between a change from a close-ended history to an open ended one, and consequently, at the junction of transition from the post-Baroque historic-imagination into a conceptual split between history and imagination. In reading the forms of the *Campo Marzio* as polemical and original, as done above, one assumes that in this work Piranesi has already made the transition into a Cartesian notion of imagination.

This paper on the other hand has shown a much larger use of historic sources by Piranesi in *Campo Marzio*, and the fact that work on the imaginative forms of *Campo Marzio* began much earlier than understood by traditional historiography. Hence the figures of *Campo Marzio* can also be read within the post-Baroque historic-imagination.

Such a reading of the imaginative inputs is reinforced by the fact that in the eighteenth century, archaeology and its scientific method were not codified. The word archaeology derives from the word 'archiology' that began to be used in 1607. The term 'archiology' meant the study of inscriptions on monuments and had limited application within the antiquarian studies. It is difficult to determine when archaeol-

ogy became a distinct scientific discipline, with its own methodology and body of theory. Some recent histories of archaeology¹ have claimed that prior to the 1960's there was no established body of theory. According to this theory each scholar was free to build his discipline anew on the basis of his own conceptual framework. In terms of methodology, and specifically in reference to classical antiquities,² a scientific methodology began to take root in the nineteenth century, although the name of Winckelmann is often associated with the first methodological textual studies. Yet even in the nineteenth century, archaeological work was often fueled by nationalist sentiments, and the guise of objectivity was minimal. The issue is not terminology or the method of acquiring data or its verification, but the very concept of history and the objective of historic study operational in that period. In the eighteenth century there was no conceptual split between architecture and archaeology. This conceptual unity stemmed primarily from the relation between history and imagination.

The primary objective of antiquarian work for architects was to abstract principles for imagination, or as the Renaissance consciousness assumed, to discern the principles of the Ancients to be used in their own work. This study of history and its use in imagination was often on Renaissance's own terms and concepts. Alberti's work best exemplifies the setting out of the norms from the Ancients, while simultaneously using Renaissance's own conceptual framework for this study. His encyclopedic treatise *De re Aedificatoria* cannot be simply termed as a new version of Vitruvius's work, as Alberti consciously set out in search for canonical rules.³ The original objective of Vitruvius had been to compile, clarify and put in order a general corpus of rules laid down previously, most of these being empirical. Alberti's work on the other hand changed the order and sequence of Vitruvius's book as it set out the rules in such a way that they became normative and deduced inductively. To cite an example, whereas in Vitruvius's text the correlation between a building's symmetry and human symmetry is purely explanatory, Alberti turns this into a postulate, that every building is a body. Alberti then used this postulate as the basis

of working out rules at each stage of *de Re Aedificatoria*, whether in inferring the general laws of proportions, or relation to the parts of the whole, or in laying out the principles of absolute beauty. This is not a critique of Alberti's historical methodology, for laying out of the canonical rules was the very objective of Alberti's work,⁴ and he also set out to use the ancient ruins themselves to justify his correction of Vitruvius.

Alberti's work not only provides the norms for architecture but also the conceptual reason for studying the ruins. Architects from Bramante onwards studied and measured the ruins in order to either confirm the rules or to deduce them. More often using these generative rules, presumably understood as the guiding principles of the past, discrepancies were found in measuring the ancient structures themselves, as in the case of the Pantheon. The absence of symmetry and continuity in the Pantheon's interior treatment of the upper and lower part was explained as due to later reconstruction. Palladio even reconstructed the original appearance of the temple following Vitruvius's rules.

Piranesi's statement in the accompanying text of *Campo Marzio*, 'if someone compares these aspects with the ancient manner of architecture, he will see that many of them break with tradition, and resemble the usage of our own time' refers to the Renaissance and Baroque understanding of these Albertian/ Vitruvian rules, and not, as Tafuri reads them, as aimed at the Enlightenment's search for Newtonian rules that ended up translating into rigid and fixed notions.⁵ Such an understanding of Piranesi's text also further substantiates the idea that *Campo Marzio* is a work of post-Baroque imagination.

Piranesi's methodology of reconstruction can also be traced back into Renaissance. Flavio Biondo's 'guide books' to Rome were one of the first attempts at recording the ancient structures at an urban scale, and eventually ended up setting the methodology for urban reconstruction. In *Rome Restored* (1446), Biondo revived a historical genre known to Ptolemy in the ancient world: a geo-history, a study of local history with special reference to surviving physical remains. Biondo's

Campo Marzio's Imaginative Figures - A Post-Baroque Framework

in-depth work combined information about antiquarian structures from all literary sources available, with the study of the existing ruins, studying the inscriptions or other clues to provide as accurate and as verifiable a record as possible. Wherever possible, Biondo also set out to elaborate the life that went on in the structures under scrutiny. Perhaps this is why the sixteenth century humanist called Biondo's historical genre as 'chorography.'⁶ In the same period Bracciolini Poggio wrote a similar historiography, but it was Biondo's work that proved to be the more enduring.⁷ Biondo's work was descriptive, attempting a real sense of the ancient city, an 'image' of the past.⁸ Biondo's work set up the methodology for referring to the structures of antiquity, although not the representation of the ruins and his chorography remained unsurpassed till new antiquarian material was discovered. In 1527, Andrea Fulvio published a work that incorporated this new material into Biondo's descriptive genre. Bartolomeo Marliano in 1534, and Lucio Fanno and Paolo dal Rosso in 1542-43, continued to upgrade Biondo's work.⁹

Biondo's work and the subsequent work that followed it were principally concerned with describing the 'image' of the city, combining literary history with that of the existing monuments. The study and actual measurements of the monuments remained the preview of the architects whose intent was to understand the actual structures towards their own imaginative end. This study, pioneered by Bramante, was intent on the individual structures only and not on recording the urban fabric. It was only under the patronage of Leo X that the first probable survey of the ancient ruins was attempted. This survey was to be incorporated into one large map of ancient Rome, following Ptolemy's model. New survey systems and modes of representation were developed for this plan. In a letter to Leo X in 1510, Raphael established the concept of representing the surveyed monuments with a plan, elevation and section of each ruin.¹⁰ With the death of Leo X and Raphael the project was aborted. Although the recording of the Ruins was canonized by Raphael so as the representation is as precise as possible, there were often liberties taken in the actual recording of the ruins or the reconstruction of Ro-

man monuments from literary sources or through the study of the actual ruins, which were always assisted by imagination.

The representation of the urban structure or reconstruction of the ancient City was mainly informed by the language of the town views. The maps of ancient Rome developed by Fabio Calvo (1527 and 1553) and Pirro Ligorio (1561) were town views, and were little more than assemblage of monument, with the rest of the space often filled by the medieval fabric. The aim of both Calvo's and Ligorio's work was principally the 'image' of the city. It is, however, Piranesi who in *Antichità Romane* emphasized on combining the precise study of individual monuments with the overall urban structure, and with continuous reference to the Forma Urbis. Piranesi also is the first to have shifted the language of reconstruction maps to an ichnographic format, as discussed earlier. But Piranesi's aim was similar to Ligorio's, that is to provide an 'image' of the ancient city.

Hence in urban reconstruction, the 'image' had precedence over accuracy, and imagination, as Renaissance's historic-imagination, was an accepted part of such reconstruction. Even in the reconstruction of individual structures, as Fra Giocondo's reconstruction of the ancient Roman house based on the Vitruvian text, imagination was an essential element. Piranesi's methodology for reconstruction and his use of imagination in the *Campo Marzio* is similar to the Renaissance's antiquarians.

The Post-Baroque Historic Imagination

Just as Piranesi's predecessors such as Ligorio operated within their own period's imagination modes, Piranesi operated within the post-Baroque mode of imagination. This, Piranesi acknowledges himself when he states in the commentary that '...many of them (the ancient Romans) *break with tradition and resemble the usage of our own time.*'¹¹ Piranesi was thus convinced that the strictly classical vision of the ancient Roman architecture built from the canons of Vitruvius/

Alberti did not take into account many of the ancient structures still standing in Piranesi's time. It never occurred to Piranesi that the rules he or others assumed these structures to break, could be in main part be Renaissance's own creation. Piranesi writes, "let him observe the ancient plan of Rome mentioned above (the Marble Plan), let him observe the ancient villas of Lazio, the villa of Hadrian in Tivoli, the sepulchers, and the other buildings in Rome that remain, in particular outside of Porta Capena" In these sources¹², Piranesi could easily find many examples of structures that did not follow the classical rules. It is then possible to think that Piranesi decided to expound an image of ancient Rome based on such examples which in Tafuri's words 'give the lie to the rule.'

Piranesi's expression '*resemble the usage of our own time*' refers to the Baroque freedom in adopting the rules. Borromini's work in particular provides the key elements of Baroque historic-imagination used by Piranesi. Borromini's work is marked for innovation and freedom in the application of classical rules. In his innovation Borromini saw himself as the intellectual heir to Michelangelo. Followers like Vignola and Giacomo della Porta had adopted and canonized Michelangelo's daring innovations. Borromini, however, not only looked at Michaelangelo's work for motifs and elements, but also for the spirit of innovation. Even in his own days, Borromini was vilified for this spirit of innovation, and seen as the person who overthrew the laws of the Ancients and replaced them with disorder. Borromini, however, did work with ancient models and his innovations or transgression of the rules of the Ancients stem from these particular models.¹³ It is this spirit of innovation in adopting the rules that Piranesi mentions in his commentary when he states '. . . many of them (the ancient Romans) *break with tradition and resemble the usage of our own time.*' The ancient models that Borromini often adopted were, however, the ones that broke the rules, and had often been earlier ignored by the Renaissance. These models included the sepulchers structures that Piranesi mentions as a source for *Campo Marzio*, for example the ancient Roman tomb near Capua, called the *Conocchia* (Figure 6.02). Borromini

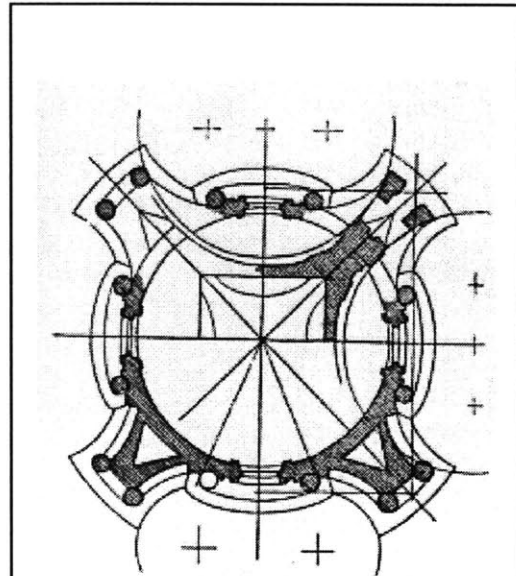


Figure 6.01 Plan of Borromini's *Sant' Andrea Delle Frate* was based on the *Conocchia* shown in Figure 6.02

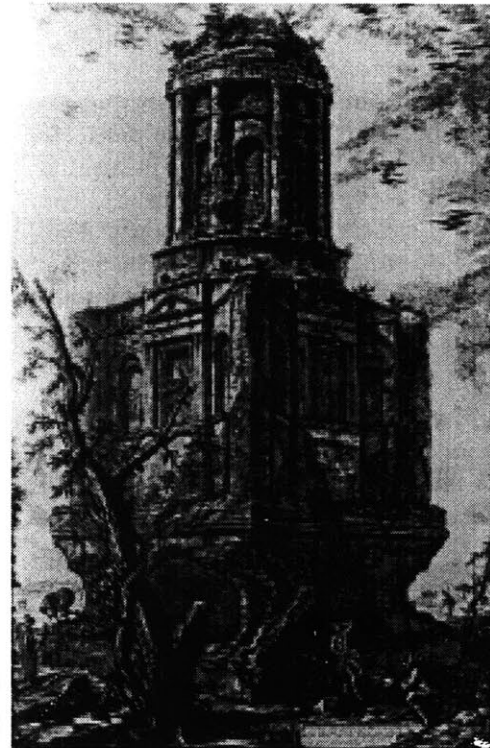


Figure 6.02 The tomb called *Conocchia* etched by Piranesi

Campo Marzio's Imaginative Figures - A Post-Baroque Framework

based the plan of the dome at S. Andrea delle Fratte (Figure 6.01) on the Conocchia, and this structure was also the subject of an etching by Piranesi in *Vedute di Roma* (W-E 263, F 843 Figure 6.02). Other ancient sources would include the Baths of Diocletian, the reconstruction of Hadrian's Villa by Pirro Ligorio, and the work of G. B. Montano. Many of Montano's engravings show either facades on a single concave curve, or combination of curves, and both kind of examples were transformed in their imitation by Borromini. If Borromini's ancient models were atypical and partly responsible for his innovative designs, so was his use of geometry in analyzing these ancient models and abstracting ideas for their imitation in his work. Thus Borromini's designs were formed from an interaction of simple geometric forms in a way similar to the ancient models he analyzed. Also, geometric units, and not the Renaissance's principle of building from modules, were the basis of Borromini's designs. This is a fundamental feature of Borromini's work. His most complex designs are formed by a series of geometrical interaction of circles and triangles, as the drawings of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane and S. Ivo show.

Practical geometry was always an instrument of Renaissance. But it is Borromini's work that can be marked for using geometry as a conscious part of the historic-imagination, in both design, and the analysis of Ancient ruins.¹⁴ This emphasis on geometry was partly due to the changes Galileo's work brought about in the post-counter reformatory secularization. Galileo believed that the human mind and the world were linked through geometric structures as a result of pre-established harmony. Platonic geometry was the order of nature, and thereby the cosmos, and thus was the correct mode for architecture. Galileo notes, "The great book of nature. . . is written in the language of mathematics, and its characters are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures without which it is humanly impossible to understand a single word of it."

Piranesi's historic-imagination as used in the *Campo Marzio* plan is post-Baroque. Its key elements were innovation and flexible understanding of ancient rules, the use of atypical ancient

models that did not seem to confirm to the classical cannons, and the use of geometry in the analyses of ancient models. Piranesi's interaction with the Academie de France in Rome in the late 1740's and 1750's further lends credence to this reading of his historic-imagination. Piranesi's and the Academie's work may be understood as a neo-Sixteenth-century mannerist revival and appears non-classical in nature.¹⁵

Lodoli, Vico and Piranesi's non-Cartesian Imagination

As discussed earlier, if Piranesi's figures in the *Campo Marzio* plan are assumed to be polemical and original, an open-ended progressive conceptual framework becomes implicated in such a critique. On the other hand, if *Campo Marzio* is assumed to be the work of a post-Baroque historic-imagination, this demands a clarification of Piranesi's historic conceptual framework, one that allows a much larger freedom to imagination.

Piranesi acquired such a framework from Carlo Lodoli's architectural theories, which in turn were influenced by Giambattista Vico.¹⁶ For Vico history was neither open-ended, nor a close system. Vico rejected the Cartesian tenant that the criterion of truth is an innate clear and distinct idea. He stressed that certain knowledge belongs to the maker: *verum et factum convertuntur*: To know something truly, as opposed to merely perceiving it, the observer himself should have participated in its making. This is commonly construed as that mathematics, and human sciences, can be known by the humans, while the natural sciences cannot be exact sciences. "The plan of history is a wholly human plan, it does not pre-exist in the shape of an unrealized intention, progressing to its own gradual realization."¹⁷ This implies a free will, a mechanical freedom as the humans progress in an open ended history. Vico's theory, in consideration of his metaphysical predilections, can be better understood as that we as humans can understand our history not because we are its sole makers, but because we participate in its making. Vico's philosophy does not exclude God from the sphere of history. God acts indirectly on human history through the divine force

of Contaus. History unfolds within divine providence, and there is an 'irrational' force in individuals and an 'irrational' *common sense* in society which manifests in its institutions. Fundamental to human development is not the issues of philosophy and skepticism, but these *common senses* as they act in history.¹⁸ History is then neither static and hermetically close-ended, nor open and unresolved, driven by progress and skepticism. History for Vico was cyclic, moving in spirals, as each culture plays out the 'Ideal Eternal History.'

In this cyclic framework of history, Rome became the blueprint of the 'Ideal Eternal History.' Vico pointed out that Rome became wise without the aid of philosophy. Its wisdom was derived from strong attachments to religion, customs, and myths, which were developed and codified in a rich jurisprudence (authority) that managed to balance the rational (*verum*) with the customary (*certum*).¹⁹ Thus the key to understand history, as well as its reconstruction was not reason or Newtonian rules, but a particular notion of historic-imagination termed 'Memory' by Vico. 'Memory' consisted of memory itself, imagination (*fantasia*) and *ingeno* (invention).²⁰ 'Memory' or such a notion of historic-imagination, became Vico's basis of epistemology. Knowledge stemmed from discerning patterns in reading the inner writings of both the individual and the Ideal Eternal History of the society.²¹ It was also possible to gain insights or discern patterns of a given culture by studying another culture whose cyclic position happens to be at the same stage. Historic-Imagination was therefore the key element, and using it historians could reconstruct the process of history in their own mind.²²

Vico's notion of historic-imagination, and emphasis on comparative history has a direct correlation with Lodoli's methodology.²³ Lodoli was, however, a firm believer in Socrates's methods, and his theories are principally grounded in reason and the inductive process. In Venice, Lodoli established a peripatetic school for the training of the youth of the city. He critiqued Vitruvius and attempted a reappraisal of the ancient architecture by using history in a manner similar to

Vico. In his garden, Lodoli collected art and architectural fragments of various periods, especially non-classical ones, including fragments from the Middle Ages.²⁴ Lodoli emphasized on including the examination of such non-classical fragments in his reappraisal of ancient architecture, and Lodoli appears to have impressed this on Piranesi.

More significant is Lodoli manner of examining the fragments such as to discern patterns and thus read the inner writings of these pieces. Geometry was the key element in the anatomical analyses of these fragments as well as in extrapolating the overall pattern or inner writings of the fragment. Marco Fascari paraphrases 'The education of a young mind for the practice of mechanics as well as any art is accomplished through the study of forms, which are a combination of geometrical and physical properties, and these can only be understood through genetic investigations. The young mind should understand triangles, circles and other geometric forms embodied in the materials and the structural systems in a genetic mode.'²⁵ The genetic mode here is Vico's idea about the inner writings of Ideal Eternal History.

Piranesi's Post-Baroque Historic-Imagination: Conclusion

The extensive use of historic sources in the *Campo Marzio* plan, as shown in this paper, renders untenable a straightforward polemical reading of it. Thus Tafuri's attempts to read an intentional hidden critique of the Enlightenment in the plan is unsatisfactory. A polemical reading of the plan assumes either a second order meaning within the plan or at least an open-ended conception of history. For only in an open-ended conception of history does the relation between history and imagination become casual enough for historic-imagination to be distorted into second order meanings.

A different reading of the imaginative structures of the *Campo Marzio* plan emerges, if it is read

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as an application of Lodoli's theories, which in itself were sympathetic to Vico's non-Cartesian conception of history.²⁶ Vico's assertion that knowledge stemmed from the inner writings of the Ideal Eternal History, and Memory, that is memory, fantasia and ingeno, were the elements for gaining such knowledge was particularly useful for extracting the overall pattern from a fragment. Vico's notion of recognizable genetic patterns appears to have been the impetus for Lodoli in analyzing the art and architectural fragments in his garden. Such theories of extracting the genetic patterns from fragments may even have been Piranesi's principal notion when he embarked on the reconstruction of a plan of Rome from the fragments of the Marble Plan.

Similarly, Piranesi's critique of the variation of the rules by the Ancients themselves was instrumental in the elucidation of the forms of *Campo Marzio* plan. Piranesi's critique of rules can be traced back to a number of influences. Lodoli's critique of Vitruvius and his desire to reappraise the Ancients is perhaps the most obvious one. The Baroque use of non-classical ancient models, and perhaps most importantly some of the forms of the Marble plan must have further provided credence to Piranesi's ideas. Thus Piranesi must have concluded that the Baroque and neo-Mannerist freedom in applying the rules of the Ancients was a mode of the Ancients themselves.

Thus, Piranesi's polemical position, as it stood against the pro-Grecian theorists, grew out of his convictions about architecture and was based on Lodoli's ideas. Also, the historic-imagination used in reconstructing the forms of *Campo Marzio* is coincident with Piranesi's polemical position, but not at its service.

Hence, in *Campo Marzio*, Piranesi set out to extrapolate the overall plan from the Marble plan while concurrently also studying many other non-classical ancient models for use in such reconstruction. Most importantly geometry was the key instrument in reading the patterns of the ancient models. Again, both Baroque, that is Borromini and thereby Galileo, or Lodoli can be read in Piranesi's deployment of geometry.

VII

The Geometric Underlay

Due to the ichnographic format of *Campo Marzio* plan, geometry became a key element in the articulation of the structures. The ichnographic language also contributed to the sharp focus of all the structures. The plan form demands a certain specificity and required Piranesi to precisely define what would have escaped as a blurred background in the vedute format, too far to be visible. The *Campo Marzio* structure, in spite of the ichnographic form, or perhaps due to it, appear more as schematic designs than specific ones. Vincenzo Fasolo's analytical drawing of these structures¹ (Figure 7.01) implies this schematicism clearly, although at no point in his text does Fasolo state this conclusion or follow its inferences. The structures appear more as diagrams, and as Fasolo shows, they are principally formed by geometrical combinations of circles, triangles, squares, etc. Sometimes in these structures the third dimension appears to be an open question, its real implications unknown. In one of the schematic birds-eye view (W-E 610, F479a Figure 7.02), the structure between Theater of Balbi, and Theater of Marcellus appears as a variation of a *cinquocento*, a central domed structure with four side domes. Within the *Campo Marzio* plan, the same structure appears with six side circles, all of them of equal importance, and in the process appearing as an unprecedented form (Figure 7.03). Vincenzo Fasolo's diagrammatic representation of this structure, clearly brings out the geometrical underlay of the structure, two concentric central circles, with a constellation of six circles, three on each side (Figure 7.04). The implica-

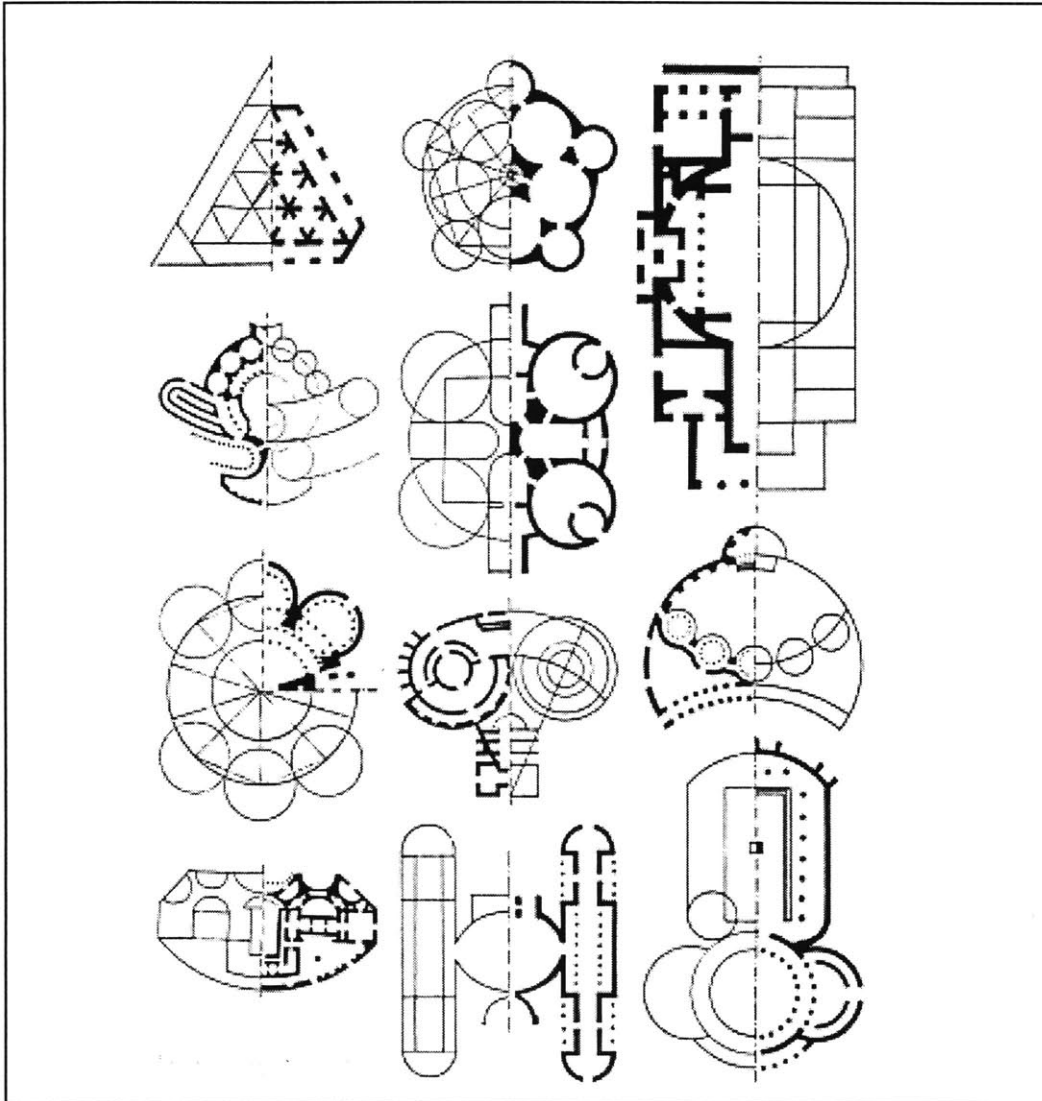


Figure 7.01 Vincenzo Fasolo's analytical drawing of the Campo Marzio structures

tion that only four of these smaller circular forms are covered cannot be deduced from the plan. It almost appears that Piranesi generated the third dimension of the structure afterwards, using only two of the three circles. The schematic vedute or the bird's-eye view also shows the central dome to be like the Pantheon with an orifice, although proportionately much larger. This central opening is indicated in the plan with a dotted circle. The angular beams that support the roof structure also find an expression in the plan in the piers at the junction of the smaller circles. It is possible that Piranesi may have returned to the plan

later, after drawing the vedute to make additions of the dotted circle of the central orifice and the piers. In that case, Piranesi should also have made some change in the representation of the side domes, unless it was an intentional misrepresentation. It is therefore difficult to make a straight case for a two-dimensional nature of the *Campo Marzio* structures. The third dimension is existing in these forms, although not always accurately indicated in the plan. Furthermore, if one reads this circular structure as its third dimensional view demands, as a central circular domed space with four semi-circular half domed spaces, it begins

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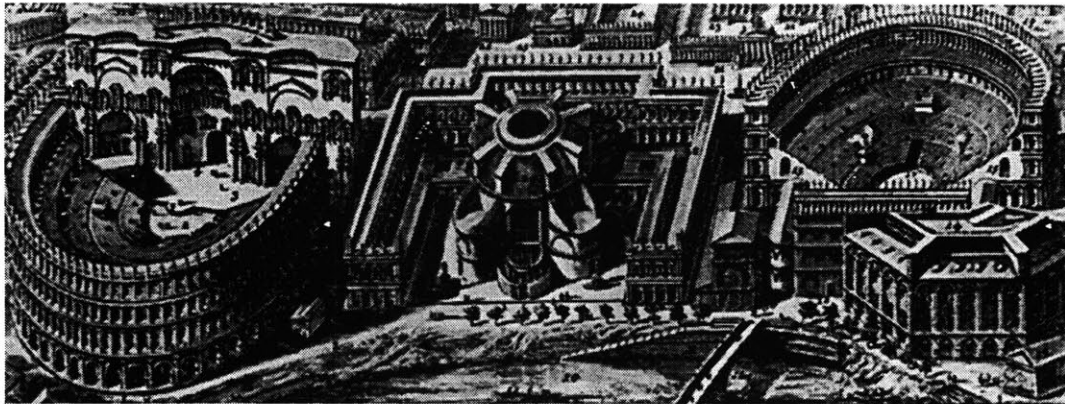


Figure 7.02 Schematic birds-eye-view in Il Campo Marzio

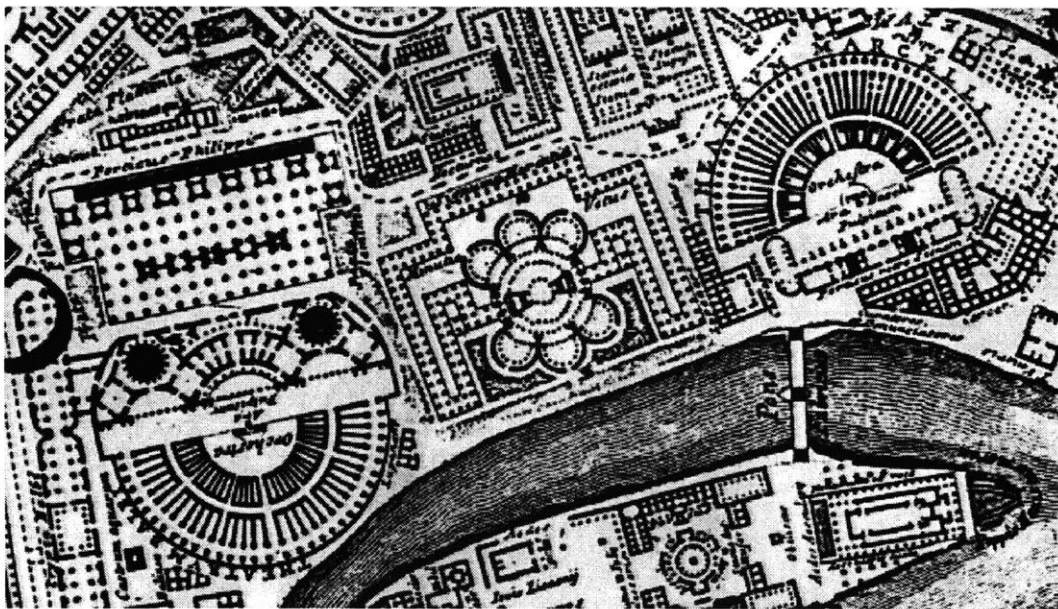
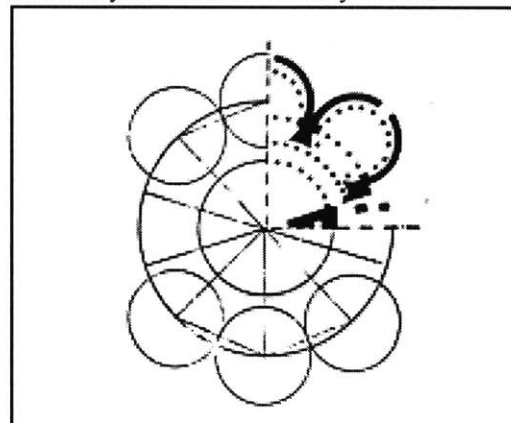


Figure 7.03 Plan of area in Campo Marzio plan corresponding to Figure 7.02

to look like a variation of a traditional plan. One of *Antichita Romane's* Plate (W-E 429, F 294) shows such a plan of a tomb, with a central circular space, and four small half domed space (Figure 705). If the side four domes of this plan are further scooped out, and two other smaller circular spaces are added, a plan similar to the structure in *Campo Marzio* begins to emerge.

The diagrammatic nature of the structures of *Campo Marzio* also had to do with the diagrammatic nature of many structures of the Marble plan. Some of the Marble plan fragments used

Figure 7.04
Plan analysis of the structure by V. Fasolo



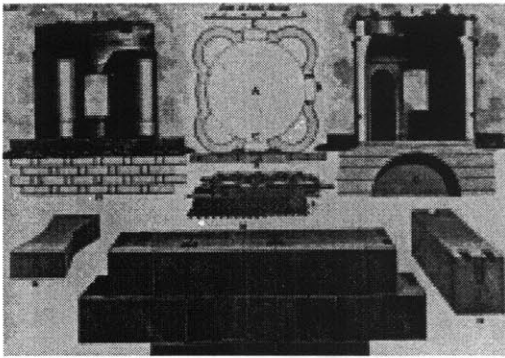


Figure 7.05 plan of a tomb, *Antichita Romane*

by Piranesi as models are almost schematic diagrams themselves. For example, the fragment on which the *Viridarium Lucii* is based is a single line diagram of a building (Figure 4.62). In the transformation of this fragment to a structure of obviously larger scale, Piranesi does not manage to remove the schematic nature of the plan. In any case Piranesi's space making elements appear unequivocally linear, and space appears to be made more by planes rather than solids. In many structures thick walls are denied a solidity by enlarging the niches, so as the residual sections of the walls almost appear as piers, thus accentuating the fluidity as well as the diagrammatic nature of the structure. In such articulation of structures Piranesi appears to be influenced not so much by the Marble Plan, as by the Baroque search for dynamic fluid spaces. It would not be untenable to assert that Piranesi here may be exhibiting the possible Roman prototypes from which Baroque structures evolved. Again, this is not the only strategy, although perhaps the most visible one. In many other structures the relation of spaces, and the thick mass is analogous to the Baths. The wall is now a malleable, non-linear element and subject to providing the rigorous equilibrium to the dynamic spaces conceived. Such spaces, as in the Curio Octavia, however, place the spatial sequence of the Baths along the diagonals of the structures, and thereby again producing a Baroque like result. In the freedom of twisting such axis or creating new interpretation of these elements there is almost a sixteenth century mannerist variation at play here.

The plans then, formed either by a series of lin-

ear elements, or by malleable solids, still have one operating force that appears to be common to all of them. This is the spatial geometry of the figures, the objective being the creation of dynamic spatial movement, but primarily using platonic geometric shapes. For even when a complex spatial relation becomes imminent by the combination of circles or two such forms, Piranesi clearly accentuates the independence of these structures by either introducing a ring of columns, or by creating a distinct hierarchy such that the parts again gain some autonomy (Figure 7.09, 7.01). Hence it is possible to analyze Piranesi's structures as a combination of platonic geometric parts. Such a system of geometric parts was similar to sixteenth and seventeenth century reconstructions of ancient Roman forms. Figure 7.08 is a reconstruction of a temple by G. B. Montano, which was existing in the eighteenth century. The structure can be described as a central circular domed space, with two half domed side spaces, all distinct and separately articulated. The mass of the wall thickness is punctuated by niches, expressing and articulating the solidity and weight of the structure. Palladio's in his studies of antiquity in 1570, termed this structure as *Galluce* (Figure 7.06) The structure is nearly the same, except that Montano has further embellished the front and side elevations. Both in Montano's and Palladio's reconstruction, the articulation of the niches, as well as other details betray the predilections of their time. Bauldessire Peruzzi, also drew the same structure but called it temple of Minerva (Figure 7.07). As Peruzzi's sketch predates both Montano, and Palladio, it may be termed as the first record of the structure.

Piranesi's Curia Pompeii shows a similar arrangement as the Peruzzi-Palladio-Montano structure. There is a central domed space, with two half-domed side spaces. In Piranesi's structure the walls have been reduced to planar elements, and an inner ring of columns is introduced which must have supported the dome above. This central space is probably modeled on the Tomb of St. Costanza, which Piranesi erroneously assumed to be the temple of Bacchus (W-E 158, F 811). Another similar structure is the plan of a sepulchral building in *Antichita Romane* (W-E 386, F 251). The central space is octagonal in this case,

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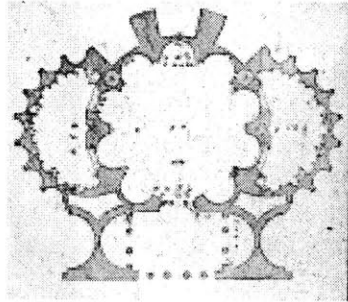


Figure 7.06 Plan of structure by Palladio

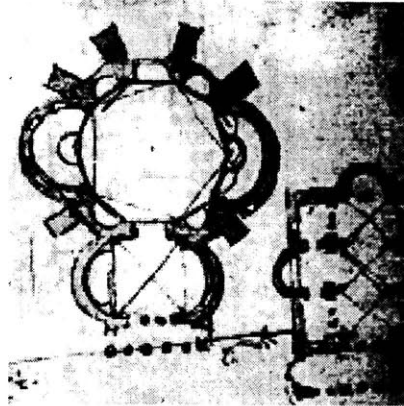


Figure 7.07 Plan of same structure by Perruzzi

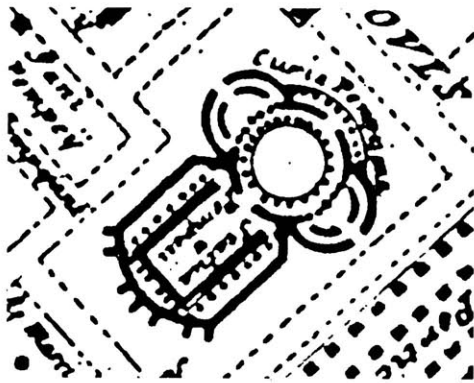


Figure 7.09 Curia Pompeii by Piranesi

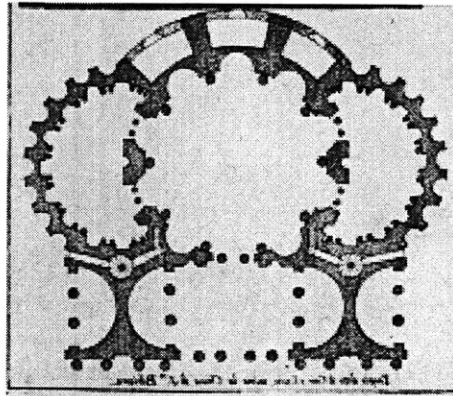
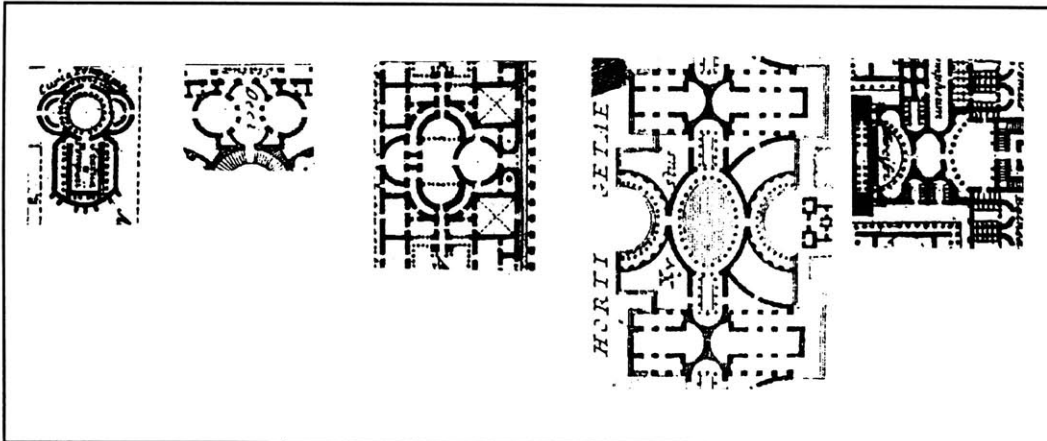


Figure 7.08 Plan of same structure by Montano

Figure 7.10 Structures in Campo Marzio with similar treatment as in Curia Pompeii



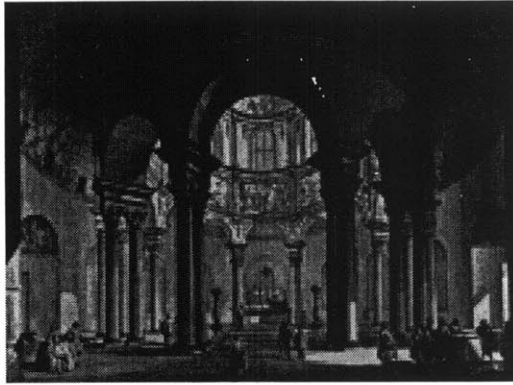


Figure 7.11 Tomb of St. Costanza (W-E 158)

and there are three rings of circular structure inside this structure, as if an alternative to the solid wall with niches. The walls themselves are again reduced to simple planar elements. As Figure 7.10 shows this arrangement of one large space, either circular, or elliptical with two side spaces is often used in the *Campo Marzio* plan.

Another Montano temple, which itself may have been based on St. Costanza, also shows a central space, with a ring of columns that supports the central dome (Figure 7.17). In this reconstruction the walls are reduced to planar elements, similar to Piranesi's structure. Montano here is delineating two circular forms conjoined end to end. A similar relationship of circular forms conjoined end to end is also found in a Palladio reconstruction called the Temple of Sun and Moon (Figure 7.12). In Palladio's structure, the two temples were identical structures stuck end to end. A similar dynamic relation between circular forms is provided in the Basilica of Caius and

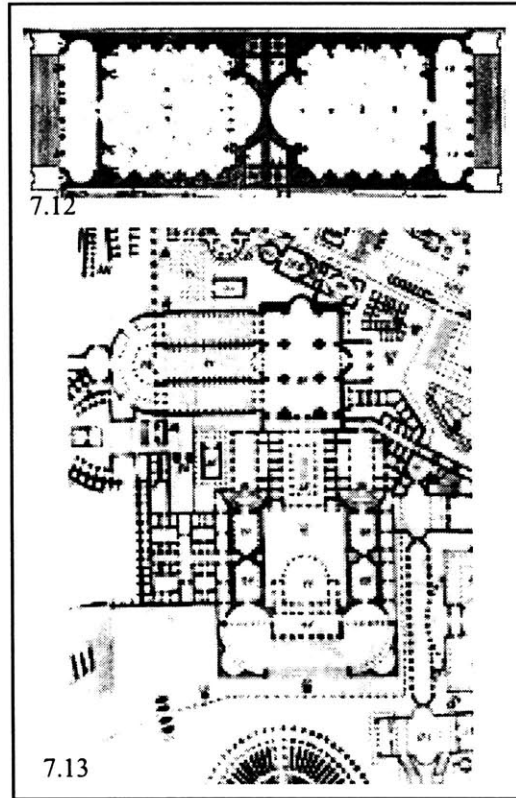


Figure 7.12 Palladio's drawing of Temple of Sun and Moon

Figure 7.13 Piranesi's use of Palladio's structure in his reconstruction of Roman Forum

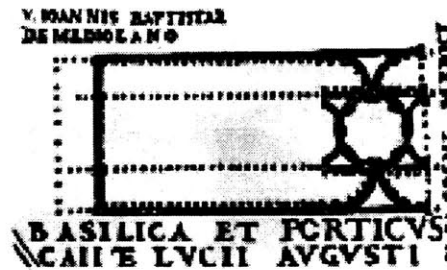


Figure 7.14 Buffalini's Basilica of Caius and Lucius

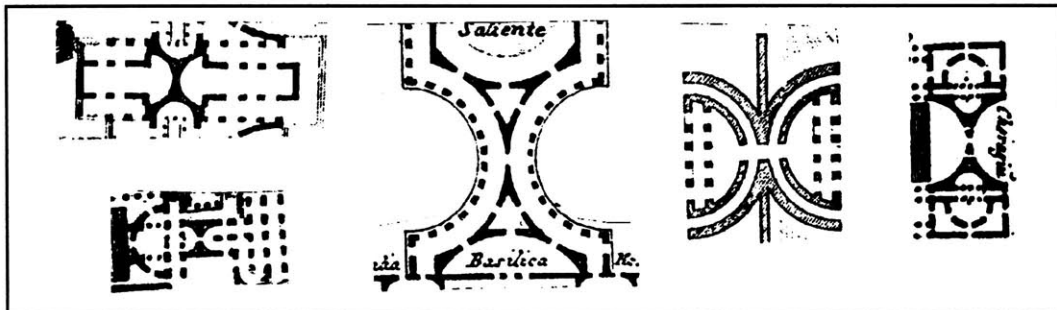


Figure 7.15 Structures in Campo Marzio plan with similar treatment as Palladio's temple of Sun and Moon (Figure 7.12)

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Lucius in Buffalini's map of Rome of 1551 (Figure 7.14). In his use of the circle, Piranesi may have taken his cues from these structures or from the many sepulchral buildings around Rome, or from the Hadrian's Villa or a combination of these visions.

Piranesi uses simple geometric forms, primarily the circle as seen in these structures, and then combines them in various permutations, again seen in these structures, to achieve the forms of *Campo Marzio*. Analyzed this way, Piranesian structures appear to emerge more from the Renaissance or Baroque consciousness of ancient Rome than any inventive game of caprice. Figure 7.16 shows some of the operations Piranesi can be said to have performed. Two circles are conjoined end to end, and in one of the variation of this basic scheme, one circle is cut into a hemisphere. This is a scheme close to Montano's temple, but if the hierarchy is reversed and the full circle made the smaller structure. If such a scheme is arrayed to produce a series of these circle-half circle combinations, this gives us a design that is close to one of the central element in one of Piranesi's structures (Figure 7.16). If we array the original sketch as full circles. From these four circles, let us reduce the two added circles to half circles, and then extend them as arms of a wing. We again arrive at the central element of another Piranesian structure (Figure 7.18).

Returning to the combination of the full circle and the half circle, let us assume the circle and half-circle to be of equal dimension, similar to Montano's temple. To this combination, let us introduce two more arcs on the cross axis, similar to the convex arcs shown in Montano's structures, or to the many convex arcs in the Hadrian's Villa. (Refer Figure 7.19) To this combination, let us add two small circles on the other end of the full circles. Again, this is not an unknown element been introduced, as another Montano structure shows just similar circular appendage; and such circular chambers were part of the Roman vocabulary. With this combination, we again arrive at the central element of another Piranesi structure (Figure 7.20).

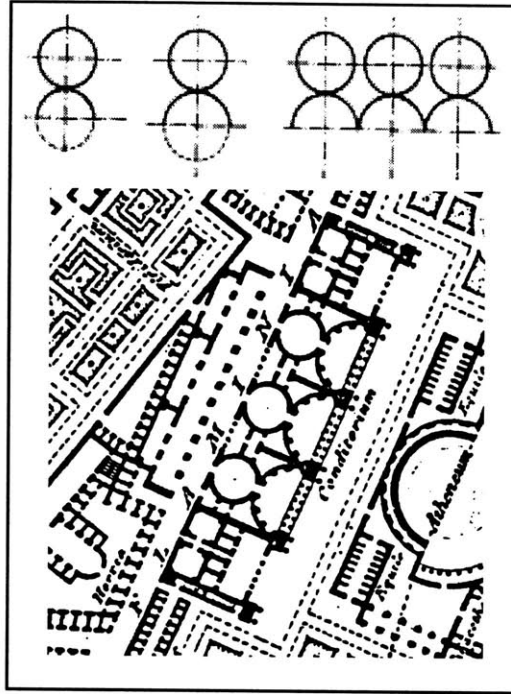


Figure 7.16

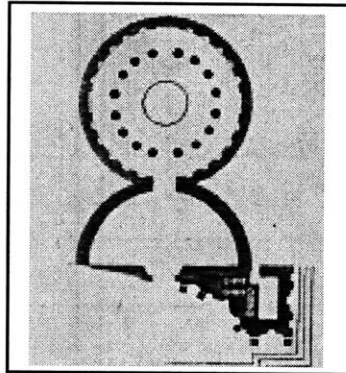


Figure 7.17
Reconstruction
of a temple by
Montano

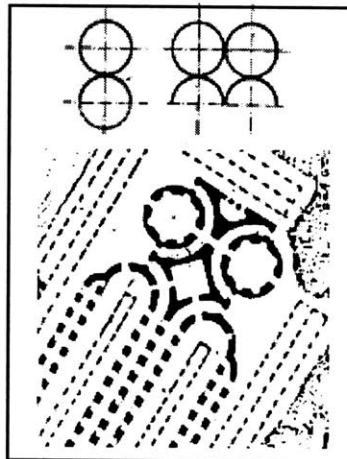


Figure 7.18

Figure 7.19
Palladio's
reconstruction
of Therme di
Agrippe

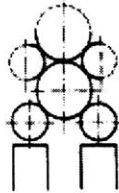
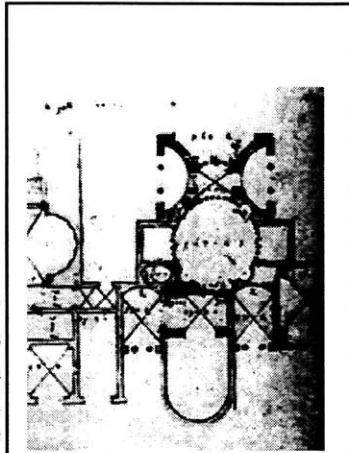


Figure 7.20
Structure in
Campo
Marzio

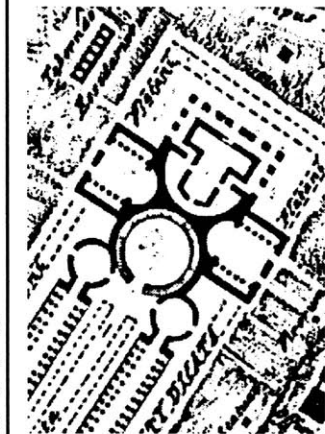


Figure 7.22 shows another Montano temple, which is a constellation of six small circular chambers, around a central circular space. Montano also presents us with another variation of the same temple in which the center is hexagonal. The spatial geometry of this structure is similar to the structure between Theater of Balbi and Theater of Marcellus discussed earlier (Figure 7.23), which could easily be derived by performing a number of operations on Montano's structure. Let us now note the other possible variation of Montano's structure. If the constellation of the smaller circles is increased while the central circular space removed, we arrive at another Piranesian structure, at whose center is placed a staircase scooped out of the masonry mass formed from the constellation of circles (Figure 7.25).

Figure 7.21, 7.22 Montano's temples

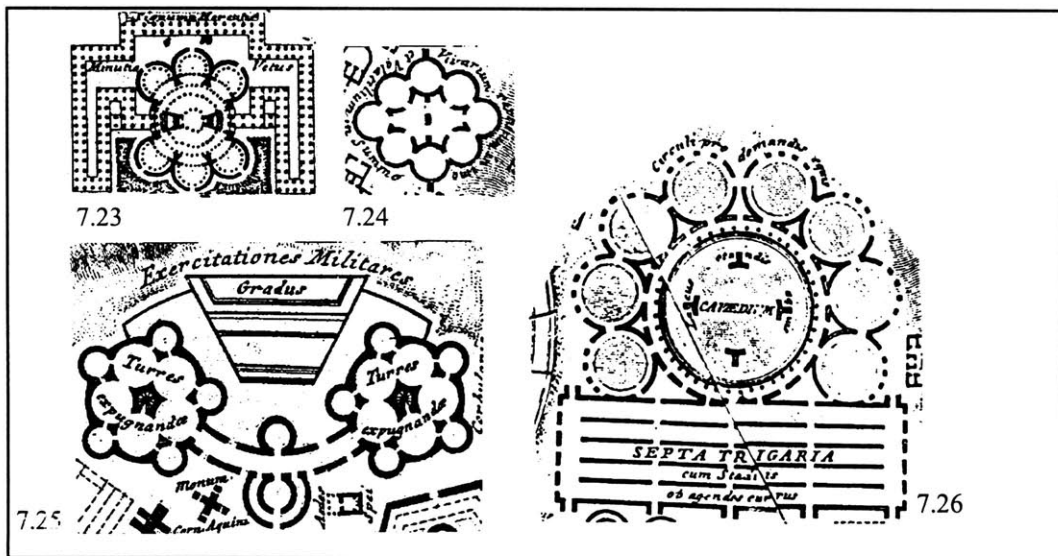
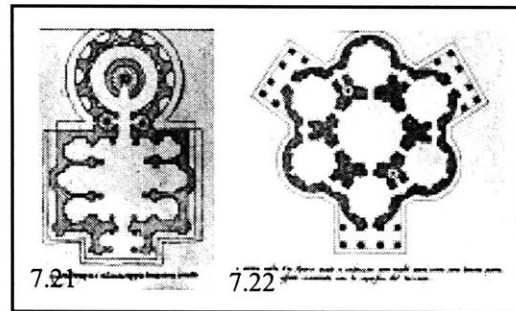


Figure 7.23-7.26 Structures in *Campo Marzio* plan similar to Montano's temple in Figure 7.22

The Geometric Underlay

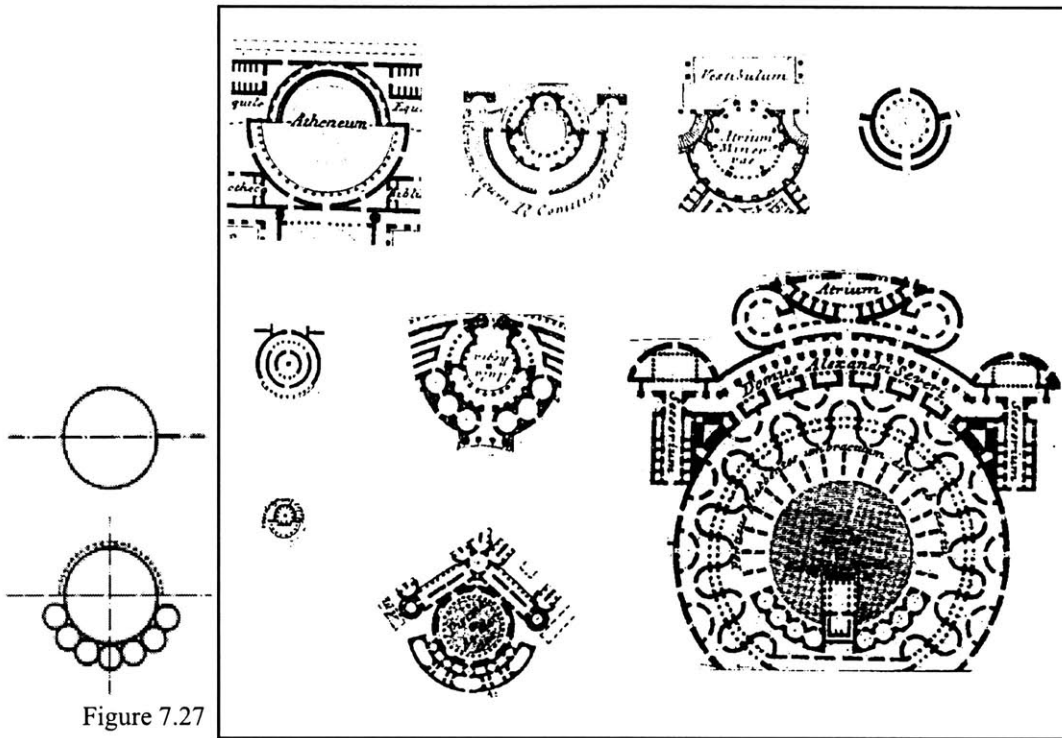


Figure 7.27

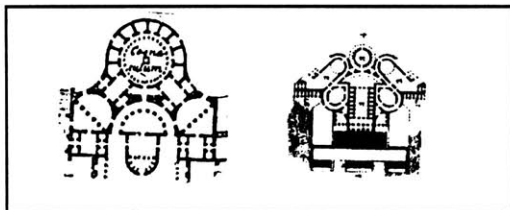


Figure 7.28

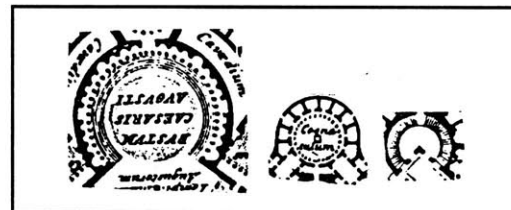
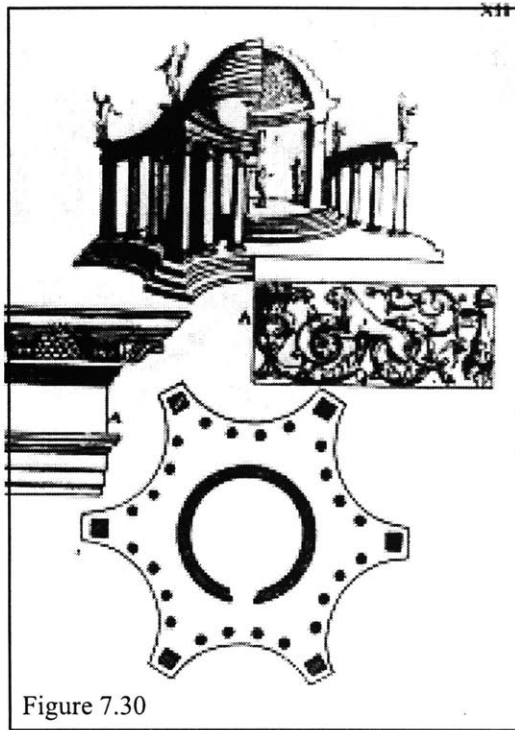


Figure 7.29

There is a precedence for such a central location of a staircase, as can be testified by yet another structure by Montano (Figure 7.21). In another variation of this Montano structure, let us enlarge the central circle and change the walls from a solid mass to planar elements. From this configuration, if we remove some structures, such that it can now be intersected into a flat element, another Piranesian structure can be achieved (Figure 7.26).

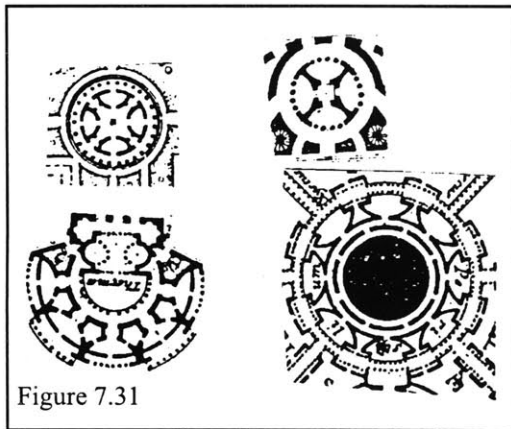
Let us once again return to a simple single circle, and divide this circle in two halves, such that one part is given one kind of treatment say a circular constellation, while the other is given a string of columns or another treatment. A whole family of Piranesian structures created through such opera-

tions emerge (Figure 7.27). Some of these structures show concentric rings, known to have existed, for example in St. Stephano Rotunda. The central structure of the *Domus of Alexandri Sevari* offers perhaps the most virtuoso example of such a string of operations. The inside core is a lake, similar to the horatium in Hadrian's Villa. Half of the next concentric ring is a constellation of domed circular spaces, while the rest are just two strings of columns. This is followed by another concentric ring, punctuated by reverse domes, and finally another concentric ring. Figure 8.05 shows a perspectival drawing by Piranesi, whose spatial articulation is very similar to the domus of Alexandri Sevari (the large plan in Figure 7.27).



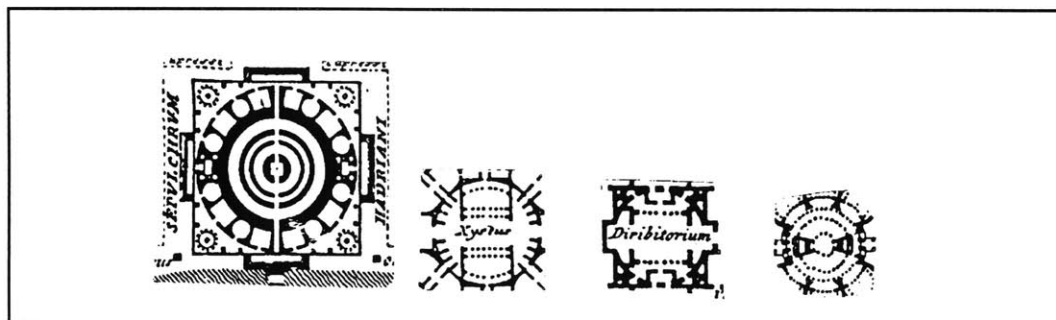
Similarly, other Piranesi structures exhibit a central circle cut out only at an angle, and given different treatment (Figure 7.29). Figure 7.28 also shows the top end of two structures, one in Nero's nymphaeum, and the other in the bustum of Hadrian, where one can be said to be variation of the other.

In another Montano reconstruction, a circular temple is shown surrounded by convex rings of colonnades, as if forming inner arches in plan on a second circle implied although not shown (Figure 7.30). This structure also gives us clues to another family of Piranesi's circular forms. Montano's structure is also similar to a small circular structure shown in one of the marble fragments in the plan of Rome (W-E 288, F 153 Figure 4.07). This small circular structure is shown with four segments of masonry, which again appear to leave out convex spaces. In his structures, Piranesi uses convexity as pronounced as Montano's structure, but inscribed mostly in masonry, similar to the small Marble plan fragment. Figure 7.31 shows the variation of this composition. The plan of upper drum of St. Ivo may have also served as a model for these structures.



Thus, Piranesi's methodology for articulating these structures is a complex collage of simple geometric elements conjoined in simple known ways. These elements, such as a circular space, as well as their rules of combination either existed in the vocabulary of ancient Roman architecture, or at least within the consciousness of Renaissance and the Baroque. Thus Piranesi's structures can be said to be the result of an interpretive memory, which by virtuosity of the per-

Figure 7.32 Other treatments of the Circular form in Campo Marzio plan. Notice the extra ring on Hadrian's tomb.



The Geometric Underlay

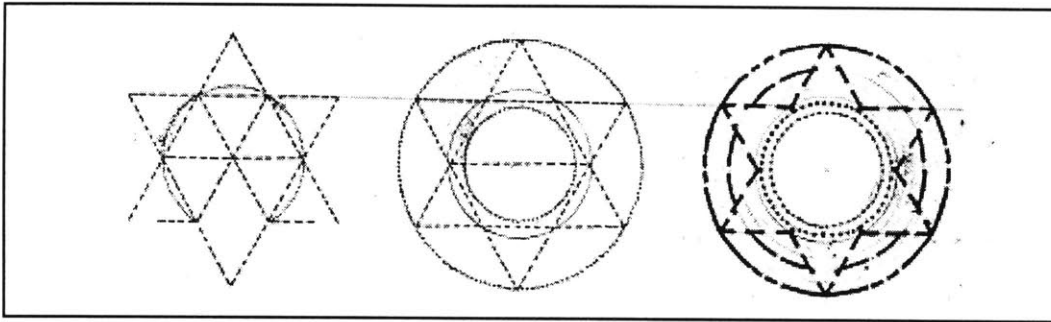


Figure 7.33

mutations created a complex spatial relation as well as its articulation from simple elements. It is possible to think of the relationship between parts of Piranesi's structures as fluid or contingent, such that their rearrangements, like furniture in a room, will yield another form. Sergi Eisenstein, in analyzing the Carceri etchings, conducts just such an operation, abstracting the forms from one etching, making some changes to get the forms of another etching. The basic language of Piranesi's memory operations in Campo Marzio can be said to be geometric. In this use of geometry Piranesi appears similar to Borromini.

Figure 7.34 shows the plan of Borromini's St. Ivo as published by Giannini in Borromini's opera of 1720. As Joseph Connors points out, Giannini introduced a second triangle in the sketch, which in reality would be superfluous in a constructional sense as it lends no key points on the plan. But Giannini's addition became an accepted norm and the eighteenth century perception of the church was of two intersecting triangles. Figure 7.33 shows the abstraction of this geometry by Paolo Portoghesi. A series of geometrical operation on this geometric abstraction (Figure 7.33-7.34) brings us close to yet another Piranesian structure. If, however one notices very carefully the actual Piranesian structure, its arms do not run in a straight line, and this structure, therefore cannot be simply analyzed as an overlapping of two triangles. Piranesi's structure divides the circle in six equal parts and then continues to join these six points

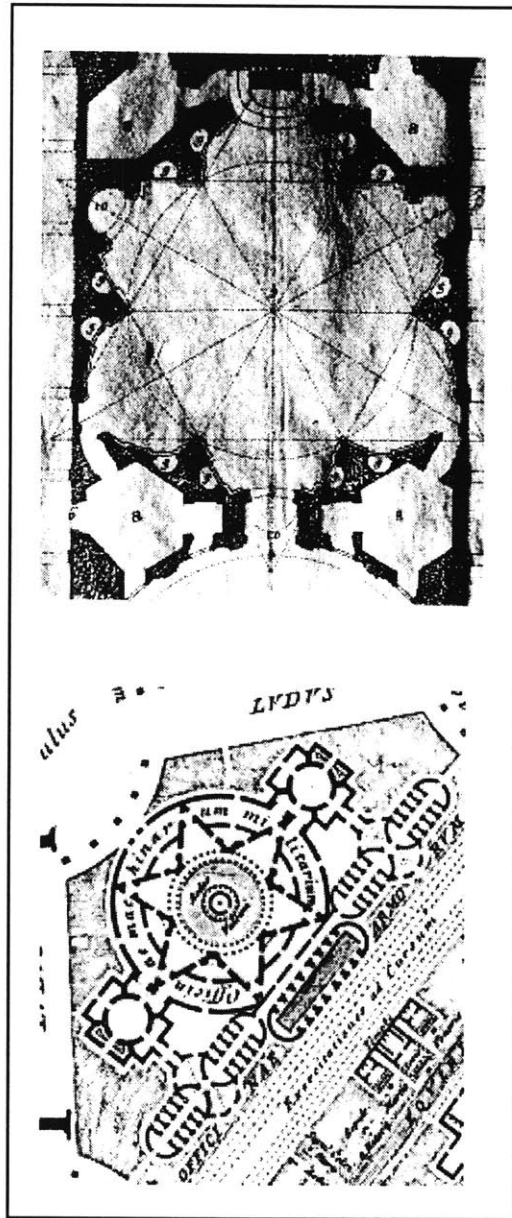


Figure 7.34

to six points on the outer circle, so placed as to be in the center of two points of the inner circle. But it is also possible that Piranesi abstracted this design from Borromini's St. Ivo and only introduced a precision of accurately dividing the circle in redrawing it. In any case Piranesi's use of geometry to create structure is similar to Borromini.

Baldassarre Peruzzi's sketch for a triangular church (Figure 7.35) offers another insight into the Renaissance consciousness of complex geometrical spaces formed from triangles and circles. Piranesi's *Sepulchrum Agrippae* is a similar structure that abstracts a series of triangular spaces followed by three circular ones around it (Figure 7.36). Piranesi, most likely derived this form from the plan of the triangular structure in the Marble plan fragment, which was also transformed into the pyramidal form described earlier.²

This similarity of Piranesi's forms with Peruzzi's sketch, or the many forms of Montano show that in the Renaissance, the Baroque, and the eighteenth century consciousness there was an image of such complex geometric forms associated with ancient Rome.

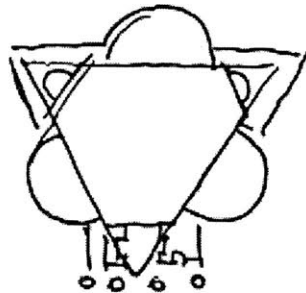


Figure 7.35

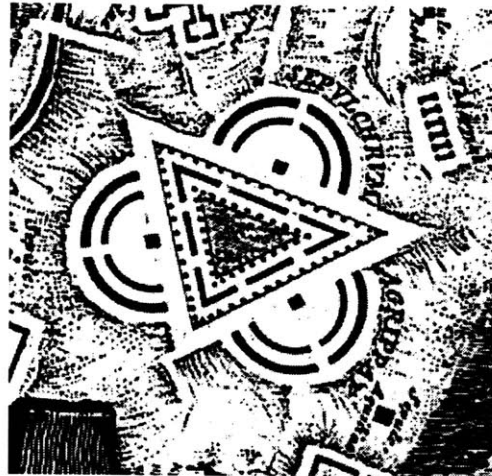


Figure 7.36 Structure in Campo Marzio plan similar to B. Perruzi's church (Figure 7.35)

VIII

Piranesi's 'Memory Fragments' *and the Palimpsest of Interpretive Memory*

As the preceding chapter shows, Piranesi's process of imagining the forms of *Campo Marzio* plan is a series of geometrical operations, or combinations of simple geometric forms. The simple forms used in this imagination, primarily the circle, were not un-Roman, nor were the methods of conjoining these forms un-Roman. These forms derive their novelty from the degree of operations and Piranesi's virtuosity in creating these permutations. But a series of geometric operations in themselves is an inconclusive exercise and could hardly lead to the visionary designs of the *Campo Marzio*. Even if such geometric exercises did lead to the forms of *Campo Marzio*, such an operation in itself would be a hedonistic game of imagination. *Campo Marzio* would then be a product of a 'fictitious' imagination, even if it such 'fiction' was unintended.

The guiding force of the geometric forms of the *Campo Marzio* plan was the collection of images of ancient Rome that Piranesi had built through his earlier works in other art genres, as well as the accounts of Pliny and other ancient authors. But the most tangible and ultimate source for these images were the ancient monuments, especially the many then existing non-classical structures which Piranesi studied and measured. More importantly, as most of these structures existed as ruins, that is incomplete structures, they provided Piranesi with fragmented images that he had to complete himself. The

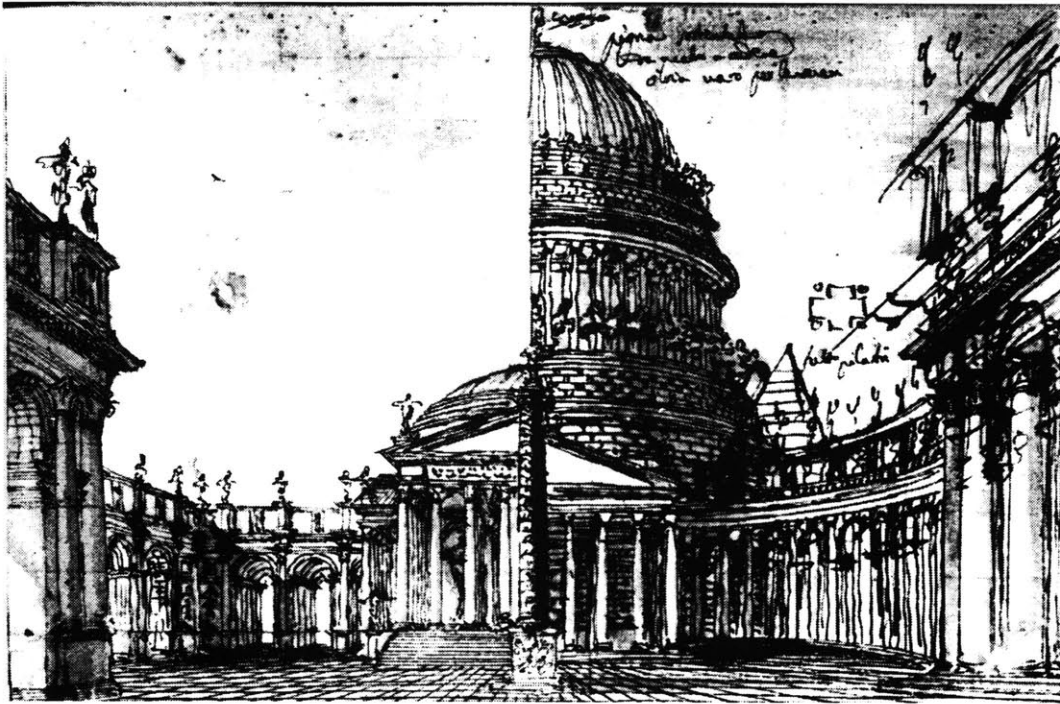


Figure 8.01

fragments of images that Piranesi collected from these monuments, and the magnificence that he assumed these structures to once possess, are not unique to Piranesi. Montano, Peruzzi, Ligorio, and even Palladio's study of antiquity shows such a collection of images. There was then a fantastic, although partly fuzzy, image of ancient Rome in the historic consciousness or collective memory of the Renaissance and the Baroque. As the world-view became more open ended, Newtonian and based on progress, this image of ancient Rome as the topos of imagination slowly eroded out of the collective memory. Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* can be termed as perhaps the last of the pre-moderns, or the post-Baroque.

On the other hand, if the *Campo Marzio* is analyzed for its freedom and inventive spirit, it would still stand as the first of the Moderns. For even if the fragments of images of ancient Rome led to the forms of *Campo Marzio*, in the

inventive spirit of the reconstruction, still an element of 'fiction' can be found. Assuming Piranesi's inventive spirit to be fictitious and based on personal caprice would be incorrect for Piranesi actually assumed that innovation and flexible application of the rules was a basic trait of the ancient Roman architecture. Hadrian's Villa, the many other sepulchral structures around Rome, and some of the forms of the Marble Plan authenticated such beliefs, and as shown in the previous part of the paper, led directly to the many forms of the *Campo Marzio* plan. For Piranesi the fragments of images of ancient Rome were a raw material to be extended and interpreted within the innovative boundaries of the rules of the ancients, and this critique of rules came in part from Lodoli, and in part from the post-Baroque milieu of Borromini. Hence the memory fragments became malleable and fluid, to be interpreted and extended within the innovative boundaries of the ancients. The geometric operations for

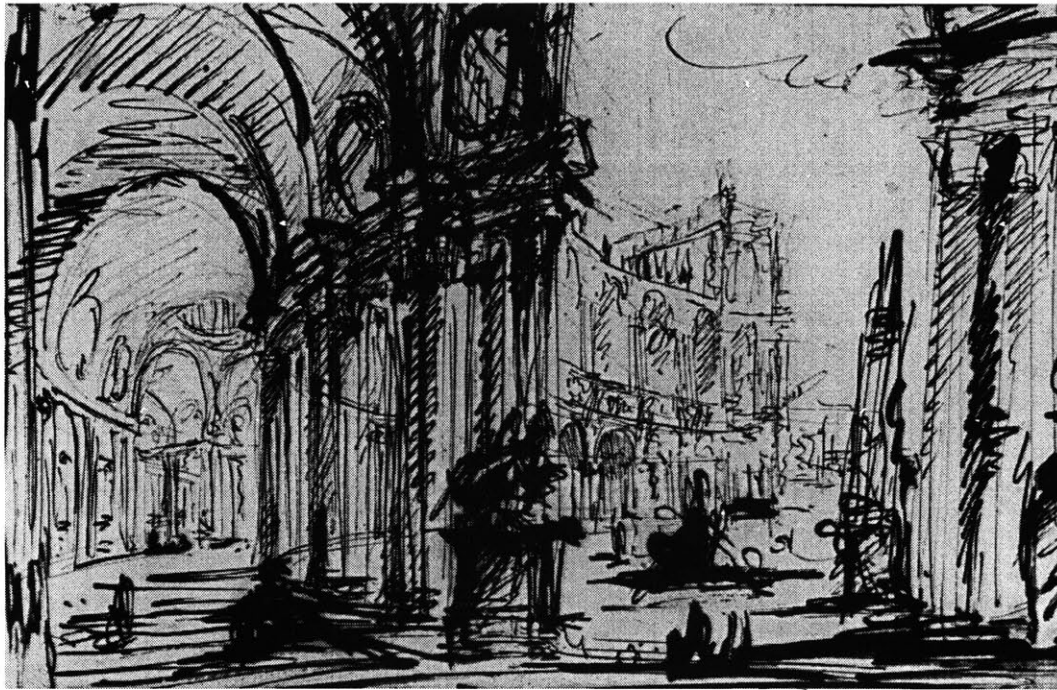


Figure 8.02



Figure 8.03 The place from where the drawing in Figure 8.02 may have been drawn

the forms of *Campo Marzio* are then the planimetric use of the memory fragments. As Piranesi's basic aim was to provide an image of ancient Rome, he assumed that by extending his memory fragments within the innovative use of the rules of the ancients, he will arrive at such an image. thus Piranesi's freedom and inventive spirit stemmed from a historical consciousness and not its denial.

The fluid use of memory fragments begins much earlier, is evident in many genres, and

extends beyond the *Campo Marzio* plan. The description here, however will be more related to how this images form and relates to the *Campo Marzio* plan. One of the mediums which expresses Piranesi's formation of the image of ancient Rome, as well as its dynamic use, is his drawings in the 1740's and 1750's. Figure8.01 is a drawing of the transformation of a Roman urban space, which is symmetrically divided into two parts with the only constant element being an obelisk in the center. Both parts of the drawings appear as versions of a formal arrangement of an Urban space along a central axis, similar to the one often used in the *Campo Marzio*. The view point of this one point perspective is on this very central axis, and thus accentuates the sharp division of the picture, as well focuses on the comparison of the two parts. On the left hand side of the drawing, the space is orthogonal, its perimeter prescribed by a deep masonry arcade. The end

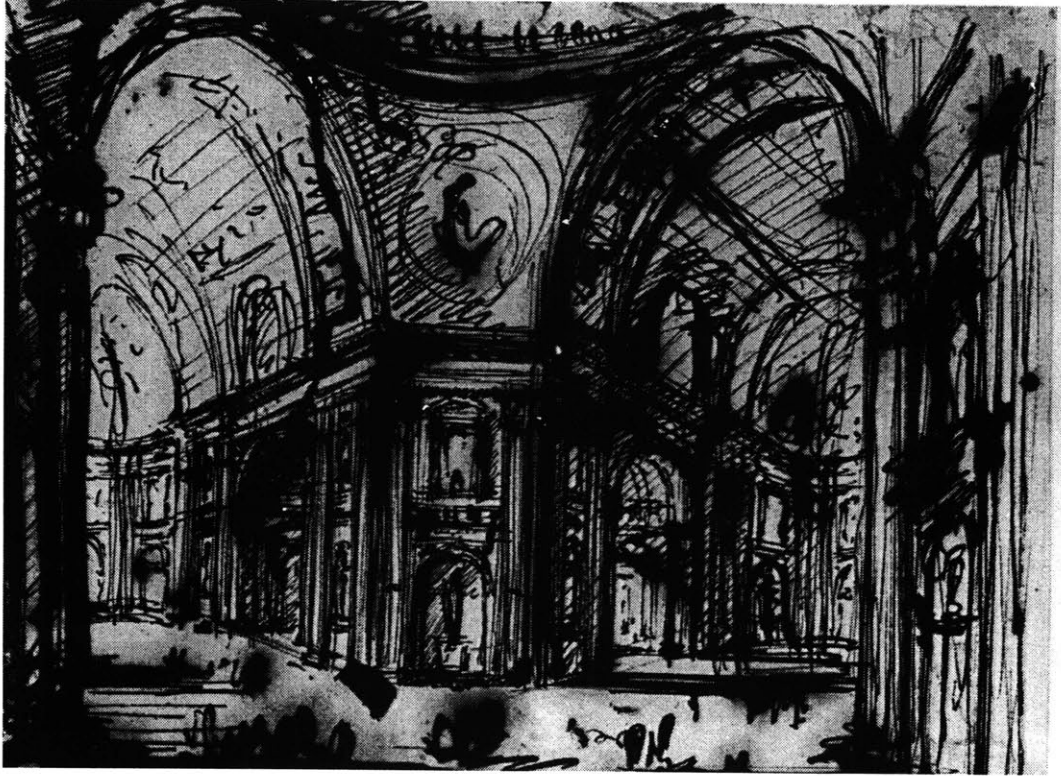


Figure 8.04

piece, or the culmination of the axis, is a simple Roman temple, a typological version of the Pantheon with side apses, and a much lower dome. The image on the right-hand side is obviously an enhanced version of either the same space or the elaboration of a similar spatial layout. The most obvious change is in the end piece, which is still a round basilica, with a facade made up of a deep portico, as in the Pantheon or in other Roman temples. The perimeter arms are curved, and in comparison to the left side, made up of a colonnade. This perimeter is obviously influenced by Bernini's St. Peter's square, but is the right hand side a transformation of the urban space into a baroque incarnation? There is a pyramid shown just behind the colonnade, which must have been a later addition as the rotunda of the main structure can be seen through the pyramid. Also the ink used in making the pyramid appears to

be much darker. The positioning of the pyramid, as well as the front low colonnade of the end piece raises doubts in assuming this space to be a Baroque version. On the other hand, the high dome of the basilica cannot be thought of as Roman. Hence, while the overall drawing can be understood as an iteration of Piranesi's image of ancient Rome, the right-hand side of the drawing shows the fluid use of this image.

Figure 8.02 is a drawing that shows a perspectival view through one end of a circular structure sitting in an urban space. A rough sketch of an obelisk marks perhaps one end of the space whose view is obstructed by another series of columns in the foreground. These columns appear to belong to another building although the structure on the left hand side does not appear to have terminated. This curvilinear series of colonnades appear to be

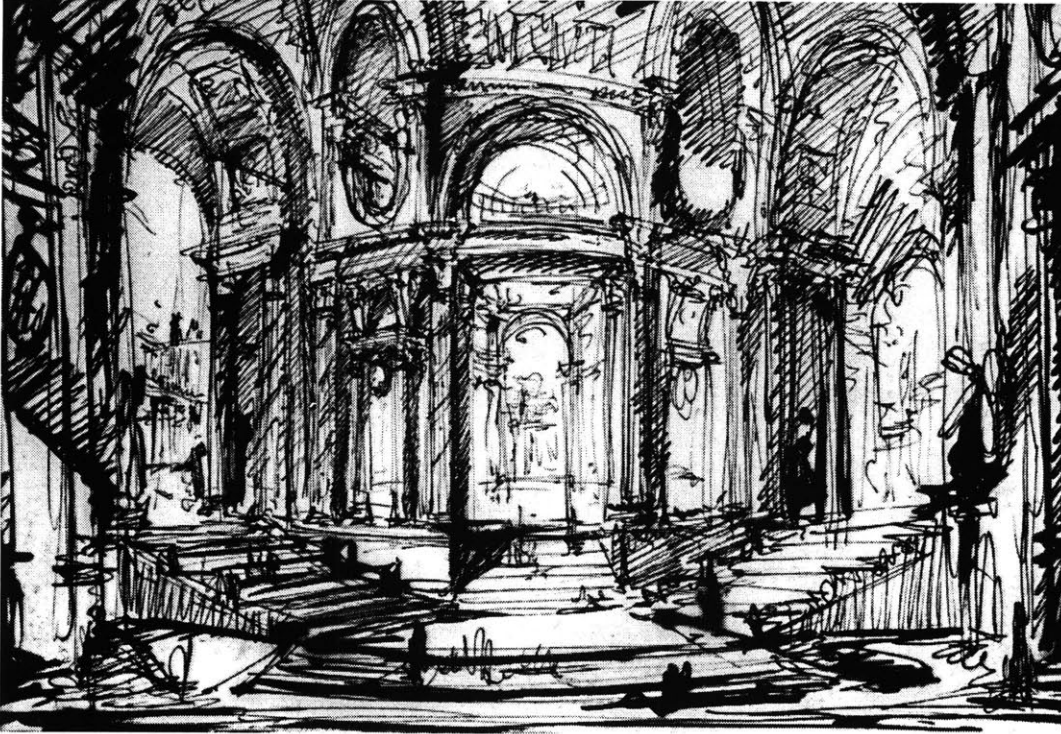


Figure 8.05

part of an elaborate structure as the sketchy background in the left hand part of the structure indicates. A junction in the curved colonnade is indicated in the roof, while there appears to be a clearer movement deeper into the structure. It is possible to show that the station point of this sketch was inside the curved colonnade of the right-hand side of the previous drawing, with the main basilica behind the view point and the structure on the right-hand side foreground being part of the portico of the basilica. In such a scenario, the junction between these two structures will be formed by the curvilinear form of the main basilica, or end piece (Figure 8.03). This is not to propose that this was the definitive way in which Piranesi drew these two drawings, but that these drawings manifest various versions of a malleable image of ancient Rome.

Figure 8.04 is a drawing with a perspectival view of an interior space. The view point is taken at a complex junction at the threshold of two curved spaces. One senses a much larger space behind the view point from which one is now progressing into two smaller spaces. The scale of the spaces appear close to the baths. The pier in front partially closes what may have been a triangular space between two or more curvilinear spaces. This sketch may be understood as an elucidation of complex geometric spaces which Piranesi uses later in the *Campo Marzio* plan.¹

Figure 8.05 is another drawing showing an interior perspective view. From the view point, which again appears to be at the threshold of a larger space behind it, three flights of steps lead above. A central series of steps lead to a space above. A circular ring of colonnade, still linked

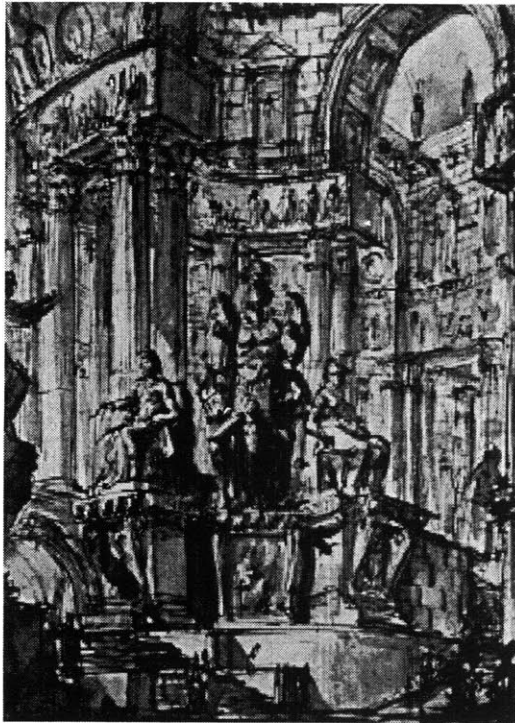


Figure 8.06

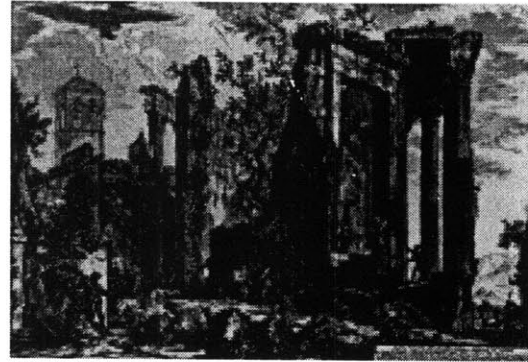


Figure 8.07

to the main structure define an open circular courtyard. This structure appears to recall the circular structures of Hadrian's Villa, but perhaps more emphatically, the garden end circular portico of the Baths of Caracalla. The background of the drawing, alluded to with a few strokes here and there, is an urban setting. In this drawing again Piranesi is in the process of elucidating for himself the image of an urban segment of ancient Rome, with a collage of various segments from various buildings now reposed in his memory.

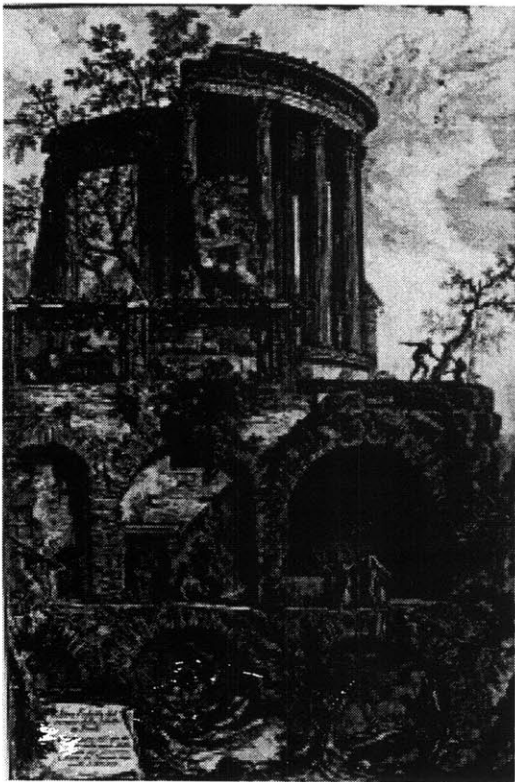


Figure 8.08

Figure 8.06 shows another drawing by Piranesi dated to be in the 1750's by Andrew Robinson. This drawing, as Robinson points out, is not based on any building or existing ruin. If, however, this drawing is seen as a collage and transformation of many fragments, its precedence begins to emerge. This drawing is of a ruin, only parts of the structure exists. The low view point cuts out most of the ground from the drawing. There is a sharp circular flight of stairs that leads up into the structure. There is a central ring made up of double rows of columns, and an outer ring of masonry, which leads deeper into the structure. There is a complexity and depth in this drawing that indicates Piranesi's mastery over perspective, but the collaging of memory fragments is still the same. The *vedute* of temple of Sibyl in Tivoli (W-E 195-196, F 765-766 Figure 8.07, 8.08) reveals a similar incomplete ring of columns. Also with a few geometrical operations on this drawing, a view from the side of many *Campo Marzio* forms can be formed, such as the house of Alexandri Severi (Fig-

Piranesi's 'Memory Fragments' and the Palimpsest of Interpretive Memory

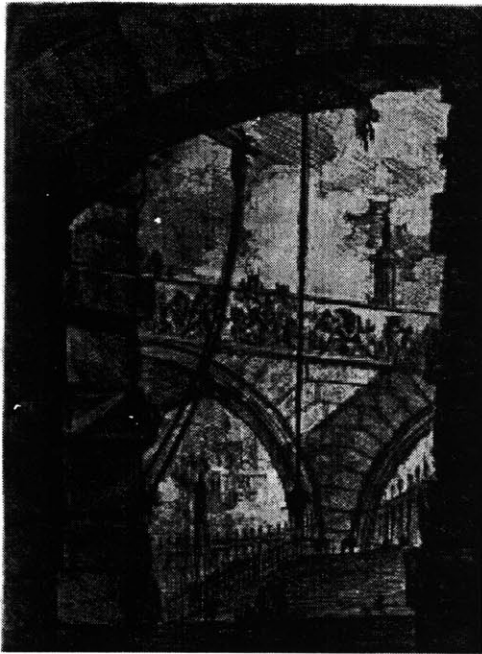


Figure 8.09



Figure 8.10

Figure 8.11



Figure 8.12

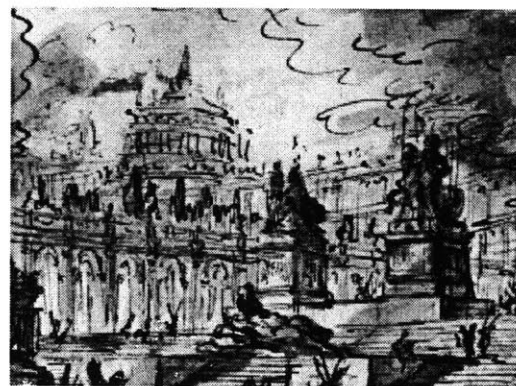


Figure 8.13

ure 7.27).

Use of Memory Fragments in Other Genres

Piranesi's other works, in different genres, indicate not only similar predilections, as in the drawings discussed above, but also similar spatial devices or themes. Such use substantiates the theory of Piranesi's use of 'memory fragments.' Figures 8.09, 8.10 is a comparison of two plates. The first plate (W-E 8, F 7), is a fantasy in *Prima Parte di Architettura e Prospettive* about a magnificent bridge with loggias and arches erected by a Roman Emperor (Figure 8.10). The second plate (W-E 29, F 27) is the early state of one of the *Carceri* etchings (Figure 8.09). The background of the right hand side of the first plate, beyond the arches of a second bridge is a magnificent circular urban space reached by a flight of steps from the river. In the second plate, from the *Carceri*, the view is taken from a semi-arched opening, and in the background is a similar circular space, marked with an obelisk, and approached through a series of arches. There is a series of flights of steps here, but they seem to lead above the plane of the Grand Piazza. In both the plates, the background are very similar urban space. Figure 8.13 is another drawing from the same period, which shows a similar urban space, with a magnificent curved peripheral structure, but in this drawing the urban space is divided into two by a lower arcade. If one were to remove the arcade and imagine the foreground to be a river, this drawing will almost appear as a close-up detail of the urban space shown as a background in the first plate (W-E 8, F 7).

Similarly, the structure indicated in the ornamental letter I in *Antichita Romane* (W-E 285) is also shown in another drawing that may have been an earlier sketch for one of *Antichita Romane*'s frontispiece. This structure may have been derived from a Fischer drawing of the tower of Babylon.

Piranesi's subject matter in different genres

also shows a continuation of concerns and themes with respect to the image of ancient Rome. Many of the buildings shown in the *Vedute de Roma* were subject of scrutiny and reconstruction in *Antichita Romane* and elsewhere. For example, the Baths of Titus,² were first etched by Piranesi in the *Vedute de Roma* (W-E 256, F 837) and later reconstructed in the *Antichita Romane* (W-E 330-332, F 195-197). Piranesi's exploration for an image of ancient Roman architecture thus spanned many categories, such as *vedute*, archeological work, and fantasies (*fantasia*). One of the hindrances in understanding the continuity of themes in Piranesi's work is the categorization of his work into different art genres.

Campo Marzio plan as the Palimpsest of Interpretive Memory: an Overview

The Renaissance's appraisal of the ancient Roman architecture was defined to a large extent by Vitruvian/Albertian rules. Vitruvius's aim was to compile empirical rules or perhaps even customs, but Alberti, in *De re Aedificatoria*, gave such rules a definite canonical format. Such rules had discrepancies with many existing ancient Roman structures that were then largely ignored, and in some sense assumed to be non-classical.

Carlo Lodoli critiqued the discrepancies in Vitruvius and aimed at a reassessment of the ancient Roman architecture with respect to such rules. In this reassessment, Lodoli wanted to include the many examples of ancient structures hitherto ignored. Given Lodoli's art collection, it is possible that Lodoli even assumed that there was a single set of rules that governed all architecture, and by the inspection of other examples, such as the ones from Middle Ages, these rules would emerge more clearly. For his desire to reassess the ancient architecture, Lodoli is often labeled a 'true modern.'³ Given Lodoli's closeness to Vico, such modernistic categorization is problematic.

Piranesi's 'Memory Fragments' and the Palimpsest of Interpretive Memory

It is probable that Lodoli's objectives in architecture were close to Vico's, and Lodoli was attempting to find a parallel in architecture of Vico's ideal eternal history. In any case, Lodoli's method of studying the art fragments collected in his garden and the use of imagination in this study recalls Vico's theories, or at least appear sympathetic to it.

In *Della Magnificenza*, Piranesi shows his affinity with Lodoli's ideas, and it is possible that the original aim of the treatise was to propagate Lodoli's theories. From Lodoli Piranesi acquired the methodology for studying ancient fragments as well as the objective of extrapolating an overall pattern from such studies. Piranesi may thus have begun the study the Marble plan with the hope of using Lodoli's method of studying fragments to achieve an overall plan of Rome. The *Campo Marzio* plan, even if not an overall plan of Rome, marks the culmination of this study.

From Lodoli Piranesi also acquired the critique of Vitruvian rules and the inclusion of ancient structures hitherto largely ignored as non-classical. Piranesi's impulse to use such non-classical models would also have found many supporters in the post-Baroque Roman milieu. Borromini's work is not only marked for the use of such models, but also his innovative and flexible application of rules. Given the Vitruvian inconsistencies in these ancient models, Piranesi eventually concluded that innovative and flexible application of rules was an essential trait of the ancient Roman architecture itself. Piranesi's work with the *Academie de Francais* in the 1740's can also be marked for the innovative use of ancient models.⁴ Thus Piranesi asserted in the introductory text of *Campo Marzio*, 'if someone compares these aspects of the ancient manner of architecture, he will see that many of them break with tradition, and resemble the usage of our own time.'⁵

The belief that the ancients were innovative in the use of rules, and that such innovations resulted in the many non-classical ancient structures, led to two things that are essential to

understanding Piranesi's imaginative mode. First was the image of ancient Rome that Piranesi built from the study of ancient ruins, including non-classical ones, and perhaps also from the writings of such authors as Piny. This image manifested in many art genres and as shown above was primarily structured by Piranesi's own time, that is Lodoli's Venetian influence, post-Baroque Rome, and the intellectual debates that began at the *Academie de Francais*. This image of ancient Rome is not unique to Piranesi, but is linked to a historic consciousness that extends back into the Renaissance. The compatibility of Piranesi's antiquarian work with Montano, Peruzzi, and even Palladio, and more importantly the compatibility of these ideas about ancient Rome amongst Montano, Peruzzi, and Palladio is due to a collective historic consciousness. There was a fantastic, although partly fuzzy, image of ancient Rome in the collective memory⁶ of the Renaissance and the Baroque, and Piranesi only extended this image.

Secondly, Piranesi assumes such images of ancient Roman architecture to be fluid, open to operations that the Romans themselves may have performed. Such operations were also necessary due to the incomplete nature of the images that Piranesi had acquired from the ruins. These images were fragments in the memory to be extended, transformed and collaged much in the same way as Lodoli proposed to study the art fragments in his garden. Piranesi's use of imagination can be termed as the manipulation of fluid memory fragments, such that the rearrangements of parts of one structure, like furniture in a room, would yield another form. The basic operations that Piranesi performs on these memory fragments, and assumed the ancient Romans would have performed themselves, was the permutation and transformation of simple geometric elements. The fluidity of Piranesi's memory fragments was then geometric. But given that Piranesi's basic elements were Roman, and his belief that this fluidity was a trait of the ancient Romans themselves, Piranesi's imagination does not harbor on a free run, or notions of open-ended Modern view of

the world, but was still part of the post-Baroque historic-imagination. It was hence Piranesi's use of fluid memory fragments that resulted in the many fantastic images of ancient Rome in the different art genres.

The 'original' forms of *Campo Marzio* plan were not to instill a second-order meaning in the plan, or the result of a fictive imagination. The underlay of *Campo Marzio*'s forms is geometric elements combined in simple relationships guided by the fluidity of the memory fragments. The *Campo Marzio* plan then is also a result of the use of fluid memory fragments. The reason that the forms of *Campo Marzio* appear original and different from Piranesi's other works is primarily due to the ichnographic format of the plan that demanded sharpness and articulation of every structure. Perhaps the more important reason in the difference between *Campo Marzio* and Piranesi's other work, is that in *Campo Marzio*, Piranesi attempted to strive for the most magnificent version of his image of ancient Rome, as *Campo Marzio* was the most important known site of ancient Rome. References such as the Hadrian's Villa, and the Marble plan also gave Piranesi the impetus to evolve such magnificent forms, and some of the forms of *Campo Marzio* evolved directly from these sources.

Piranesi also was not bothered that some of the *Campo Marzio* forms, even if in the correct architectural idioms, may not have existed at all, or at least not in that very form. His intent in the reconstruction of the *Campo Marzio* plan, as in all his reconstructions in *Antichita Romane*, may be termed pictorial, that is to give an image of ancient Rome. In this intent, Piranesi was in consonance with the aims of such antiquarians as Pirro Ligorio, although present historiography now accuses Piranesi of abandoning the objectivity and accuracy that only later archaeology demanded.

The *Campo Marzio* plan is thus the ichnographic geometric representation of the transformation, extension and collaging of the memory fragments. As the culmination of the

study of the fragments of the Marble Plan, the antiquarian work of *Antichita Romane*, and Piranesi's aim of achieving an overall plan of Rome, the *Campo Marzio* plan can be termed as *the* palimpsest of Piranesi's interpretive memory.

Notes

CHAPTER I

**Piranesi
Earlier Work and
the Issue of Fictive Memory**

¹ This biographical sketch is based on G. L. Bianconi's and J. G. Legrand's biographical work, among other sources. Refer Bibliography.

² *Architettura Civile*, 1711.

³ See J. A. Hatfield's *The relationship between late Baroque architecture and scenography, 1703-1778: the Italian influence of Ferdinando and Giuseppe Bibiena, Filippo Juvarra, and Giovanni Battista Piranesi.* Thesis, Wayne State University.

⁴ John Wilton-Ely, *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi*, London 1978. Pg. 11.

⁵ See Henry A Millon, 'Vasi-Piranesi-Juvarra' in *Piranesi et les Francais, 1740-1790.* Ed. G. Brunel and Pierre Arizzoli. Pg. 345-362. The article lays specific focus on Piranesi's probable activities during this period, and Juvarra's influence on both Vasi and Piranesi.

⁶ By early work, I mean at least till 1760, although it is only in the dialogues of *Parere su l'Architettura* that a decisive shift is discernible. Wittkower notes this shift in '*Piranesi's Architectural Creed*,' *Studies in the Italian Baroque.*

⁷ Joseph Rykwert is perhaps the most assertive in stating this hypothesis. Refer *The First Moderns*, pg. 330 to 390. In a footnote, Rykwert also asserts "It was not lack of building in Rome which drove Piranesi to learn etching; it was his passion for the ruins and the pettiness of contemporary building in comparison with these, as well as his intransigent independence."

⁸ The other important architect of the 1740's,

Nicola Salvi, and certainly one of the key theoreticians of the time died in 1751.

⁹ The total plan measured 18.1 x 13.0 meters. Even today the position of all the fragments in the ancient city is not a certainty.

¹⁰ This plan was earlier given a much later date, by both Hind and Focillon. Wilton-Ely has however dates it to 1774, because of some correspondence of Piranesi in 1774 which clearly mentions the plan. Nolli's plan was a key reference for Piranesi, and fragments of this plan often appeared in Piranesi's drawings of Rome, as in the Theater of Pompeii and the study of the Pantheon. In this reissue, Piranesi turned the orientation of the plan, so as South is approximately up, and extending the plan in the north, where he believed the *Campo Marzio* to be.

¹¹See *Architectural Fantasy and Reality. Drawings from the Accademia Nazionale Di San Luca in Rome Concorsi Clementini 1700-1750.* exhibition catalogue.

¹² The reconstruction of monuments was an accepted norm, but Piranesi's detailed plans took this reconstruction mode to another level altogether.

¹³ R. Wittkower, *Piranesi's Architectural Creed, Studies in the Italian Baroque.* Colorado 1975 pg. 244

¹⁴ J. Wilton-Ely, *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi.* London, 1978, p. 73.

¹⁵ M. Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia.* Cambridge, 1976. p. 15.

phies. This reference to literary sources is prescribed by Piranesi himself in the introduction to *Antichità Romane*. The main aim

Chapter II
The Campo Marzio Plan

¹ R. Wittkower, *'Piranesi's Architectural Creed,'* in *Studies in the Italian Baroque*, Colorado 1975. Wittkower states, 'Robert Adam, on the other hand, a friend of Piranesi, in whose circle in Rome he certainly acquired much of his historical education. . .'

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³ Raphael's recommendations were based on Alberti's system for architectural drawing. Like Alberti, Raphael rejected the use of perspective as a means of recording the ruins due to the lack of mathematical verification of perspectival representation.

⁴ Refer, John Pinto, 'Origins and Development of the Ichnographic City Plan.'

⁵ As per John Pinto in his essay, 'Origins and Development of the Ichnographic City Plan,' Buffalini's plan was largely an administrative and service map.

⁶ I am indebted to Prof. James Ackerman for this observation.

⁷ This is clarified by the language of the authorization pass issued to Nolli for carrying out the survey of the city. The pass, reads in part as 'Since his Holiness has given permission for the publication of a new, *exact* map of the City of Rome. . .'. The emphasis was on an exact map of Rome.

⁸ John Pinto in his essay, 'Origins and Development of the Ichnographic City Plan' notes, '*Nolli's ichnographic plan of Rome (1748) was prompted in part by the reorganization of the city into new administrative quarters, the boundaries of which he precisely indicated.*' This explanation attempts to categorize Nolli's plan as an administrative map, and thereby understand the ichnographic form of the map within this category. Nolli, however began work on the survey seven years before the administrative reorganization of Rome was undertaken. Furthermore Count Bernardini, under whom this reorganization was carried

out, states 'I have compared my established layout with the new plan of Rome.' Bernardini already had a layout, he just used Nolli's survey drawing to verify his work. Nolli's work therefore cannot be simply categorized as an administrative map. The market orientation of Nolli's work, further reinforces its categorization as a town-view, and Nolli's belief in the ichnographic format must have assumed a certain acceptability in the market. The plan was however a commercial disaster, only 340 copies of the large plan being sold. This rejection by the market demonstrates the pioneering nature of Nolli's representational language. Also see J. Zanker, 'Die "Nuova Pianta" von G. B. Nolli, 1748.'

⁹ Actually the Temple of the Divine Hadrian, today the Roman Stock Exchange.

¹⁰ A partial explanation can be deduced in the correspondence of James Adam to his brother Robert Adam from Rome in 1762. This is dealt in detail in the next chapter. It appears in 1762, Piranesi was distressed by marital problems, while Adam wanted him to publish *Il Campo Marzio* as soon as possible. Piranesi may have therefore chosen to use a bird's-eye view then the more laborious normal eye views.

Chapter III

Chronology of the *Campo Marzio* Plan

¹ All correspondence mentioned here are from Fleming, J. *Robert Adam and his Circle in Edinburgh and Rome*, Cambridge, 1962.

² *Ibid.* pg 354.

³ The Cardinal mentioned here is . . .

⁴ *Robert Adam and his Circle.* pg. 207.

⁵ One of the reason that Adam gives for this friction is that Adam himself was now working on the measurement of the Baths, and Piranesi feared the commercial consequence of any subsequent publication of the same. The Baths was one of the most measured and studied ancient ruins in Rome at that period, including scrupulous drawings of the same by Marie-Joseph Peyre, and the other French pensionnaires. Adam in studying the Baths was hardly treading on exclusive property.

⁶ Robert Adam and his Circle. pg. 231

⁷ Note the anglicizing of Piranesi's name.

⁸ Adam at that time reported it as Piranesi's next plan of Rome, while Piranesi at that time has yet to publish a reconstructed plan of ancient Rome; in some sense Piranesi never published a complete plan of ancient Rome. The conversation must be based on Piranesi wanting to publish various segments of Rome in *Antichita Romane*, some of which, like the Forum Romanum must have been ready by then. Hence Piranesi may have referred to the *next* plan of Rome, in June 1755.

⁹ The larger plan of Rome showing the hydraulic system, Plate XXXVIII (W-E 352, F217), sheds further evidence on the possibility of a overall plan of ancient Rome and will be dealt later in this paper

¹⁰ Adam also does not appear to be familiar with the engraving process, and thus may have made the assumption that the drawing would automatically lead to the engraving.

¹¹ If Adam was instrumental in building Piranesi's theoretical position, and in the making of *Campo Marzio*, as traditional historiography has always assumed, why is it that there is no mention of any discussion between Adam and Piranesi, especially about the plan. In all his two years of correspondence Adam never mentions any details of the plan, while the dedication as well as the dedication plate receive far more attention. This seems to suggest that while Adam and Piranesi were on friendly terms, and may have shared many ideas, the making of Campo Marzio was

primarily from Piranesi's own ideas and concepts.

¹² The private affair, as James Adam reports, is Piranesi's wife's extra-marital relationship. As per Adam, Piranesi appears to be distressed by the same, and this may be one of the reason for the little work produced by Piranesi in this period. This may also be the reason for the delay in the publishing of the *Campo Marzio* plan, and not any polemical twist to the same.

¹³ This triumphal process does not continue into the corresponding area in the Capitoline plan. Hence the overall conception of *Via Triumphalis* is a post 1756 idea.

Chapter IV Sources of the *Campo Marzio* Plan

¹ Lazio was the larger district to which Rome belonged. About the ancient villas in this region, John Pinto, and William MacDonald note in their book, 'Hadrian's Villa and its Legacy', 'During the late republic and early empire, not to have large country villas was unthinkable of Romans of wealth and rank. Cicero, who was only fairly well off, had at least eight. By Hadrian's day the Roman countryside and seashore, within what seems to have been for senators the expected residential limit of twenty miles from the capital, was dotted with them.' These Villas were known, but had not survived well enough to be reconstructed. Many descriptions of these villas survived, one of the best being by Pliny. 'As he (Pliny) takes his readers across his gardens and grounds and through chambers and suites, pointing out views and landscaping and commenting on architectural features and functions, Pliny brings the Roman luxury villa into sharp focus.' (Hadrian's Villa and its Legacy) Piranesi is here mentioning these

Villas, and perhaps more to these written texts than to the actual structure, of which he had even less information than the present period.

² From the text accompanying the *Campo Marzio* plan. The English translation quoted here is from Manfred Tafuri's *The Sphere and the Labyrinth. Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, Cambridge 1987.

³ Present Via Corso.

⁴ I discovered the significance of this plate only after I had laboriously discovered all the pieces used from the comparison of the etchings of the actual marble fragments with the large Ichnographia. In the paper I have used this plate as the main reference, simply because of the direct relation it offers to the *Campo Marzio* plan.

⁵ *Antichita Romane* was issued in 1756, while *Il Campo Marzio* was issued in 1762.

⁶ Piranesi first made use of such a gradation in the Plan of Forum Romanum (W-E 357, F 222).

⁷ We know that this work was well known to Piranesi, who sketched some of its illustrations, in a drawing now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.

⁸ Among the sources mentioned are Biondo, Livy, Pliny, Strabone and Donati.

Chapter V *Campo Marzio's Imaginative Figures* A Reading within the Pan-Grecian Debate

¹ The last volume of the same was published posthumously in 1767.

² Marc-Antoine Laugier, *An Essay on Architecture*, 1753. Translated by Wolfgang and Anni

Herrman, Los Angeles, 1977.

³ This anonymous English writer later turned out to be Allan Ramsay, a friend of Robert Adams, and acquainted with Piranesi.

⁴ Piranesi in a letter, dated November 11, 1760, to Robert Mylne informs him: 'My work "On the Magnificence of Architecture of the Romans" has been finished sometime since. . . The Antiquities of Greece, brought to light by Mr. Le Roy . . . contributed to its enlargements.' Quoted in C. Gotch, 'The Missing Years of Robert Mylne,' *Architecture Review*, September 1951, p 182.

⁵ In Venice, Piranesi was in association with the group around the British consul and merchant of art, Joseph Smith, and was especially attracted to the work of the painter Maro Ricci. Lodoli was also associated with the same group, and it is therefore probable that Piranesi attended Lodoli's school.

⁶ This did not mean the total rejection of the Orders.

⁷ This argument was only a rigorous restatement of Vitruvius. Lodoli's position on ornament in general remains ambiguous.

⁸ Both Wittkower in *Piranesi's Architectural Creed*, and John Wilton-Ely in *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi* make such an assertion.

⁹ The argument presented in the text of *Della Magnificenza* and the illustrations do not appear in conjunction to each other. In restating Lodoli's argument Piranesi appears to be eulogizing less adorned buildings of the early Romans, while his own predilection for ornamentation, and as illustrated in *Della Magnificenza* is well known. I believe there is far too much emphasis placed on this apparent discrepancy. Piranesi in *Antichita Romane* had completely stressed on the building techniques of the Romans, and perhaps he may have felt the need to stress more on the ornamentation of the Romans in *Dell' Magnificenze*. In any case, a sympathetic reading of the plates of *Della*

Magnificenza shows that Piranesi's basic thesis for evaluating ornamentation was basically same as in the text. Emil Kaufmann in *Architecture in the Age of Reason*, (Cambridge, 1955) presents a completely different argument.

¹⁰ The letter was originally a correspondence with Bottari. Mariette later asserted that the letter was published without his knowledge.

¹¹ English translation by M. Nonis and M Epstein, *Thoughts on Architecture*, Assemblage 10.

¹² In the eighteenth century, it was still believed that arts embodied universal principles, and these principles could be derived from a universal consent, i.e. to find out the ideas that pleased everybody and had stood the test of time. Universal consent was one of the driving principle of French theorists. In *Parere su l'Architettura* Piranesi begins his defense by stating that ornamentation has been an accepted part of architecture for a long period and was accepted by everybody.

¹³ *ibid.*, pg. 7.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pg. 8

¹⁵ Perhaps the most significant shift evident in *Parere su l'Architettura* from *Della Magnificenza* is the inclusion of Etruscan friezes in *Parere*. Piranesi here appears to be retracting from his earlier radical stance that Etruscan structures were unadorned. But the real operation theory in *Parere su l'Architettura* remains the same as *Della Magnificenza*.

¹⁶ For example Piranesi's reconstruction of Hadrian's Villa was not only accurate but also did not to fill in any imaginary pieces.

¹⁷ The reference here is to both, '*The Wicked Architect: G. B. Piranesi, Hetrotopia, and the Voyage*' in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (Cambridge, 1987), and *Architecture and Utopia* (Cambridge 1976).

¹⁸ Piranesi's reference to tradition is roughly the one abstracted from Vitruvius by Alberti; and the reference to 'the usage of our own time' is to the Baroque and Post-Baroque freedom in using the rules of ancients, especially to Borromini. In *Parere su l'Architettura* Piranesi would express a similar position, and refer more directly to Borromini. Ironically for the French theorists, Borromini represented a reprehensible figure, the villain who had introduced many incorrect ideas in architecture, ideas which would lead to barbarism.

¹⁹ In his *Novum Organum*, Francis Bacon denied the authority of the Ancient. Bacon proposed a new type of knowledge, independent of transcendental issues, and derived from the observation of natural phenomena. Bacon's challenge to the authorities of the ancients was primarily triggered by Galileo's work.

²⁰ The most important effect of Descartes on history is on the conceptual framework. Cartesian philosophy caused the first split between the perceptual and conceptual spheres of knowledge, although a benevolent God still insured that the correspondence between the subject's 'innate' ideas and the reality of the object. The secondary literature on Descartes is vast. I have found John Cottingham's commentary, *Descartes*, (Oxford, 1986.) to be an easy and useful reference. In particular reference to the epistemological changes in Renaissance, see George Molland's, '*Science and mathematics from Renaissance to Descartes*' in *The Renaissance and the 17th Century Rationalism*, London, 1993.

²¹ In comparison, the objective of the Medieval, or even Renaissance's intellectual quest was to discover the first cause. For a detailed discussion see Richard Popkin's, '*Theories of knowledge*' and Nicholas Jardine's '*Epistemology of the Sciences*' in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, Cambridge 1988, although both these essays discuss changes only up to end of sixteenth century. Jardine's essay in particular traces the Aristotelian component as the sciences advance through

astronomical discoveries.

²² Alberto Perez-Gomez, Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science, Cambridge 1983. Perez-Gomez however has constructed this thesis mainly from the French architecture and theory of the period, although his inferences are nearly always global. It is only after Darwin that any clear basis for an evolutionary or progressive theory is available, and even Kant in a late essay "An Old Question Raised Again: Is the Human Race Constantly Progressing?" concedes that the best grounds for believing in progress were moral, not scientific. Kant's essay obviously marks a turning point in conceptual thought, for the foundation of a degenerative theory had always been moral and religious, inextricably linked with the Fall of Man. The eighteenth Century marks a cross-road of epistemological and conceptual framework; for a comparative treatment of eighteenth century histories, especially in relation to Vico, see Hayden White's 'The Irrational and Historical Knowledge' in Tropics of Discourse, Essays in Cultural Criticism (Baltimore, London 1978.)

²³ This has been discussed earlier in the paper.

²⁴ J. Scott, Piranesi, London, New York 1975. pg. 169. Scott also points out that Natoire sent Hubert Robert to get the *Campo Marzio*.

Chapter VI

Campo Marzio's Imaginative Figures A Post-Baroque framework of Imagination

¹ See. Willey G. R. and J. A. Sabloff, A History of American Archaeology, San Francisco, 1980; also see Bruce G. Trigger's A History of Archaeological Thought, Cambridge 1989, which I find to be invaluable simply in terms of the comprehensive treatment of the subject.

² I have unfortunately found no comprehensive study of the origins of antiquarian research. Both Trigger, *op. cit.* and Philip Jacks, in The Antiquarian and Myth of Antiquity, the origins of Rome in Renaissance thought, have voiced similar opinions. R. Weiss's The Renaissance discovery of Classical Antiquity, Oxford, 1969. continues to remain the standard reference, although severely dated. Also see J. S. Slotkin ed. Readings in Early Anthropology, New York 1965; and I. B. Rossi The Dark Abyss of Time: The History of the Earth and the History of Nations from Hooke to Vico, Chicago, 1985 Slotkin examines at length the early challenges to biblical chronology and the changing philosophy of History from the medieval period, while Ross traces this change right up to the early eighteenth century.

³ Françoise Choay, Alberti, The invention of Monumentality and Memory. I have here referred more to Choay's 'Alberti and Vitruvius' in Architectural Design, vol. 49.

⁴ See R. Krautheimer's 'Alberti and Vitruvius' in The Renaissance and Mannerism. Studies in Western Art, Acts of the Twentieth Congress of History of Art, vol. II, (Princeton 1963). Krautheimer sets Alberti's work within the humanistic tradition.

⁵ Piranesi's later opposition to rules in *Parere su' l'architettura*, must also be understood as the opposition to the rules and their rigid use being laid out by the pan-Grecian theorist.

⁶ J. Pocock, 'The Origins of the Study of the Past' in Comparative Studies in Society and History, 1962-63.

⁷ By 1453, Biondo would extend his historical approach to all of Italy in *Italy Illustrated*. In his epochal work on Roman culture, *Rome Triumphant*, Biondo used many of these descriptive devices.

⁸ Here is an excerpt from Biondo's study on Padua to illustrate his descriptive style, "It is well known that this most ancient and most famous city of Italy was founded by Antenor, a

fugitive from Troy . . . Livy describes the glory of the Paduans at length in his first book. Cicero in his *Phillippics* says that the Paduans were close friends of the Romans. . . In the city there is a very large church dedicated to St. Justina the virgin, 1000 paces in circumference, and surrounded by water. It is believed that this church was constructed on the ruins of an ancient building, for where ever one digs, it is possible to find most beautiful tiles.”

⁹ L. Schudt, *Le Guide di Roma*, Vienna-Augsberg, 1930.

¹⁰ Raphael's recommendations were based on Alberti's system for representing architecture. Like Alberti, Raphael rejected the use of perspective as a means of recording the ruins due to the lack of mathematical verification of perspectival representation.

¹¹ The italics are mine.

¹² Piranesi's use of the Marble plan, including the modeling of some structures in the Campo Marzio has been discussed in the earlier part of this paper.

¹³ Fioravante Martinelli, in his guidebook to Rome, defended Borromini's work by referencing it to the Ancients, 'for the liveliness of his invention (*ingegno*), for his knowledge of the rules of Vitruvius, and for his experience in imitating the works of the best masters of architecture among the ancient Greeks and Romans.'

¹⁴ Anthony Blunt, *Borromini*, Cambridge 1979. As Blunt points out, there are three major influences on Borromini's work: Michelangelo, Nature and the Ancients. Nature here is understood in Galilean terms, which principally meant the use of perceptual geometry. Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600-1750*, pg. 132. on the other hand assigned Borromini's geometric approach to the medieval Masonic tradition which was part of his technical background. I have obviously adopted Blunt's explanation of Borromini's use of geometry, although Wittkower and Blunt's

explanation are not mutually exclusive.

¹⁵ See George Brunel ed. *Piranesi et les Francais, 1740-1790*. Rome: conference proceedings, Academie de France a Rome, Villa Medici, (1978) 1976.

¹⁶ On Vico the secondary literature is not only massive, but often tends to deal with a single dimension of his philosophy, or attempt to explain Vico to their own determined ends. There is certainly no single reference to Vico. Refer R. G. Collingwood's *The Philosophy of Giambattista Vico* (London, 1913) which is a translation of Benedetto Croce's *La filosofia di Giambattista Vico* (Bari 1911) although they are heavily laid with Hegelian conceptions. I have also found Collingwood's comments on Vico in *The Idea of History* (Oxford 1946) to be useful, simply they are closely treated with Cartesian and Empirical thoughts. Also see Isaiah Berlin's *Vico and Herder* (New York 1976), and Donald R. Kelley's short but useful article '*Giovanni Battista Vico*' in *European Writers, volume 3*, edited by G. Strade (New York, 1984)

¹⁷ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford 1946. Pg. 65.

¹⁸ In Vico's philosophy ideas do not necessarily propagate by diffusion, transmuting from one civilization to another, but by independent discovery by each culture at the point of its own historic development, its own *recorso*.

¹⁹ Mark Lilla, G. B. Vico, *The Making of an Anti-Modern*. Cambridge 1993. Pg. 117.

²⁰ Refer D. P. Verene's '*Vico's Philosophy of Imagination*' in *Vico and Contemporary thought*, 1976. Verene coined the term *recollective fantasia* to explain the two meanings of Universal Imagination in Vico. I have however kept my comments on Vico's ideas on memory very general. Also see, Verene's *Vico's Science of Imagination*, (Ithaca, 1981) for a detailed treatment of the same.

²¹ '*Giambattista Vico was perhaps the first to*

Speak up for the primordial knowledge of all people, a knowledge that stemmed not from reason but imagination. Alberto Perez-Gomez, Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science, Cambridge 1994.

²² In the second edition of *New Science* Vico urges the reader to narrate the science to himself in such a way that the divine force of Contaus flows through the reader and cause the Ideal Eternal History to arise within him.

²³ Lodoli was trained as a theologian and a master of morality, and was a scientific polymath. His active interest in architecture, and in creating a radical architectural theory remains curious and unexplained, they may have arisen from his interest in architectural tropes. Perez-Gomez has explained this interest by suggesting that Vico's philosophy emphasized on the poetic wisdom of the primitives and a fundamental form of this early *poesis* was building; and this was one of the prime reason for Lodoli's interest in architecture, and his peculiar methodology. For me this remains an unexamined thesis, although extremely appropriate. I have therefore refrained from including it in the main text.

²⁴ This art collection was organized by nations or cultures in the manner of Vico, and Algoratti would later use and popularize this manner of classification when organizing other art collections all over Europe.

²⁵ Marco Fascari, *'Function and Representation in Architecture.'* In the article Fascari's main attempt is to create a link between Lodoli and semiotic theory.

²⁶ The lineage from Vico to Lodoli to Vico may also explain the element of 'irrational' Tafuri notes in Piranesi's work.

Chapter VII **Campo Marzio's Post-Baroque Imaginative Figures: The Geometric Underlay**

¹ V. Fasolo, *'Il Campo Marzio di G. B. Piranesi,'* Quaderni dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura 15, 1956. Pg. 1-14.

² Refer Chapter 4.

Chapter VIII **Piranesi's 'Memory Fragments' and the Palimpsest of Interpretive Memory**

¹ There is also a structure by Montano, whose plan would easily support this sketch.

² Actually the Baths of Trajan.

³ Refer Alberto Perez-Gomez, in Architecture and the Crisis of Modern Science (Cambridge, 1983), pg 253. Perez-Gomez's argument is actually based on Joseph Rykwert's exposition on Lodoli in The First Moderns, Cambridge 1980.

⁴ The work of the *Academie de Francais* in the 1740's is often labeled as neo-mannerist revival.

⁵ From the text accompanying the *Campo Marzio* plan. The English translation quoted here is from Manfred Tafuri's The Sphere and the Labyrinth, Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s, Cambridge 1987.

⁶ The term collective memory here is used as defined by M. Halbwachs, in On Collective Memory (Chicago, 1992).

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