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THE CITY FLOOR

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INTRODUCTION

The Campidoglio by Michelangelo has a magnificent patterned pavement of cut travertine in a setting of small basaltic blocks. An expanding pattern of stars emanates from the base of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. As the pattern flows outwards the star shapes interweave and ebb away like ripples on an oval pool finally dissipating on three raised steps which form the sunken depression within the trapezium formed by Michelangelo's three great façades (Figure 5.1). Walking the Campidoglio is a wonderful experience (Figure 5.2). The squares associated with St Mark's in Venice combine to form an equally stimulating visual treat for the pedestrian. Important to that visual and tactile experience is the intricate knot-like pattern of the pavement made from white travertine and black basalt (Figures 5.3 and 5.4). The pavements in the Campidoglio and at St Mark's, while quite different in form and pattern, have two qualities in common. Both patterns function as elements which unify space and give it scale. The pattern in the Piazza San Marco directs the eye towards the Basilica. The Basilica is further emphasized by the diverging lines of the square whose false perspective gives an added dominance

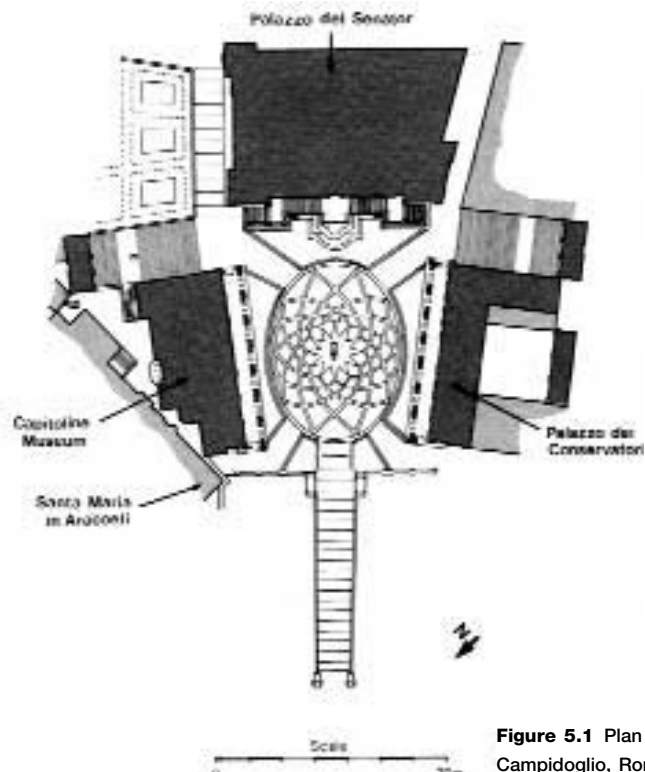


Figure 5.1 Plan of the Campidoglio, Rome