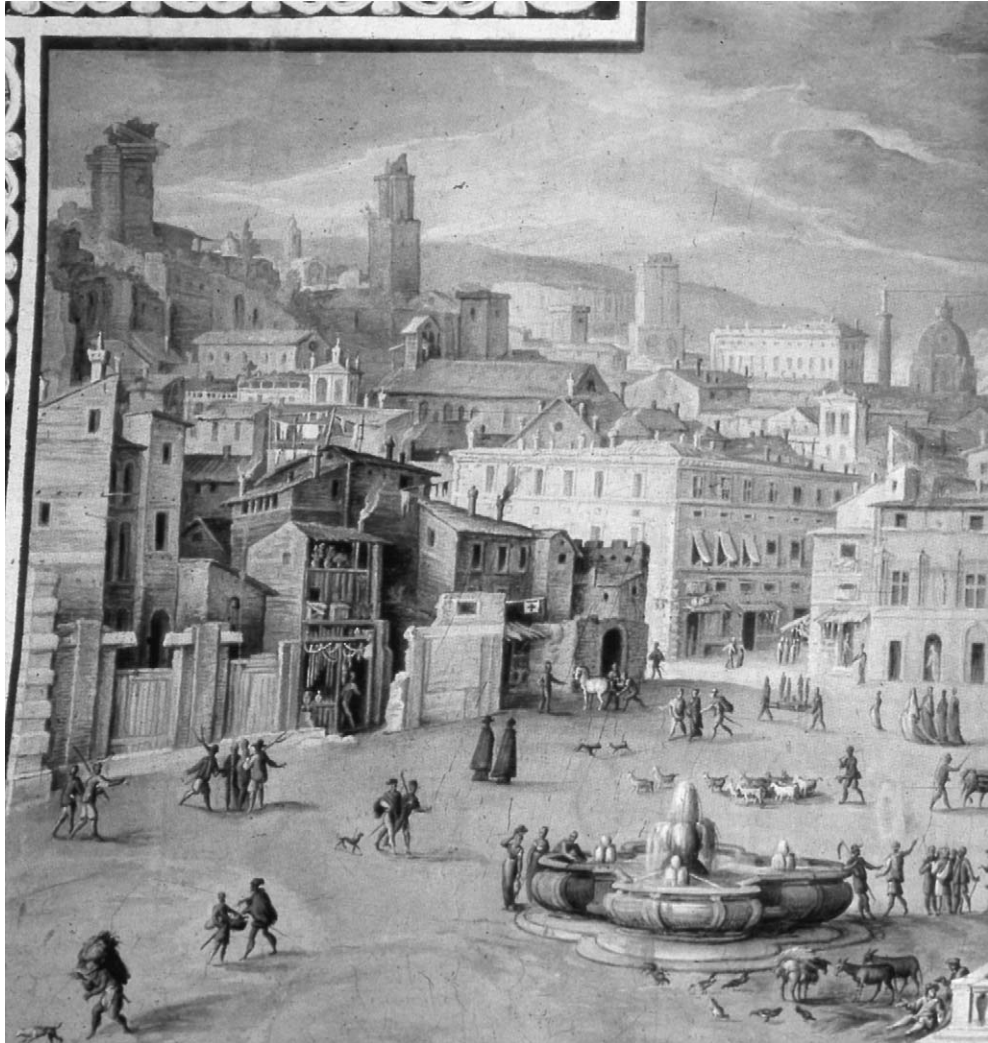


8.3  
**Piazza Colonna, Rome,**  
at the time of Pope Sixtus  
V, 16th century (detail)

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as buildings. In the etching of the Forum Romanum there is what looks like a hay wagon drawn by oxen and some fenced in livestock being inspected by several men. Similarly a 16th century painting of the Piazza Colonna in Rome at the time Sixtus V who was pope from 1585 to 1590 – includes among those using the piazza a goatherd and his flock, several horsemen, a smith

shoeing a horse, several donkeys carrying loads and a group of men with pitchforks. Ambrogio Lorenzetti painting a fresco of the 'Allegory of Good Government' in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena in 1338 has a flock of sheep being herded within the town walls. Five hundred years later a view of the Round Tower and the Church of the Trinity in the centre of Copenhagen in 1840 has a large farm wagon piled high with hay blocking out part of the church. The animals being herded through the town would, moreover, feed on any vegetation so that a tree-lined avenue was a highly unlikely occurrence.

For centuries and over large parts of Europe the city was an urban farmyard. This lasted well into the 19th century and even then streets were hazardous with horse dung and mud. It was in such a setting that the buildings we now see against smooth roadways and pavements were originally viewed. Our standard notion of urbanity is a 20th century invention.

So is our mental picture of interiors. We assume, for instance, that furniture in a room would be disposed within the space. During much of the 18th century in England, chairs, sideboards and candle stands were ranged against the wall and only brought forward when required. The centre of the room was, in a sense, a void. The greatest difference was, however, at night. Many paintings show how very small pools of light existed and how anyone reading or doing needlework sat extremely close to the candles or oil lamps. Only the table was illuminated; the rest of the space was dark. To lessen the sense of gloom, mirrors, polished metal plates on sconces, gilding and cut glass chandeliers, where these existed, were introduced to sparkle and reflect. Candles were expensive and prone to smoke – as well as always a fire hazard – so were not used in profusion except by the wealthy on special occasions. The open fire provided some light as well as flicker.

Although there had been a number of improvements to oil lamps – especially to the French Argand lamp with its glass funnel – it was the advent of illumination by gas which very