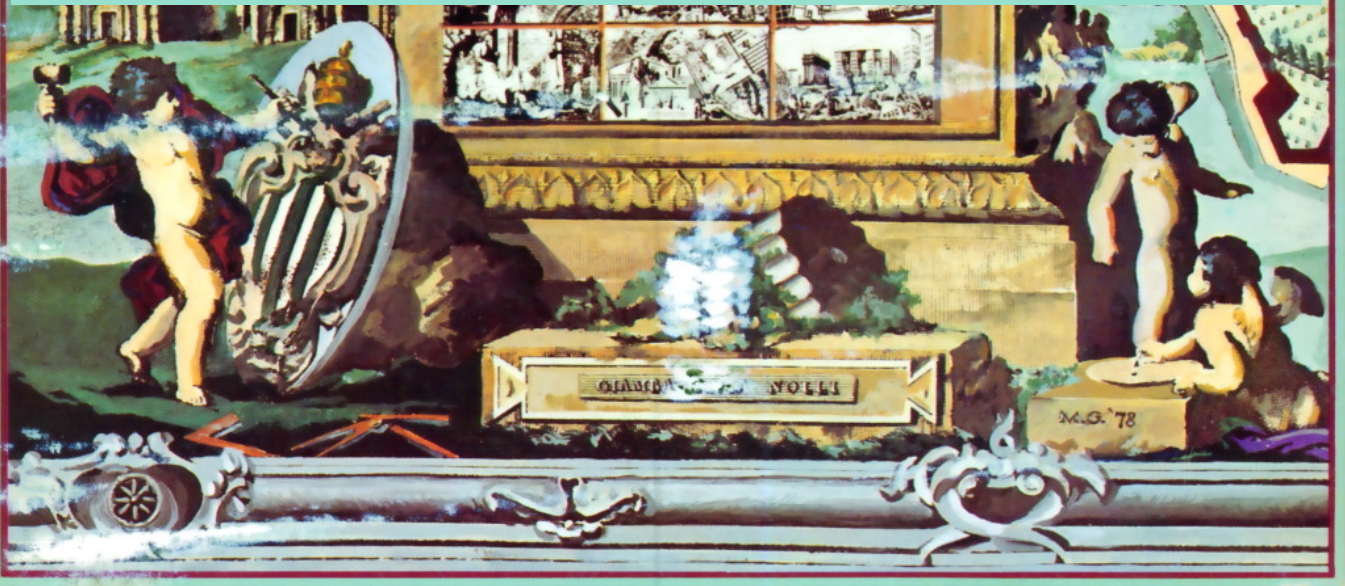


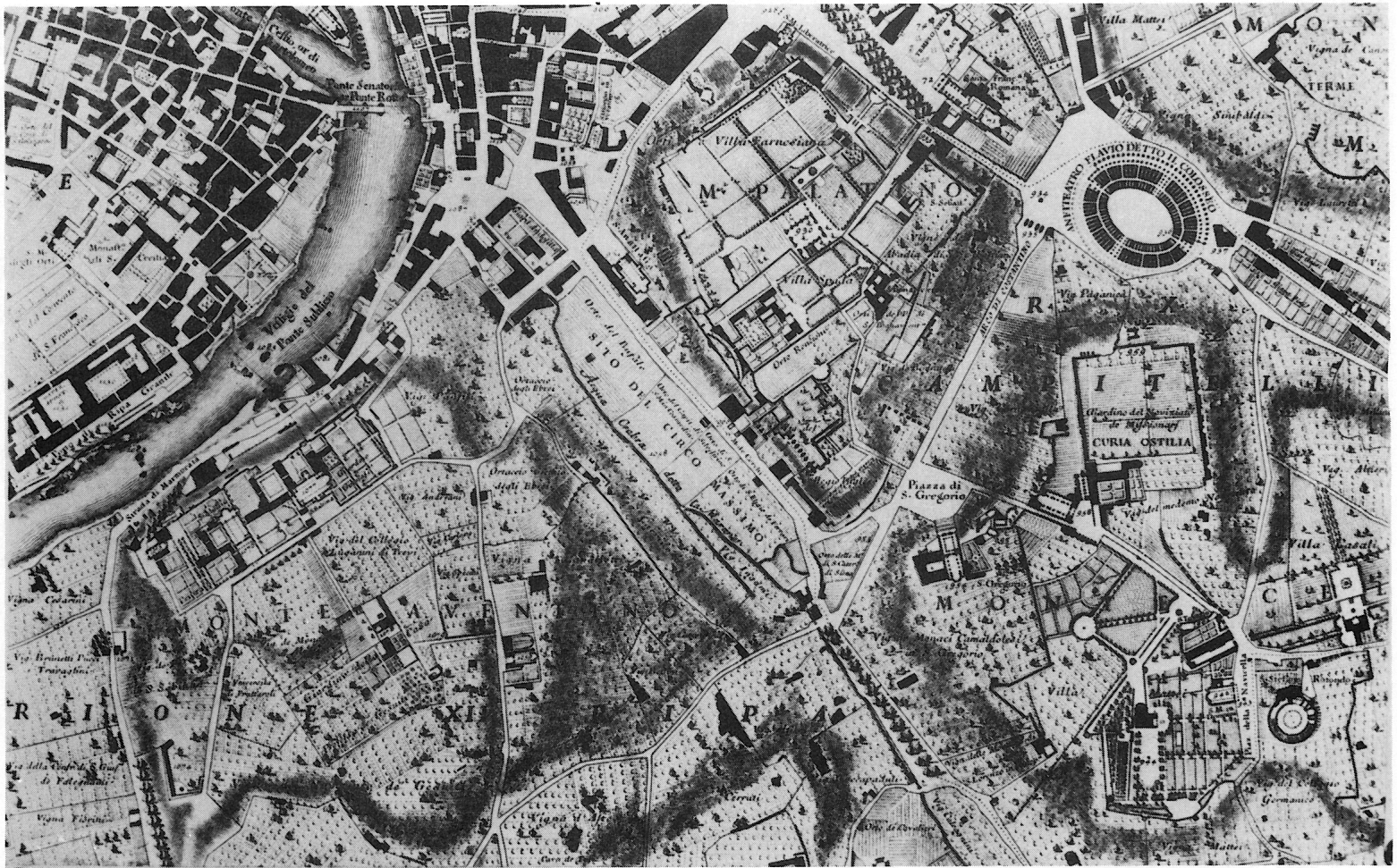


Colin Rowe's commentary on Nolli map sector VIII



ROMA INTERROTTA

NOLLI: SECTOR VIII



Nolli: Sector Eight: A commentary on the researches and extrapolations of Peter Carl, Judith Di Maio, Steven Peterson and Colin Rowe.

The following is excerpted from the catalogue of the exhibition *Rome: The Lost and the Unknown City (Roma Ignota e Perduta)* organised by the Museum of Art, University of St Francis Xavier, Great Falls, Montana in the summer of 1974. This exhibition continues to be little known and was, at the time, regrettably unadvertised; but we believe that we can state with certainty that the catalogue is the product of the late Father Vincent Mulcahy, S.J. In instructed circles Vincent Mulcahy's knowledge of Roman topography is, needless to say, recognised to have been as extensive as it was minute. Indeed, Mulcahy, who was always a fount of generalisations, was simultaneously so devoted to the arcane and the abstruse as to have rendered much of his very solid information highly suspect to those many scholars whose only ideal is the never to be interpreted accumulation of what, without undue epistemological concern, they presume to be no more

than irreducible fact.

Incipient criticisms of Father Mulcahy's more extreme speculations are already to be found in the catalogue of the exhibition, *Papal Urbanism and Numismatology*, Museum of Fine Arts, Waxahachie, Texas, 1972, in which, with something approaching an excess of critical apparatus, certain of his conclusions are found to be less than accurate; but in this disagreement of authorities we would prefer to remain neutral. Indeed, because we feel more than highly indebted to Vincent Mulcahy – and because we prefer to consult the visible evidence of available drawings and monuments – while, though sometimes sceptical of his more elaborate findings, we would prefer to stipulate our own dependence upon his incomparable exegetic capacity.

'We are so familiar with the area of the Palatine, the Aventine and Celio in its present appearance that it becomes difficult for our minds to reconstruct its earlier aspect – an arid and deserted region of ancient remains, unkempt vineyards, malarial villine and battered monastic foundations. But such was the landscape known to Poussin and to Claude,

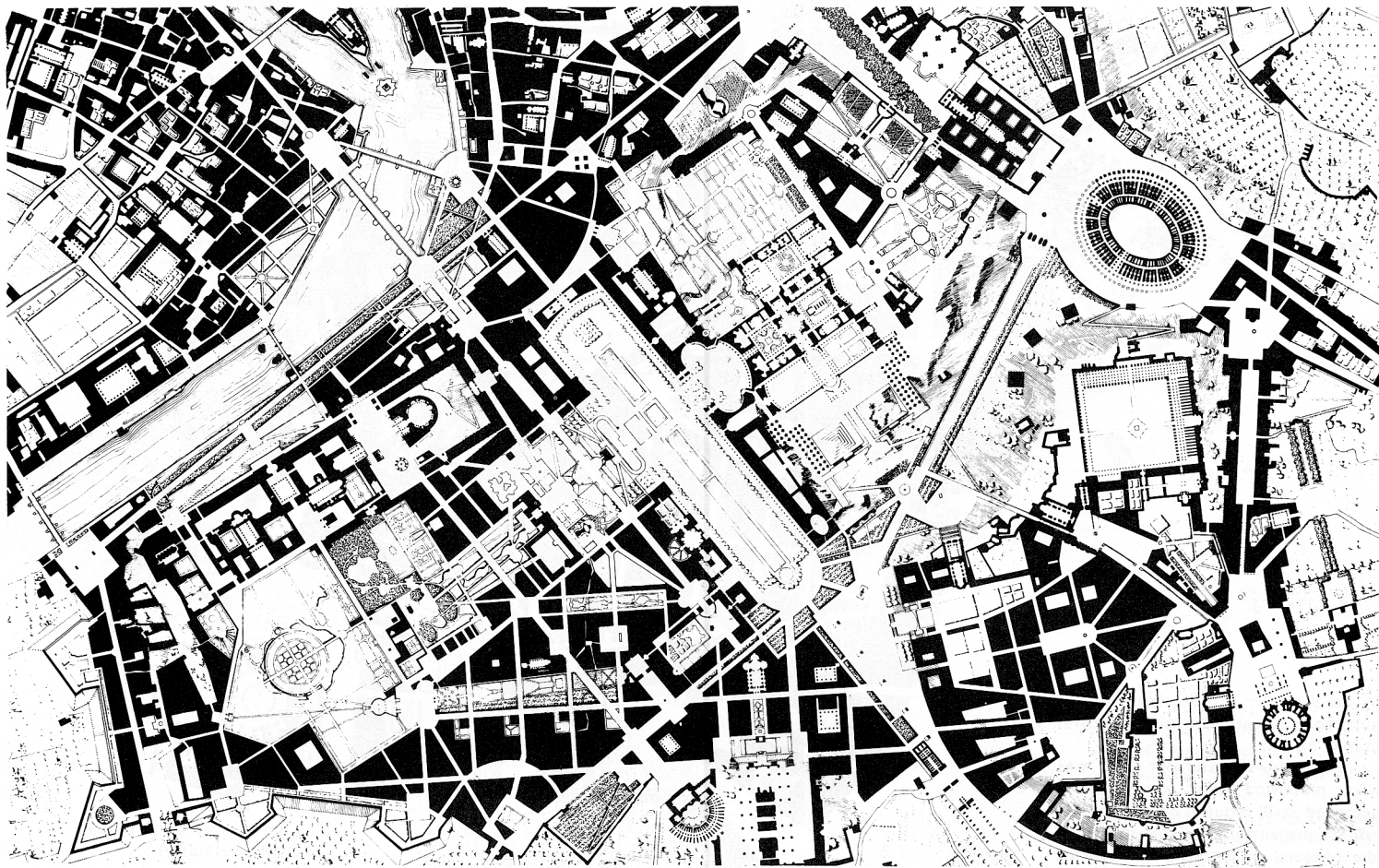
known also to Gaspar Van Wittel; and while we may mourn its loss, we may also salute the present appearance of these hills, which in their gentle and brilliant greenness, are apt to suggest a fragment of the Veneto posturing as an ideal and a better Rome, as a Rome of the Northern imagination.

'The present Venetic, and almost English, character of this territory, which has so long displeased archaeologists, was, needless to say, the result of a deliberate policy. The Acqua Buonaparte, later to be known as the Acqua Pia and, still later, as the Acqua Sabaudia, was a primary result of the French administration of the city during the years 1809-1814, but though mostly an affair of the Ecole Polytechnique, this great hydraulic undertaking demonstrably betrayed a symbolic purpose. For, if ostensibly there was here proposed no more than a rational programme of irrigation, in the profusion of water which was supplied the bounds of reason were extravagantly exceeded. And therefore (and almost like the cataract of 18th-century rationalism itself) this particular aqueduct might lend itself to interpretation as

a "scientific" critique of an assumed Papal retardation.

'However, if the Acqua Paola and Acqua Felice were, here, both put to shame, this is to anticipate our account, since modern developments in this area may be said to have begun at a slightly earlier date, with Cardinal Albani's purchase of the Orti Farnesiani from Charles III of Naples.

'The building of Capodimonte and Portici, not to mention the impending construction of Caserta, had, one supposes begun to place too great a strain upon the Bourbon resources; and, since there was the additional expense of the excavations at Pompeii (however many vases might later be bought by Sir William Hamilton and others) the disposal of superfluous Farnese estates in Rome was perhaps the inevitable result. The exact date of the sale of the Orti Farnesiani and the exact price paid is still not known;¹ but Cardinal Albani's purchase might be considered as having been doubly happy. For, while it relieved the house of Naples of an embarrassment both genealogical and financial,² it equipped the Cardinal with an archaeolo-



gical foyer of unexampled richness. The villa already built by Marchionni at Porta Salaria (Villa Albani as it is *still* sometimes called) became now a merely minor theatre of display; and, in the new Villa Albani del Palatino, we should be called upon to imagine the enthusiastic builder dispensing hospitality and patronage to Robert Adam, Jacques Louis Clerisseau, Hubert Robert, Raphael Mengs, Antonio Canova, Benjamin West and others.

Though never elaborate,³ it is now recognised that this new Villa Albani provided one of the principal "forcing houses" in the early history of Neo-Classicism,⁴ and, as such, we are indebted to Goethe for some record of its appearance and contents on the occasion of his Roman visit of 1786. But, fresh from Weimar and highly susceptible to all appropriate impressions, Goethe's encomium of the Villa Albani is too famous to require record; and, as we recall it, we can only experience regret for what, substantially, is lost — a most brilliant and precocious demonstration (the youthful John Soane must have known it well) which could only have prepared the way for the more exact-

ing archaeological tastes of circa 1800.⁵

However, in spite of Cardinal Albani's remarkable incentive and in spite of its art historical celebrity, as already intimated, for further developments we are compelled to wait for the French Revolution and the subsequent impact of the Napoleonic Empire; and here we are faced with a major problem. The Emperor's projects for Paris are well known, but largely uninvestigated is the history of his projects for Rome; and, no doubt, a prime reason is the received idea that Buonaparte himself never visited peninsular Italy which, in his days, slumbered so happily outside the major theatres of European dispute.

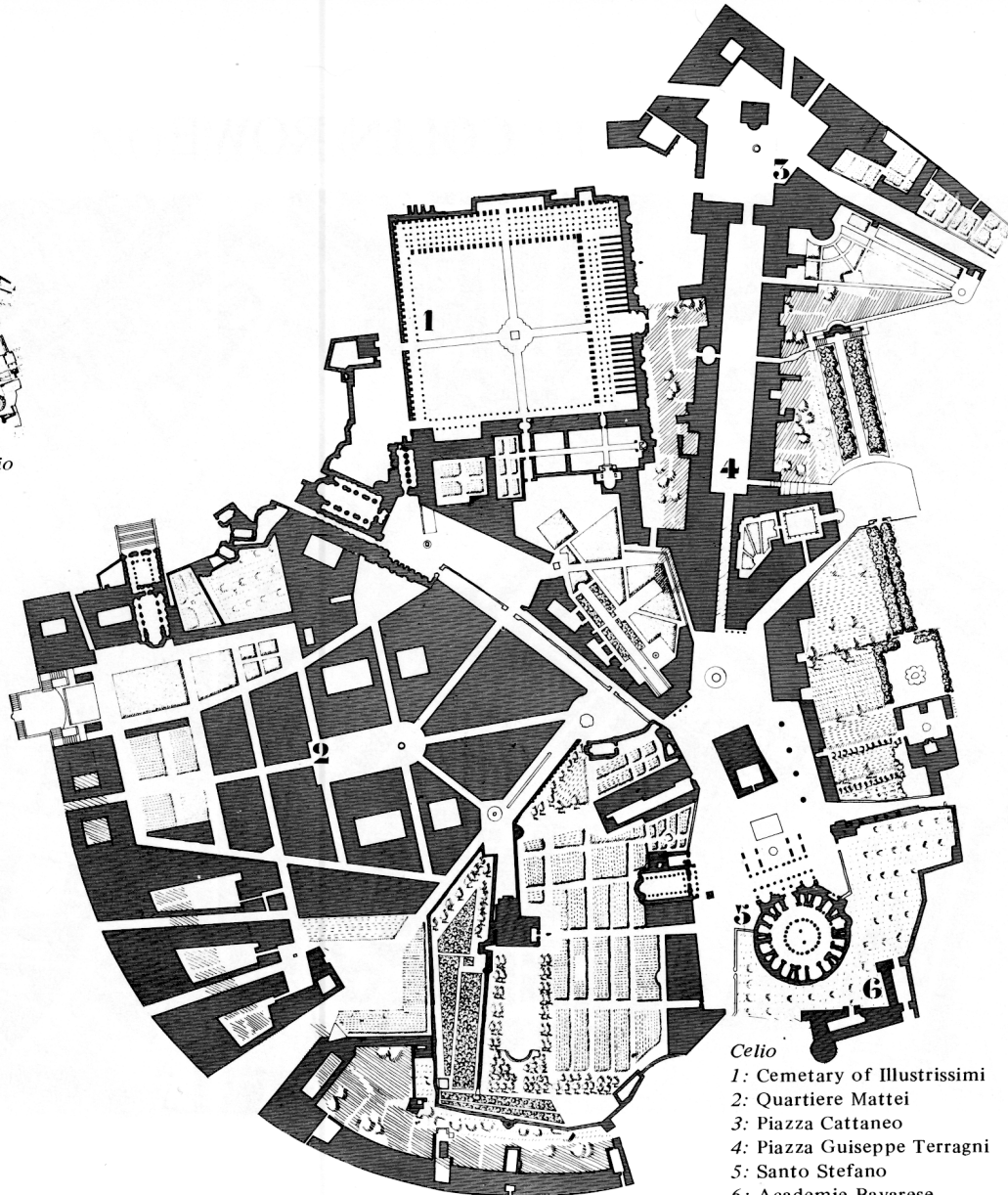
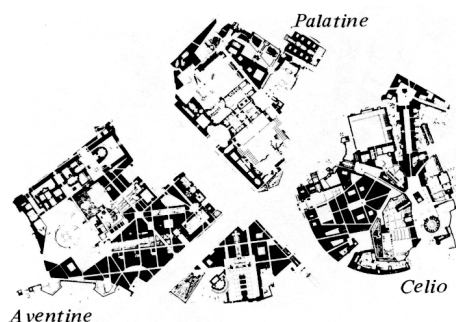
The subject of Napoleon and Rome, so crisscrossed with the internment of Pius VII at Fontainebleau, has of course been lately illuminated by Francois Choay in her exemplary *Interventions Napoleoniennes à Rome*,⁶ and this study has made us, yet again, aware of the fantastic plan of Scipione Perosini (involving an ensemble of palaces extending from Piazza Colonna to the Colosseum) and the less ambitious proposals of

Raphael Stern (involving no more than a reconstruction of the Quirinale).⁷ Mme Choay also makes abundantly clear the roles played in these projects by the Comte de Tournon and the Marechal Daru, respectively Prefect of Rome and Intendant of the Imperial Palaces; and it is, therefore, highly unfortunate that her researches were unable to take cognizance of that great body of Valadier drawings which, until 1972, remained unknown. For these drawings, so recently revealed by the Cabinet des Estampes et des Desseins of the Bibliothèque Nationale, still largely unpublished and still waiting detailed exploration, introduce an entirely new evidence; and involving as they do, a "reconstruction" of the Palatine and the Circus Maximus, a monumental cemetery (the present Uomini Illustrissimi), a *sistemazione* of the Aventine, an Egyptian Temple⁸ and, as a pendent to the Arch of Constantine, an Arco Napoleonico, their ultimate interpretation may well inspire a major revision of our ideas as to Imperial policy — as, quite certainly, they may reinforce the stubborn legend, hitherto dismissed, of the Emperor himself

having visited the Eternal City on at least two occasions.

Legend and rumour, though insubstantial, are never to be wholly wished away; but, meanwhile, the record of Buonaparte's movements during the years 1809-11 would seem to be established quite beyond dispute. Do we, therefore, assume a *doppelganger* in Paris (or wherever) while the alleged Roman visits took place? Mariana di San Silvestro and Luigi Primoli would encourage us in this fantasy⁹ but, these apart, *if we know that the Valadier drawings are annotated by the Emperor himself and if the same evidence leaves us in no doubt as to his firsthand, though not intimate, knowledge of the relevant topography, then what are we to postulate?*

We will leave aside the possibility of a clandestine visit which Napoleon may have paid to Rome in the years 1809-11 (could the visit have been paid on his return from Egypt in 1799?); but we will assume the probability of his reviewing and condemning the projects of Perosini and Stern at about this date; and we will then assume a new incentive in the part of Tournon and Daru resulting



Celio

- 1: Cemetery of Illustrissimi
- 2: Quartiere Mattei
- 3: Piazza Cattaneo
- 4: Piazza Giuseppe Terragni
- 5: Santo Stefano
- 6: Academie Bavares

in the Valadier propositions, which, apparently, secured Imperial approval in May 1810.

'However, to interpret what was here presented and, conditionally, accepted will require on our part a willing suspension of disbelief. For, if the Imperial iconography is eloquent, ourselves are apt to view this Greco-Roman apparatus rather as a period piece, its outlines softened by retrospect, than as what it was designed to be: a hard-edged politico-theatrical propaganda intended to elicit enthusiasm for a universal rule.

'But to place ourselves in the position of Napoleon circa 1810: his new wife is an Austrian archduchess; Pius VII, to all intents and purposes, is a prisoner, the news from Spain, though scarcely happy, is dismissable; and meanwhile, since Russia remains unattacked the future sequence of catastrophe — Moscow, the Beresina, Leipzig, Waterloo — is not to be conceived. Indeed, triumph is absolute; the new Caesar's fantasies are at their most elaborate; and it is into this arena of possibility that we would wish to place the evidence of the Valadier drawings of which, as yet, we have very imperfect knowledge.

'To repeat: the time is 1810; and, while we are confronted with the meaning of Valadier's project, to be taken into account there are also those six colossal statues intended to represent Alexander, Julius, Augustus, Constantine, Charlemagne and Napoleon himself, known to have been ordered from Canova's studio in 1809;¹⁰ and then there is the more surprising image of Cola da Rienzi, apparently intended to be part of a fountain, provided by

Thorvaldsen in the following year.¹¹ But if, by themselves, the Rienzi piece, recently put on exhibition by the Accademia Carrara at Bergamo, and the Canova commission may constitute a difficulty, then, related to Valadier, all these problems diminish. For, simply, the Valadier drawings seem to suggest themselves as the preparation of a stage, a stage for the ultimate Napoleonic settlement of Europe which was to be dictated from Rome possibly in 1819 and, probably, on the occasion of the Emperor's 50th birthday, August 15.

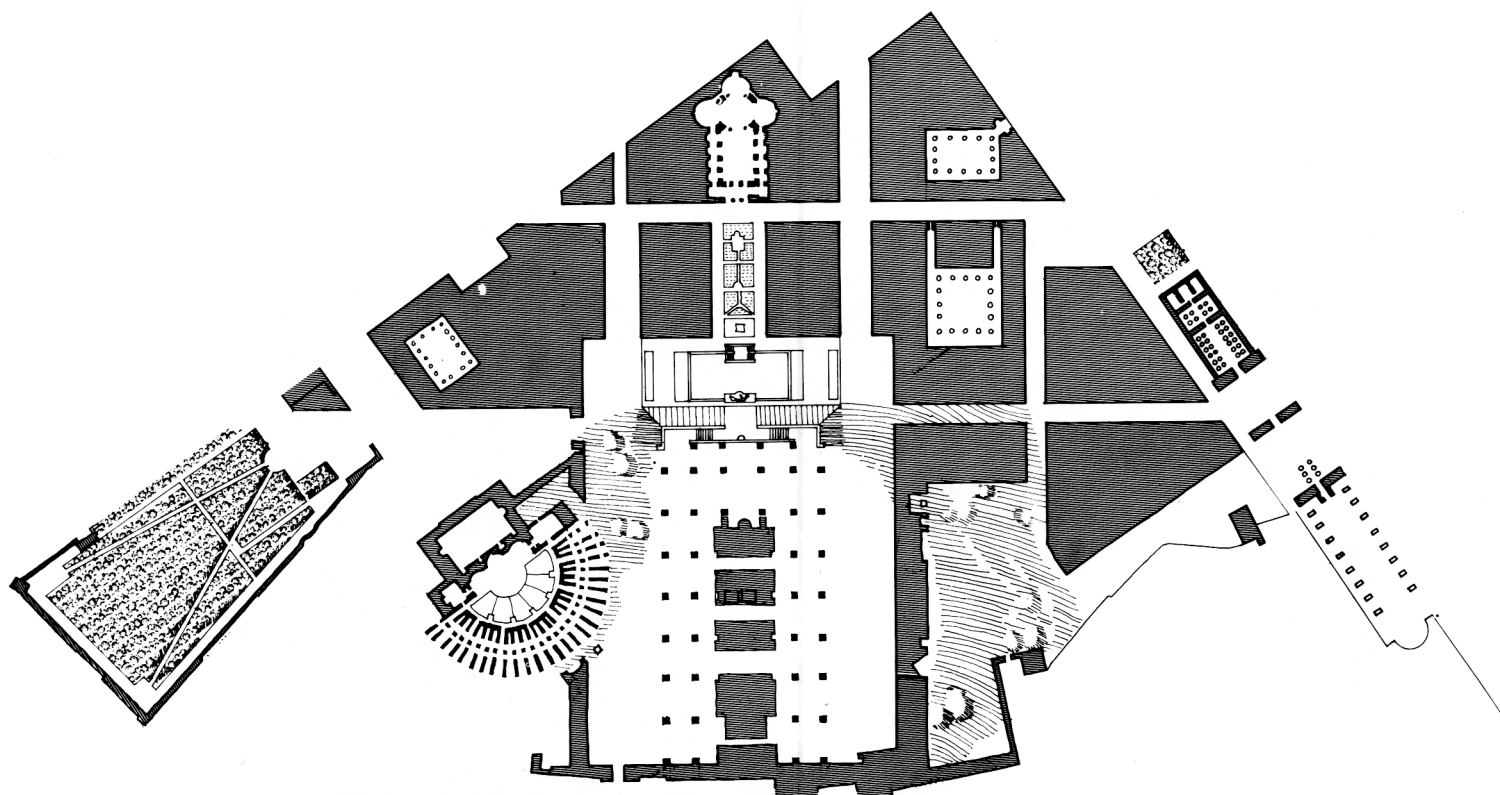
'One may imagine the anticipated scene of the Congress of Vienna in reverse operation. The Russians and the English are exhausted; the gently heroic Pius VII has yielded; there is to be much coming and going between the Vatican and the Palazzo Imperiale del Palatino; there is to be a major concordat; the King of Rome is to be crowned; possibly Beethoven is to contribute a symphony; there are to be acclamations, parades, pyrotechnics, fountains running with wine, *feux de joi*, all the rest — and the whole is to be conducted in a setting of heroically romantic Neo-Classical architecture.

'The Valadier drawings are, therefore, an ironical commentary upon possibility and prediction (man proposes, God disposes); but, if the Dictate of Rome did not come about, the idea of this 'triumph' was to be not without its future influence. The Foro Buonparte, otherwise known as the Piazza d'Armi del Circo Massimo, was of course constructed, complete with Palladian reminiscences, in 1811; by the same date work was under way on the Palatine;¹² and by the following year the great terrace of the Aventine with its accompanying bridges was also building; but since the rest of this plan remained unaccomplished at the time of Pius VII's return in 1814, one may still be surprised by the longevity of its skeleton — a longevity which clearly excludes politics. Otherwise, how could Valadier's great Piazzale dell' Aventino, put forward as Napoleonic gesture, be later converted into the setting for Santo Spirito della Restaurazione, that *chiesa votiva* so embarrassingly presented by the Czar Alexander to the Pope?

'And, of course, this masterpiece of Quarenghi,¹³ a highly accomplished Pantheon and not completely a crude

monument to reaction, must now be recognised as a major secondary impulse in the development of the area. For, in the 1820s, to that opulent English and Russian society which increasingly flooded Rome it provided an irresistible magnet. Fashionable (dare we say corrupt?), at Santo Spirito spectacle, religiosity and the Almanach de Gotha were all simultaneously entertained; and if, to the Russians, the church suggested St Petersburg and, to the English, Regent's Park, it should not be at all surprising that this society (with its miscellaneous German clients) gravitated to the vicinity.

'The various villas: Mommouth-Bariatinski, Demidoff, Beresford-Hope, Storey, Casamassima,¹⁴ Curtis-Winterhalter built in this area attest to this Anglo-Russian, later American, and always foreign influence. Partly because of Santo Spirito the Aventine became a *quartier-de-luxe*. But, if so much is part of knowledge, there might have still been almost nothing had it not been for the genius of Aldo Rossini, the Czar's chef, like his more famous namesake a native of Pesaro who in 1817, retired from the snows of Russia to establish what



may well have been the first of grand hotels.¹⁵

'The great and almost Genoese bulk of the Albergo della Russia, then so eccentrically located, might today be considered as having established the ultimate *cachet* of the neighbourhood...'

Footnotes to the text of Father Vincent Mulcahy, S J

- 1 Perhaps, with the destruction of the Neapolitan archives, never to be known. But see Heinrich Schreiber, Winckelmann und Kardinal Albani, *Preussische Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, vol XXV, 1913.
- 2 The illegitimate descent from Paul III Farnese had begun to constitute a problem.
- 3 Cardinal Albani was able to acquire little more than the Farnese property.
- 4 See: Jacquelin Tannenbaum, *Cardinal Albani as a Patron*, Princeton, NJ, 1958; and, for a different opinion, see: Martino Scolari, 'Un Cardinal Dilettante', *Connaissance des Arts*, 1964.
- 5 Friedrich Gilly also visited the Villa del Palatino, unfortunately during its decadence; and, of course, to

Karl Friedrich Schinkel we are indebted for yet another survey. Indeed we are indebted for a survey so accurate that we may be eager to acknowledge some of its traces in that brilliant sequence of apartments executed by Schinkel for the Berlin Schloss. In which context see: Mario Praz and Giuliano Briganti, *Illuminismo e Romanticismo*, Bari, 1953.

- 6 Françoise Choay, *Interventions Napoléoniennes à Rome*, Paris, 1969; and particularly pp 97-115.
- 7 See also: A La Padula, *Rome e la Regione nell' Epoca Napoleonica*, Rome (?), 1970; and Vittorio de Feo, *La Piazza del Quirinale*, Rome, 1973.
- 8 Napoleon's regret at not having built an Egyptian temple in Paris is recorded in Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte Hélène*, vol II, p 154, ed Paris 1956. *'Il regrettait fort, du reste, de n'avoir pas fait construire un temple égyptien à Paris: c'était un monument, disait-il, dont il voudrait avoir enrichi la capitale, etc.'* And, from the same source, see also vol I, p 431:

'L'Empereur distait que, si Rome fût restée sous sa domination, elle fût sortie de ses ruines; il se proposait de nettoyer de tous ses décombres de restaurer tout ce qui eût été possible, etc.'

The Egyptian temple located at the head of the Circus Maximus and destined for the purposes of a cult as yet unknown is, of course, the present church of Saint Catherine of Alexandria.

- 9 See: Mariana di San Silvestro di Castelbarco della Verdura, *Memoire Inédite*, Turin, 1872. Born in 1790, during the French interregnum her grand-father self-exiled to Sardinia (Luigi di San Silvestro, 1738-1817, remained one of the most intractable ornaments of the court of Turin), the Contessa di San Silvestro, in her youth acquainted with Mme De Staël and, later, allegedly, more than a friend of Cavour, can only be a reliable witness. Though somewhat divorced from her proper niche in time, she was a person who saw and knew; and, if her own record may still be insufficient, there still remain the *Saggi Napoleoniana* of Luigi

Primoli, Livorno, 1905; and Primoli, again from the point of view of an eminent insider, amply corroborates the San Silvestro rumours.

- 10 See: Janos Szechenyi, 'A Hitherto Neglected Project of Antonio Canova', *Art Bulletin*, vol XVI, 1972.
- 11 See: Bertil Gyllenstierna, *A Republican Monument to Empire*, Uppsala, 1970.
- 12 The Hellenistic bust of Apollo presented by Pius VII in 1817 to the Prince Regent is a record of this building campaign. One of the few significant discoveries made in construction work on the Palatine, before being transferred to Windsor, it was for many years incongruously housed among the *chinoiseries* of Brighton.
- 13 A posthumous masterpiece sometimes, alternatively, attributed to Japelli, Quarenghi, of course, died in St Petersburg in 1806.
- 14 For the background of the still surviving Villa Casamassima see: Henry James, *Roderick Hudson*, London and New York, 1875; and: Michael Manfredi, a 'Nineteenth-Century "Replica" of Pirro Ligoro's Villa Pia', *Facciata*, vol V, Geneva, NY 1973.
- 15 For a full appraisal of Rossini's culinary genius see: Joseph De Maistre, *Les Soirées de Saint Petersbourg*, 5th ed, Lyon, 1845. But Aldo Rossini deserves also to be celebrated as the probable inventor of that notorious Manhattan dessert, named for a Russian foreign minister of Portuguese birth and Anglican background, the Nesselrode Pie.



Aventine

- 1: Great Terrace of the Aventine
- 2: Santo Spirito della Restaurazione
- 3: Villa Casamassima
- 4: Albergo di Russia
- 5: Orto Botanico
- 6: Palazzo dei Cavalieri
- 7: Palazzo Laetitia

At this stage we will leave Father Mulcahy to both his footnotes and his fantasies. To us he has provided an indispensable guide; but he has also left us in the position of old fashioned classical archaeologists attempting to reconstruct a shattered monument or statue from the most fragmentary debris and, while it has been useful, his information is sometimes a little too selective for our purposes. Thus, while he makes brief reference to the monumental cemetery of the Illustrissimi, Father Mulcahy is strangely reticent about further developments on the Celio which Valadier's proposals seem to have sponsored. We refer to: the elegant Quartiere Mattei, achieved without any great mutilation of the Villa Mattei itself; to the sequence of spaces (the present Piazza Giuseppe Terragni and Largo Cattaneo) leading in from the Colosseum; to Von Klenze's manipulations of Santo Stefano which have often been considered doubtful; and then, and unlike our Jesuit guide, we suggest that the same architect's Accademia Bavarese, located immediately to the rear of the church in the former vigna of the Collegio Germanico, is a building

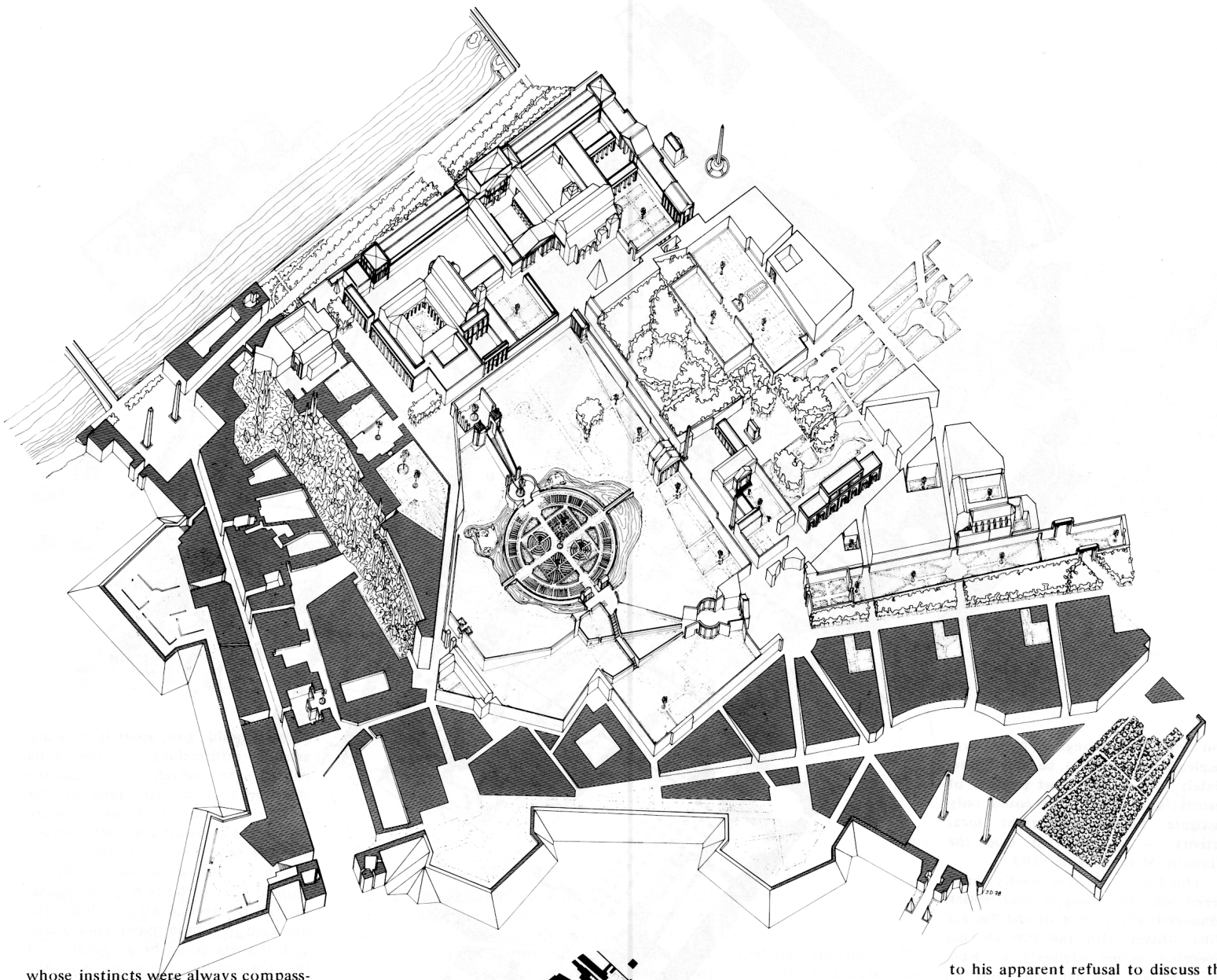
which — with all its later Nazarene associations (frescoes by Schnorr von Carolsfeld, etc) — increasingly clamours for record and recognition.

But, if these proofs of 19th-century Bavarian piety have not been noticed by Father Vincent, then how much stranger is his account of developments upon the Aventine! For there he concentrates exclusively

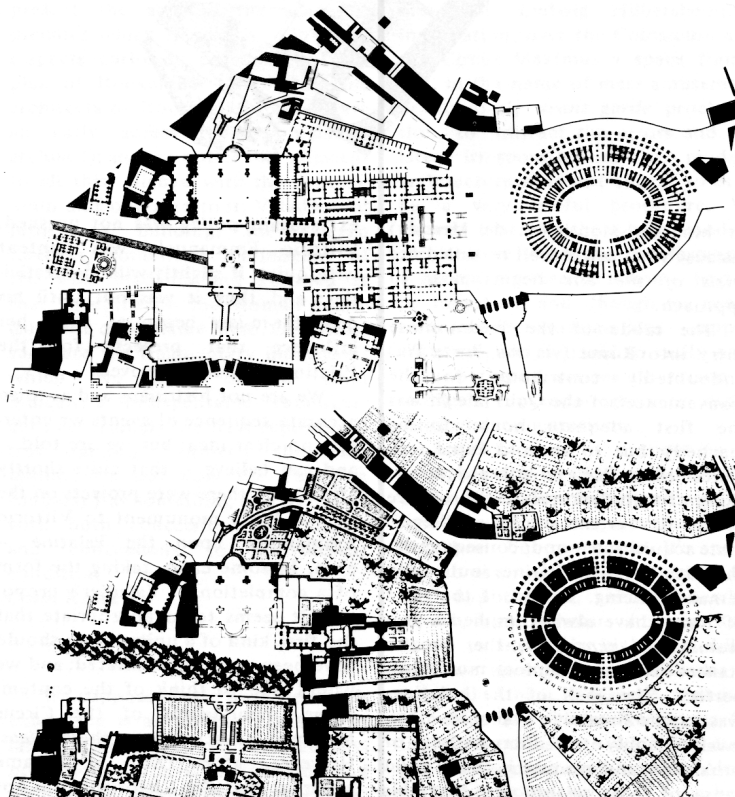
on the great terrace and its later Russian appendages and fails entirely to make any commentary upon much else which surely deserves attention. We refer to the Orto Botanico with its decidedly Paduan overtones (was this also executed by Jappelli?); to the interesting but apparently decorative sequence of fortifications extending from the bridge of Porta Portese;

to the public park, the Pineta del Monte Testaccio, which protrudes into the area; and to the sequence of villas and other buildings, vaguely recalling Giulio Romano, Pirro Ligorio and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux which, rising out of their context of trees, comprise the south-western enclosure of the Circus Maximus. But, even with regard to Santo Spirito, Father Mulcahy who clearly detested the whole programme of this church is also mysteriously quiet with reference to its iconography, the Great Piranesian Terrace of the Aventine! Its references to Diocletian and to Robert Adam! Its superstructures so suggestive of Durand! The essence of this great terrace, so well conceived by Alexander I, seems completely to have evaded Mulcahy's scrutiny. Had too many years in the Midwest dulled his native Irish percipience? At one end of the terrace the Cavalieri di Malta; and at the other (as a replica of the Castello Savelli) the new priorato of the Cavalieri della Restaurazione — that order which, deriving mostly from the Baltic provinces, was for so long unduly favoured by Pius IX and Leo XIII!

Correspondingly, Father Mulcahy



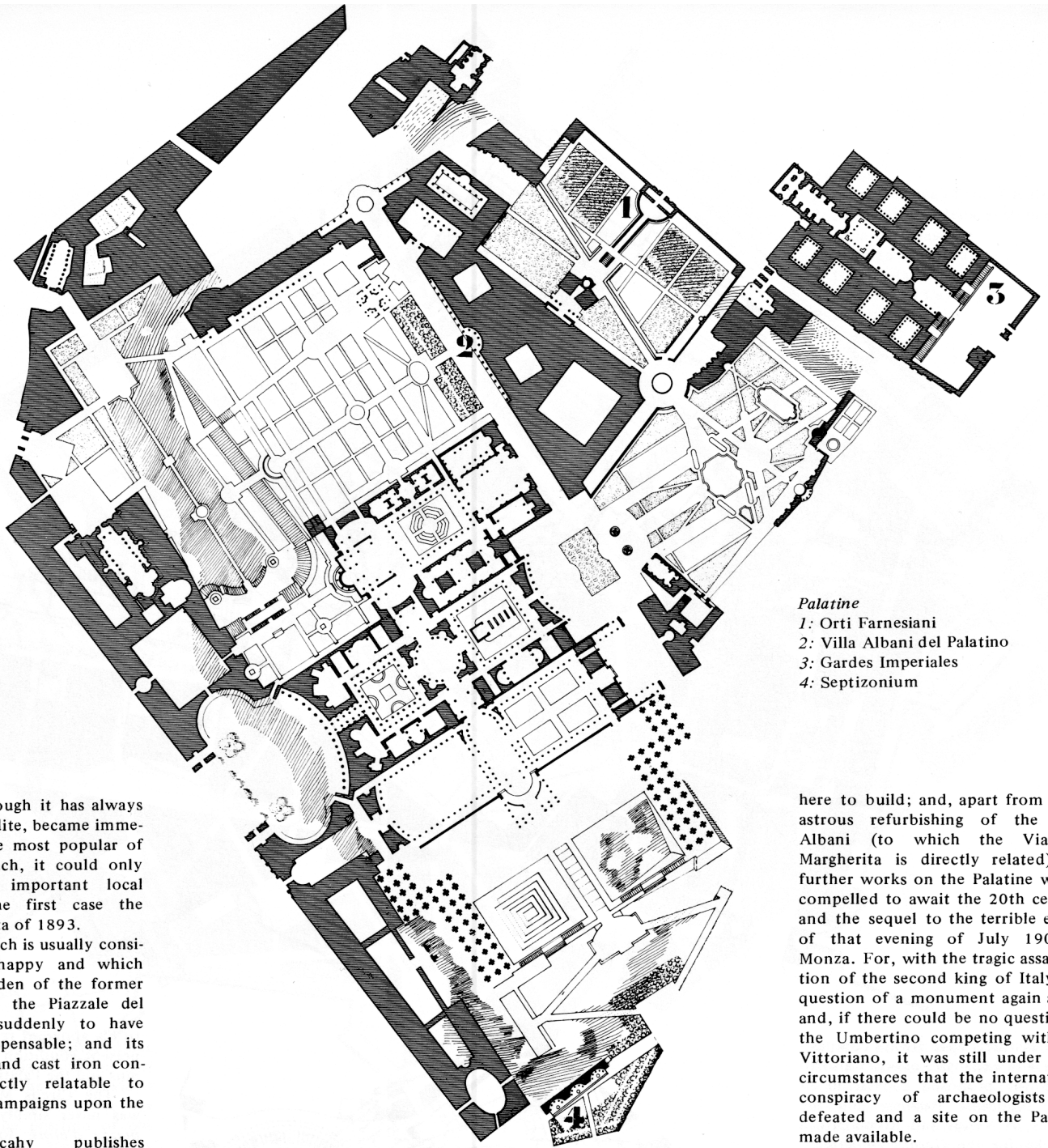
whose instincts were always compassionate and expansive chooses also to ignore the proposed conversion of Santa Francesca Romana and the temples of Venus and Rome into a barracks for the *Gardes Imperiales*. Indeed, while frequently concerned with *minutiae*, such rather large *minutiae* as these he often affects to disdain; and possibly, we too should be glad that this particular project was never even attempted. However, Father Mulcahy's silences with regard to much else, we must confess, do place us in a situation of great difficulty. As to be expected, his interests altogether cease as of September 20, 1870; and even after 1848 he is scarcely disposed to be highly attentive. For with all his Midwestern democracy, Father Mulcahy was no friend to the Risorgimento, the Garibaldini, or the House of Savoy. In 1870 he would have been the implacable enemy of all those who assembled themselves around the strangely assorted court of the Quirinale. But, if almost constitutionally he was anti-Piedmontese, his unwillingness to make commentary upon what he regarded as usurpation does result in some grave injustices; and we allude



to his apparent refusal to discuss the present condition of the Circus Maximus and the Palatine.

The Circus Maximus, though it was never simply an unembellished *piazza d'armi*, down until the later 1870s retained a somewhat astringent Neo-Classical character. Surrounded by Valadier with a shallow canal registering its original outline and equipped with an apparatus of balustrades, bridges, obelisks and statues, it is tempting to attribute to its format during these years a further Paduan source; and Stendhal, when he compared it with the Prato della Valle, of course made this connection. But, though the role of this source is still visible, as the area was revised around 1880, it is impossible not further to interpret it as both a tribute to Hadrian at Tivoli and a large-scale commentary upon the water garden at Bagnaia.

An arcadian valley, crudely suggestive of the magic garden of the *Hypneroto machia*, densely enclosed by a framework of pines, palms, oleanders and rhododendra, perhaps the most seductive of all Roman celebrations of water, the Circus Maximus, in its present role of nymphaeum



Palatine

- 1: Orti Farnesiani
- 2: Villa Albani del Palatino
- 3: Gardes Imperiales
- 4: Septizonium

and *boschetto*, though it has always displeased the erudite, became immediately one of the most popular of resorts; and as such, it could only instigate further important local activity – in the first case the Viadotto Margherita of 1893.

This bridge which is usually considered less than happy and which connected the garden of the former Villa Albani with the Piazzale del Aventino seems suddenly to have been found indispensable; and its engaging stucco and cast iron construction is directly relatable to further building campaigns upon the Palatine.

Father Mulcahy publishes Valadier's proposals for the Palazzo Imperiale, notices that work began upon them, but disdains to comment upon their subsequent evolution; and, needless to say, during the period 1814-70, this unfinished building could only constitute a grave Papal embarrassment. 'Part sacrilege and part nostalgia', to quote from Siegfried Giedion's characterisation of Schinkel's palace on the Acropolis for King Otto of Greece, the buildings of this Napoleonic *mise-en scène* were already too advanced and too solid to permit even the idea of demolition. There are some indications that here the Czar envisaged the seat of the Holy Alliance: and, as all the world knows, Lord Byron spent one extremely uncomfortable winter attempting, in the company of Teresa Guiccioli, to inhabit these unheatable halls; but we will leave aside the comparable circumstances of Richard Wagner's occupancy in 1865 (the buildings were then rented

to him by Monsignor de Merode) because what might well be called the *crisis of the site* begins now to approach.

The mode of the Piedmontese entry into Rome (via the Porta Pia) undoubtedly contributed to the 'convenience' of the Quirinale (it was the first adequate house to be reached); but to the old Papal residence there always adhered something of an inappropriate atmosphere – the flavour, no doubt, of illegitimate acquisition – and, consequently, the idea of the Palatine could only remain enticing. Indeed, if the ruins of Rome have always implied a programme of *renovatio*, the circumstances were now almost more than perfect. The shell of the buildings was approximately available; they awaited only an incrustation of ornament; and we owe it to the good sense of *il re galantuomo* that this

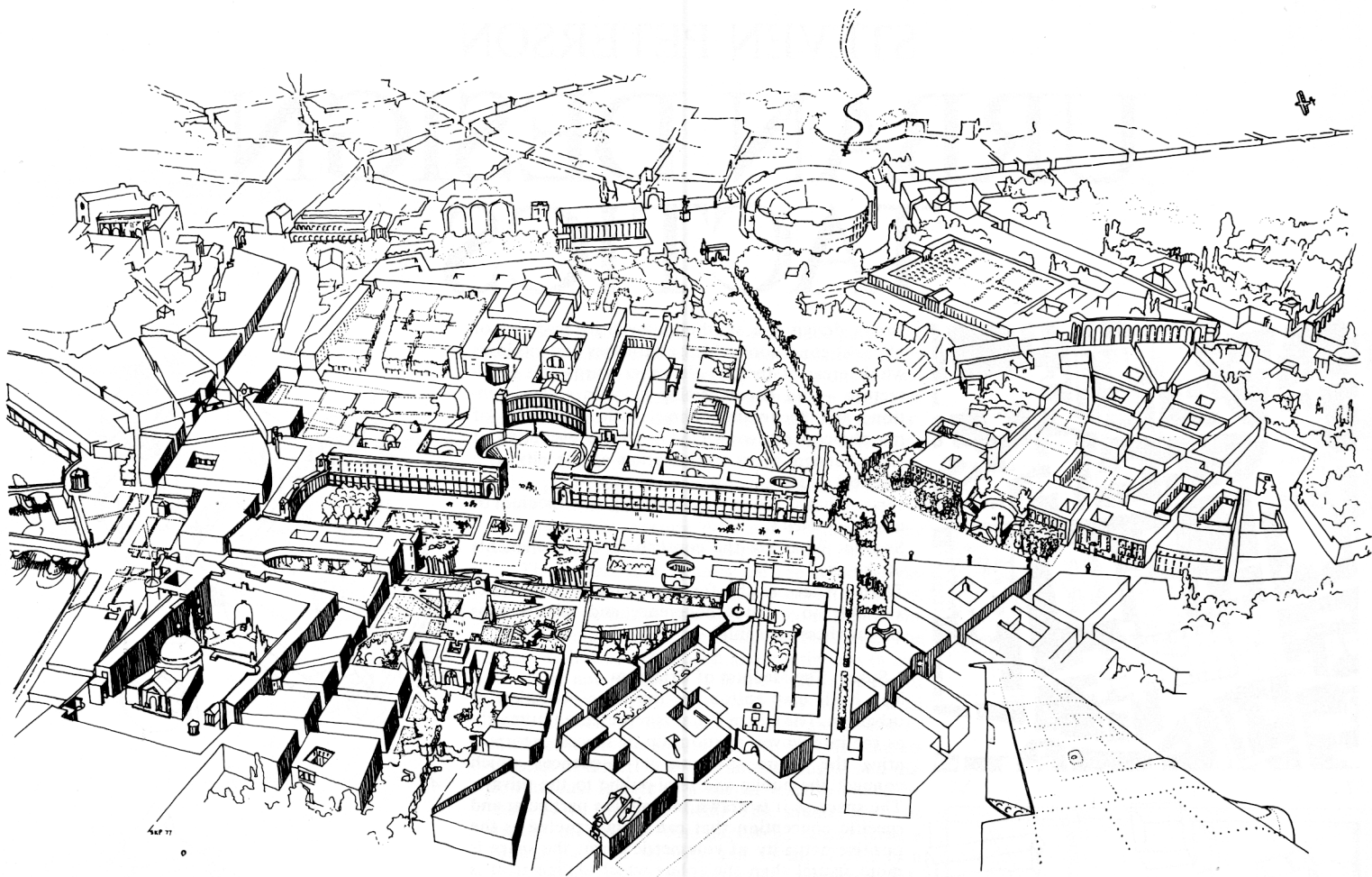
extravagant policy was not pursued. Vittorio Emanuele was content with quiet, if slightly wild, domesticities; and thus it was not until his daughter-in-law began to exert her influence that projects for the Palatine came to be revived.

We are not historians and as to an accurate sequence of events we entertain no clear idea; but we are told – and can believe – that quite shortly after 1878 there were projects on the boards for a monument to Vittorio Emanuele upon the Palatine – even, in some cases, taking the form of a completion of Valadier's proposals. It seems to us appropriate that the first kind of a united Italy should have been so commemorated; and we would like to think of the contemporary remodelling of the Circus Maximus as related to these ideas. However, after 1882, it became apparent that the Vittoriano was not

here to build; and, apart from a disastrous refurbishing of the Villa Albani (to which the Viadotto Margherita is directly related), for further works on the Palatine we are compelled to await the 20th century and the sequel to the terrible events of that evening of July 1900 at Monza. For, with the tragic assassination of the second king of Italy, the question of a monument again arose; and, if there could be no question of the Umbertino competing with the Vittoriano, it was still under these circumstances that the international conspiracy of archaeologists was defeated and a site on the Palatine made available.

One need not be altogether exhilarated by the results – though doubtless taste will change. Whether Sommaruga and Sacconi were the most harmonious of collaborators is scarcely an open question; but the decision to rebuild the exedra of the Domus Augustana and to establish behind it the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna was surely prompted by a reasonable ambition and a conspicuous wisdom. For, if its classicism is, in parts, a little bit too Puvis de Chavannes and, if its details are, occasionally, uncomfortably reminiscent of the Italian Pavilion at the St Louis Exposition of 1904, from a distance, certainly, the *Umbertino* is surely more than adequate; and, excessive purism apart, it can be claimed that this white marble apparition helps pleasingly to complete the architectural furniture of the Circus Maximus.

There is little more that now remains to be said. In spite of the



strenuous manipulations of Queen Margherita, the Palazzo del Palatino still awaits completion. However, as a ruin imposed upon ruins, it is not without a certain poignancy; and, in our accompanying plan, we have chosen to present it had it been built according to intentions. In other areas, too, we have taken comparable liberties — by adding to the plan of Valadier contributions by later architects (Santo Spirito, the Accademia Bavarese, etc) which seem to suggest or to augment its themes, and by not showing the Viadotto which was, after all, demolished in 1937. We are inclined to suspect that, although approved by Napoleon, by Valadier's own standards the urbanistic scenery of the Piazzale di San Gregorio remained unsolved and subject to emendation; and particularly we are conscious of the problems which he must have experienced at the termination of the Via Appia.

Along with the church of Saint Catherine of Alexandria (the Egyptian temple which Father Mulcahy conveniently footnotes) did he here propose a university, or following the model of the Invalides, was it a hospital that was here intended? A private source of information (which we cannot divulge) has made us aware that, in this area, the drawings at the Bibliothèque Nationale are invariably redun-

dant, imprecise and overlaid with contrary suggestions; and so much we would have expected. In any case, we present the area as the academic precinct which it now is — in many respects curiously precursive of the plan of Rockefeller Center (did the architects of Rockefeller Center have an early access to the Valadier archive?); and we notice that adjacent to all this, aligned with the Septizonium and opposite to it, Valadier did project a building, the Palazzo Laetizia, somewhat reminiscent of the Villa Madama and destined at that time, to be the Roman establishment of Madame Mere. Or at least such are the fragmentary indications which we have derived from Mulcahy's indispensable catalogue; and, accordingly, we have reproduced this building (formerly the Villa Monmouth and now the Canadian Embassy) as something of a hybrid — with both concessions to Valadier and concessions to its present condition.

Colin Rowe

We suppose that a purpose of this exhibition is an oblique criticism of late 19th-century and, particularly, present-day urbanistic strategies; and we can only agree with this intention.

We could have proposed that on the Palatine be erected a fragment of the *ville radieuse*, on the Aventine a fragment of Ludwig Hilbersheimer's imagination, over the Colosseum and the Circus Maximus a space frame; but, in the name of mere amusement or dubiously *avant garde* proclamation, to protract the errors and the later irresponsibilities of modern architecture does not appear to us to be a very useful procedure. We assume that, on the whole, modern architecture was a major catastrophe — except as a terrible lesson — best to be forgotten; and, though we sometimes wonder how an idea — apparently so good — could so easily have been betrayed, we see no reason to indulge in pseudo-regrets or quasi-satirical demonstrations.

Instead, since a purpose is to extrapolate from Nolli a Rome that could have been but never was, we have invented a history that might have been but never was. We apologise to the real Vincent Mulcahy for the hypothetical, and somewhat erratic, Jesuit scholar whom we have dared to invent in his name. Likewise we apologise to the shades of Cardinal Albani, Giuseppe Valadier, Napoleon and Queen Margherita for the different uses to which we have put their separate reputations. Along with Father Vincent, they have been

our life savers; but had we been dealing with another area of town — less sacrosanct and less central — no doubt we should not have needed them and, almost certainly, we should have deployed an entirely different category of argument.

However, as it is within the limitations of the Nolli format, we have attempted to make a plausible Rome, a city belonging to the category of the impossibly probable; and our fictive history has, for the most part, been an alibi for a topographical and contextual concern. For, assuming, that *Roma Interrotta* infers a condemnation of most of the horrors which have been perpetrated since 1870, we have attempted to constitute a fragment of the city which could appear as no more than a 'natural' extension of the 'old' Rome of the Campus Martius, a city of discrete set pieces and interactive local incidents, a city which represents a coalition of intentions rather than the singular presence of any immediately apparent all-coordinating ideas.

We can say no more except that we offer extended thanks to Bryant Baker, Susan Power, Cecile Chenault, Steven Leet, Robert Szymanski and others who wish to remain anonymous, who have participated in the production of our drawings.