

**THE VIRTUAL TOURIST IN RENAISSANCE ROME: PRINTING AND
COLLECTING THE SPECULUM ROMANAE MAGNIFICENTIAE**
09/2007 – 02/2008

INTRODUCTION PANEL

In 1891, as William Rainey Harper began his tenure as the first president of the University of Chicago, he purchased the stock of a Berlin bookdealer who offered, among other things, a “unique set of Lafreri’s *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* consisting in 1100 plates of which no public library has a set over 120 plates.”

Perhaps the grandiose claim was calculated to appeal to the American taste for bigness. The plates in question are engravings (printed images) of the monuments and antiquities of Rome, most published in the second half of the sixteenth century, the age of Michelangelo and the Counter-Reformation. When first published, they were sold individually and also, from the 1570s, in sets of around 100 to 150, bound in volumes that often included the title page that gave them the “*Speculum*” name.

Over the centuries, Lafreri’s prints, and those of his contemporaries and successors, provided Europeans and others with images of Rome that could be put to many different uses. Collectors often added to these volumes, and thus most of the 994 prints that eventually arrived as part of the Berlin collection were neither published by Lafreri nor part of an original set put out by his shop, but were collected together because they depicted similar views of Roman landscape, monuments, and statues.

In 1966, the Library first exhibited prints from the *Speculum* collection, choosing a group of major architectural monuments. This exhibition focuses instead on the prints as material objects in the cultural context of Renaissance Rome and the centuries that followed, examining how they were made and collected and what influence they had. Alongside prints, it displays related books whose illustrations often copied images originally published as independent prints. It presents a portrait of the interests Renaissance people took in ancient Rome. By showing how images were circulated, collected, and used, it gives insight into the purposes that brought scholars, artists, and travelers to Rome, and how they navigated once there.

This exhibition forms part of a project to use technology to enrich the field of print studies. The Provost’s Program for Academic Technology Innovation is supporting a partnership with the Library to develop a digital collection of *Speculum* prints (<http://speculum.lib.uchicago.edu>) that will be accessible online and provide high-quality, zoomable digital images as well as updated catalogue information, and “virtual itineraries” that provide paths through a thematically related selection of images. Research for the exhibition was conducted by a team of graduate students who worked with the original prints in the Special Collections Research Center and could consult the digital images at any time. Today’s visitors are invited to navigate both the physical exhibition and the database and its itineraries online.

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Note: In the exhibition labels, the spelling and capitalization of the titles and edition statements for books have been transcribed as they appear in the text. Standardized spellings are used for the names of authors, publishers, and places of publication. All prints are from Antonio Lafreri (1512-1577), publisher. *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, 1574-77. The University of Chicago’s *Speculum* includes 994 prints dated from as early as the 1530s and as late as the 1760s.

CASE 1 ANTONIO LAFRERI AND THE SPECULUM ROMANAE MAGNIFICENTIAE

Interest in Roman antiquity was well established by the mid-sixteenth century, when Antonio Lafreri began printing ambitious, large-scale engravings of the monuments and antiquities of Rome. Lafreri, a native of the French-speaking province of Franche-Comté (his birth name was probably Antoine Lafrère), traveled to Rome around 1540 to become one of many foreigners plying a trade in the Eternal City.

Lafreri built a market for his prints both in Rome and elsewhere in Europe that probably included middle-class as well as upper-class devotees of antiquity. A buyer might purchase a single print from a local dealer in Madrid; another, possessing the resources to transport and store a large collection of prints, might purchase them by the hundreds in Rome, order them to be luxuriously bound into a volume, and have the volume brought back to Paris. There, it might serve as travel souvenir, repository of antiquarian knowledge, and inspiration for architectural and interior design. Most of the Speculum prints remaining come from such collections: prints bound into books simply had greater longevity than those that existed independently. (Many found their way into larger collections such as the one now at the University of Chicago, which contains copious quantities of prints not published by Lafreri, as well as much of his production.)

In the mid-1570s, Lafreri's workshop responded to the practice of collecting multiple prints and binding them into albums by publishing a print that could serve as the title page for such collections. Though no one collection was identical to any other, the title page established Lafreri's prints as a coherent, comprehensive body of work understood by the title *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae*, the "Mirror of Roman Magnificence."

CASE 2 LAFRERI'S ENTERPRISE

Antonio Lafreri's first signed and dated prints were produced in 1544 in Rome. Lafreri began his career, in large part, by copying the prints of the established publisher Antonio Salamanca, with whom he contracted a partnership in 1553 that lasted until Salamanca's son dissolved it (following his father's death in 1562). Throughout his career Lafreri employed many artists from outside Italy, including Etienne Dupérac, Jacob Bos, and Nicolas Béatrizet, and maintained contacts with scholars north of the Alps.

Like many of his rival print publishers, Lafreri was also a book publisher and a dealer in books and prints. The relative novelty of the profession meant that older guild divisions did not apply, and many artisans occupied multiple roles in the printing and printmaking sector. One of the most important and innovative joint publications of Lafreri and Salamanca is Juan Valverde de Amusco's *Historia de la composicion del cuerpo humano* (1556). The *Historia* was one of the first printed books to use high-quality, large-scale engravings rather than woodcuts. Woodcuts, because they are relief rather than intaglio prints, are easier to incorporate into letterpress printing (also a relief method). With this edition Lafreri and Salamanca, specialists in the publication of engravings, implicitly promoted the capacity of engraving to provide highly accurate visual information—a prominent feature of their claims for their archaeological prints.

After Lafreri's death in 1577 his workshop was taken over by his nephew, Claude Duchet (Claudio Duchetti). Duchetti continued printing from the existing copperplates inherited from his uncle. When he no longer owned a particular plate, he often hired an artist to etch a new one copied from prints he had in stock. This accounts for the many near-identical copies published with his "address" (the term used for a publisher's signature).

After the death of Lafreri's heirs, the plates came into the hands of many subsequent publishers. Many plates originally published by Lafreri, therefore, bear a sequence of later publishers' names. In some but not all cases, names of the original engraver and publisher have been removed.

CASE 3 MAPS OF THE ANCIENT CITY

Ancient monuments and statues had been mentioned in medieval guidebooks, but there had been little systematic effort at plotting the physical contours of the ancient city, and

its change over time, until the fifteenth century, when Flavio Biondo composed his *De Roma Instaurata*.

In the sixteenth century, antiquarian scholars attempted to reconstruct the geography of ancient Rome at various stages in its history. While they could see the remains of later Roman monuments and city planning, they struggled to understand early phases of the city's growth. Results included the schematic, highly geometric maps made by Marco Fabio Calvo that showed the growth over time of the regions of the city. Calvo's *Simulachrum* was published in 1527 and was reprinted in Boissard's much later *Topographia*, which also compiled numerous other texts and images. Schematic maps like Calvo's displayed relationships and ideas more than accurate physical space.

Classical texts, existing monuments, the results of excavations, inscriptions, and depictions on coins and medals could all provide evidence for mapmakers. As cartographic practices developed, some artists preferred to render buildings and streets as a flat ground plan. Others presented a sweeping, oblique bird's eye view. Pirro Ligorio and Etienne Dupérac, while treating the overall space of the city as a ground plan, presented modified elevations of monuments as they looked from the ground, thus combining two different points of view in one image much as tourist maps still do. In this period, no single standard way of representing the relationship between monuments and the extended topography of the city existed.

In 1562, the *Forma Urbis Romae*, a marble plan of the city dated to the time of the Emperor Septimius Severus, was discovered near the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian and excavated by Giovanni Antonio Dosio. This Roman plan of the city soon influenced Renaissance mapmakers.

CASE 4 MAPS AND GUIDES TO "MODERN" ROME

Travelers have always visited Rome with different goals in mind: to view Christian relics and follow a spiritual itinerary; to contemplate the picturesque landscape of past grandeur; to visit prestigious collections of antiquities on a scholarly mission. All needed maps and guidebooks to help them navigate the modern city, not only to study the remains of the ancient city. Others, in Rome or elsewhere, collected maps to attain virtual mastery of the city.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Rome presented a rapidly changing urban landscape, and mapmakers and publishers had to keep up. Mapmaking techniques developed in response to expanding global travel and local administrative needs. In the fifteenth century, the famous scholar Leon Battista Alberti provided a systematic and highly mathematical method for measuring the topography of Rome. No map by Alberti survives, but in 1500 Jacopo de' Barbari produced a gorgeous (and accurate) aerial view map of Venice that had a major influence on later publishing. Antonio Lafreri and his competitors also published numerous maps; as with antiquarian prints and the *Speculum*, Lafreri's maps were often bound together into collections known as the *Geographia* based on a title page he produced.

Modern conventions for depicting topography in print took centuries to develop. Early printed books for the traveler also included itineraries that were simple lists of roads with their distances and intersections—a verbal account of space from the ground up, rather than a look down from on high. During the sixteenth century, the publishing of more extended narrative guidebooks blossomed. A guidebook can be thought of as a kind of map, sequentially presenting a series of itineraries (often illustrated for additional navigational help) rather than a single, all-inclusive view.

CASE 5 ARTISTS AND THE RUINS OF ROME

Drawing was a fundamental aspect of art education during the Renaissance and the ancient masters were first in the line of references: painters, sculptors and architects alike filled their sketchbooks with images of ancient Rome. Artists from all over Europe traveled to Rome to copy directly from the ruins and works there, and together constituted a distinct subculture in the city.

The genre of vedute, or views of Rome, comprised more than just simple, objective landscapes. These images also included self-representations, expressing the experiences of artists as a group, and included the results of both direct observation and copying practices. Among Giovanni Antonio Dosio's views, published in 1569 by Giovanni Battista Cavalieri, some were drawn on-site, and others were copied from other prints. As artists spent entire days, spring through autumn, sketching Roman sites, they naturally began to record and comment on their own activities pictorially. Several of Dosio's views, for example, include a portrait of the (or an) artist hard at work.

Depicting oneself in the act of drawing within a picture could make several artistic statements. First, it implied first-hand knowledge of monuments, ruins and sculptures. Empirical knowledge was important during the Renaissance and evidence of documentary accuracy could help guarantee print sales. An embedded self-portrait served as proof that the artist had been present at the scene, which in turn validated the idea that the print was an accurate record of what actually existed. Secondly, these vignettes could serve as playful commentary on artists' habits and activities—an insider's view on the working artisan. Lastly, these embedded pictures served as evidence of the culture's interest in particular famous objects. A contemporary parallel might be a cartoon depicting the throngs of tourists crowded around the Mona Lisa, all flocking to the same site. In each case, the embedded portrait or generic depiction of an artist added an important intellectual element to the picture, adding veracity to the print and value to the viewing experience.

CASE 6 ANTIQUARIAN PRINTING IN VENICE AND ROME

The print and book publishing industries in Rome often drew inspiration from Venice, to the north. Due in large part to its position as an international trading hub, Venice was the major center of print production in Italy and a stopping point for many travelers who came from the north and the east. Roman publishers, printers, and print and book dealers (functions often combined in a single enterprise) traded merchandise with their Venetian counterparts, and often competed with them as well.

Venice provided particular inspiration in the realm of antiquarian printing. The famous publishing house of Aldus Manutius (Aldo Manuzio) published both scholarly editions of classical texts and modern treatises on antiquarian topics. The selling of prints was considered to be a secondary pursuit to that of selling books, and was often pursued as a supplemental income. Book printers marked their publications with a printer's mark, their business insignia, on the title page. These woodcut images often took the shape of a motto paired with a symbolic device. Here in the *Antiquitatum Romanarum Pauli Manutii liber de legibus* by Paulo Manuzio can be seen his father Aldus's famous "dolphin and anchor" device, expressing the motto *festina lente*, or "hasten slowly."

The sibyl, mystical female herald of ancient prophecy, was the printer's mark of Michele Tramezzino, one of the most prominent Venetian print publishers in the second half of the sixteenth century. He first established himself as a successful bookseller with his brother Francesco in Rome before branching out on his own in Venice, finding his niche in antiquarian publishing. In the realm of printmaking Tramezzino is credited with popularizing intaglio prints (engravings, as opposed to woodcuts) in the Venetian market and facilitating commerce between Rome and Venice. The Tramezzino specialization in the reconstructed monuments and topography of Rome earned the family such a reputation among antiquarians that their house in Rome was included among the stops made during antiquarian walking tours offered in the city.

CASE 7 DESTRUCTION, RECONSTRUCTION, ANTIQUARIANISM

The sixteenth-century interest in antiquities built upon growing interest in ancient texts in the previous century. With the advent of humanism, the ruined classical monuments dotting Rome also fell under the gaze of architects and artists intent upon reviving the ancient city of Rome.

Ironically, the Renaissance interest in classical styles of architecture, when combined with the desire to express wealth, status, and style through building projects, was a greater danger to ancient buildings than the damage sustained in raids and earthquakes during the Middle Ages. Renaissance construction projects regularly raided architectural

ruins for building materials. Even as Renaissance builders (including the popes) hastened the demise of certain monuments, a culture of antiquarianism developed among individuals concerned with the preservation and documentation of classical buildings. A letter written by the painter Raphael to Pope Leo X around 1519 was a landmark statement of concern about their fate.

The goals of Renaissance antiquarians heralded, but differed from, the modern science of historical preservation. Rome was a central focus for the activities of antiquarians, and mapping the city's monuments was one of their main tasks. In the mid-1500s, the Neapolitan architect and antiquarian Pirro Ligorio was considered one of the preeminent experts on ancient Roman culture. His work comprised architectural projects, Roman and Ferrarese encyclopedias of classical culture, and maps and individual reconstructions of ruined buildings. All of Ligorio's Roman views were printed by Michele Tramezzino, a prominent Venetian publisher, some of whose books can be seen in case 6. Antonio Lafreri and his heirs published myriad copies of Ligorio's engravings. An expert in numismatics, Ligorio relied to an unprecedented degree on images of buildings on antique coins and medals to ascertain the original appearance of ruined Roman buildings.

CASE 8 THE PICTURESQUE

Many of the Roman monuments depicted in Lafreri's prints appear in reconstructed form: using the best archaeological knowledge available (often copying work done by Pirro Ligorio), Lafreri directed designers and printmakers to present an idealized form understood to be as close as possible to the monument's original state. Often the monuments are presented without bystanders, or with ancient Romans who suggest the historical difference between past and present. Other Lafreri prints represent monuments in their current, ruined state, sometimes including contemporary bystanders whose presence draws the viewer in to the colorful variety of (then-) present-day Rome.

It was a different printmaker-publisher who began to exploit fully, and systematically, the aesthetic potential of Roman ruins as an independent subject of art. Hieronymus Cock, an Antwerp-based printer, produced a series of devastatingly beautiful scenes of ruins, depicting crumbling buildings as part of a landscape, with scattered fragments, tangled vegetation, scenes of seduction, and dramatic skies. Cock made full use of the etching medium, concentrating on the evocative qualities of line and often using chiaroscuro (dramatic contrasts of light and shadow) to create looming, cavernous spaces, and inserting figures that make witty commentaries.

Though art historians often associate the term "picturesque" with the eighteenth century, all the qualities of the later picturesque are apparent in these landscapes. They highlight wildness and irregularity rather than cool symmetry, and they make their artfulness apparent. They were often copied by other artists, and one can see stylistic transformations in Cock's own atelier that produce ever more fantastical scenes. Such scenes seemed to call for commentary; some scholars and learned printmakers attached commentaries or legends to picturesque scenes in order to reimagine them as rational documents of ancient architecture.

CASE 9 THE USES OF IMAGES

Many different types of books incorporated images of antiquities as illustrations; *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* prints and other similar prints were also bound into a variety of types of albums. These images thus served a variety of purposes, as part of history and "text" books, pilgrimage and tour guides, and as records of antiquarian collections. Artists also put such images and collections of them to myriad uses. They copied images in order to learn from them (see case 17), and quoted, reused, recreated, and reformulated them in whole or part.

Artists understood that their images would be used and borrowed from by others. Hieronymus Cock's title page explicitly encourages other artists to use his images, while François Perrier's simply implies it. Lafreri's collaborator Cartaro, on the other hand, does something slightly different. He both leaves blank spots throughout his "perspectives" (fantastical scenes of architecture that emphasize the use of perspective) and gives visual suggestions for how to use them by including small figures in

incomplete scenes. Cartaro blends his display of perspectival skill with a tacit invitation to copy and learn from him.

Many of the owners of these books and albums, inspired by such direct or implied suggestions, made their own interventions on the pages of books and albums. Speculum albums were often annotated by hand. Drawn, traced and written copies and “commentaries” can be observed in the books displayed here, some of whose prior owners are known. The copy of Marliani’s *Topographia*, an important guide to the antiquities of Rome, displays the tracings and obsessive autographing of an owner named Le Cocq.

Marliani’s influential book also served as a source of images for others; Montjosieu’s idiosyncratic account of Roman antiquity, *Gallus Romae Hospes* (“the French visitor in Rome”) drew on several of Marliani’s images. Perrier’s collection of statues was also a source of inspiration for others; Bisschop used Perrier’s etchings for his book and it is likely that copies of Perrier’s prints may be found hiding in some of Joshua Reynolds’s paintings.

CASE 10 COPIES AND LINEAGES

Printmaking was a competitive business, and copying works by others was an efficient way to turn a profit. Many artists made more or less precise copies of other prints in hopes of profiting from the cachet of the original’s recognizable image. The wide dissemination and profitability of prints spurred concerns about plagiarism. Even as protections of the rights of artists developed (mostly in the form of “privileges” granting exclusive rights to sell and reproduce books and prints), artists went on copying each other’s work, believing it was their right to draw inspiration from many sources.

Copying documentary images—prints that depicted well-known statues and monuments—may have seemed to pose fewer problems than purely fictive ones, whose “invention” could be identified with a particular artist. Yet because even documentary images involve a variety of artistic choices, the influence of such prints can often be traced. Views of Roman sites like the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina were copied over and over again. Since nothing prevented an artist from choosing a new point of view in depicting such monuments, the fact that one print uses the same vantage point as another suggests that the artists were copying from prints rather than going on-site to make their own independent drawings. Cavalieri’s and Gamucci’s prints of this temple, for example, represent the monument from the same position because they worked from Dosio’s original drawings; the woodcut present in the 1588 edition of Marliani’s *Topographia* was copied from Gamucci’s.

Not all copies are exact replicas nor are they always identifiable as reproductions based on a single shared visual source. The *Roma victrix* sculpture group was a composite created out of several statues in the sixteenth century to symbolize Roman victory. The engraving published by Lafreri put it in wide circulation and thus influenced later artists in a more indirect way. Other artists took inspiration from it in producing their own versions, even if they did not copy it directly. Sometimes technical challenges or the artist’s skill level account for variation in the copies; the three images of *Roma victrix*, for example, seem to indicate a lineage of simplification.

CASE 11 UNDERSTANDING ANCIENT ARCHITECTURE

The architectural orders used in Renaissance buildings derived their form and aspects of their symbolism from the classical Greek orders, systems of proportion and ornamentation that are most evidently associated with columns, but extend to all components of buildings. A publishing fervor for architectural treatises appeared early in the Renaissance: from 1450 onward, writers such as Alberti, Filarete, Francesco di Giorgio, and Bramante published works that attempted to describe and systematize the architectural orders. Lafreri and others followed in their footsteps in publicizing images of ancient buildings.

The three classical orders—Ionic, Doric and Corinthian—were canonized in the handbook of the Roman theorist Vitruvius, who described their origins and declared them appropriate to the temples of particular gods on the basis of gender. Vitruvius also

mentioned a fourth, Rustic (or Tuscan) order. When Vitruvius's text was rediscovered by Renaissance humanists, the Tuscan order was once again admitted to the fold of orders, albeit in a cursory way. Comprehensive diagrams of the Tuscan column's form and proportions were first published by Sebastiano Serlio, whose sources for the reconstruction were based on actual measurements of the very few antique ruins that bore such columns, such as the columns of Trajan and of Marcus Antoninus. A fifth order, not recognized by Vitruvius, was identified by Alberti from his antiquarian observations of Roman triumphal arches: known as the Composite or Italic order, it was regarded as the most ornate of the orders, associated with Roman authority.

Renaissance authors debated the usefulness of Vitruvius and the extent to which the Romans followed his rules in their building practices. The studies of ancient monuments conducted by printmakers provided newfound opportunities to compare styles by laying images of them side by side. Thus, the explosion of antiquarian publishing raised awareness of style and its cultural meanings and history.

CASE 12 THE COLOSSEUM

Considered a wonder to behold, the Colosseum was included in almost every guidebook to Rome. It became a symbol of Rome itself, indeed, of all of Western society. The "Flavian Amphitheater" or "hunting theater," as it was called in antiquity, was built by the Emperor Vespasian beginning around 70-72 CE (Colosseum is a medieval term for the structure, perhaps based on a nearby colossal statue of Nero; Coliseum, another modern spelling, was a secondary Latin form). It was inaugurated by the Emperor Titus in 80 CE and remained in use until the sixth century. A series of earthquakes eventually took their toll, and the amphitheater descended into ruin. By 1855, the English botanist, Richard Deakin, recorded 420 species of plants growing within the structure.

Prints played an important role in the way the Colosseum was perceived. Renaissance printmakers portrayed the Colosseum both as a contemporary ruin and as an intact monument, in each case purporting to offer the viewer an authentic experience of it. Reconstructions allowed the viewer to glimpse the magnificence of Rome; ruins reminded the viewer of Rome's fall and of the inevitable decay of one's own historical moment.

It was the image of ruins that later captured the imagination of the Romantics. Their sublime grandeur seemed to transport the visitor beyond him- or herself. Percy Bysshe Shelley was especially mesmerized by the amphitheater; for Shelley and other Romantic writers, the Colosseum was synonymous with the sublime.

Despite its ruined state, the Colosseum was anything but deserted. Indeed, it was a vibrant part of the city. During the Renaissance, its stones were harvested and re-used in building projects throughout Rome. Romans traversed it in their daily routines. Artists, lovers, and tourists frequented the site. Pilgrims came to venerate the cross erected in the amphitheater and to honor the martyred faithful. In short, the Colosseum had a pulse.

CASE 13 OBELISKS AND URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS

Some of the most prominent markers of urban space in Rome are its obelisks. These arrived in the city after Rome brought Egypt into the empire in 30 BCE. By the time of the Renaissance, the only ancient obelisk that remained standing was located to the south of St. Peter's Basilica. A monolithic spire of red granite, the Vatican obelisk measures 83 feet tall and weighs 330 tons. Its four sides taper slightly inward, toward a pyramidal top. Unlike many other obelisks, it is not inscribed with hieroglyphs.

The project of moving the obelisk to the piazza in front of St. Peter's was first suggested by Pope Nicholas V (1447-55) in order to celebrate the re-unification of the church and the end of papacy's exile in Avignon. The removal of the obelisk was not achieved, however, until the pontificate of Sixtus V (1585-90). Domenico Fontana was appointed the task of transporting the monument; he employed over 900 men, 75 horses, and 40 capstans or winches for the job. Numerous contemporary publications and artistic media celebrated this incredible feat of engineering.

The Vatican obelisk represented the triumph of Christian Rome over its pagan past. In particular, Sixtus V wished to proclaim the successes of the Counter-Reformation. The obelisk was dedicated on September 26, 1586, with new inscriptions commemorating the event. As it was raised in its new location, a cross replaced the gilded ball at top. During the Middle Ages, this globe was believed to hold the ashes of Julius Caesar. Sixtus V placed other ancient obelisks at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, San Giovanni in Laterano, and by the Porta del Popolo on the Via Flaminia. The obelisks identify the most sacred of Christian sites in the city, helping to redefine the main avenues of access and circulation.

CASE 14 EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES IN ROME

Renaissance and Baroque antiquarians were fascinated by Egypt's ancient culture and religion. Much of their knowledge came from classical authors and from the Egyptian artifacts that could be seen in Rome. After Egypt was incorporated into the Roman Empire, Rome claimed many of its monuments as symbols of its own greatness. Egyptian obelisks, for example, were imported for use in civic and funerary contexts (their afterlife in the Renaissance is discussed in case 13). The Sepulcher of Caius Cestius is another example of Egyptian influence in the first century BCE. A pyramidal tomb built for a Roman magistrate, it was a popular subject of sixteenth-century prints and guidebook illustrations. The view from the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* is one of several in the Chicago collection. Both the frontispiece engraving from Athanasius Kircher's *Sphinx Mystagoga* and a woodcut illustration of the pyramids as one of the Seven Wonders of the World, shown in this case, demonstrate the impact of these monuments on later European perceptions of the East. Pyramids and obelisks are treated as interchangeable monumental forms (the two words were used without a clear distinction between them in the sixteenth century). The resulting views of Egypt are more fantastical than accurate.

Other well-known Egyptian antiquities in sixteenth-century Rome include the Canopic Vase, numerous sphinxes, and a pair of lions placed in front of the Pantheon. Some objects, like the *Mensa Isiaca*, were thought to be Egyptian but were actually Roman imitations. Many scholars sought to decipher the hieroglyphic code of their inscriptions. Lucan's *Pharsalia* provides information on Egypt's culture and language in its account of the Roman civil wars. Here it is supplemented with marginal notes and drawings by a reader. Horapollo's *Selecta hieroglyphica*, accepted as an authoritative interpretation of Egyptian hieroglyphs and their meanings, inspired many Renaissance artists and authors.

CASE 15 LAOCOÖN AND IMAGINARY RECONSTRUCTION

Discovered in 1506 near Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, Laocoön is one of the most famous statues to survive from antiquity. The story of Laocoön and his sons was known from Virgil's *Aeneid*. The Trojan priest, Laocoön, distrusted the wooden horse left by the Greeks outside Troy's city walls. Laocoön tried to warn the Trojans of his fears, but they did not listen, and in response Athena sent a pair of sea serpents to kill Laocoön and his sons for cautioning the Trojans. The statue's date remains disputed. Generally, it is considered a first-century CE Roman copy of an original from Pergamum.

Significantly, Laocoön was the first statue unearthed in the Renaissance that had been described by an ancient author. In his "Natural History," the Roman author Pliny declares that the Laocoön is "a work superior to any painting and any bronze [sculpture]." Based on the authority of Pliny's ancient text, Renaissance artists and antiquarians had discovered the greatest ancient sculpture ever made.

When found, the statue was almost completely intact. Laocoön's right arm was missing, as were the right arm and lower leg of his eldest son (on the left). Additionally, the younger son was missing his right-hand fingers and some toes. The statue group was likely restored by the sculptor Baccio Bandinelli in the 1520s and by Michelangelo's protégé, Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli, in 1532-33.

Immediately after its rediscovery, the sculpture was also reconstructed in prints. Prints allowed Renaissance artists to re-present ancient ruins and fragmentary sculptures as they would have looked in antiquity. Such imaginary reconstructions claimed to offer an authentic experience of the statue. Laocoön was a favorite subject for prints; several still

showed the statue with some breaks, even after the group had been restored by Montorsoli. Prints also allowed the artist to play with the location of the statue. The Laocoön was re-imagined in various locales: sometimes in a niche, other times in the open air, or in an extended landscape.

CASE 16 ANCIENT STATUES

The unearthing of ancient statues throughout Rome fueled Renaissance interest in history and archaeology. As the past was literally emerging from the ground, Renaissance antiquarians and artists alike devoted themselves to the study and preservation of ancient sculpture. Sought not just for their beauty, these objects were valued for information they could provide about ancient culture. The statues reflected Rome's illustrious past and served to enhance the glory of Rome's present.

In his "Lives of the Painters, Sculptors, and Architects," Giorgio Vasari instructed Renaissance artists to emulate ancient works. Through such emulation, Vasari believed that it would be possible for the Renaissance to surpass the greatness of the ancients. The Apollo Belvedere, the Belvedere Torso and the Laocoön were among the finest examples of ancient statues listed by Vasari. Each became famous for its classicizing naturalism.

The fragmentary statue, Pasquino, perhaps best illustrates the Renaissance appropriation of ancient statuary. Known as a "talking statue," Pasquino offered (and still offers) Romans an anonymous mouthpiece with which to vent their frustrations at civic and papal authority. Satirizing poems and sayings would be posted on or near the statue. Each year on St. Mark's Day (April 25), Pasquino was dressed as a different mythological figure. Poets would compete to compose the wittiest poem about Pasquino in his mythic garb. Pasquino was also known to converse with other ancient statues throughout the city. Most famously, Marforio (see case 5) would ask Pasquino questions and Pasquino would answer him. Far removed from his ancient function, context and even identity, Pasquino is a paradigm for the way ancient statues acquired new meaning in the Renaissance.

CASE 17 THE CREATION OF CLASSICAL FORM

The story of ancient statuary and the codification of classical form does not begin with classical Greece. Instead, it commences with Giorgio Vasari's publication and subsequent enlargement of his "Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects" in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. Vasari provides a framework that was later to be superimposed onto the story of Western art history. His tale begins with abstraction (as found in the works of Cimabue and Giotto), rises to the pinnacle of naturalism with the works of Michelangelo, and finishes with a hint of decline in the work of Titian. This teleological construct: abstraction (archaic), naturalism (classical), decline (Hellenistic/Roman), would become the foundational narrative of Western art history. Indeed, it is the story of ancient Greek art.

In the eighteenth century, J. J. Winckelmann solidified Vasari's tripartite narrative expressly for the study of Greek and Roman art. The stylistic categories of dating that Winckelmann employed are still in use today, with the same connotations. Drawing on Vasari, Winckelmann establishes four categories: Archaic, Classical, Decadent (Hellenistic), and Decline (Roman).

Texts, however, were not the only way statues were classified and codified. Prints also perpetuated classical form and the techniques for producing it. In his publication, *Sentiments sur la Distinction des diverses manieres de peinture...*, Abraham Bosse emphasizes the importance of first learning to copy ancient statues from prints. According to Bosse, it was only after one mastered the study of the antique from engravings that one was able to copy from nature. This process taught artists how to study the human figure before they ever saw a live nude model.

Antonio Lafreri's *Speculum* contributed to this codification of classical form in its systematic collection of the best that ancient and modern Rome had to offer. In it, an artist would have had access to all of the excellent examples of naturalism that could be copied and perfected.

CASE 18

ROMAN RELIGION

Roman religion was polytheist in nature, and the Roman state easily assimilated new and foreign religions as long as their practice did not interfere or compete with political affairs. Different divinities were associated with every aspect of Roman life, such as the family, the state, and the environment; the domestic practice of religion occupied a separate sphere from national religious observances. In the realm of politics, which was closely reliant on religion, the Roman state appointed its own religious officials—such as augurs, skilled in the interpretation of the flight of birds – who were consulted before important events like wars or during periods of plague.

Several cults that operated in secrecy were popular during the Roman Empire. The cult of Bacchus, whose initiation rites supposedly encouraged homicidal and sexual debauchery, was suppressed during the second century CE and resulted in the death sentence of about 7000 participants and the destruction of Bacchic shrines across Italy. Another popular sect was the cult of Mithras, a sun god and bull-killer. However, despite the many visual depictions of Mithras that survive, little textual evidence about the cult exists today.

During the Renaissance, much of the attraction of prints depicting ancient Roman religion and cult scenes hinged on the conflicting desire to observe orthodox Christian values while also studying pagan religion. Engravings of Roman religious scenes confirmed the moral uprightness of Christianity and at the same time fed cultural interest in popular beliefs. The esoteric nature of the Mithras cult appealed in particular to the taste of humanists, who treated the image's iconography as a collection of symbolic emblems to decipher.

CASE 19

ROMAN EMPERORS AND EMPRESSES

Over the course of its history, Rome's system of government transformed from monarchy to republic to empire. To later ages, Rome could thus serve as an inspiration to those who sought to replace monarchies with the republican form of modified democracy. The empire also provided an example of a multicultural society. More often, however, it was a model for imperial splendor and military might, put to use by kings and even lesser political leaders who did not themselves have convincing claims to empire. With the history of Rome as a guide, empire also implicitly suggested the potential for decadence and decline.

Renaissance readers and viewers were fascinated by stories of the emperors. As a sequence, their biographies and portraits also told a tale of rise and decline. Portraits of great men were viewed as models for virtuous behavior; portraits of emperors judged wicked by history provided examples of bad choices. Claiming that the true depiction of facial features was an accurate guide to the moral contents of the soul, scholars strove for accuracy—or at least purported to strive for it—in the depictions of emperors in their works. They used ancient Roman portraits as source material, copying from coins, medals, and statues, though many also fabricated their images. Enea Vico, who devoted a book to depictions of empresses and their insignia, was careful to indicate where he drew on ancient sources and where he made conjectures.

Because coins and medals were more portable and numerous than large-scale statues, they provided many a scholar or amateur with the beginnings of a collection—even if, as Antonio Agustín (see case 21) lamented, those who could afford collections of medals had little knowledge of them, and those who had knowledge of them could not afford them.

CASE 20

MILITARY POWER AND EMPIRE

Renaissance viewers were deeply impressed by the military might of Rome. At its greatest extent, the Roman Empire covered a vast territory unmatched by any European power until Napoleon in the nineteenth century. Much of the literature the Romans bequeathed to later ages dealt with the history and strategy of war; this resonated with the experience of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europeans, who experienced the devastation of many major wars.

In a more fictive vein, the battle of Amazons displayed here documents no actual event, but stories of these female warriors were a source of fascination to ancient and Roman

viewers alike. Surviving ancient art often displayed military themes. In particular, Roman military triumphs had a major influence on the visual culture of the European Renaissance. Triumphs were marked by processions and by temporary or permanent arches that displayed dominance over conquered land or commemorated victory at home. Later European rulers often took these events and monuments as models for their own victory celebrations. Antiquarian research was useful to artists and writers who helped plan such events and sought accuracy in their historical allusions. Presenting imagery of warfare in the guise of distant historical figures may have made it a more palatable subject.

To later ages, the Arch of Constantine represented Christian victory (Constantine was the first Christian emperor). Standing beside the Colosseum, it was a favorite subject for Renaissance engravers—not only in its entirety but also in its details. Many of the details were published as individual engravings, and Renaissance artists and antiquarians began to note fine distinctions in the styles of different parts; Constantine’s builders had reused sculpture of earlier periods in designing the arch.

CASE 21 ROMAN CULTURE AND THE TOOLS OF HISTORY

Renaissance humanists are especially known for their rediscoveries and promotion of ancient texts. But in the Renaissance, scholars employed many different tools to help them understand myriad aspects of Roman culture. Studying material culture—coins, medals, tablets, as well as artworks—allowed them to define mysterious terms and references in texts, and to represent the classical world as accurately as possible in images. Renaissance scholars, for instance, studied Roman coins and calendars in order to understand how Romans valued different commodities, and to establish chronological orderings of historical events.

Epigraphy, the study of ancient inscriptions, became an important area of scholarship in the Renaissance. Inscriptions in stone, even if fragmentary or mundane, offered the reliability of authentic age, where literary texts copied and recopied by hand could be expected to have accumulated errors over the thousand years that separated the Renaissance from the ancient Romans. Moreover, attention to the style of lettering was used both as a historical tool (for dating monuments) and as inspiration for Renaissance typography.

For Christian scholars, Roman culture was also a link to the historical world of Christ and the apostles, who lived in the time of the Roman empire. The tools of historical and biblical research overlapped. Both involved the close reading and comparison of texts and images to derive definitions of seemingly mundane details that might nonetheless help illuminate difficult historical questions. Lazare de Baïf (see case 23) wrote on Greek and Roman ships, clothing, and vases. Pedro Chacón, whose text is presented here, studied Roman dining habits in order to shed light on the circumstances of the Christian Last Supper with the goal of reforming its depiction in paintings.

CASE 22 SEX AND CENSORSHIP

For artists, antiquarians, and collectors, the fascination with antiquity included the depiction of the human form displayed in the nude. Over the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, the nude, often modeled on ancient statuary, became the standard basic unit of painting and sculpture. For Europeans in this period, antiquity was also associated with frank depictions of sex and sexuality in both art and literature, whether Greek civic homosexuality or Roman debauchery, the loves of the gods or bawdy scenes (or both, as with figures like Priapus—see case 24). Certain statues, like the bronze nude boy called the Spinario or “thornpuller,” came to be associated particularly with prurient interest.

The Renaissance is often viewed as a moment of reawakening of interest in bodily beauty, but in Christian contexts, nudity itself was sometimes controversial—let alone overt erotica. Both Protestant and Catholic writers complained about nudity in art. The “I Modi” series of prints by Marcantonio Raimondi (based on drawings by the painter Giulio Romano) depicted sexual positions in an unadorned manner and were famously banned by the Pope. Other artists found ways around the ban by dressing the couples in

mythological guise and presenting them as the “Loves of the Gods,” as in the print after Caraglio displayed here.

Some owners of prints and books took matters into their own hands and intervened in engravings and woodcuts to “censor” them with a pen or pencil. Similar editing often befell printed religious images during the conflicts that infused the Protestant Reformation in this same period. In the censored images presented here, acts of censorship seem to serve little purpose other than to draw attention to the offending anatomy.

CASE 23 THE RENAISSANCE IMAGINATION

As fifteenth- and sixteenth-century archaeological excavations of Roman ruins revealed a treasure-trove of antique design, such discoveries prompted a range of artistic reactions and initiated a new chapter in printmaking’s creative relationship to the past. While the visual impact of ancient Rome on the Renaissance is undeniable, the increasingly inventive application of antique decorative motifs and subjects to modern imagery reflects a kind of liberation for the artist. A number of works in the *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* faithfully represent Roman architecture in the damaged state in which it was unearthed, or visually reconstruct fragmented sculpture. Yet imagination and invention often led to completely original designs based on ancient vocabulary.

Imaginative combinations of mythology, eroticism, humor, and ancient and modern histories became the trademark of renowned artists such as Giulio Romano, who used his study of the antique as inspiration in designs for architecture, large-scale programs of wall painting, and ornate silverware for banquet tables. Engravers, in turn, immortalized these designs that displayed both modern ingenuity and resourceful reliance on antiquity.

Duchetti’s print of a priapic sacrificial scene after a design by Giulio Romano alludes to the recurring imagery of garlands, acanthus leaves, hybrid animals, and masks that appeared on the elaborately painted walls and decorative objects uncovered during excavations of such subterranean ruins as the *Domus Aurea* (Golden House) of Nero. Artists and antiquarians who explored the area recorded their findings in notebooks, to be copied in future works or adapted into a new language of design.

Antiquarian printmaking’s variety of functions shows the breadth of its appeal. Nearly two centuries after the initial discovery of the *Domus Aurea*, the artist and excavator Pietro Santi Bartoli (1615-1700) published engravings of antique bronze objects collected from the subterranean remains of ancient Rome. While his purpose was categorical documentation, Bartoli’s print of an oil lamp shaped as a satyr’s head may still remind us of the ancient origins of popular Renaissance decorative motifs.

CASE 24 STAGING AND FRAMING SCENES OF ROME

Performances of many kinds contributed to the visitor’s experience of Rome. These might be liturgical rites, papal appearances, or the public processions of confraternities and local charities. Theatricality also appeared in print, whether as visual documentation of an actual performance, narrative excitement inserted into an image, or playful manipulation of images within images.

Some of these images may represent actual performances. The figures gathered beneath the Arch of Titus in an unsigned seventeenth-century aquatint suggest the street dramas put on by the *Commedia dell’Arte*, while a single performer and his animals occupy the piazza in front of St. Peter’s Basilica in the illustration for Franzini’s *Merveilles de la ville de Rome*. The monuments of Rome likewise provided opportunities for visitors to participate in their spectacle. The two woodcuts, also from the 1725 edition of Franzini’s pilgrim guide, present views of the Pantheon and its piazza that require the reader to navigate in a way similar to the experience of a tourist in the actual, physical space.

Two different editions of François Deseine’s “Description of Old and New Rome” offer images in which the ancient monuments of Rome become performers themselves. Careful attention is given to the framing of these views, often placing one image within another. The opening from the large-scale Dutch edition is typical of the arrangements used throughout the volume on ancient Rome. The multiple levels of imagery are self-

referential, illustrating the very process of reconstructing and representing the past. The scenes of ruins published by Philip and Theodoor Galle after designs by Hendrick van Cleve likewise mediate between the contemporary viewer and ancient history, incorporating a panorama of fantastical ruined monuments into their frontispiece.

CASE 25 PRINTMAKING TECHNIQUES

The Renaissance saw the advent and use of several different printing techniques. Used in Europe from the fourteenth century, the woodcut process, represented here by Hubert Goltizus's two-color title page, is a relief printing technique. The raised lines of the design are inked and then the image is pressed to paper, producing an image in reverse. Because of the difficulty of carving fine lines in wood, the images produced by woodblocks have a distinct look. The lines tend to be thick and tapered at each end. Woodcut blocks have some longevity, but when the blocks have been used a great deal, the lines round and flatten and resulting prints appear faded.

Engraving was the next major print technique developed and used in the Renaissance. The process was adapted from goldsmithing and metalworking. Lines are cut into a plate, usually copper, with a burin, a sharp needle-like tool. This allows for fine lines and, in turn, gives the artist the ability to design in great detail. The plate is then inked, but rather than sitting on the surface of the plate as with a woodblock, the ink collects into the grooves created by the burin. The plate's surface is wiped clean with a cloth, leaving only the ink in the grooves to print onto a sheet of dampened paper. Engravings were often re-incised to prolong their longevity. Plates of particularly popular prints were sometimes re-engraved many times before a new plate was made. The images in the Bosse and Cavalieri books are engravings.

The last technique perfected in the period is etching, one of the subjects of Bosse's technical treatise. An image is lightly incised with a needle onto the wax coating of a metal plate. The plate is dipped into acid that eats away at the exposed lines and leaves the wax untouched. The plate is then cleaned, inked, and printed like an engraving plate. Etched images, like the ones in Perrier's and Jan de Bisschop's books, can be even finer and more detailed than engraved prints, with a looser, more spontaneous line. Despite these design advantages, the etching technique was used less frequently than engraving. This is probably because the process is somewhat dangerous (acids can be unstable), and because etched plates wear quickly and it is difficult to extend their use.

CASE 26 PILGRIMAGE AND THE CHURCHES OF ROME

Rome was increasingly sought out by antiquarians, scholars, and artists from the sixteenth century onward, but it had long been a destination for Christian pilgrims. The importance of Rome's relics and indulgences was affirmed in the Catholic Counter-Reformation. This response to the Protestant Reformation included renewed emphasis upon the spiritual well-being of ordinary Catholics. The promotion of pilgrimage, especially in Jubilee or holy years, coincided with greater access to Rome's many churches and changes in the spatial organization of the city. Printed guidebooks were another means of encouraging devotion. At the same time, they helped to structure the pilgrim's experience, integrating him or her within a community with similar interests and goals.

Upon arrival in Rome, pilgrims found the Renaissance version of a thriving tourist industry, with hostels, tour guides, and souvenirs available in different price ranges. Guidebooks had existed since the Middle Ages, but in this period, the printing of illustrated guidebooks took off along with the growing market. A standard edition of the pilgrim guide, *Le cose maravigliose*, was established by 1575. It consisted of a list of churches (often condensed in order to treat only the seven principal basilicas) and ecclesiastical calendar, as well as a guide to the antiquities of Rome. In 1588, it was supplied with an extensive series of illustrations. The visual program offered a contemporary portrait of the city that reflected Pope Sixtus V's strategies for urban renewal. Not surprisingly, the guidebook was dedicated to Sixtus. Its text was also expanded to include the names of patrons, artists and architects in its description of each of the churches. This aspect of the guide eventually replaced the lists of relics and indulgences. By the seventeenth century, many other guidebooks treated monuments of the secular city, both ancient and modern.

CASE 27 THE GRAND TOUR

The Grand Tour (ca. 1670-1835) offered aristocratic young men (and their entourage) education, society and political connections. Part of the allure of the Grand Tour was the opportunity to form a collection of art. Not only did such a collection allow one to re-create Rome at home, such a display both defined the elite and upheld their authority.

Although the main destination was Rome, access to collections of ancient art (and indeed, Rome itself) was limited. For most of the seventeenth century, Protestants were unable to travel to Rome. The best ancient statues in Rome were owned by four families, each with strong connections to the papacy: the Farnese, the Medici, the Borghese and the Ludovisi. Indeed, J.J. Winckelmann, a German Protestant, converted to Catholicism to gain entrée into the papal court, libraries and collections of ancient art. Without such access, he would not have been able to write his “History of the Art of Antiquity.”

Prints played a seminal role in shaping foreign attitudes toward Rome. A Grand Tourist’s experience in Italy was informed by seeing the city in print prior to seeing it in person. Upon his arrival in Rome in 1786, J.W. Goethe describes seeing the city that he only knew from images: “All the dreams of my youth have come to life; the first engravings I remember—my father hung views of Rome in the hall—I now see in reality, and everything I have known for so long through paintings, drawings, etchings, woodcuts, plaster casts and cork models is now assembled before me. Wherever I walk, I come upon familiar objects in an unfamiliar world....”

Goethe’s testimony is evidence of the effect that a collection of prints such as Lafreri’s *Speculum* could have. Goethe makes it clear, however, that there is no substitute for the knowledge gained from traveling: “No one who has not been here can have any conception of what an education Rome is.”