

SVENSKA INSTITUTEN I ATHEN OCH ROM
INSTITUTUM ATHENIENSE ATQUE INSTITUTUM ROMANUM REGNI SUECIAE

Opuscula

Annual of the Swedish Institutes at Athens and Rome

18
2025

STOCKHOLM

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Prof. Henrik Gerding, Lund, Chairman
Dr Mikael Johansson, Gothenburg, Vice-chairman
Mrs Marie Grönberg, Stockholm, Treasurer
Dr Susanne Carlsson, Stockholm, Secretary
Prof. Gunnel Ekroth, Uppsala
Dr Therese Emanuelsson-Paulson, Stockholm
Dr Johan Eriksson, Uppsala
Dr Ulf R. Hansson, Rome
Prof. Christer Henriksén, Uppsala
Dr Jenny Wallensten, Athens
Mr Julian Wareing, Stockholm
Dr Lewis Webb, Gothenburg

EDITOR

Dr Julia Habetzeder

SECRETARY'S & EDITOR'S ADDRESS

Department of Archaeology and Classical Studies
Stockholm University
106 91 Stockholm, Sweden
secretary@ecsi.se | editor@ecsi.se

DISTRIBUTOR

Eddy.se AB
Box 1310
621 24 Visby, Sweden

For general information, see <https://ecsi.se>

For subscriptions, prices and delivery, see <https://ecsi.bokorder.se>

Published with the aid of a grant from The Swedish Research Council (2023-00215)

The English text was revised by Rebecca Montague, Hindon, Salisbury, UK

The text of this work is licenced under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence (CC BY 4.0). To view a copy of this licence, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>. All figures are reproduced with the permission of the rights holders acknowledged in captions. The figures are expressly excluded from the CC BY license covering the text; they may not be reproduced, copied, transmitted, or manipulated without consent from the owners, who reserve all rights.

Opuscula is a peer reviewed journal. Contributions to *Opuscula* should be sent to the Secretary of the Editorial Committee before 1 November every year. Contributors are requested to include an abstract summarizing the main points and principal conclusions of their article. For style of references to be adopted, see <https://ecsi.se>.

ISSN 2000-0898

ISBN 978-91-977799-7-5

© Svenska institutet i Athen and Svenska institutet i Rom

Printed by PrintBest (Viljandi, Estonia) via Italgraf Media AB (Stockholm, Sweden) 2025

Cover illustration from Susan M. Dixon in this volume, p. 252, fig. 5. Cover illustration edited by Julia Habetzeder.

Illustrating scientific archaeology in the late 18th century

Carl Fredrik Fredenheim's excavation in the Roman Forum, 1788–1789

Abstract

Carl Fredrik Fredenheim's excavation in the Roman Forum in 1788–1789, which paved the way for the discovery of the Basilica Giulia in 1848, has been acknowledged as the first modern archaeological work in Rome. Although his findings had been published by 1795 in an essay by the Alsatian scholar Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin, the project's innovative methods were only recognized and appreciated in the 20th century. This article questions why this is so by exploring the way in which Fredenheim's project was printed and illustrated. It concludes that the impact of the publication as originally planned was compromised because of the effects of the French Revolution on the lives of the three men involved: Fredenheim himself in Stockholm, the printmaker Francesco Piranesi in Rome, and Oberlin in Strasbourg. As a result, not only were the publications difficult to access, but some were without illustrations. This article argues that these illustrations were seminal in making Fredenheim's science-based archaeological process visible. They utilize novel graphic conventions that indicate the process of measured digging and the position of the most valuable or useful artifacts.*

Keywords: archaeological illustration, Basilica Julia, Carl Fredrik Fredenheim, Francesco Piranesi, Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin, Roman Forum, 18th century, Sweden, Classical reception

<https://doi.org/10.30549/opathrom-18-10>

Introduction

Carl Fredrik Fredenheim's considerable contribution to the history of the archaeology of ancient Rome has been well acknowledged in the 20th century.¹ He is noted for enacting the first excavation guided by scientific inquiry, the goal of which was to find the limits of the Roman Forum in its south-west corner. From early November 1788 to early March 1789, Fredenheim (1748–1803) explored this site between the bases of the Capitoline and Palatine Hills. Although unaware of it at the time, he uncovered late imperial remains of the Basilica Julia and thus helped set the stage for the identification of the building in 1848 and its full exposure in 1870.²

Fredenheim's application of certain modern archaeological procedures on the site was without precedent in Rome and its environs. He scientifically measured and recorded the process of digging and finding pertinent material evidence, applying a horizontal and a vertical grid pattern to the site. However, in the many decades following the finds, Fredenheim's work was often poorly considered or overlooked, in part because it was not well published, a fact that contributed to the decades-long delay in uncovering the site of the Basilica Julia.³ This oversight was exacerbated by the fact that the illustrations intended for the essay on the archaeological finds were not all available in the earliest publications. Those illustrations made visible Fredenheim's scientific approach to archaeology. This article explores the fraught circumstances around issuing the publications of Fredenheim's excavation and their illustrations, clarifying why there was delay in recognizing his contribution to archaeology. In addition, it argues for the extraordi-

* I sincerely thank the outside reviewers for their insightful comments, without which this essay would be much impoverished. I also thank those at the Swedish cultural institutions who made this research possible: Ulf R. Hansson, Svenska institutet i Rom; Jessica Öhnell and Henning Hansen, Kungliga Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek; Filippa Hanzon, Konstabiblioteket och Arkiven, Nationalmuseum; and Svante Helmbäck Tirén, Konstakademien.

¹ Bildt 1901, 3; Ridley 1989, 80; Stiernstedt 2004, 312; and in reference to Nylander's comments, Laine 2010, 46. Also Watkin 2009, 163; Gorski & Packer 2015, 247.

² Ridley 1989, 80–84.

³ Bildt 1901, 4.

narily prescient quality of the illustrations, created at the dawn of the age of scientific archaeology.

The excavation conceived

In 1780, Fredenheim, son of an erudite archbishop of the Church of Sweden, began a life of service at the Swedish royal court. Under King Gustav III (1746–1792, reigned 1771–1792), he served officially as an assistant in the ministry of foreign affairs, in charge of the king's foreign correspondence. In this role, he often performed as a minister of culture (*Fig. 1*).⁴ A man of “extensive education and thorough erudition,”⁵ he worked tirelessly to purchase books and other printed materials, and art and antiquities for Sweden's royal court, for the country's cultural institutions, including its libraries, as well as for private citizens.⁶ This activity would lead eventually to his appointment as director of the national art collections.⁷

From 1 November 1787 to 4 August 1790, Fredenheim embarked on a European Grand Tour. His official business was to identify and expand markets for Swedish copper, but it was also intended that he strengthen bonds with Sweden's allies in Europe.⁸ A significant amount of his trip was spent in Rome, from 18 March 1788 to 4 March 1789, from which he was absent from May to July while he visited Naples and its environs. In Rome, Fredenheim continued working on gathering information about Swedish history from the Vatican archives, a task begun during Gustav III's own Grand Tour of 1783–1784.⁹ Throughout his trip, Fredenheim was diligent in establishing connections with dignitaries and sundry people of culture living in or visiting the city. These included visual artists as well as antiquities dealers, whom he consulted as he worked to expand the royal collections.¹⁰

In his first months in Rome, Fredenheim had toured the Roman Forum on more than one occasion.¹¹ However, it was only on 22 October 1788, on the eve of his planned departure from Rome, that his interest in exploring the Forum's limits was sparked.¹² He subsequently postponed his departure

to excavate there.¹³ The license from the Vatican authorities was granted on 31 October, and by 3 November, a *capolavoro*, or supervisor, was hired, and a work crew was assembled and working.¹⁴ In his travel journal, Fredenheim presented his decision to excavate as a spontaneous one, but this is slightly misleading. His interest in the archaeological discoveries in Italy had been fueled for quite some time by Francesco Piranesi (1758/9–1810). In 1788 and 1789, Piranesi was serving as agent for the Swedish court at the Papal court and was acting as Fredenheim's personal assistant while he was in Rome.¹⁵ However, he had been corresponding with the Swedish agent for about six years, sending him information about the archaeological past of Rome.¹⁶

Francesco was the son of the prolific printmaker and visual recorder of ancient Rome, Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778). The son inherited the weighty responsibility for the father's active workshop just before Giovanni Battista's death in 1778.¹⁷ In 1777, Francesco (hereafter Piranesi) had established contact with Prince Fredrik Adolf, Duke of Östergötland, Gustav III's brother, with an offer to sell him much of the inventory in Piranesi's atelier, including the father's collection of prints and his antiquities.¹⁸ The offer was rejected. However, it precipitated Piranesi's correspondence with Gustav III, and more intensely with Fredenheim. From 1783 forward, Piranesi sent letters courting Fredenheim as a client or patron, drawing attention to his cultural wares, and often sending prints without charge to Stockholm. Piranesi's letters also highlighted his personal skills and broad connections in Roman culture. The result was a mutually beneficial association between Piranesi and Fredenheim that lasted for years. It ultimately led to Sweden acquiring the Piranesi collection of antiquities for what would become the National Museum, as well as other important antiquities.¹⁹ On a more practical level, during Fredenheim's Grand Tour excursion in Rome and in some other courts of Italy, Piranesi helped the Swedish agent arrange meetings, tour important cultural sites, obtain housing, and at times, find a good meal.

Piranesi fed both Fredenheim's and Gustav III's interest in the archaeological activity in Rome, by sending them most of his father's oeuvre, which included many images of the city's ancient past. Piranesi also provided them with news about current archaeological finds, such as the Tomb of the Scipioni

⁴ Leander Touati 1998, 49–51; Johansson 1966, 46–47.

⁵ Bildt 1901, 5.

⁶ Laine 2010.

⁷ Leander Touati 1998, 49–51; Olausson & Söderlind 2004, 584–586.

⁸ Stiernstedt 2004, 102.

⁹ Laine 2010, 39 n. 52.

¹⁰ Lumetti 1990, 93–125; Stiernstedt 2004.

¹¹ Laine 2010, 42.

¹² Lundström 1914, 141, citing Fredenheim's notes for his autobiography. Also see Ridley 1992a, 31, on how rare the interest in the Roman Forum was at the time.

¹³ Bildt 1901, 6.

¹⁴ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 3 November 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 133; Corbo 1981, 99.

¹⁵ Lumetti 1990, 35–42, 103–118.

¹⁶ Piranesi's first letter is dated 27 December 1782; Panza 2022, 37.

¹⁷ Minor & Pinto 2016, 263–264, 267–268.

¹⁸ Lumetti 1990, 37 n. 8.

¹⁹ Leander Touati 1998, 27–29, 31–36.

in Rome.²⁰ This also included the excavation in the kingdom of Naples, a subject in which many courts of Europe were fascinated.²¹ Piranesi had sent a plan of the theater of Herculaneum to Stockholm,²² and was collaborating on a project with the artist Jacques Beys (dates unknown) to reproduce some of the stunning frescoes at Pompeii.²³ But perhaps the most effective item in sparking Fredenheim's interest in the practice of archaeology was Piranesi's site plan of what had been uncovered in the ancient city of Pompeii. Piranesi published it in 1785, and subsequent revised impressions were issued.²⁴ Because the Neapolitan court jealously guarded information from the excavation, Piranesi's plan was not an official one, nor was it accurate. Nonetheless, it served Fredenheim, and he stated that during his summer of 1788 visit to Pompeii, it was in his hands.²⁵ Using it, he described almost all the major structures then uncovered, commenting at times on the various layers of the structures which the Neapolitan excavators had exposed.²⁶

The experience informed him when he undertook his own excavation in Rome. And as always, Piranesi was there to help Fredenheim with the project. Piranesi was able to obtain the required permissions to excavate quickly, in no small part because of his personal connection to Filippo Aurelio Visconti (1754–1829), the papal prefect of antiquities and curator of the Museo Pio-Clementino.²⁷ He also recommended the excavation foreman, Pietro Pasquini, Piranesi's maternal uncle who hailed from a family of gardeners skilled in using tools to move earth and debris.²⁸ Another Piranesi associate, the Roman sculptor Giuseppe Angelini (1735–1811), often visited the site to advise on the quality of the marbles found there.²⁹

Fredenheim recorded the measurements of the excavation pits, including the depth at which artifacts were found. In



Fig. 1. Lorens Pasch the Younger (1733–1805). Portrait of Carl Fredrik Fredenheim. 1779. Frame possibly by Pebr Ljung (1743–1819). Konstakademien, Stockholm.

this, he is unlike other foreigners on Grand Tour in late 18th-century Rome, who excavated to seek antiquities for a thriving market in Europe and Russia. They often did not give much thought to recording even the site location of their digging.³⁰ Instead Fredenheim took a cue from Piranesi, whose experience with his father studying and depicting the antiquities in and around Rome taught him to record what they revealed of the ancient sites in the surrounding topography, with at least an attempt at accuracy. This is found in Giovanni Battista's publications of the 1760s forward, including his investigations at the Lago Albano, Cora, and Tivoli.³¹ The Piranesis, in turn, inherited the legacy of the early 18th-century protoarchaeologists working in and around Rome. Scholars such as Pier Leone Ghezzi (1674–1755), Francesco Bianchini (1662–1729), and Francesco Ficoroni (1662–1747), recorded the context of their discoveries, in structures and landscapes.³² Fredenheim, however, went beyond the work of

²⁰ Piranesi 1785; Lumetti 1990, 41.

²¹ De Caro 2015.

²² Kockel 2000, 33 n. 6. An impression of 1783 was dedicated to Gustav III.

²³ Stiernstedt 2004, 279–307. The project was never completed.

²⁴ Kockel 2000, 35–40. Piranesi's edition of the map of 1792 was dedicated to Gustav III.

²⁵ Stiernstedt 2004, 180.

²⁶ *Resedagbok*, v. 3, A398, 15 May 1788, in reference to the Temple of Isis and the private residences nearby.

²⁷ Visconti served in these roles from 1784 to 1799. See Pietrangeli 1985, 96; Ridley 1992b, 143–145. Piranesi had a close relationship with Visconti's brother Ennio Quirino (1751–1818), also a noted antiquarian. See Calcani 2005; Bevilacqua 2006, 14, 52–53; Panza 2022, 28.

²⁸ Lumetti 1990, 115–116. See also Pucci 1979, for Piranesi's interest in gardening or digging tools of the ancients.

²⁹ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 3 November 1788, 13 November 1788, 8 January 1789, 12 January 1789, 22 January 1789, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 133–134, 138–139.

³⁰ Bignamini & Hornsby 2010; Hansson 2025, 311–316.

³¹ On Piranesi and his archaeological publications, see Dixon 1991; Pinto 2012, 32–50, 157–213.

³² On the emergence of protoarchaeology and the accomplishments of the protoarchaeologists, see Polignac 1998; Griggs 2009, 292–297; Ridley 2017, 13, 100, 105–106; Heilbron 2022, 189–203; Hansson 2025, 300–304.



Fig. 3. Giuseppe Vasi (1710–1782). Church of *Santa Maria Liberatrice*, in *Della Magnificenza di Roma antica e moderna vol. 3*, 1753, pl. 34. Etching. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles (88-B12976).

Fig. 2 (left). Giuseppe Vasi (1710–1782). *Le Rovine delle antiche magnificenze di Roma che si veggono nel Campo Vaccino*, 1765. Etching. John Hay Library, Brown University.

these men by documenting the process of the search. In this, he borrowed methods from experimental sciences, in vogue since the 17th century,³³ and applied them to his archaeological endeavor.

Fredenheim's accounts of his daily activities in Rome contain brief but insightful entries about how the excavation proceeded.³⁴ The first journal entry offers a description of the site at the base of the Capitoline Hill, in an area framed by some extant columns of the Temple of Saturn—which Fredenheim referred to as the Temple of Concord—and the Temple of Castor and Pollux—which he called the “*tre colonne*” (Fig. 2). Debris had accumulated in the area since medieval times, and in late October 1788, it was nearly flat and covered with grass (Fig. 3). To the west of this site was the church and hospital

of Santa Maria della Consolazione and the small early medieval church of Santa Maria delle Grazie with an adjacent bell foundry (Fig. 4:O and OO).

The excavation, illustrated

Four illustrations associated with the project capture the essential information about the excavation. The first, a site plan (Fig. 4; key provided in *Appendix 1*), captures the location of Fredenheim's pit within the Forum parameters, and between the Temples of Saturn (Fig. 4:N) and Castor and Pollux (Fig. 4:F). It records both the ancient and then contemporary structures within the Forum, as well as the imprint of the pits of previous excavators of the 16th and 18th centuries. These holes were usually backfilled after artifacts were found there, but some of them were recorded at the time, and some had left an impression on the Forum's surface in Fredenheim's day (Fig. 4:a–i, k). The effect of their organic outlines on the site plan is that the earth was rent open to reveal what might be missing of the ancient Roman topography. In this way, the mapping convention is comparable to the use of the Severan

³³ On experimental science in the aftermath of Galileo Galilei, see Emerson 1990; Beretta 2000.

³⁴ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 3 November 1788 through 17 February 1789, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 132–138. Bildt 1901, 5–15; Stiernstedt 2004, 309–324; and Laine 2010, 42–47 all consulted the travel journals, as well as the other sources such as his letters.

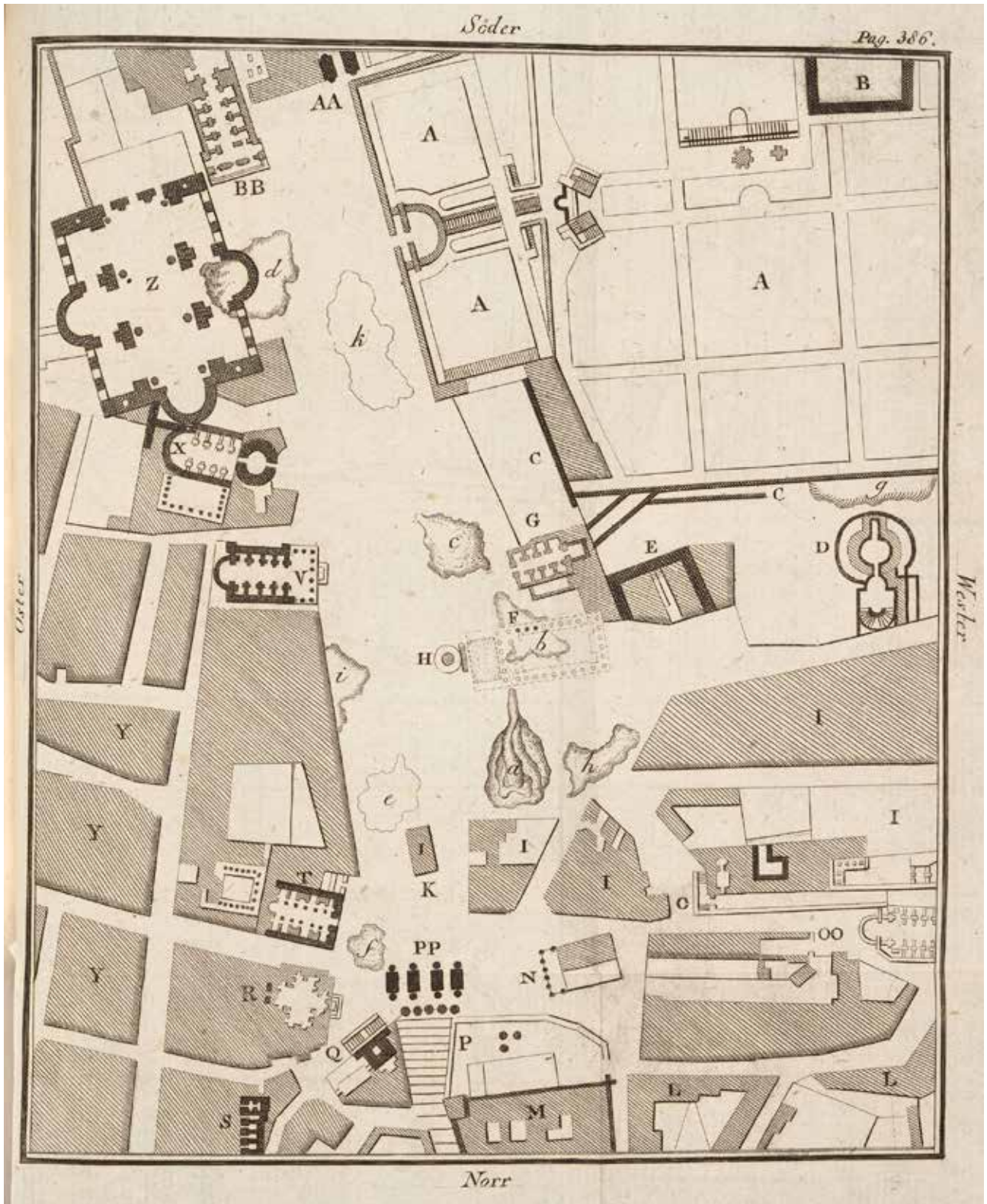


Fig. 4. Unknown engraver. Site plan of Roman Forum with excavation pits a–i and k, of which a is the excavation of 1788–1789, in Fredenheim 1808. The key to the figure is provided in Appendix 1 below. Engraving, Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek, Stockholm.

Forma Urbis fragments in Luigi Canina's *Pianta Topografica di Roma Antica*, 1832, and Rodolfo Lanciani's *Forma Urbis Romae*, 1893–1901, as credible evidence to substantiate their reconstructions of ancient Rome.

Fredenheim's journal entries record all types of incidentals about the conditions of the excavation, such as when weather or soil conditions were an impediment to the digging, how many staff were digging on any given day, and which dignitaries or interested parties were present at the site, while not neglecting to record any significant collectable or saleable artifact found at the site. Fredenheim recorded the measurements related to the excavation pit, such as how far it was located from the extant structures, and how wide and deep it was.³⁵ The resultant pit is reflected with some detail in a second illustration, in a plan with a corresponding section, seen in the shadow of a reconstructed Temple of Castor and Pollux (*Fig. 5*). The illustration reinforces the information in Fredenheim's travel journal, that there were three major levels of the dig, each about 12 palms deep, for a total depth of about 36 palms.³⁶ This is best illustrated in the stepped profile wall of the pit, at the right edge of the section, near the letter M, which designated the surface of the Forum before excavation began (*Fig. 5:I*).

The narrative of the excavation, which is highlighted by the discovery of artifacts, plays out in three stages, each within one of the layers. In the first week of November, at a precise distance from the Temple of Castor and Pollux, the workers created a pit, labeled D in the plan (*Fig. 5:II*). Here they recovered a large slab of ancient alabaster. Fredenheim noted that it was big enough to create a table from it; indeed, after the excavation was complete, he noted that he had three tables made from such large marbles.³⁷ Regarding the material that was not deemed important or salvageable, Fredenheim observed that buyers of stone gathered at the site every day. The income from the sales helped cover the costs of the excavation.³⁸

As the second layer was brought down another 12 palms, the diameter of the pit was diminished. This layer is made clear from the profile of the pit on the right-hand side (*Fig. 5:I*). In this level, on 15 November 1788, Fredenheim found the inscription block of the *Kalatores Pontificum et Flaminum*, a list of the assistants to the most powerful ancient Roman priests (*Fig. 6:III and IV*)—which he deduced probably dated from the time of

Claudius or Nero.³⁹ Its find position is most likely marked N in the section (*Fig. 5:I*). By 1 December, a substantial fragment of a stucco ceiling was found at the location most likely marked Q (*Fig. 5:I*). The ceiling featured a grid with elaborately decorated frames, within which were set designs such as rosettes of acanthus leaves and a female herm figure sprouting palmettes (*Fig. 7:VI*).⁴⁰ The trusses to which the stucco had been attached were identified and likely marked R in the section (*Fig. 5:I*). Later, in the same layer of earth, two identical Corinthian capitals were found near the inscription block (*Fig. 7:V*); these are likely indicated by P and O in the section (*Fig. 5:I*). A last find in this second layer was the solid walls marked H on the plan (*Fig. 5:II*), which, Fredenheim reasoned, given that they were constructed from rubble, might not be original to the ancient structure he was exploring.⁴¹

The illustrations of the artifacts found at site have subsequently proven useful in constructing narratives about the history of ancient Rome and of its archaeology. For example, since the early 20th century, scholars have recognized that the list of the *Kalatores* was written on one of many ancient inscription slabs or blocks that had been moved in post-antique times, to be reused as building materials elsewhere, and thus it was not of use in establishing the date of the structure which Fredenheim uncovered.⁴² However, its illustration has been useful in that it reveals its original means of display, as part of a block (*Fig. 6:IV*). This information could have been lost had it not been recorded. Fredenheim gave this block to the Vatican, likely as part of the agreement to excavate, and it was shaved down so that it could be easily embedded into the wall of the museum's lapidary gallery.⁴³ In addition, the illustration of the column capital (*Fig. 7:V*)—only one of the two found is represented because the design was identical—is important because since the early 20th century, scholars have not been able to locate them.⁴⁴ Yet, they resemble, if only in a stylized

³⁵ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 4 November 1788, 5 November 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 133. Bildt 1901, 7–8 noted that the point was paced off from in front of the bell foundry of Santa Maria delle Grazie.

³⁶ Laine 2010, 44. 1 palm = 0.22 m. The entire pit was nearly 8 m deep.

³⁷ *Resedagbok*, 3v. 4, A399–A400, 3 November 1788, 4 December 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 133, 137; Fredenheim 1808, 381; Stiernstedt 2004, 316 n. 17, 317.

³⁸ Laine 2010, 43.

³⁹ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 15 November 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 135; Oberlin 1796b, 18.

⁴⁰ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 1 December 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 136.

⁴¹ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 4 December 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 137; Bildt 1901, 18. There were other finds, although the locations were not recorded well. A bronze coin from Caligula's reign was found on 8 November; some stamped bricks were also revealed, but the date of their finding was not recorded. On 20 December, Piranesi encountered a thumb of a colossal statue in the lowest layer.

⁴² Bildt 1901, 10–12; Ridley 1989, 81.

⁴³ Bildt 1901, 10–11.

⁴⁴ The column capitals, like the inscription, were donated to the Vatican. Stiernstedt 2004, 314–315, 322, regarding evidence he found documenting that the capitals were received on 30 December 1789. Both the capitals and the inscription probably remained on site throughout the excavation; Fredenheim showed them to

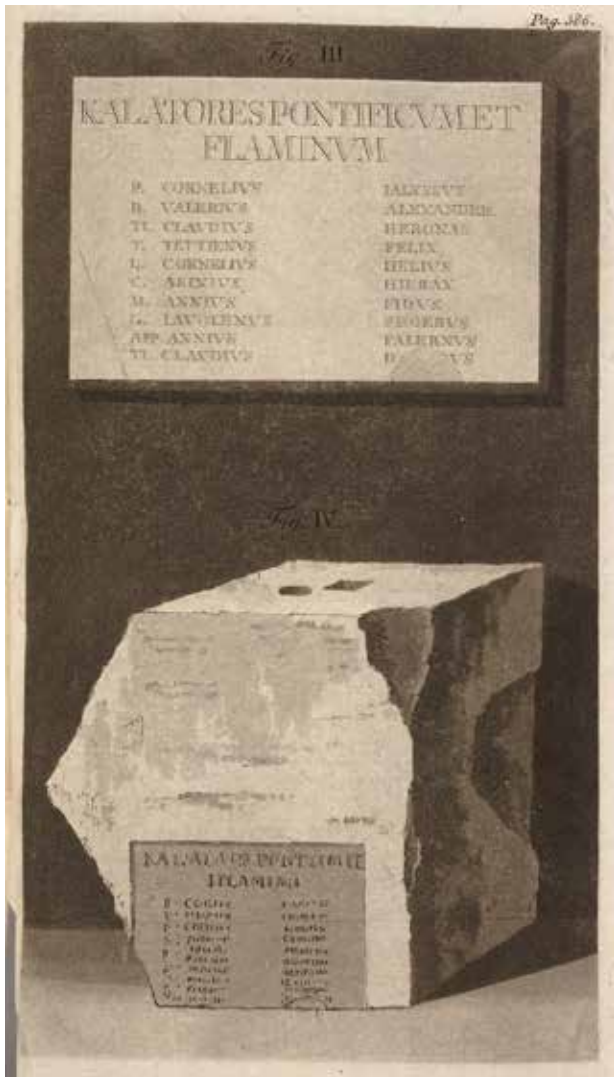


Fig. 6. Francesco Piranesi (1758–1810) or an assistant. Transcription (fig. III) and inscription block (fig. IV), Kalatores Pontificum et Flaminum. Roman Forum excavation of 1788–1789, in Fredenheim 1808. Engraving and etching. Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek, Stockholm.



Fig. 7. Francesco Piranesi (1758–1810) or an assistant. Column capital (fig. V) and stucco ceiling fragment (fig. VI). Roman Forum excavation of 1788–1789, in Fredenheim 1808. Engraving and etching. Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek, Stockholm.

fashion, similar capitals encountered during the late 19th-century excavation near Fredenheim's site, thus hinting at the

visitors, including to the architect Giuseppe Valadier (1762–1839) (*Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 2 December 1788, 17 January 1789, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 136, 138). The Swedish architect Carl Fredrik Sundvall (1754–1831), from 1788 to 1791 in Rome on a study tour, also visited the site, and accompanied Fredenheim on business related to the excavation (*Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 22 November 1788, 23 November 1788, 26 November 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 135–136).

extent of the ancient structure's footprint.⁴⁵ Likewise, the illustration of the stucco was much valued because it captures that which has been completely lost; the stucco ceiling was destroyed in the night after its discovery, but not before Piranesi,

⁴⁵ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 2–4 December 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 137. Bildt 1901, 14, noted that this representation of the capital was much stylized, an opinion he based on a comparison to a similar capital subsequently found on the site.

or Piranesi's assistant Benedetto Mori, made a drawing from which the print was derived (*Fig. 7:VI*).⁴⁶

By 4 December 1788, the diggers were at work in the third layer, and again reducing the area of the excavation pit as they progressed. After encountering more fragments of stucco and marble floors, which were sold off at the site, they encountered a floor made of thick slabs of white marble tiles, some of which appeared scorched.⁴⁷ Fredenheim believed he had uncovered the base layer of the structure he was excavating in part because by probing more deeply, the diggers struck water. From the salvageable marble tiles, two small tables were fashioned.⁴⁸ The digging was then halted because of cold temperatures and Fredenheim dismissed the supervisor on 14 December, an act that signaled that the project was drawing to a close. Fredenheim himself took charge, instructing a group of almost 30 workers to extend the pit laterally and to explore the extent of the tile floor. The workers moved in the direction of the Capitoline Hill, as well as towards the Temple of Castor and Pollux.⁴⁹ The multiple contour lines encircling C in the plan (*Fig. 5:II*) suggests these actions. In the process the diggers revealed another wall comprised of architectural fragments; it is labeled F on the plan (*Fig. 5:II*). Throughout this stage, the workers again were met with cold temperatures. Work was halted near the Temple of Castor and Pollux because the ground was flooded; later scholars would identify this area as the location of the Cloaca Maxima.⁵⁰ The last significant thing that Fredenheim recorded, with some zeal, was the complex composition of the base floor: its marble tiles were laid atop layers of some mixed stone debris, held together with mortar, all of which was positioned above a thick tufa slab.⁵¹

The journal's on-site notes halt after 22 January 1789,⁵² although last entries on 16 and 17 February record Piranesi

meeting with the excavators.⁵³ Fredenheim left Rome on 4 March, but indications in the expense reports show that the excavation continued for another month, as the workers finished up and likely fed whatever possible fragments were found to the stone buyers in order to recoup costs.⁵⁴ While the digging progressed, Fredenheim cautiously posited some interpretation of the evidence he encountered. He believed that he might have found a monument of Republican Rome, perhaps a temple with a portico, but he did not suggest which building.⁵⁵

The site plan was provided with an index (*Appendix 1*), although it was not a key incorporated into the image of the print, but rather it was appended to the essay. The illustration of the pit's plan and section, however, was not supplied with a key or an index, and what is represented is not always obvious (*Fig. 5*).⁵⁶ The letters often seemed placed just slightly askance from what they might refer to. Nonetheless, its creator was innovative in attempting to capture the progress of the excavation's major events in visual form, and in this, it signals something new in the history of the illustration of classical archaeology. Perhaps the only other precedent for such representations is to be found in some of the drawings of the excavation at Herculaneum and Pompeii, created by Karl Weber (1712–1764), the Swiss engineer who was in charge there from 1750 to 1764. He is considered the first to anticipate “scientific methodologies of classical archaeology,” in both the process of excavating and that of presenting the results.⁵⁷ Neither Fredenheim nor Piranesi, however, would have been able to view Weber's notes or drawings, given that they, as well as most of the information about the extraordinary activity in the Neapolitan kingdom, were kept under the tight control of the Borbone king Ferdinando (1751–1825, reigned 1777–1825).⁵⁸ That said, Piranesi was interested in the excavation of the ancient sites around Naples, seeing some publishing opportunities there. Among his collaborators were some who had access to the site and would be cognizant of the new approaches to archaeology that they were witnessing.⁵⁹

⁴⁶ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 1 December 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 136; Lumetti 1990, 116 suggests Mori drew the capital.

⁴⁷ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 3 December 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 127. Fredenheim wanted to see in it traces of the fire of Nero, but in the end, he did not insist on the interpretation. See Fredenheim 1808, 381; Bildt 1901, 14.

⁴⁸ *Resedagbok*, 3v. 4, A399–A400, 4 December 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 137; Fredenheim 1808, 381; Stiernstedt 2004, 316 n. 17, 317. Bildt 1901, 14, n. 2, citing a plan in Montiroli 1859 in which the missing marble slabs are indicated.

⁴⁹ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 15 December 1788, 20 December 1788, 22 December 1788, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 137–138.

⁵⁰ Laine 2010, 44.

⁵¹ Fredenheim 1808, 382.

⁵² The carnival theater season had begun in Rome and Fredenheim participated enthusiastically in it.

⁵³ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 16 February 1789, 17 February 1789, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 138.

⁵⁴ Lumetti 1990, 266.

⁵⁵ Bildt 1901, 19.

⁵⁶ Bildt 1901 was the first to try to make sense of the letters in *Fig. 5*; Fredenheim 1808 did not refer to the letters in this print.

⁵⁷ Parslow 1998, 3–5, 159–198.

⁵⁸ For the reign of Ferdinando, first as King of Naples and then as King of the Two Sicilies, during the time of various French interventions in Italy, see de Maio 1996.

⁵⁹ For example, Pagano 1997, 98, notes that Beys was on site. See Allroggen-Bedel 1983, on ways in which information about the Neapolitan excavations showed up in both Francesco Piranesi's and his father's work.

Nonetheless, the trend to depict the process of excavation, capturing how the earth was probed and what it yielded up, documenting what was found as it appeared in the site's stratigraphy, would not be a standard tool used in archaeological excavation in Rome until the late 19th century.⁶⁰

Plans for publishing compromised

With the excavation nearly finished, Fredenheim embarked on his return trip home on 4 March 1789. He spent months in the courts of northern Italy before visiting those of northern Europe. He stopped at Strasbourg, in the Alsace region of France, from 19 to 28 January 1790. Here one of his tasks was to visit with Jérémie-Jacques Oberlin (1735–1806), professor at the University there, to discuss the excavation with him; they met nearly every day.⁶¹ Fredenheim showed Oberlin the four illustrations which Piranesi provided Fredenheim: an initial draft of drawing of the site plan (*Fig. 8*) and either the plates or the prints of the other three images (*Figs 5–7*).⁶² Oberlin's task was to send a scholarly essay which dealt with Fredenheim's findings to Piranesi in Rome. Piranesi would incorporate it into an illustrated publication. But the project met with difficulty, and Piranesi did not complete his part of the project. Eventually in December 1795 the publication was issued, but only one print, that of the site plan, accompanied the text. It took another 13 years before all four illustrations were issued together, but they appeared not with Oberlin's text, but with Fredenheim's. To compound the issue of the availability of the illustrations, Oberlin's essay had limited distribution, and Fredenheim's was very rare.⁶³

The delay in the publication was caused in large part because the lives of the men involved in the project—Fredenheim, who generated the information, Piranesi, who was to arrange for the publication, and Oberlin, who wrote the scholarly text—were much affected in the six years after Fredenheim returned home from his Grand Tour. The long reach of the events of the French Revolution shaped their lives in different ways. In early 1790, Fredenheim canceled plans to visit Paris on his return trip because of the violent struggles for political control there. It is well known that after the storming

of the Bastille on 14 June 1789, the power of the French royal court was diminished and a constitutional monarchy was established in 1791. The turmoil in France had echoes elsewhere; because France under King Louis XVI (1754–1793; reigned 1765–1793) was a strong ally of Sweden, these events unsettled Gustav III.

In his heyday, Gustav III had been known for his liberal policies, including striving towards some social egalitarianism, by allowing freedom of the press, empowering the peasants in Sweden's and Norway's Estate system, and allowing consideration of a new constitution which ceded some powers to the nobles.⁶⁴ However, after the rise of an angry republican sentiment in France, Gustav III was nervous that the nation "would find imitators" in Sweden.⁶⁵ Thus he began to exercise a stringent authority at home and halted or curtailed some of his reforms.⁶⁶ After his death in March 1792, the result of an assassination attempt, the stage for strife was set at the royal court. When the king's brother Carl, Duke of Södermanland became regent to 13-year old Prince Gustav Adolf (1778–1837), he chose Gustav Adolf Reuterholm (1756–1813) as his adviser. Until the coming of age of the new king in 1796, Reuterholm had an highly influential role at court. His policies were liberal-minded, in contrast to those of the later years of Gustav III's reign. He was also brutal in punishing some of Gustav III's staunchest allies at court.⁶⁷ Fredenheim seems to have thrived in the new court, as he conformed to the rule of Reuterholm, and later, of the young king. He was rewarded with the demanding role of first director of the Royal Museum, which was established in June 1792 in honor of Gustav III. He worked diligently to open the display of the court's collection of ancient marbles some years later.⁶⁸ For this and other numerous services, Fredenheim was awarded membership to the Royal Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities, or *Kungliga Vitterhets Historie och Antiquitets Akademien*, also known as the *Vitterhetsakademien*.

Piranesi's fate is also related to the political turmoil at the royal court of Sweden. Still an agent of Sweden in Rome, and loyal to Gustav III and then to the regent, Piranesi was caught up in Reuterholm's scheme to banish his political rival Gustav Mauritz Armfelt (1757–1814). Armfelt, who had been a powerful adviser to Gustav III during his last years, was reassigned duties in Italy. On 5 December 1793, while he was in Naples, Reuterholm requested that he be arrested for treason against the Swedish state. Since Armfelt was an ally of the Neapolitan prime minister John Acton (1736–1811) and

⁶⁰ Giacomo Boni (1850–1925), director of the excavation in the Roman Forum from 1899 to his death, was innovative in recording the stratigraphic layers; see Fortini 2020.

⁶¹ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 20 January 1790, 21 January 1790, 23 January 1790, 24 January 1790 (in which Oberlin sees the drawings), 26 January 1790, 27 January 1790, 28 January 1790, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 139–141.

⁶² The Vitterhetsakademiens bibliotek in Stockholm holds the four copper plates for the prints attached to Fredenheim 1808.

⁶³ Bildt 1901, 4.

⁶⁴ Barton 1986, 82–87, 107–114, 132–140.

⁶⁵ Barton 1986, 178.

⁶⁶ Barton 1986, 191.

⁶⁷ Lumetti 1990, 130 n. 2, 131–133.

⁶⁸ Olausson 1998, 61–65; Olausson & Söderlind 2004, 584–585.

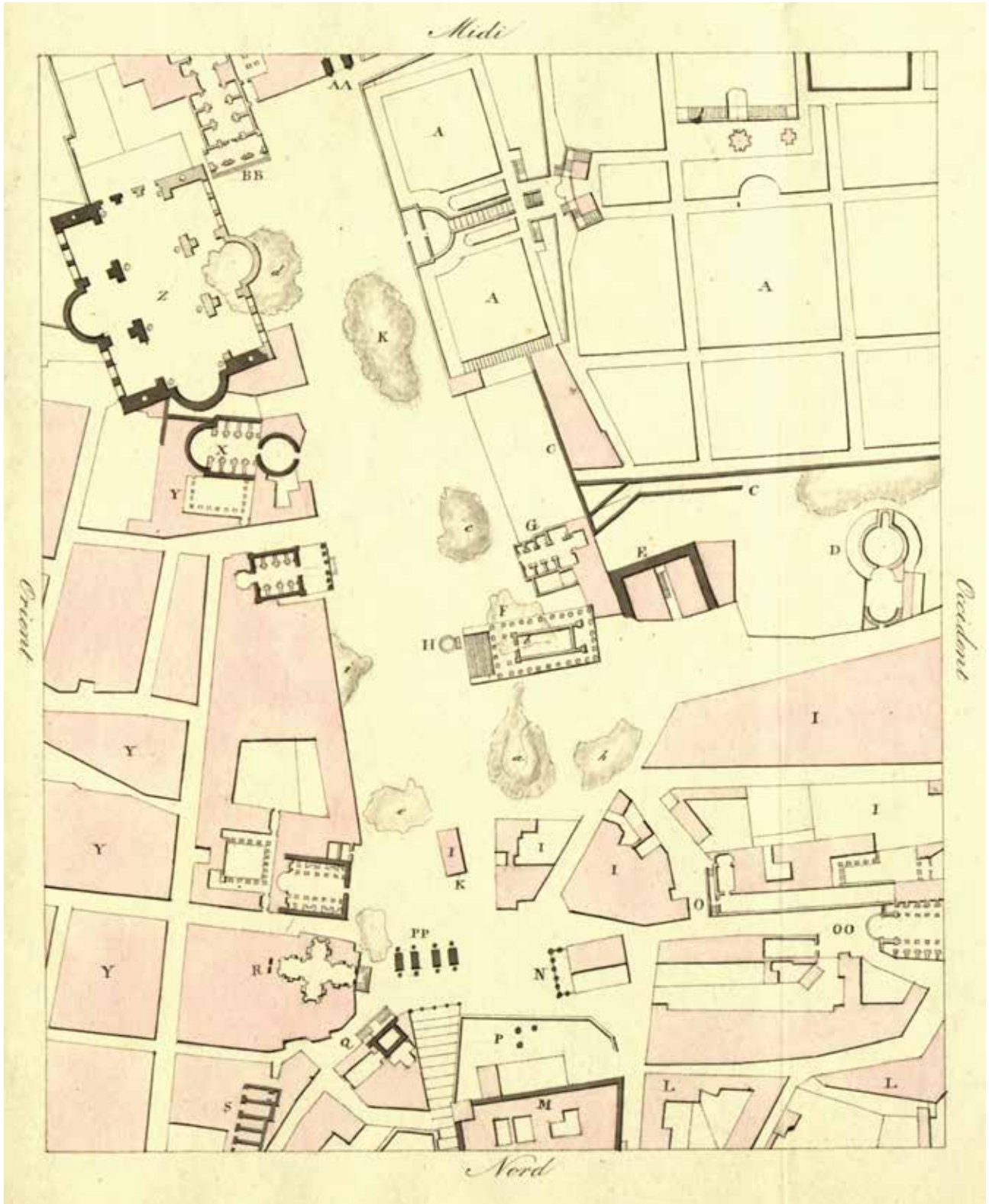


Fig. 8. Francesco Piranesi (1758–1810). Site plan of Roman Forum with excavation pits, in *Resedagbok, Fredenheim*, v. 4, A400, 29 November 1788. Drawing Nationalmuseum Archiv, Stockholm.

was under his strong protection, he was allowed to flee Naples for Russia. Reuterholm's action against Armfelt spurred an event with far-reaching and complicated implications for Piranesi. A furious Acton accused some of Piranesi's associates of attempting to assassinate Armfelt. On 18 December Pietro Pasquini, Piranesi's uncle, was incarcerated, as was Vincenzo Mori, brother of Piranesi's associate Benedetto. Benedetto Mori was also implicated but he avoided incarceration by hiding in Rome.⁶⁹ Piranesi was insulted and aggrieved by the accusations and he exacerbated the tensions between the courts of Naples and Sweden by publishing an acerbic letter addressed to Acton.⁷⁰

After Gustav IV Adolf came of age in 1796, Reuterholm was expelled from Sweden, and soon thereafter Piranesi was stripped of his title as agent of Sweden.⁷¹ Piranesi's life changed radically after this event and he eventually moved to Paris, in a series of events well told by his biographers. In the chaos of the early 1790s, the printmaking and publishing project for Fredenheim was sidelined and likely forgotten.

Oberlin's fate was similarly complicated. Oberlin had been a professor of logic and metaphysics at the University of Strasbourg since 1770, although he was known to research other subjects, particularly philology and classical Latin studies, the latter of which he helped foster there.⁷² He served at a time when the University had an excellent international reputation, the result of Enlightened reform begun about 1720. University administrators had strengthened the institution by bringing in from outside the region faculty members whose scholarship was distributed widely. These maintained strong collaborative research relationships with those at other universities, including the University of Göttingen, then considered the best in Europe. New disciplines were added to the curriculum, and university subjects were reorganized in a manner that reflected recent disciplinary developments.⁷³

The French Revolution disastrously affected the University of Strasbourg, as well as the entire city and Alsace region. The city had a diverse population, in part because of its his-

toric ties to the Germanic states.⁷⁴ At the beginning of the Revolution, the new French governors tolerated the diversity, being guided by ideas of egalitarianism. However, by the third year of the revolution, and against the backdrop of France declaring war on Austria,⁷⁵ there was a fervent desire to create a unified French identity in Alsace, one based in good part on the adoption of French as the official language. German was commonly a second language in Alsace, but the new authorities forbade it in official documents. At the University, no instruction was to be delivered in the German language.⁷⁶ In addition, some curricular subjects, especially those considered Germanic scholarship, were eliminated in favor of disciplines deemed more suitable to the French revolutionary goals. These restrictions were not received well. Oberlin, who had researched and written a seminal work on the Alsatian dialect, protested against these new regulations; in particular he wrote passionately about the value of German as a viable language in Alsatian culture.⁷⁷ Tensions increased and on the night of 2 or 3 November 1793, Oberlin was arrested and imprisoned in Metz, along with six other faculty members.⁷⁸ He was released in September 1794 and was returned to a teaching position at the University, with the stipulation that he teach only certain proscribed subjects, including archaeology. Thus, only in late 1794 did he return to the project of publishing Fredenheim's excavation, stating quite simply: "*La révolution Française a porté obstacle à l'exécution de ce projet*".⁷⁹

The original plan for publication, then, was foiled. Piranesi lacked the interest or the ability to complete the publishing assignment, although not before supplying Fredenheim with some materials for the illustrations before he left Rome. However, Fredenheim neglected the project for some years, and only in December 1795 did he use the opportunity of his acceptance speech into the Vitterhetsakademien to revisit his excavation in the Forum. In the meantime, the newly freed Oberlin returned to the project. His publication which brought the Roman Forum excavation of 1788–1789 to light was issued at nearly the same time as Fredenheim's presentation in Stockholm.

⁶⁹ Lumetti 1990, 152. Vincenzo Mori died in prison soon after his arrest. Pasquini most likely was released in 1799, after French troops marched into Naples. Benedetto Mori hid in Piranesi's house in Rome.

⁷⁰ Lumetti 1991; 1990, 129–153.

⁷¹ He lost his standing in the Swedish court in 1798. See Lumetti 1990, 215–229; Minor & Pinto 2016, 268–272; Panza 2022, 103–108.

⁷² Vogler 1994, 137. Oberlin was a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, as well as of several learned societies in Rouen, Palermo, Cortona, Nancy, and Kassel; see also Livet 1996b.

⁷³ Vogler 1994, 136–141.

⁷⁴ Alsace had been part of the German states until after the Wars of Religion, when in 1681, it was incorporated into France.

⁷⁵ On 20 April 1792, the French declared war on Austria, beginning what became known as the War of the First Coalition. In response, Austria's ally Prussia declared war on France in June.

⁷⁶ Vogler 1994, 193; Livet 1996a, 17–37.

⁷⁷ Vogler 1994, 145, 153, 174–175.

⁷⁸ Livet 1996a, 41.

⁷⁹ Oberlin 1796b, 22.

The illustrated publications and their fates

Fredenheim's essay, published only in 1808, was a transcription of his speech to the Vitterhetsakademien on 15 December 1795, after he was awarded an honorary membership on 30 July of that year. It appeared in the *Handlingar*, a collection of the academy's notices and speeches, published occasionally. Fredenheim's discourse is prefaced by praise for Gustav IV Adolf, then on the eve of his assumption of full power after the regency, and it employs the panegyric rhetoric common in the day. In addressing his archaeological work, Fredenheim stressed his rationale for choosing the site, i.e., to find the limits of the Forum, and he referred to the classical and Renaissance sources which informed his curiosity about the question.⁸⁰ The account of the excavation process, however, was condensed, but nonetheless sprinkled with vivid highlights, such as the flooded excavation pit, the scarred marble flooring which he believed was evidence of the fire during Nero's reign, and the marble slabs from which tables were crafted. He finished his speech with descriptions of the excavation's most memorable artifacts.⁸¹

All four illustrations accompany the *Handlingar* essay (Figs 4–7). Fredenheim likely had the drawing of the site plan (Fig. 8), and three of the prints (Figs 5–7), their copper plates, or both in hand when he met with Oberlin in early 1790 to discuss the publication project.⁸² By late 1795, Fredenheim employed an engraver to make a reproductive print from the site plan.⁸³ Thus, Fredenheim had the four copper plates, and likely the corresponding prints as well, for his presentation in December 1795.

In the last two months of 1795, Oberlin issued his essay about the excavation in the *Magasin encyclopédique*, a journal which, as the name implies, published on a wide-ranging array of topics.⁸⁴ The next year, he arranged for a limited reprinting of a slightly revised essay in a 20-page pamphlet. Fifty

copies were sent to Fredenheim for distribution.⁸⁵ Both editions of Oberlin's essays are illustrated only with the engraved site plan. It is not unrealistic to expect that Fredenheim and Oberlin corresponded in these last months of 1795 and early 1796, given that their essays were made public at about the same time.

Oberlin's sources for much of the essay were the nearly daily conversations with Fredenheim from 18 to 29 January 1790, when the two surely reviewed the relevant entries of Fredenheim's diary.⁸⁶ In content, though, Oberlin's essay is different from Fredenheim's. It employs the form of then traditional scholarship on topics of classical archaeology. It begins with a lengthy analysis of the classical sources related to the Forum's history and physical appearance, including its monumental structures. This section provides a brief explanation of some of the various 16th- and 18th-century excavation pits in the Forum, which are represented in the site map (Fig. 4), including such information as what was found there and how past scholars such as Famiano Nardini (d. 1661) and Ficoroni reported them. He singled out the pit labeled h on the site plan, located to the south of Fredenheim's pit (Fig. 4:b); it is the only place where Oberlin refers to any of the letters on the map.⁸⁷ In 1763, at this spot, no marble floor was found at 30 palms; given that Oberlin believed that the building Fredenheim discovered must extend as far as pit h, he suggested that the slabs had already been removed by that date.⁸⁸ Indeed, making past excavations visible is one of the main purposes of the illustration, i.e., to help locate the places in the Forum which might be sites of ancient structures. (It would have been an aid to subsequent topographers, had they access to this site plan.) In the last part of his essay, Oberlin concentrated on the major artifacts revealed during the excavation, including the inscription, the fragment of the stucco ceiling, and the capitals, commenting on their possible relevance to the edifice being revealed. However, their illustrations

⁸⁰ Fredenheim 1808, 377–379.

⁸¹ Fredenheim 1808, 380, 382 (flooring), 382–383 (stucco), 383 (capital), 384 (inscription).

⁸² Bildt 1901, 9, n. 1. It seems unusual that Piranesi would allow the plates to leave his workshop, given the fact that in 1789 he still intended to create a publication of Fredenheim's excavation; thus it could be that the plates were sent to Fredenheim sometime between 1790 and 1795. However Fredenheim did have all the imagery with him in 1790 when he met with Oberlin.

⁸³ Oberlin 1796a, 380. Oberlin published notice of the defects in the engraver's work.

⁸⁴ Oberlin 1795. Also, see Lacour 2012, for the range of subjects published in *Magasin encyclopédique* published between 1795 and 1816 under the editor Millin. Lacour 2012, 6 n. 19 states that the publication viewed studies in antiquities and archaeology as synonymous.

⁸⁵ Laine 2010, 46, n. 65.

⁸⁶ *Resedagbok*, v. 4, A399–A400, 20 January 1790, 21 January 1790, 23 January 1790, 24 January 1790 (in which Oberlin sees the drawings), 26 January 1790, 27 January 1790, 28 January 1790, transcribed in Lundström 1914, 139–141.

⁸⁷ Oberlin 1796b, 8–11.

⁸⁸ Oberlin 1796b, 12–13, 16, 24. The passages are a little confusing to follow in that they do not correspond directly to the site plan. In addition, the sources of Oberlin's information are not always apparent, although he cites Ficoroni (*Le vestigia e rarità di Roma Antica*, 1744) and Johannes Georges Graevius (*Thesaurus Antiquitatum Romanarum*, 12 vols, 1694–1699). For the excavations of the second half of the 18th century, I suspect the source was Piranesi, Filippo Aurelio Visconti, or even some stone buyers, who had memories of these finds. Only a few of these appear in Lanciani's *Storia degli Scavi*; they warrant further investigation.

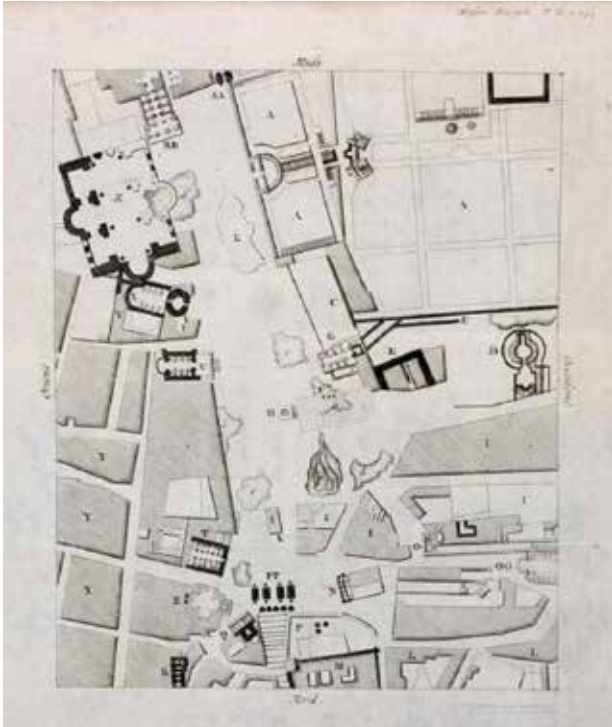


Fig. 9. Unknown engraver. Site plan of Roman Forum with excavation pits, in Oberlin 1795. Engraving. Natural History Museum, London.

(Figs 6, 7), do not appear in the essay. Overall, as in Fredenheim's speech, Oberlin's essay does not elaborate extensively on the process of excavation,⁸⁹ but rather on the material evidence produced for what it might reveal about the structure that was being uncovered.

The drawing of the site plan which Fredenheim brought from Rome (Fig. 8) contained some errors, and these were replicated in the engraving that accompanied the *Magasin encyclopédique* essay of late 1795 (Fig. 9). However, when Oberlin issued a pamphlet of the same material in the following year, he had the opportunity to request that the printmaker alter the illustration of the site plan, as well as to revise his essay's text in some minor ways. Many of the requests for changes were listed in an emendation notice that Oberlin published in the first months of 1796, in a note to the editor Aubin-Louis Millin (1759–1818).⁹⁰ The engraver made the most important requested corrections in the site map, and this edited version is attached to Oberlin's pamphlet of 1796

⁸⁹ Oberlin 1796b, 16, does, however, include the measurements of entire pit.

⁹⁰ Oberlin 1796a, 379–380.

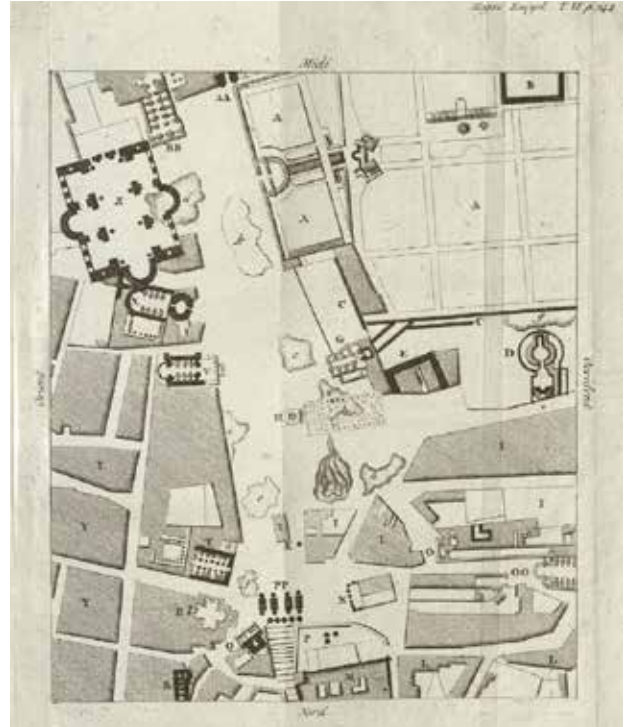


Fig. 10. Unknown engraver. Site plan of Roman Forum with excavation pits, in Oberlin 1796b. Engraving. Houghton Library, Harvard University (ARC 785-21).

(Fig. 10).⁹¹ A very similar plan was appended to Fredenheim's essay (Fig. 4) with one minor omission, that of the imprint of the Column of Phocas (K); this suggests that Fredenheim's site plan was printed first, and after the final alteration to the plate, subsequent prints were pulled and sent to Oberlin for the pamphlet. The mistakes in the various editions of the site plans are as follows:

—In the drawing (Fig. 8): Oberlin identified that letters f, g, and B were missing; he noted that there was no indication of the column at K. (In addition, there are some errors which Oberlin did not comment upon. There was no striation in pit a, and an uppercase K, instead of a lowercase one, is positioned in front of the Farnese Belvedere.)

—In the print published in Oberlin 1795 (Fig. 9): the letters f, g and B are still missing and there is still no indication of the column at K. (However, the striations in pit appear, and the uppercase K in front of the Farnese Belvedere is now a lowercase k.)

⁹¹ Oberlin 1796a, 380. Not all of Oberlin's suggestions for alterations were made. He was critical of the way the interior structure of the churches at V and X was rendered and he noted that even though he had informed him, the printmaker never made these changes.

—In the print published in Fredenheim 1808 (but of the speech of 1795) (*Fig. 4*): the letters f, g and B appear. There is still no indication of the column at K.⁹²

—In the print published in Oberlin 1796b (*Fig. 10*): there are no mistakes as per Oberlin's concerns.

All versions of the site plan are based on the map of 1748 by Giambattista Nolli (1701–1756) (*Fig. 11*), with some variations to underscore what was important about the excavation. These include the footprint of a reconstructed Temple of Castor and Pollux (*Fig. 4:F*) using the convention whereby those structural elements which currently existed were represented with filled lines—in this case, the three columns—and those which were no longer standing, in outline only. As noted above, they also include footprints of former excavations in the Roman Forum (*Fig. 4:b–i, k*).⁹³ Lastly, the plans were sprinkled with letters: capital letters for built structures and lowercase letters for the pits. None of the plans, however, incorporates a key into the image. It is appended to Oberlin's essay (*Appendix 1*), but is missing completely from Fredenheim's.

The superior quality of the drawing (*Fig. 8*) over that of all versions of the engraving suggests that it was made in Rome either by Piranesi or someone in his atelier, most likely Benedetto Mori, who was known as a skilled architectural draftsman. But the mistakes imply that the task was hurried, perhaps undertaken quickly before Fredenheim left Rome. The unnamed engraver hired to reproduce the site plan ultimately fixed most of the mistakes in the drawing, as per Oberlin's instructions, but his manner of copying the original drawing was uninformed and unsophisticated. The engraver did not seem to understand all the subtleties of the drawing's mapping conventions. For example, he misunderstood the subtlety of the shadowed outlines in the original and represented them as thick outlines. This is seen in his version of the plan of the religious complex of Santa Maria della Consolazione where the structural elements seem nonsensical or incomprehensible (*Figs 4, 9 and 10:OO*). In addition, some of the small churches which were embedded in the contemporary architecture, such as Santa Maria delle Grazie, are awkwardly translated in the print, where they seem shrunken and misshaped (*Figs 4, 9 and 10:O*).

⁹² In this print, the engraver changed how some of the walls of the Baths of Maxentius and Constantine were rendered. They were filled in as a solid thick black, a convention that indicates these are extant walls (which they were not). He also made some changes to the interior structural elements of the churches at V and X, but not in the manner which Oberlin had specified.

⁹³ To render the pits, the avenue of trees fronting the temples on the northern edge, along the Sacra Via, represented in Nolli's map, was eliminated.

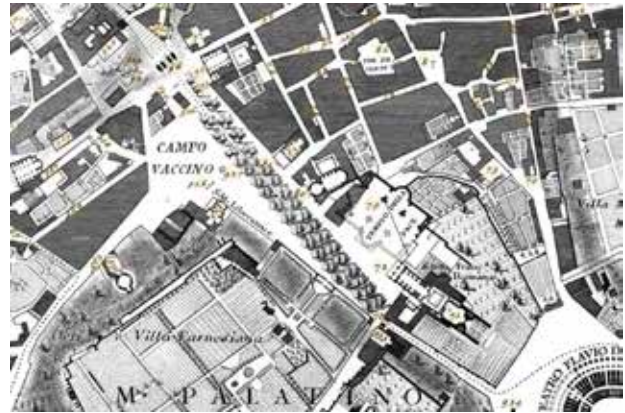


Fig. 11. Giambattista Nolli (1701–1756). Detail of Roman Forum, from Pianta Grande di Roma, 1748. Engraving. University of Oregon, Eugene.

The drawing and the prints of the site plan were not the only illustrations made for the project that were wanting in some way. Some of the engraved prints or plates which Fredenheim carried from Rome were also in need of some refinement. As we have noted, *Fig. 5* lacked a key to help make sense of the different parts of the excavation pit. And the rich background against which two of the major artifacts are placed in *Fig. 7*, probably created using an aquatint process which gave the appearance of wash, was not well considered, being too dark to fully showcase the artifacts.⁹⁴ It is an effect which a skilled printmaker could remedy easily.

No doubt the rarity of these published essays delayed the impact of Fredenheim's work on that of subsequent scholars. But its consequences were also hindered because the print of the site plan, which was slightly oversized, was pasted as an insertion rather than bound into the pages of the publications, and thus was sometimes separated from the essay. Carlo Fea (1753–1836), the early 19th-century archaeologist interested in teasing out the typography of the ancient Forum, stated he did not have access to the fold-out plan, even as he referenced the contents of the essay.⁹⁵ The three other prints remained virtually unknown through the 19th century, as they were appended to the very rare copies of the *Vitterhetskademien's Handlingar*.

In 1910, Carl N.D. Bildt (1850–1931), historian and long-time Swedish diplomat in Rome, published an account of Fredenheim's excavation. Bildt's motivation was timely: he wished to bring the achievements of his countryman to the attention of the archaeological world just as sensational discoveries in the Roman Forum in the same area, made under

⁹⁴ Piranesi used such a technique in his other works; for example, see Piranesi 1778.

⁹⁵ Ridley 1989, 81 n. 27; 2000a, 193.



Fig. 12. John Hakewill (1778–1843). *The Roman Forum*, after drawing by J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851), 1816–1817, in J. Hakewill, *Picturesque tour of Italy*, London, 1820. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

the direction of Giacomo Boni, threatened to conclusively overshadow Fredenheim's achievements.⁹⁶ His narrative of the excavation is the first to make use of additional information in the travel journal, some of which neither Fredenheim nor Oberlin had woven into their essays. Most importantly for this article, he was the first to make use of all four prints. However, he, too, did not reproduce them. The site plan is missing, even as he, like Oberlin, provided an index. The print of the excavation pit's plan and section, however, is reproduced for the first time since the *Handlingar* of 1808, and Bildt refers to it often in his narrative. This was important, because it is the image that best reflects Fredenheim's scientific methods of excavation. Bildt also reproduces the column capital, i.e., the top half of one of the artifact prints (*Fig. 7:V*) but provides a line drawing of the bottom half featuring the stucco ceiling (*Fig. 7:VI*) because he believed the print, with its darkened background, could not be reproduced well. The bottom half of the inscription block (*Fig. 6:IV*) is also presented as a line drawing. This current article, then, is the first to print all the

⁹⁶ Bildt 1901, 3. Since 1899, Boni had been excavating in the Comitium, to the north-east of the Basilica Julia, and discovered, among other things, the Lapis Niger at the base of the Arch of Septimius Severus. These events dramatically altered ways of thinking about the Roman Forum. See Fortini 2021, 46–51.

illustrations together since their appearance in the Vitterhetssakademien's publication of 1808.

Conclusion

In the conception, execution, and documentation of his archaeological project in the Roman Forum, Fredenheim showed great innovation. Francesco Piranesi was his accomplice and visual translator.

Pondering the limits of the Forum, as Fredenheim had, was not something many had in mind in 1788. Even after his excavation, the site remained largely untouched for years (*Fig. 12*). Only in the 1820s was the question of what occupied that area of the Forum considered with some gravity by Rome's most serious topographers—Carlo Fea, Antonio Nibby (1792–1839), Stefano Piale (1754–1835),⁹⁷ among others. These men looked to the site with the classical sources at hand and with the Basilica Julia in mind.⁹⁸ Even then, it was nearly a decade after Fredenheim's project that the Basilica Julia, in its

⁹⁷ Ridley 2000a; 2000b; Ruggeri 2013.

⁹⁸ Even the French excavators in the Forum, from 1809–1814, were less concerned with teasing out new information to understand the topography of their ancient space, and more to clear out the amassed debris to establish an archaeological showpiece; Ridley 1992a, 137–148.



Fig. 13. Paul Bigot (1870–1942). *The Roman Forum*. c. 1900. Black and white photograph. Université de Caen Normandie.

Republican form, was uncovered (Fig. 13). Fredenheim's absorbing curiosity, fueled by Piranesi's knowledge of all things archaeological in Rome, brought the question to the Swede's mind: What lay in that seemingly bare and flat spot of land in the south-west corner of the Forum?

The science of recording the archaeological process was not standard practice in Rome in the last decades of the 18th century. Yet Fredenheim did record his excavation, both in word and in image, perhaps imitating the work he witnessed in Pompeii. No doubt, he consulted the expertise of Piranesi and his associates who knew a thing or two about targeted digging and making drawings of archaeological sites. As a result, he left behind information for successors to aid in verifying that the space in the Roman Forum he probed was occupied by the Basilica Julia, even if they did not use it in a thorough or timely manner.

I have argued that the illustrations, and especially the two orthogonal images—the site plan, and the plan and section of the pit—made visual the activities of digging and discovery. The creator of the images, most likely either Piranesi or Benedetto Mori, employed some conventions not as yet standard in archaeological imagery. The images are extraordinary in that they convey something for which there was no set precedent, i.e., what the diggers were experiencing on site, how they dug and where they found artifacts. The artist translated that

experience into a visual form, making the science of archaeology apparent.

The long delay and insufficient distribution of the illustrated publication of Fredenheim's work compromised the impact of the innovations of Fredenheim and his illustrator. This article has demonstrated that it had much to do with the personal circumstances of the three major characters involved, each struggling within their own different political and cultural environments. The illustrations, reflective as they were of innovative methodologies of excavation, did not have any immediate resonance on 19th-century archaeologists, and have not been incorporated into the history of archaeological illustration. Once overlooked, but now published in an open-access format, the images take a much deserved place there.

SUSAN M. DIXON
 La Salle University
 1900 West Olney Avenue
 Philadelphia, PA 19141, USA
 dixons@lasalle.edu

Appendix I. Key for Fig. 4, from Oberlin 1796b, 23–24; [] indicates current status of structures in the Forum Romanum

Letter	Description
A	<i>Jardins et Villa Farnèse, sur le mont Palatin</i> [partially destroyed]
B	<i>Murs contigue à la salle de Domitien</i>
C	<i>Murs élevés au bas du mont Palatin, pour soutenir la partie du palais, bâtie par Caligula</i>
D	<i>Église de S. Théodore, près de laquelle étoit situé le temple d'Auguste</i> [perhaps Temple of Sospita]
E	<i>Avances de la demeure des Vestales</i>
F	<i>Les trois colonnes, qu'on croit avoir appartenue au temple de Jupiter Stator</i> [Temple of Castor and Pollux], <i>mais que Nardini prétend avoir fait partie du portique du Comitium</i>
G	<i>Église de S. Maria Liberatrice</i> [destroyed]
H	<i>Fontaine avec un bassin de granit, placée à peu-près au milieu du Campo Vaccino</i> [destroyed]
I	<i>Bâtimens modernes, qui occupant la place de ancien forum Romanum</i> [destroyed]
K	<i>Colonne de marbre canelé</i> [Column of Phocas], <i>qui paroît avoir appartenu à quelque portique dudit forum</i>
L	<i>Bâtimens modernes sur le mont Capitolin</i>
M	<i>Palais du Sénateur de Rome au Capitole, bâti sur les ruines de l'ancien Tabularium, ou archives</i>
N	<i>Ruines du temple de la Concorde</i> [Temple of Saturn] <i>sur le penchant du mons Capitolin</i>
O	<i>Église de la Santa Maria delle Grazie</i> [not extant]
OO	<i>Église de la Consolation</i>
P	<i>Trois colonnes du temple de Jupiter Tonnant</i> [Temple of Vespasian and Titus]
PP	<i>Arc de Septime-Sévère</i>
Q	<i>Église de S. Joseph des menuisiers (S. Giuseppe de' Falegnami), batie sur les ruines du Carcer Mamertinus ou Tullianus</i>
R	<i>Église des SS. Martine et Luc, académie des peintres</i>
S	<i>Avances du forum d'Auguste</i>
T	<i>Église de S. Adrien, bâtie sur les ruines de l'Aerarium</i> [Curia]
V	<i>Église de S. Laurent in Miranda, jadis le temple d'Antonin et de Faustine</i>
X	<i>Église des SS. Côme et Damien, autrefois le temple de Romulus et Remus</i> [Temple of Romulus]
Y	<i>Bâtimens, qui occupant l'ancien forum de Jules César</i>
Z	<i>Temple de la Paix</i> [Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine]
AA	<i>Arc de Tite</i>
BB	<i>Église de S. Francesca Romana</i>
a	<i>Place, où s'est faite la fouille de M. de Frédenheim, laquelle appartenoit au forum Romanum</i>
b	<i>Fouille fait en 1773, dans l'intérieur du temple prétende de Jupiter Stator</i> [Temple of Castor and Pollux], <i>ou s'est trouvé, à 14 palmes au dessous du sol actuel, un pavé pris pour celui dudit temple</i>
c	<i>Fouille fait en 1773, près de Santa Maria Liberatrice</i> [destroyed], <i>où l'on a trouvé des murs à 40 palmes au-dessous du sol de Rome</i>
d	<i>Fouille faite en 1576. On y parvint jusqu'au sol du temple de la Paix</i> [Basilica of Maxentius and Constantine], <i>avec une avance de murs, large de 8 palmes, haute de 5, à côté de laquelle pessoit une rue, peut-être la via sacra, à 14 palmes au-dessous du sol, sur lequel posent des degrés de la façade de la Francesca Romana</i>
e	<i>Fouille faite en 1567, près de la douane, qui produisit [sic] une colonne de granit</i>
f	<i>Fouille faite en 1568, pres l'arc de Septime-Sévère et de l'église de S. Luc, où furent découverts, à la profondeur de 50 palmes, des fragmens de colonnes de couleur violette, de granit de la Brescia</i>
g	<i>Fouille fait en 1730. On y découvrit un passage pour entrer au mont Palatin</i>
h	<i>Fouille fait en 1763, d'où l'on tira quantité de pièces de marbre mélangé et blanc, semblable à ceux de la fouille du chevalier de Frédenheim : mais on n'y trouva point le sol don't on a parlé, ce qui prouve, que l'on y avoit déjà creusé précédemment</i>
i	<i>Fouille fait en 1778, où se trouva une colonne de granit du diamètre de 6 palmes et demi</i>
k	<i>Fouille fait en 1779, où l'on trouva, sous le sol de Rome, un chemin ou une rue, qui conduisoit à l'arc de Titus</i>

Bibliography

- Allroggen-Bedel, A. 1983. 'Piranesi e l'archeologia nel reame di Napoli', in *Piranesi e la cultura antiquaria: gli antecedenti e il contesto*, ed. A. Lo Bianco, Rome, 281–291.
- Barton, H.A. 1986. *Scandinavia in the Revolutionary era, 1760–1815*, Minneapolis.
- Beretta, M. 2000. 'At the source of western science: the organization of experimentalism at the Accademia del Cimento (1657–1667)', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London* 54:2, 131–154. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsnr.2000.0104>
- Bevilacqua, M. 2006. 'The young Piranesi: the itineraries of his formation', in *The serpent and the stylus: essays on G.B. Piranesi*, eds M. Bevilacqua, H.H. Minor & F. Barry, Ann Arbor, 13–53.
- Bignamini, I. & C. Hornsby 2010. *Digging and dealing in eighteenth-century Rome* vol. 1, New Haven & London.
- Bildt, C.N.D. 1901. 'Die Ausgrabungen C.F. v. Fredenheims auf dem Forum Romanum (1788–1789)', *RM* 16, 3–20.
- Calcani, G. 2005. 'Ennio Quirino Visconti tra antiquaria e archeologia', in *Antonio Canova: la cultura figurative e letteraria dei grandi centri italiani* vol. 1. *Venezia e Roma*, Bassano del Grappa, 103–113.
- Corbo, A.M. 1981. 'Gli Scavi nello stato pontificio nella seconda metà del secolo XVIII', *Archeologia medioevale* 2, 89–103.
- De Caro, S. 2015. 'Visitare Pompei: i progressi degli scavi e il turismo nella seconda età borbonica', in *Pompei e l'Europa, 1748–1943*, eds L. Gallo, M. Osanna & M.T. Caracciolo, Milan, 96–106.
- de Maio, S. 1996. 'Ferdinando I di Borbone re delle due Sicilie', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* vol. 46, ed. Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, Rome. [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ferdinando-i-di-borbone-re-delle-due-sicilie_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ferdinando-i-di-borbone-re-delle-due-sicilie_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)
- Dixon, S.M. 1991. *The image and historical knowledge in mid-18th-century Italy: a cultural context for Piranesi's archeological publications*, Ph.D thesis, Cornell University.
- Emerson, R. 1990. 'The organization of science and its pursuit in early modern Europe', in *Companion to the history of modern science*, ed. R.C. Olbey, London, 960–979. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003070818-71>
- Fortini, P. 2020. 'From pen to pixel: studies at the Roman Forum', in *From pen to pixel: studies of the Roman Forum and the digital future of world heritage*, eds P. Fortini & K. Krusche, Rome, 103–147.
- Fortini, P. 2021. 'Gli scavi al Foro Romano e il Museo', in *Giacomo Boni: l'alba della modernità*, eds A. Russo, R. Alteri & A. Parabeni, Milan, 46–59.
- Fredenheim, C.F. 1808. 'Tal hållet vid inträdet i Kongl. Vitterhets, Historie, och Antiquitets Akademien, d. 15 Dec. 1795', *Kongl. Vitterhets, Historie och Antiquitets Akademiens Handlingar* 8, 376–386.
- Gorski, G.J. & J.E. Packer 2015. *The Roman Forum: a reconstruction and architectural guide*, Cambridge. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511894640>
- Griggs, T. 2009. 'The local antiquary', in *The rebirth of antiquity: numismatics, archaeology and classical studies of the culture of the Renaissance*, eds G. Oberfranc & A. Stahl, Princeton, 280–314.
- Hansson, U.R. 2025. 'Bovillae rediscovered and removed: antiquarians and treasure hunters south of Rome in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', in *Ancient Bovillae: history, art, and archaeology of a lost city in the Roman hinterland*, ed. P. Hatlie, Ann Arbor, 287–323.
- Heilbron, J.L. 2022. *The incomparable monsignore: Francesco Bianchini's world of science, history and court intrigue*, Oxford.
- Johansson, C. 1966. 'Carl Fredric Fredenheim and his collection of eighteenth-century music', *Fontes Artis Musicae* 13:1, 46–49.
- Kockel, V. 2000. 'Archäologie und Politik: Francesco Piranesi und seine drei Pompeji-Pläne', *Rivista di studi Pompeiani* 11, 33–47.
- Lacour, P.-Y. 2012. 'Encyclopédisme et distribution des savois. Le cas du Magasin encyclopédique, 1795–1816', *La Révolution française* 2, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.4000/lrf.588>
- Laine, T. 2010. *Carl Fredrik Fredenheim—en nyhumanist och hans klassiska bibliotek*, Helsingfors.
- Leander Touati, A.-M. 1998. *Ancient sculptures in the Royal Museum* vol. 1 (ActaRom-4° 55), Stockholm.
- Livet, G. 1996a. *L'Université de Strasbourg de la Révolution française à la guerre de 1870*, Strasbourg.

- Livet, G. 1996b. 'Oberlin, Jérémie Jacques', *Fédération des Sociétés d'Histoire & d'Archéologie d'Alsace*. <https://www.alsace-histoire.org/netdba/oberlin-jeremie-jacques/>
- Lumetti, R.C. 1990. *La cultura dei lumi tra Italia e Svezia: il ruolo di Francesco Piranesi*, Rome.
- Lumetti, R.C. ed. 1991. *Lettera di Francesco Piranesi al Signor Generale D. Giovanni Acton*, Palermo.
- Lundström, E. 1914. 'C.F. Fredenheims dagboksanteckningar om gräfnigen på Forum Romanum', *Eranos. Acta Philologica Suecana* 14, 130–141.
- Minor, H.H. & J.A. Pinto 2016. "Marcher sur les traces de son père": the Piranesi enterprise between Rome and Paris', in *Giovanni Battista Piranesi: predecessor, contemporanei e successor: studi in onore di John Wilton-Ely*, ed. F. Nevola, Rome, 263–278.
- Montirolì, G. 1859. *Osservazione sulla topografia del Foro Romano*, Rome.
- Oberlin, J.J. 1795. 'Découverte faite au forum Romanum par M. le chevalier de Fredenheim, Suédois, au mois de janvier 1789', *Magasin encyclopédique* 1:6, 344–362.
- Oberlin, J.J. 1796a. 'Forum Romanum: J.J. Oberlin à A.L. Millin', *Magasin encyclopédique* 2:1, 379–380.
- Oberlin, J.J. 1796b. *Exposé d'une découverte de M. le Chevalier de Frédenheim, Suédois, faite au Forum Romanum, en janvier 1789*, Strasbourg.
- Olausson, M. 1998. 'The Museum', in *Ancient sculptures in the Royal Museum* vol. 1 (ActaRom-4° 55), A.-M. Leander Touati, Stockholm, 61–78.
- Olausson, M. & S. Söderlind 2004. 'The genesis and early development of the Royal Museum in Stockholm: a claim for authenticity and legitimacy', in *Grasping the world: the idea of the museum*, eds D. Preziosi & C. Farago, Aldershot & Burlington, 572–600. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429399671-36>
- Pagano, M. 1997. *I diari di scavo di Pompeii, Ercolano e Stabiae di Francesco e Pietro la Vega (1764–1810)*, Rome.
- Panza, P. 2022. *Nel nome del padre: le molte vite di Francesco Piranesi*, Venice.
- Parslow, C.C. 1998. *Rediscovering antiquity: Karl Weber and the excavation of Herculaneum, Pompeii and Stabiae*, Cambridge, New York & Melbourne.
- Pietrangeli, C. 1985. *I musei Vaticani: cinque secoli di storia*, Rome.
- Pinto, J.A. 2012. *Speaking ruins: Piranesi, architects and antiquity in eighteenth-century Rome*, Ann Arbor.
- Piranesi, F. 1778. *Différentes vues de quelques restes de trois grands édifices : qui subsistent encore dans le milieu de l'ancienne ville de Pesto*, Rome.
- Piranesi, F. 1785. *Monumenti degli Scipioni*, Rome.
- Polignac, F. 1998. 'Fouilles et découvertes, collections et documentation : le tournant de la decennia 1720–1730', in *La fascination de l'Antique : Rome découverte, Rome inventée*, eds F. Polignac & J. Raspi Serra, Lyon, 26–29.
- Pucci, G. 1979. 'L'antiquaria e il suo doppio: a proposito di Francesco Piranesi', *Prospettiva* 16, 67–73.
- Resedagbok = Resedagbok*, or Travel diary, Carl Fredrik Fredenheim, Enskilda arkiv, Nationalmuseum Arkiv, Stockholm.
- Ridley, R.T. 1989. 'The monuments of the Roman Forum: the struggle for identity', *Xenia* 17, 71–90.
- Ridley, R.T. 1992a. *The eagle and the spade: the archaeology of Rome during the Napoleonic era, 1809–1814*, Cambridge.
- Ridley, R.T. 1992b. 'To protect the monuments: the Papal antiquarian (1534–1870)', *Xenia Antiqua* 1, 117–154.
- Ridley, R.T. 2000a. *The pope's archaeologist: the life and times of Carlo Fea*, Rome.
- Ridley, R.T. 2000b. 'The forgotten topographer, Stefano Piale', *Xenia Antiqua* 9, 179–200.
- Ridley, R.T. 2017. *The prince of antiquarians Francesco Ficoroni*, Rome.
- Ruggeri, A. 2013. 'Antonio Nibby', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* vol. 78, ed. Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, Rome. <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-nibby/>
- Stiernstedt, L.-J. 2004. *Vår man i Rom*, Stockholm.
- Vogler, B. 1994. *Histoire culturelle de l'Alsace : du moyen âge à nos jours, les très riches heures d'une région frontrière*, Strasbourg.
- Watkin, D. 2009. *The Roman Forum*, Cambridge, Massachusetts. <https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674063679>