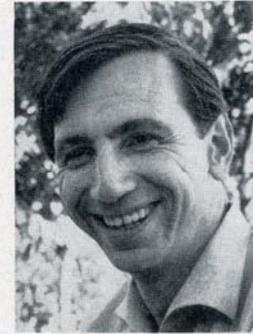


The Rome of Panini and Rome Today

By Milton Gendel

Few Americans are as well qualified to write about Rome as Milton Gendel, who went to that city on a U.S. government scholarship in the 1940s, and has remained there since. He is the regular correspondent for *Art News* in Italy, as well as a frequent contributor to Italian journals, and is presently working on a large book on Italian Romanesque fresco-paintings.



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The image of Rome has had a hold on people's imaginations for more than two thousand years. Even today, when a classical education is no longer necessarily the hallmark of high culture, Rome's image still exerts a powerful pull on the imagination. As long as no better nor more promising organization of mass society than the millennium of the Pax Romana existed, all western civilization referred back to Rome, for Utopia was still in the past. Utopia did not move to its proper place, which is in the future, until discontent with Rome's baroque national state and its mercantile eighteenth-century heirs found expression in the vision of a mass-based economy and culture. But the peregrine stones of Rome (not merely metaphoric - there's no city like it for moving monuments around) stand for something in every generation, and in modern times have served as a quarry of information, as a nostalgic stage-set for a papal theocracy assailed and finally overcome by a monarchical demos, a backdrop for a factitious caesar - and now as a souvenir capital and the star stop on the grand tour.

Rome is a constant with many variations. Our attitude toward the present city of more than two million inhabitants is one that begins in the eighteenth-century Rome of 150,000, when what was already a stream of visitors divided into two branches, the traditional religious pilgrimages continuing, and the newer cultural pilgrimages gathering force. The branched stream still pours through, but Rome is now a cultural backwater and has become merely a secondary world capital.

By the 1670s, Rome had passed its peak as the civilized capital of Europe; the pace was being set by Paris and London, but the English and continental gentry were still culturally obligated to sightsee Roman antiquities and Roman life. Particularly the English, whose attitude is best expressed by Horace Walpole and Thomas Gray in their Grand Tour letters of 1740 quoted below.

On the tourists: "The English are numberless... indeed 'tis dreadful dealing with school-boys just broke loose, or old fools that are coming abroad at forty to see the world!" and, "... French and Germans I could fling into the bargain by the dozens. Nations swarm here."

On "popery": "Now and then we drop in at a Procession or a high mass, hear the music, enjoy a strange attire, and hate the foul monkhood."

On the backward local townsmen: “The incidents of a week in London would furnish all Italy with news for a twelvemonth...” “... they seem to have found out how hot their climate is, but not how cold; for there are scarce any chimneys, and most of the apartments [are] painted in fresco, so that one has the additional horror of freezing with imaginary marble...” “I am very glad that I see Rome while it yet exists . . . I question whether it will be [long] worth seeing. Between the ignorance and poverty of the present Romans, everything is neglected and falling to decay.”

Rome is still perpetually in the process of piecemeal destruction, as the current newspapers report every day, but things weren't quite as bad as our celebrated travelers claimed. Exportation of antiquities had been banned (though not very effectively), and museums established. Excavation, after the much-publicized discovery of Herculaneum in 1711, began on the Palatine in 1720 and at Villa Adriana in 1724. Although somewhat in the spirit of a treasure hunt, modern classical and Christian archeological studies were launched. And rationalism, for that matter, was reflected by the papacy, in such instances of cultural relativity as Francesco Maria Zanotti's performance at the Capitol at the invitation of Pope Benedict XIV. Zanotti orated in praise of painting, sculpture and architecture, gave a second oration contradicting the first, then a third confirming the first.

Walpole's and Gray's Rome, like ours, combined the exalted and the prosaic, The grandest ceremonies – despite their impressive manifestations of religious sentiment, their fireworks, and fountains flowing with wine (white and red) - had a touch of tedium, although even the most miserable beggar could always muster a theatrical gesture and a suggestion of belonging to the drama of history.

This Rome had its great iconographer in Gian Paolo Panini, master of view painting, both fanciful and naturalistic, and the last superlative painter identified with the eighteenth-century papal city. He was not a Roman, having been born (in 1691 or '92) and trained as an artist in Piacenza, in Northern Italy. Nothing is known about his childhood, and so little about the details of his personality and life that he may have been a happy man, since the happy are supposed not to have a history. This uncertainty extends to the date of his death (which probably was October 21, 1765); but the main lines of his career and the corpus of his work have been traced and identified by the art historians Ozolla, Wunder and Arisi - particularly the last, whose recent monograph and *catalogue raisonné* constitute an encyclopedia of Panini and Paniniana. (This superb octavo volume has just been published by the Cassa di Risparmio of Piacenza [the Municipal Savings Bank] as a signal honor, in the twentieth century, to an artistic native son.)

In 1711, Panini moved to Rome, where he was to spend the rest of his life. By this time, he was accomplished in perspectival wall painting, for which Piacenza and nearby Parma had been centers led by the celebrated Bibiena family of stage-set, scene and perspective artists. Panini undoubtedly also had some experience in easel painting of figures, landscape and ruins - related to the work of Ghisolfi (1623 - 83), Vanvitelli (1700 - 73), Locatelli (1680? - 1741) and Spolverini (1657-1734), among others. In Rome, he continued to study figure painting, for a time under Benedetto Luti (1666-1724), and eventually his repertory included mythological, biblical, classical, historical and genre scenes in architectural and natural settings. In an age of specialization he was not to be left on one of the lower rungs of artists' hierarchy, among the “secondary and mechanical” decorators who found it difficult to get into the academies. He must have been ambitious and enterprising: for more than seven years he spun out the job that launched him, the wall decorations commissioned by Cardinal Patrizi for his family's villa (destroyed in 1849) , doing a little in each room, so that he couldn't be replaced – and meanwhile accepting other assignments for frescoes and easel pictures. His connections were good. The two great official powers in the Roman art world were the Academy of St. Luke and the French Academy. He became a member of the former around 1719, donating a prestige demonstration piece, Alexander at the Tomb of Achilles; and joined the latter at

the Villa Medici in 1732 (indeed, he later was considered a candidate for its directorship). He was close to the influential French circles of Rome and married Mlle Gosset, sister-in-law of Nicolas Vleughels, painter and director of the French Academy (here again the facts of Panini's life are elusive; she may have been his second wife). Commissions poured in—from princes of the Church, the French and Spanish ambassadors, travelers, even the King of Spain. Besides painting, he also practiced as an architect and was consulted on important competitions, such as the one for the new facade of St. John Lateran. His fame was international and he was admired by other artists: an admiration he sometimes responded to with disdain, as when he refused to send pictures of his own in exchange for two of Jean Baptiste Oudry's (Oudry wrote from Paris that it didn't matter - he had found a couple of Panini canvases dirt cheap at an auction).

Every traveler wanted souvenirs and views of the city. "How I like the inanimate part of Rome [Walpole wrote] you will soon perceive on my arrival in England; I am far gone in medals, lamps, idols, prints &c all the small commodities to the purchase of which I can attain; I would buy the Colosseum if I could." Panini diligently supplied view paintings.

The poetization of ruins has a long history going back at least to Petrarch, and reaching an elegiac apogee in the Romantic era, when Byron wrote: "I've stood upon Achilles' tomb, / and heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome." Ruins figure in Renaissance painting as background subjects, but following a law of art by which the marginalia of one generation become major themes of successive generations, they gradually moved to the foreground. By the seventeenth century, ruin painting was the specialty of a number of schools throughout Italy. Thus Panini was not the inventor of a genre but its most gifted practitioner in his time, contributing a personal interpretation - through the quality of his painting, his point of view, and the vitality of his foreground figures - that was formative in the training of Canaletto, Hubert Robert and perhaps Fragonard, among others. Early in his work, such identifiable monuments as the Column of Trajan, the Pyramid of Cestius and the Arch of Constantine appear in the midst of views which otherwise show perspectives of generically classical architecture, ruined or not. Later, the view paintings fall roughly into two categories, The first, and larger, is that of the invented scene (*vedute ideate*), in which a collection of ancient monuments is freely grouped in a landscape, as if in an imaginary open-air museum.

Particularly interesting because it shows the changes in Roman terrain since the eighteenth century is the other category of Panini's view painting. It is made up of exact realistic or topographical views (*vedute esatte*). Convenient but not strict, the classification blurs when the realistic view has some of the standard Classical props added to the foreground, as is often the case, or when a single recognizable monument is set in an invented landscape.

The same apse of the Temple of Venus (the familiar ruin that still stands beside the Colosseum) appears in *Colosseum and the Arch of Constantine*, painted in 1736. The view is from the hollow between the Palatine and Caelian hills; to the left are the masses of red-brick foundation and wall cores of the imperial palaces on the Palatine, and the fragmentary arches of the aqueduct built by the Emperor Claudius. The road on axis with the Arch of Constantine is seen at an angle where it starts between the walls bounding private properties. In the Middle Ages, the powerful Roman barons, the Frangipane, incorporated the Arch and Colosseum into a fortified complex that was not to be dismantled until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Colosseum, symbol of the city, had lost almost half its vast circumference as a result of earthquake damage and the quarrying operations that provided materials for such buildings as the Venezia and Farnese palaces and the Cancelleria.

As might be expected, the Colosseum appears in more than twenty of Panini's paintings - often even in invented views - in realistic relationship to the Arch of Constantine. And, logically, it is to be found in the backgrounds of his six views of the Roman Forum that survive. Three of these, including *View of the Forum from the Capitoline*, painted between 1720 and 1747, are topographical, although in one version (in the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore) the Column of Phocas has been eliminated.

The Arch of Titus stands on Via Sacra's highest point, and in *View of the Forum and Campidoglio from the Arch of Titus*, the full sweep of the Campo Vaccino is given, with the vaults of the Basilica of Maxentius seen two-thirds buried and fenced in as cattle yards, while the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina and the Curia are invisible, realistically screened by trees.

Panini's Rome had become an elaboration of the town plan laid down at the end of the sixteenth century by Sixtus V, the swineherd who became Pope. At its low point in the Middle Ages, the city had shrunk to a village of perhaps 30,000 huddled on the old Campo Marzio in the bend of the Tiber, which was the main water supply (the ancient aqueducts were by then out of commission). The city's subsequent gradual expansion was given form and impetus by Sixtus V, whose plan linked the town with the outlying basilicas and established the pattern of long perspectives punctuated with notable landmarks, such as the Quattro Fontane Crossroads. The new arteries served, of course, for rapid communication; the maze-like neighborhoods between them retained their slow medieval aspect, relieved by surprising piazzas, decorated in the baroque style, in their midsts. The city - still occupying only about two-fifths of the area within the Aurelian walls - petered out into vineyards and villas at the Forum and along the Pincian and Quirinal hills. (The present Little White Way of Via Veneto is on the site of the Villa Ludovisi-Boncompagni, then on the outskirts of town.) Only four bridges then crossed the Tiber (as compared with seven in ancient times), but there were at least five ferry points. More attention, on the whole, was paid to grandiose effects than to convenience, and when a financial choice came up between embanking the river or reconstructing the facade of St. John Lateran, the money went into the church. The choice was necessary because money was scarce. As Lady Mary Wortley Montagu wrote, "... there is literally no money in the whole town, where they follow Mr. Law's system [the South Sea Bubble] and live wholly on paper." Obelisks were unearthed and fountains planted everywhere. The passion for the *Valorizzazione* ("placing on show" or "improvement") of piazzas and crossroads, which is still strong, put ancient monuments on the move. Rome, however, has always been engaged in scene-shifting, from the transfer of the Marcus Aurelius equestrian statue (from the Lateran to the Capitol) to the recent re-erection of the palace of Flaminio Ponzio in Piazza Campitelli; and a good half-dozen Roman fountains play in places never envisaged by Jacopo della Porta.

A panorama of Rome introduces us to Panini's representations of the eighteenth-century townscape. In *View of Rome from the Slopes of Monte Mario*, the field of vision has again been adjusted to include all possible landmarks, but a sort of helicopter viewpoint is justified here by the heights of Monte Mario - which once reminded Henry James of New Hampshire. Piazza del Popolo appears on the left, minutely detailed; then come Villa Medici and the Trinità dei Monti on the Pincian hill, and, below them, the cupola of San Carlo al Corso, followed by all the domes of Rome, including the corkscrew one of Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza. The focus of the composition is the Castel Sant'Angelo, and on the far left rises the dominant bulk of St. Peter's, with a glimpse of the arms of the piazza and the great obelisk. Except for frequent stage-set clouds, the unchanging silhouette of the Alban hills and the few monuments on high ground that still stand out, this entire area has become an anonymous urban hodgepodge. The truck gardens of Prati di Castello (in the foreground of the painting) disappeared under a concrete bedroom quarter in a building boom soon after Rome became the capital of Italy in 1870. St. Peter's now competes with the Altar of the Nation, the wedding-cake monument to Victor Emmanuel II (built 1885-1911); Castel Sant'Angelo and the

domes of Rome are invisible or require triangulation in order to be identified; Monte Mario, itself already clothed in concrete, is about to be capped with a Hilton hotel.

Within the city, the old piazzas have changed relatively little since Panini's day, although they are now criss-crossed and spotted with traffic indicators, and the glinting beetle bodies of parked automobiles give them a very different air. The greatest changes have taken place in the Piazza del Popolo. Its principal monuments are the same: Santa Maria del Popolo; the twin seventeenth-century churches of Santa Maria dei Miracoli and Santa Maria in Montesanto, by Rainaldi, Bernini and Carlo Fontana; and the central Egyptian obelisk. The obelisk was moved by Augustus, from Heliopolis on the Nile to the spina of Circus Maximus, to commemorate the battle of Actium, and placed here during the reign of Sixtus V by Domenico Fontana, the celebrated obelisk-raiser who also put up those in Piazza San Pietro, Piazza dell' Esquilino, and at the Lateran. The Pope exorcised the heathen obelisk, topped it with a cross and granted fifteen years of indulgence to passersby who paused to revere and pray.

Some details of the piazza have been added, such as the bell towers on the churches and the base and fountains of the obelisk, but the major change is the creation of the grandiose hemicycles with sculptures and fountains at the sides of the square. These were designed by the French architect Berthault, under Napoleon's program of dignifying the second city of his empire while providing public works for the unemployed. The hemicycles replace the nondescript houses seen on the right side of the painting, and the Augustinian monastery on the left. The left-hand hemicycle lies below the terrace that has provided the favorite promenade and sunset view of the city for more than a century.

Panini's *Piazza del Popolo*, a picture very similar to one by his contemporary, Vanvitelli, might seem to take its point of view from the top of the Michelangelo and Bernini gate (which was the entrance to the city for travelers from the north), but Santa Maria del Popolo is not included on the right, making the viewpoint an imaginary one. Until the end of the Papal temporal regime, at carnival time a jockeyless horse race ran down the Corso from the Piazza del Popolo and ended in the present Piazza Venezia. Piazza del Popolo, like the Circus Maximus and many Roman piazzas, was also the scene of public executions. The three streets diverging from the square are: in the center, the Corso, following the route of the ancient Via Flaminia and continuing the present long road of that name; on the right, Via Ripetta, which was cut through in the fifteenth century and leads to the site of the vanished Porto di Ripetta, one of the city's two river ports when the Tiber was navigable; and on the left, Via Babuino, also dating from the fifteenth century. Today, the amenities of Piazza del Popolo include, besides the parking lots within the hemicycles, the writers' and artists' café hard by Via Ripetta; and a second café off Via Babuino, where movie and television people gather. Most of the eighteenth-century travelers immediately headed down the Via Babuino toward Piazza di Spagna, then—and partly still—today—the heart of the foreigners' quarter, where a number of hotels and cafés, including the venerable Caffé Greco, clustered.

By a willful extension of diplomatic extraterritoriality, the section had a kind of autonomy under the nearby Spanish Embassy, and was the only place in Rome where streetwalkers were tolerated. A slope with an avenue of elms rose from Piazza di Spagna to the Trinità dei Monti. The painting shows Trinità dei Monti towering between Villa Medici and the Quirinal. The elms, however, have already been cut down, presumably for the construction of Francesco de Sanctis's Spanish Steps (built 1721-25), whose curvilinear design was inspired by the old Porto di Ripetta. The Spanish Steps and the Trevi Fountain are the most spectacular of the few additions to the Roman scene made in the eighteenth century.

A number of Panini's views are thematic, and were commissioned to commemorate notable events. In addition to their merits as paintings, they provide close-ups of the most beautiful Roman piazzas, and interesting genre scenes of contemporary street life. *Celebration at the Spanish Embassy* (1727; Victoria and Albert Museum, London) was commissioned by the Spanish Ambassador, Cardinal Bentivoglio, as a record of the public celebration in Piazza di Spagna (in front of the Embassy) of the birth of the Infante of Spain on September 23, 1727. The temporary, papier-maché construction on the left in the picture, designed by the painter Sebastiano Conca, represented the allegory of "Thetis entrusting the child Achilles to Chiron, so that the Centaur might educate him and set him on the path to the Temple of Glory".

The fountain on the right is the famous Barcaccia, designed by Pietro, father of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, which was moved into the picture by Panini from its place at the foot of the Spanish Steps, opposite Via Condotti. This elegant street appears as little more than an alley in the background to the left, while the narrower Via Borgognona, beside the Embassy, is given breadth and prominence, revealing at its far end a glimpse of Palazzo Ruspoli on the Corso. The Embassy, like other buildings in the painting, has the overhanging wooden balconies which were banned by Roman municipal ordinance as an eyesore and public menace, after 1870.

The splendid Piazza Navona, oldest and most "Roman" of the Piazzas, is the scene of a painting commissioned by the French Ambassador, Cardinal de Polignac: *Preparations in the Piazza Navona to Celebrate the Birth of the Dauphin* (1729). The Cardinal in fact ordered two copies of the picture, presenting one to Louis XV (now in the Louvre), and keeping one (now in the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin) for himself. As is usual in Panini's work, mere mechanical repetition was avoided, and the foreground figures are not identical in the two versions. The painter in charge of the decorations for the fête, Pier Leone Ghezzi (1674-1755, a rival of Panini and a noted caricaturist), had been instructed to give the piazza the appearance it had in antiquity. Since the piazza had been built on the ruins of the Circus, or Stadium, of Domitian from which it derives its name (*In agoni*, i.e., "contests" >*Nagone* >*Navona*), and follows the contours of the antique edifice, Ghezzi constructed a temporary *spina*, aligning decorated pavillions, armorial fantasies and columns - like those of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius - with the existing Bernini fountains. One element of Paninian fantasy in the picture is the broadening of the narrow street leading to Santa Maria dell' Anima and the fanciful replacement of the church by Palazzo Altemps (then Cardinal de Polignac's residence), which in reality stands between Piazza Zanardelli and Piazza Sant' Apollinare just beyond the present Passetto Restaurant, north of Piazza Navona.

The few changes made in the piazza since the eighteenth century are happy ones. At the corner to the left of Palazzo Pamphili (now the Brazilian Embassy), Palazzo Braschi, the last manifestation of old-style Papal nepotism, built for a nephew of Pius VI, has replaced the Palazzo Orsini of Panini's painting. Sidewalks and an Art-Nouveau fountain at the north of the Piazza also have since been added. A view from Palazzo Orsini itself, *Piazza Navona Flooded*, records a Roman custom that was observed from 1652 to 1865. On Saturdays and Sundays in August, the drains of Bernini's Four Rivers Fountain were stopped up and the water allowed to form in the then concave pavement what the Romans called their *lago*, or lake. The gentry splashed around in their carriages and the people stood and watched, commenting and eating doughnuts. This was perhaps the mildest public entertainment held in Piazza Navona, which had become the city's market place in the fourteenth century and also was used for tournaments, horse races, bullfights and rowdy celebrations.

No longer the big public market (one part of which has moved to Campo dei Fiori, and another to Piazza Fontanella Borghese), the piazza now regains its old vitality only once a year, during the Christmas toy fair. Then booths are set up all around the center pavement and, on the eve of Epiphany - *La Befana* - there is boisterous jostling and noisemaking. Otherwise it is a fairly quiet

playground for children. Until the miraculous economic recovery of Italy made two-wheeled vehicles less popular than the four-wheeled, the ancient Navona racetrack was used for its original purpose by grown-up children on motor scooters. For adults, it is a favorite place for *trattoria* and café life. Panini's view shows, on the right, Nostra Signora del Sacro Cuore (formerly dedicated to San Giacomo degli Spagnoli, and the first church built in Rome after the popes returned from Avignon), which has reassumed its fifteenth-century aspect, while the buildings and palaces have had various superstructures added. Bernini's Fountain of the Moor is in the foreground.

Celebration in Piazza Farnese in Rome of the Marriage of the Dauphin (1745; Walter P. Chrysler Collection, New York) is dominated by the allegorical construction and fireworks base designed by Panini, which represented "... the union of Amor and Hymen in the Temple of Minerva, alluding to the marriage of the royal Dauphin and the Infanta Maria Teresa of Spain," and was commissioned by de Canillac, the French Ambassador to Benedict XIV. The employment of Panini as architect was deplored by some of the artists at the French Academy, who felt that the commission might better have gone to a Frenchman; and Panini's old rival, Ghezzi, drew his caricature with a legend saying that Panini had committed the gaffe of erecting a shaft on top of the Temple of Hymen. Panini's birds-eye view of the piazza includes a glimpse, down the Via dei Farnesi to the right of the palace, of Santa Maria dell' Orazione e Morte, on Via Giulia - a compliment to the architect, Panini's friend Ferdinando Fuga. There have been no notable changes in the Piazza Farnese since the eighteenth century.

Rome has been famous for its fountains since the aqueducts were restored in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but the most spectacular and best known is, of course, the Trevi. A simpler version of the present fountain was inaugurated in 1570 by Pius V, as the display (*mostra*) of the restored Aqua Virgo aqueduct (so called after a virgin who, according to legend, led the ancient Roman engineers to its source). The same aqueduct supplied many other Roman fountains.

Panini's painting of the Trevi Fountain commemorated Benedict XIV's inspection there after his name was carved in the frieze in 1745. Designed by Nicola Salvi, the monumental composition has the theme of Ocean being drawn on a shell chariot over a reef by winged seahorses led by Tritons. The vast theatrical display dramatizes the idea of water as a wild element harnessed to urban uses, by combining the natural forms of the sculptured tableau with the sober symmetry of the architectural "backdrop" built on to Palazzo Poli. In the niches flanking Ocean are figures of Health and Fertility, and above them reliefs illustrating the legend of the discovery of the Aqua Virgo. Panini's son Giuseppe, an architect, supervised completion of work on the fountain (1751-1762). The painting was done from the scale model now in the Museum of Rome, though the preparatory sketch in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts must have been based also on drawings of the site, judging from the factual details of neighboring buildings and the convincing feeling of a small space overwhelmed by a single monument. The realistic view in the sketch becomes a ceremonial setting in the finished version of the painting, *Pope Benedict XIV Visiting Fontana di Trevi*. The viewpoint is set much farther back to provide foreground for the Papal cortege and Panini's usual Roman onlookers and strollers, while the field is broadened to include a long perspective of Via Poli, which now leads to Via Tritone, one of Rome's post-1870 arteries. The Trevi has long been popular with tourists because of the traditional belief that drinking its water insures a return to Rome. According to French sources, nineteenth-century Germans started the custom of making such insurance doubly sure by throwing in coins. Still, the place did not become a hangout for the idle and amorous (a function formerly filled by the Capitoline, the Colosseum and the Spanish Steps) until a few years ago, when it was featured in various movies (mostly American) as a setting for romance. Then it was instantly rediscovered by the Romans, who since have ringed it daily in ranks often five deep. Starlets leap into it frequently, and the city government collects two bucketful of coins from it each week.

The witty and humanistic Pope Benedict XIV commissioned two large realistic views, *Piazza dei Quirinale* and *Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore* to hang on the walls of his Coffee House, a new pavilion in the garden of the Quirinal, designed by Fuga, one of the few outstanding Italian architects of the eighteenth century besides Vanvitelli and Galilei. The Quirinal Palace, built as a summer residence in the sixteenth century, when the Quirinal hill was still outside town, became the Pope's permanent residence in the eighteenth century, the King's occasional residence after 1870, and is now the President's official abode. The two paintings are considered generally to be Panini's masterpieces, and show his genius for combining an architectural setting, a choreographic movement of figures and an effortless play of light effects.

In *Piazza del Quirinale*, a cortege is being made up in front of the palace stables. The entrance to the palace is seen shadowed and foreshortened on the left. The Palazzo della Consulta, by Fuga (completed 1734), stands frontally in the background. The Horse Tamers (Castor and Pollux) are Imperial Roman sculptures and once decorated the entrance to the Baths of Constantine (the last of the great ancient Roman bathing establishments, its remains were demolished in the seventeenth century, when the Palazzo Rospigliosi - which can be seen behind the sculptures in the picture - was built). The colossal Horse Tamers were never buried; they were moved into Piazza del Quirinale at the end of the sixteenth century, and placed parallel, as shown in the painting. Their present arrangement, with the obelisk from the Mausoleum of Augustus between them and the basin from the Camp Vaccino in front of them, dates from the reigns of Pius VI and Pius VII. The building in the background to the right faces away from the Colonna gardens and was used as part of the Quirinal stables. The ramps on which the horses in the painting are being led were demolished, along with the porch at the corner, during the terracing of the piazza and the rerouting of Via della Dataria.

Fuga was the architect also of the new facade for the ancient church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The companion piece to *Piazza del Quirinale*, *Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore* commemorates the Pope's visit to the Basilica when the work was being completed, and shows him, with his suite, on the steps of the porch. The details of the masons working by the column (from the Basilica of Maxentius) in the foreground are among Panini's best. While the column and the church are unchanged today, the neighborhood has become intensely urbanized since the construction of the nearby railroad station at the end of the nineteenth century, and the subsequent expansion of this quarter of the city.

The Coffee House for which the two pictures were painted is itself the setting for *Charles III of Bourbon Visiting Benedict XIV at the Quirinal Coffee-House*, a work close in feeling to French painting of the period and to the ceremonial pictures of Spolverini. The architecture of the pavillion has been considerably altered in the painting, where it appears more neo-classical than baroque, but the actual building may have been reworked in the nineteenth century. Charles, King of the Two Sicilies, commissioned this canvas and its mate, *Charles III of Bourbon in the Piazza San Pietro*, in 1745, as records of his visit to Rome after his victory over the Austrians at Velletri. The close-up of the king in front of the basilica makes the architectural setting secondary. In fact, it is dwarfed by the size of the figures - a frequent disproportion in Panini's work occasionally criticized by his contemporaries. The entrance is seen at a diagonal; the great cupola is invisible, but the arm of Bernini's colonnade in front of the Vatican palaces, a fountain and the obelisk appear in the background.

In the last of Panini's known realistic outdoor views of Rome, *The French Ambassador Leaving the Piazza San Pietro*, St. Peter's is represented more typically: frontally in the background, with Bernini's twin colonnades symmetrically embracing the vast piazza through which the procession snakes past the obelisk and between the two fountains. The viewpoint is from above Piazza

Rusticucci (now Piazza Pio XII). Since 1936, when demolition was begun on the old Spina dei Borghi, the approach to St. Peter's has been transformed drastically. These several blocks of buildings prevented a distant view of the basilica and the piazza, which therefore came as a surprise to the viewer emerging from the side streets. Although elimination of the Spina had been proposed as early as the seventeenth century, it is likely that no respectable architect had anything so cheerless in mind as the present Via della Conciliazione which was completed in time for the last Jubilee in 1950. On Church holidays, the immense Piazza is often completely filled with people, and a first-aid tent is set up near the obelisk for those who faint in the crush. At other times the Pope appears in the last upper window, to the right, of the palace in the background, and gives his benediction to the throng. Many kneel to receive it; others wave and shout the immemorial acclamation "*Evviva il Papa!*" others, in cars, honk their horns in salutation.

Among Panini's realistic interior views of celebrated Roman churches (including at least eighteen versions of the interior of St. Peter's), some of the best known are those of the Pantheon. The building, always a favorite with the Romans, has changed little in its main lines over the ages. One of the most radical alterations made in the interior since it was dedicated to the Madonna and all the martyrs (in the seventh century A.D.) was undertaken by Benedict XIV, who had the polychrome marble revetment of the section above the columns replaced by a series of rectangular pedimented stucco niches and alternating square panels. This work, however, post-dates Panini's paintings, in which the old decoration and a pious inscription running below it may be seen.

Another of Panini's church interiors is ceremonial: *Elevation of Cardinal Giuseppe Pozzobonelli in San Carlo al Corso*. The principal figure looks out at the spectator, as is often the case in Panini's commemorative pictures, and the crowd is arranged as are those in the *Opening of the Porta Santa*, and in the Charles III paintings. Here again the seventeenth-century church, by the Longhi, father and son, has remained substantially unchanged until the present time.

One remaining interior to be mentioned is ceremonial, but not religious, *Fête at the Teatro Argentina for the Marriage of the Dauphin of France*, depicts the refreshment interval at the allegorical concert which was given on the occasion of the second marriage of the Dauphin. It is the same Dauphin whose birth and first marriage were commemorated by Panini. Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld, the new French Ambassador who commissioned the picture, is seen in the audience with other personalities, such as the English (Stuart) Pretender and his son, Cardinal York. Panini himself, holding a glass in his hand (an unheroic instance of Bellori's and Lessing's "Significant Moment"), is seated in the orchestra on the right, near the side exit. On the stage before the fantastic backdrop of a painted caryatid with pavillion actually designed by Panini, are the musicians and, seated on clouds, singers representing Amor, Jupiter, Minerva and Mars. Painted with verve and an evident appreciation of the warm red of the theater interior as well as of the opportunities for theatricality in the spectacle, the picture fuses realistic observation with the fantasy of a stage set.

The equation of realism and fantasy is constant in Panini's work. The invented views are composed mainly of realistically observed elements; the realistic views are adjusted in perspective, chiaroscuro and proportions, to make them more dramatic and lend them a touch of unreality. The summation of this art is seen in the great composite pictures, *Views of Ancient Rome* and *Views of Modern Rome*, both of which show imaginary galleries hung from floor to ceiling with *trompe-l'oeil* canvases of the Roman monuments. Panini had utilized the idea of an imaginary gallery - a theme made familiar by earlier painters - in *The Gallery of Cardinal Silvio Valenti Gonzaga*; but, while the painting's walls were invented, its pictures literally catalogued works that were actually in the collection of the Cardinal, a great admirer and patron of the arts.

The Views of Ancient Rome (1765; National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh) and *Views of Modern Rome* (1765; Atheneum, Boston), commissioned by Panini's old patron, the Duc de Choiseul, employ the imaginary - collection idea to provide an inventory of the then outstanding monuments of Rome. Ancient pieces are seen mainly in close-ups, with few changes from reality (aside from such deliberate reconstructions as the removal of Bernini's "Ass's Ears" - the bell towers - which then were still planted on the portico of the Pantheon). The antiquarian spirit of the foreground would do credit to Winckelmann (still to come) and the archeological fervor of the second half of the century fundamental to neo-classicism. Panini here is seen working on a copy of the famous Roman fresco of *The Aldobrandini Wedding*, while his patron and some others watch or read. In the "gallery" devoted to contemporary Rome, the views are more topographical and include miniature versions of paintings such as those of Piazza San Pietro, the Trevi Fountain, Santa Maria Maggiore and Piazza Navona. In both series (replicas of which are in the Metropolitan Museum and the Louvre), many subjects are shown that were not used for separate paintings, including the Capitoline, the Arch of Janus, Santa Costanza, the Spanish Steps, Piazza Barberini and Castel Sant'Angelo. But the underlying principle is evident. The galleries are an epitome of the scene-shifting spirit, constant in Panini's art from his early training through the years of interpreting the drama of Rome, which takes matter-of-fact views and stages them in a new esthetic context.

Panini's imaginary sculpture collections are set behind draperies acting as a proscenium; their architecture is one designed by Panini the architect; the painted wall decorations are by Panini the *quadraturista*; the views by Panini the *vedutista*; and the foregrounds by the gifted figure painter Panini, who is a cultivated man, too, a friend of the great, a decorous citizen who never infringed the Papal ban on painting nudes or salacious subjects.

Two hundred years later, nudes still are officially frowned on beside the Tiber, but one would hardly guess it from the new iconography of Rome. The image of the city has never had a wider circulation than today. Panini's Rome of nostalgic ruins, ceremony, country-town atmosphere and innocent merriment (which later became Henry James's "monstrous mixture of watering-place and curiosity shop") now fills the movie screens with an appeal that once belonged to Paris and the South Sea Islands.

James said, "An Italian dandy is a figure visually to reckon with." The up-to-date iconologist of Rome would have to add: the dandy's girl, their friends and family, and all of the city. The field is so great that there has been a division of labor, and a background of Roman piazzas and monuments spells Romance - while Trastevere and huddled housing represent the eternal verities of the New Realism.