

## **Drawing the City – Writing the City: The Analogue as a Linguistic Form**

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### **Abstract**

This article, and the accompanying montages, approaches the theme of *drawing on text* through Aldo Rossi's linguistic concept of the analogical city. I argue the analogue is a linguistic form that assimilates architecture's history, transforms its language and develops the material into singular forms for combination and recombination, substitution and displacement, structured by formal syntax and association. The aim is to test the possibility of Rossi's analogical city as a critical project to reassert the city as an architectural discourse and to develop the analogue as a theoretical and methodological device. The argument is developed through a suite of montages and by constructing a genealogy of the analogical city. The montages speculate about textual processes (seriality, syntax, association, substitution, displacement, combination, recombination) using visual means. They visualise an analogical chain of association between elements of the theory and projects of the city of Piranesi, Le Corbusier and Aldo Rossi. The argument is staged in three sections to put forward a genealogy. The first section situates Rossi's concept of the analogical city and links the formal syntax of Rossi's collage project, the *Analogical City: Panel*, with Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Campo Marzio*. The second section connects the analytical view with which Le Corbusier and Piranesi study Rome in their respective projects, 'The Lesson of Rome' and the 'Views of Rome,' to elucidate linguistic operations including identification, abstraction, distillation and transformation. The last section puts forward the *Ville Contemporaine* as an Analogical City by close-reading the Piranesian and classical elements of Le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine* plan. The conclusion is subtitled 'The Linguistic Form of the City' and I end with the need to reassert a linguistic approach to architecture and the city with its attendant critical, representational and collective ethos against current instrumental and individualistic discourse.

## **Keywords**

Architecture

City

Aldo Rossi

Le Corbusier

Piranesi

Montage

Representation

Language

## Introduction

‘The obsession for symbols that lies deep inside me is like a yearning for a language limited to only a few words.’

Le Corbusier (Charles-Edouard Jeanneret), *Journey to the East*, 1966.

‘I recognize in many of my drawings, a type of drawing where the line is no longer a line, but writing.’

Aldo Rossi, *A Scientific Autobiography*, 1981.

When Aldo Rossi developed the concept of the analogical city in the 1960s and 1970s it was by means of an intense engagement of drawing and writing that condensed into one another, ‘where the line is no longer a line, but writing’ (Rossi 1981: 44), and where the city itself became an ‘historical text’ (1982: 128). Rossi argued the city is an historical text made readable by means of its permanent architectural types, their formal associations and syntactical relationships. At the centre of Rossi’s argument was the linguistic concept of the analogical city. With the analogical city, Rossi put forward the city modelled on language as a way to unite architecture and the city, the conscious and the unconscious, individual authorship and the collective imagination. Contrary to most critics of Rossi’s analogical city, such as Micha Bandini (1981), Vincent Scully (1981) and to an extent Michael Hays (2010), who have tended to portray the analogical city as nostalgic and autobiographical, I argue that the analogue always refers beyond itself toward a collective and critical project of the city.

The aim of this article will be to test the possibility of Rossi’s analogical city as a critical project to reassert the city as an architectural discourse and to develop the analogue as a

theoretical and methodological device. I propose the term *linguistic form* to frame the discussion. I construct a genealogy of the analogical city that connects Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* with Le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine* and Rossi's Analogical City: Panel. While it is common to link Le Corbusier's project as an analogue of Paris, as Stanislaus von Moos has commented, 'the *Ville Contemporaine* depends on Paris' (Von Moos 2009: 179), I will instead close-read Le Corbusier with Piranesi. In the work of Piranesi, Le Corbusier and Rossi, drawing is a critical method to assimilate architectural elements of the city, its history and language, which become the generative material and singular grammar for a critical project. In each of these architects' projects there is a strong dialogue between drawing and writing the city, and an emphasis on visual-based argument toward a critical interpretation of the city. A crucial component of this article is to develop the visual argument with a suite of montages by the author. The montages speculate about textual processes (including: seriality, syntax, association, substitution, displacement, combination, recombination) using visual means. They visualise an analogical chain of association between elements of the theory and projects of the city of Piranesi, Le Corbusier and Rossi. There is a dialogue between the images and the development of critical categories including: analogue, linguistic form, association, syntax, analogical gaze, and singularity. The categories and the montages circumstantiate a reading of the analogical city as a linguistic form and its genealogy.

While the focus is a close-reading of the *Ville Contemporaine*, the argument is organised in three sections. The first section, entitled 'Writing the City: Analogue, Association, Syntax. Canaletto, Rossi, Piranesi,' situates Rossi's concept of the analogical city as a linguistic and visual model of thought and links the formal syntax of Rossi's collage project of the Analogical City: Panel with Piranesi's *Campo Marzio Ichnographia*. The second section, called 'Drawing the City: Singularity, Analogical Gaze, Urban Grammar. Le Corbusier and Piranesi' links the analytical view with which Le Corbusier and Piranesi study Rome in their respective projects, 'The Lesson of Rome' in *Toward an Architecture* and the 'Views of Rome,' by

Piranesi, to elucidate linguistic operations including identification, abstraction, distillation and transformation. The last section, ‘The *Ville Contemporaine* as an Analogical City’ puts forward a close-reading of the Piranesian and classical elements of Le Corbusier’s *Ville Contemporaine* plan. The conclusion is subtitled ‘The Linguistic Form of the City’ and I end with the need to reassert a linguistic approach to architecture and the city with its attendant critical, representational and collective ethos against current instrumental and individualistic discourse.

### **Writing the City: Analogue, Association, Syntax. Canaletto, Rossi, Piranesi**

One of Rossi’s early readings of the analogical city is in his 1969 preface to the second Italian edition of *The Architecture of the City* (Rossi 1982b). Rossi illustrates his text with a *capriccio* painting by Giovanni Antonio Canaletto, in which Canaletto transposes buildings by Palladio from Vicenza to the site of the Rialto Bridge in Venice, then paints the scene as if it were an existing situation. In Rossi’s preface he comments on the possibility of analogy as a ‘logical-formal operation’ and that Canaletto’s painting constitutes an ‘analogous Venice formed of specific elements associated with the history of both architecture and the city’ (Rossi 1982b: 166). Rossi goes on to say that the ‘transposition’ of buildings within the painting constitutes ‘a place of purely architectural references’ (Rossi 1982b: 166). The keywords here are: logical, formal, element, and associative. They constitute the set of terms to write the analogical city. By *logical* Rossi puts forward the analogical city based on identifiable principles; he affirms a *formal* operation; and implies the relational process of *association* to connect different *elements* from different cities.

In the Canaletto painting textual ideas are condensed. On one hand Canaletto’s logic of association can be read at the scale of the city where we look at a scene recognisably Venice with Palladio’s design for the Rialto Bridge at the centre of the view. Simultaneously there is an association with the Vicenza of Palladio because the buildings that frame the view are built in

Vicenza and not Venice. There is a question of what city do we look at, or, on what ‘ground’ are we to read the scene? How are the monuments liberated from their ground? What is displaced or replaced? Does the watery base refer to the Rialto in Venice, the “island” position of Palazzo Chiericati in Vicenza, or the fluid state of Canaletto’s imagination? These questions remain open and undecidable. On the other hand there is an associative logic at the scale of the singularity of architectural form. Canaletto selects only buildings by Palladio with their language of classical order and appearance of harmony. The associative chain that links Canaletto’s selection of Palladio’s buildings and their transposition to the Venice situation is a linguistic process of identification, displacement and substitution, as Lorens Holm argues in ‘Aldo Rossi and the Field of the Other’ (Holm 2016). Canaletto substitutes the Palazzo Chiericati (1550) for the Palazzo dei Tedeschi (1228). He displaces the Vicenza Basilica (1536) for the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi (1488). Canaletto replaces Antonio da Ponte’s Rialto Bridge (1591) for Palladio’s bridge design. A formal operation of substitution and replacement of singular architectural forms is staged: the existing Rialto Bridge is replaced by a bridge by Palladio and one palazzo is substituted for another. If there is a coherent logic to these substitutions – bridge for bridge, palazzo for palazzo – the insertion of the Basilica is less straightforward because it does not seem to replace an existing Basilica, but another palazzo (However the Vicenza Basilica was originally a thirteenth-century palazzo della ragione). Limiting the architecture to Palladio, Canaletto writes the city with a singular coherent urban grammar.

The formal operations represented in Canaletto’s painting are developed in Rossi’s drawings and collages in which singular elements are repeated, duplicated and displaced from one drawing to the next, from one project to the next and are in dialogue with Rossi’s own projects and the history of the city. A tower is substituted for a coffee pot. The Statue of San Carlone replaces the tower. The surface of the city is replaced by the surface of a table top. The square windows of San Rocco (1966) are repeated at Gallarate (1973) and Modena Cemetery

(1975). They can be substituted for cross-framed windows of a farm house or a Milanese tenement. The analogical city built on language is a language that coheres through the analogic of formal and syntactic association and linguistic operations of displacement, substitution, combination and recombination.

The project in which the analogical principles of formal association and syntax become most intense is Rossi's *Analogical City: Panel* (Rossi 1976). (Figure 1) The collage project, developed in collaboration with Eraldo Consolascio, Bruno Reichlin and Fabio Reinhart for the 1976 Venice Biennale, is a model of associative thinking on the collective knowledge of architecture and puts forward a connection to architecture as the sum of all authors and projects, from the Greek City, ancient Knossos, to Palladio and *Ideal Cities*, Piranesi and Le Corbusier, of 'every project imagined, designed or built' to quote Rossi from elsewhere (Rossi 1989).

The panel is composed within a square frame. This is an important syntactic operation. The square implies centrality and this centrality produces a formal association with the Renaissance *Ideal City*, an idea reinforced by the fragment of a centrally planned circular *Ideal City* positioned within the upper right quadrant of the panel. The square frame is duplicated within the collage as a cross-framed window on the left, which reflects the quadrants of the city. The plan of Knossos Palace is positioned inside the window and it is possible to read a reference to Alberti's city-house analogy in this strategy of scaling. Yet Rossi puts forward a critique of centrality and any linear process of scaling because the collage is also multi-centred and mixes scales. The many centres are distinguished as large scale buildings such as the gridded blocks of San Rocco, the over scaled wall of Segrate (1965) and a triangular fragment of Modena Cemetery superimposed onto the *Ideal City* plan.

In the *Analogical City* panel, Rossi develops an idea of critical discontinuity. He challenges the notion of continuity by montaging architectural projects at different scales onto the fabric, thereby rupturing the normative notion of contextual continuity. Yet this rupturing is

not without structure. There is a clear vertical axis defined by the Segrate wall that divides the panel, carefully positioned large and small forms as areas of focus, and a tension between the square frame and the circular form of the Ideal City fragment. While the square frame suggests a plan, the panel is not entirely a plan. The top half merges from a plan into an elevation of Gallarate at the midpoint of the collage. Gallarate becomes an horizontal datum and connects to a mountain terrain, behind which is a fragment of a Piranesi *Carceri*. The panel includes narrative and iconographic representations such as the Tanzio da Varallo painting, *David and Goliath* (1625), in the top right with the pointing finger, as well as geometric solids that refer to those drawn by Le Corbusier in his Lesson of Rome. The elementary forms fall from the panel in an oblique direction from centre to lower right and intensify the impression of perspective.

The critique of continuity, the multi centred composition, and the careful positioning of large figures to create axes and points of focus is similar to the formal structure of Piranesi's *Ichnographia* of the *Campo Marzio*. Both the Analogical City: Panel and the *Campo Marzio Ichnographia* counterpose the stability of a square frame and the instability of a figure-figure relationship within the frame. Piranesi's *Ichnographia* and the Analogical City share a language of intense counterpositioning of architectural forms, a combination of architectural conventions – *Campo Marzio Ichnographia* includes a plan of Rome etched onto a giant stone as if it is part of the city thereby destabilising ideas of scale, temporality and place – and both projects share a sense of historical consciousness using the history of the city as the material of their architecture: Piranesi's *Ichnographia* is a representation of the collective memory of Rome in particular, while Rossi's Analogical City represents the collective memory of the European city more broadly.

Rossi includes fragments of Piranesi's projects within the Analogical City collage. Piranesi's *Carceri*, with its critique of perspectival space is inserted into the lower half of the collage. Furthermore it is possible to substitute the large urban complexes in Piranesi's *Campo*



*Marzio* for the large urban artefacts in Rossi's Analogical City: Castel Sant'Angelo replaces Modena Cemetery, the Horti Sallustiani replaces San Rocco – a logical-formal operation: funerary complex for cemetery, courtyard complex for courtyard urban form. In the upper right hand side of the Analogical City, the top right panel of Piranesi's *Ichnographia* is used as a background and we can see Piranesi's labyrinthine Baths complex next to Tanzio da Varallo's *David*. Here Rossi substitutes the head of Goliath for a pointing finger. It recalls Rossi's repeated insertion of the Hand of San Carlone into his drawings, where the hand does not stand for a transcendental ideal but a political gesture toward the city as a locus of collective memory, inhabited by a thinking, imagining and creating Multitude.

The Analogical City panel is a demonstration of formal knowledge and a model of architecture's collective intelligence. Each form in the Analogical City refers to a chain of associations in dialogue with architecture's history, constructed through processes of formal association and syntax, of combination and recombination. This demonstration of formal knowledge coincides with the demonstration of principles in Le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine*.

### **Drawing the City: Singularity, Analogical Gaze, Urban Grammar. Le Corbusier and Piranesi**

It is possible to situate Le Corbusier's linguistic approach to the city with his so called *Journey to the East*, the *Voyage*, of 1911 (Le Corbusier 2007). His notebooks of the journey compile city drawings and writings, which appropriate singular parts of the city and urban themes to accumulate formal knowledge toward a language of architecture and the city. Le Corbusier draws Vienna, Bucharest, Rome, their skylines and objects. He draws the Parthenon and the Roman Forum. The architecture of the city is distilled into objects and elements that here we will call singularities.

In a crucial statement that helps elucidate Le Corbusier's linguistic approach he writes the following: 'The obsession for symbols that lies deep inside me is like a yearning for a language limited to only a few words: [...] the organisation of stone and timber, of volumes, of solids and voids [...] and I think that such elements, are these very words, which possess infinite meaning, do not need to be clarified, since such a word, in its complete and powerful unity, expresses them all' (Le Corbusier 2007: 176). The keywords here are: a language limited to only a few words in complete and powerful unity. Le Corbusier's architectural language is limited to the identification of singular and unified forms and elements: volumes, solids, voids, their 'organisation' or in different terms, their syntax. Le Corbusier writes: 'Beholding the Parthenon, its mass, columns, and architraves, will satisfy me as does the sea itself – and nothing else but this word' (Le Corbusier 2007: 176). The Parthenon is understood by Le Corbusier as a singular word, a linguistic form, an idea I will elaborate in relation to Le Corbusier's reading of Rome.

Le Corbusier visited Rome during his *Voyage*, drawing the city, collecting postcards and photographs of the monuments (Colomina 1994: 90). His analysis is later compiled in the chapter entitled 'The Lesson of Rome' in *Toward an Architecture*, which is illustrated with a suite of images that move from overall composition to singular object and can be read as Le Corbusier's analogical gaze toward a critical project (Le Corbusier 2008: 193-200). (Figure 2) The chapter frontispiece shows Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, a collage of singular objects in careful composition, which Piranesi later produced in an etching in 1780. Then, the Pyramid of Cestius, the Coliseum, the Arch of Constantine and the Pantheon are represented as singular objects depicted in isolation without their urban context. The serial nature of these images is similar to the seriality of language to accumulate a formal vocabulary, 'limited to a few words,' as Le Corbusier said in the statement above. Each of the monuments depicted in these images become linguistic forms in a grammar of the city and I will come back to this in a moment. Concluding the chapter is Le Corbusier's study of Pirro Ligorio's *Antiquae Urbis Imago* (1551) juxtaposed

with Le Corbusier's studies of elementary solids. The solids mediate between the preceding historical objects, with their decoration, ornament and historical accretion, and the objects themselves represented in the images as distilled and unified elements, liberated from their context. In the study of Ligorio's *Urbis Imago*, architectural monuments are assembled as singular objects in the city. While in Ligorio's original drawing the monuments are assembled tightly together in a formal structure that Piranesi elaborates in his *Campo Marzio Ichnographia*, in Le Corbusier's drawing, he has traced different parts of the *Urbis Imago*, spacing out the monuments and combining alternate parts of the image.

Le Corbusier's drawing of the *Urbis Imago* can be read as an analogue of his future projects. The overall spatial arrangement is of objects in a park, which anticipates the concept of the *Ville Contemporaine*. The pyramidal and curved elements suggest the roofscape of projects such as the Assembly Building at Chandigarh (1964) or La Tourette (1960). The Castel Sant'Angelo anticipates the Mundaneum project (1929) with its stepped cubic form and labyrinthine plan. The angular returns of the piazza and belvedere can be read as the orthogonal *redents* of the *Ville Contemporaine* (1923) or the fragments of Ilot Insalubrious in Paris (1937). The cut of the Coliseum at the top left of the image reads as the curved *redents* of the Plan Obus for Algiers (1930). The curving wall that defines the River Tiber can be read as the Carpenter Centre (1963) ramp at one scale or a fragment of the sweeping inhabited highway at Algiers at another scale or the lines of infrastructure at the *Ville Contemporaine*.

When Le Corbusier studies Rome, he sees objects, the urban scale, a unity of form, a grammar of singularities to be transformed for any situation. To reinforce his argument, Le Corbusier manipulates the images (Jean-Louis Cohen shows a selection of the original postcard and Alinari photographs in his introduction to the 2008 edition of *Toward an Architecture*; as does Beatriz Colomina in *Privacy and Publicity*). Le Corbusier crops the images, deletes parts of the image, duplicates other parts, flips, adds or subtracts elements from individual photos, cutting out and rescaling fragments (Le Corbusier, perhaps more famously, does this with the

chapter that close-reads the Parthenon as syntactical “categorical elements” of step, plinth, column, entablature, pediment). The images become abstract, distilled and singular forms. Each image discards the surrounding context to put the singularity of architecture into sharpened relief. On one hand the images are contextless because the architecture is presented as an autonomous form. On the other hand the images develop their own context internal to Le Corbusier’s development of an urban grammar. They construct a project by developing a language against their context to open up the possibility of redefining context according to their own grammar of singularity.

The process of focusing on particular city parts and exaggerating their singularity corresponds with the process undertaken by Piranesi in his series of *vedute*, the ‘Views of Rome’ (Wilton-Ely 1988). In 1915 Le Corbusier visited the National Library in Paris where he traced Piranesi’s projects (von Moos and Rüegg 2002). Le Corbusier traced Piranesi’s Views of Rome, creating an inventory of monumental forms including those selected to illustrate the Lesson of Rome chapter. While Le Corbusier edits out the surrounding context to articulate architecture as an autonomous form, Piranesi exaggerates the scale of architecture toward the same ends. If we return to the monuments that Le Corbusier identifies, we can see in Piranesi’s etchings a similar process: the Coliseum fills the page, the Pyramid of Cestius dominates its setting, the Arch of Constantine is monumentalised, the Pantheon is exaggerated within its context so that the surroundings are completely removed. In this sense Piranesi’s etchings and Le Corbusier’s images in the Lesson chapter are analogous.

Le Corbusier distils his experience of Rome and the monumental forms of Ligorio and Piranesi into simple geometries and distilled forms. They become linguistic forms to be combined and recombined in different ways and in different projects to develop a grammar of the city, which is close to what Le Corbusier noted in his *Voyage* diary: ‘I would prefer geometric combinations, the square, the circle, and proportions in simple and distinctive ratios’ (Le Corbusier 2007: 177). The variety of forms drawn in Le Corbusier’s *Urbis Imago* study and

the grammar ‘learned from Rome’ is figured forth in the accumulation of singular forms and critical principles of scaling, distilling, substituting, replacing, combining and recombining staged in the *Ville Contemporaine*.

### **The *Ville Contemporaine* as an Analogical City**

The *Ville Contemporaine* is a theoretical project that puts forward principles for a ‘modern urbanism’ and develops an inventory of formal knowledge on the city (Le Corbusier 1987). It is a catalogue of singular urban elements – cruciform towers, set-back *redents*, urban blocks, z-plan factories – to be disarticulated, modified, transformed and rearticulated for other contexts. It condenses the formal principles of unity and singularity from the Lesson of Rome and the principles of hierarchy, axuality and composition from Piranesi’s *Campo Marzio*. Le Corbusier activates historical consciousness and formal knowledge by using the history of architecture as the material for his projects. The *Ville Contemporaine* becomes an analogical city that glances backward to Piranesi’s *Campo Marzio* and the history of architecture, Rome, the Classical, while simultaneously forward to Rossi’s analogical city.

The montage studies test the analogue as a critical device. (Figure 3 and 4) The montages position classical figures into Le Corbusier’s *Ville Contemporaine*. First the double square, as the ‘regulating lines’ of the temple that Le Corbusier reproduces in *Toward an Architecture*, is an analogue of the rectangular plan of the *Ville Contemporaine* with its lines of infrastructure. It is possible to read the curving edge of Michelangelo’s St Peter’s, which Le Corbusier draws in The Lesson of Rome, as the outer edge of the *Ville Contemporaine*. The *poche* of Michelangelo’s St Peters merges into the rational blocks of the city, while the nave is extruded longitudinally to spatially push the *Ville Contemporaine* central axis outward. Gabriele Mastrigli has noted that when Le Corbusier redraws Michelangelo’s plan in *Toward an Architecture*, the distilled outline without the nave is rescaled and duplicated as the Station plan

at the centre of the *Ville Contemporaine* (Mastrigli 2007). It is interesting to note the telescoping of scales as a formal strategy in Le Corbusier's projects: in a sketch for a project in Buenos Aires in 1929, Le Corbusier takes the cruciform tower of the *Ville Contemporaine* and extrudes it horizontally to construct a linear city; or at the Villa Savoye (1929) where the curving elements of the roof terrace become, at the city scale, the curving *redents* at Le Corbusier's Algiers Plan Obus (1930). This strategy is further developed in the individual cruciform towers that define the Central Station. Bramante's plan of St Peter's articulates the centralised plan as a cross, which Le Corbusier inverts void into the solid of a single cruciform tower and displaces this to the *Ville Contemporaine*. The *poche* of Bramante's interior becomes the edge that articulates each slab of the cruciform. The process reveals an associative and syntactic analogical approach that moves from a compositional strategy at the scale of the city to a formal device at the scale of the architectural object.

The strategy is also apparent in a comparison of the central section of the *Ville Contemporaine* and Piranesi's Castel Sant'Angelo complex in Piranesi's *Campo Marzio*. As Mastrigli has observed, there is a similarity between the frontispiece of the *Campo Marzio* view of the Castel Sant'Angelo and Le Corbusier's aerial view of the Central Station in the *Ville Contemporaine*. Both projects share an oblique elevated viewing position, especially noticeable when Piranesi's etching is flipped along the long axis. Le Corbusier does not reproduce the historical elements but rearticulates Piranesi's principles of composition: the axial relationship, point of view and formal syntax. These principles are present first in the way Le Corbusier replaces the paired circus elements that surround the Castel Sant'Angelo complex with paired canopies at the Central Station, which are distilled into a few simple lines. Then secondly in the principle of the axis at Castel Sant'Angelo, which in the *Ville Contemporaine* substitute for the central infrastructural spine intersecting the station. The serial process of displacement, substitution and transformation is present throughout Le Corbusier's work. We could project an associative chain in which projects are disarticulated and rearticulated from project to project

from the *Voyage* to the Lesson of Rome, which formulate the principles of Le Corbusier's urban grammar, and then are made explicit as singularities in the *Ville Contemporaine*, elements of which are disarticulated into the Plan Voisin. The cruciform tower embedded in the fabric of Plan Voisin is transformed into the linear city of the South America projects. These themes condense at Algiers.

There is more to connect Piranesi and Le Corbusier. Le Corbusier's canonical perspective drawing that looks toward the cruciform towers and along the highway recalls Piranesi's view of Piazza del Popolo. Piranesi draws the twin churches beyond the obelisk at the edge of the piazza. Le Corbusier replaces the twin churches with cruciform towers, while the obelisk is shifted to one side. A version of Carlo Rainaldi's seventeenth-century twin churches is evident as twinned circular elements at the convergence of roads to the west edge of the *Ville Contemporaine* plan. The formal syntax of twinning and pairing is a principle that underpins Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* as can be seen in the circus elements of Hadrian's Mausoleum complex, as mentioned, and the Agrippa Baths complex around the Pantheon or in the square elements of the Horti Salustiani, and in many other instances elsewhere in the plan. The graphic language of intense mark making and the flowing lines employed for the street suggest the movement that in Le Corbusier drawing is represented by the cars along the highway.

A last comparison can demonstrate the resonance between Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* and the *Ville Contemporaine*. In a study by Le Corbusier for the Plan Voisin, in which the *Ville Contemporaine* is disarticulated and rearticulated for the centre of Paris, Le Corbusier shows the cruciform towers of his *Ville Contemporaine* as the backdrop to the primary monuments of Paris: the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, Sacre Couer, the Louvre, the Pantheon, and Notre Dame (Le Corbusier 2015). These monuments become points of reference within the city and recall the selection of singularities from Le Corbusier's Lesson of Rome. The sketch resonates with Piranesi's etching of the *Scenographia* of the *Campo Marzio* in which a cluster of monuments are isolated on the site: the ground of Piazza Navona, the Pantheon, the Coliseum.

In Le Corbusier's sketch and Piranesi's etching there is an anticipation of the critique of ground that Rossi would explore, where it is undecidable if the monuments are liberated from the ground to be repositioned in other contexts (such as is seen in the Canaletto painting and Rossi's drawings), or positioned firmly as singular forms that redefine the language of the city, as implied in the Analogical City collage.

### **Conclusion: The Linguistic Form of the City**

The analogue is a linguistic form. The analogue assimilates history, transforms its language and develops the material into singular forms for combination and recombination. Piranesi exaggerates the singularity of architecture in the figure-figure relationships of the *Campo Marzio Ichnographia*. Le Corbusier distils an architectural language to the bare essentials, 'limited to a few words...which possess infinite meaning.' Rossi condenses 'every project imagined, designed or built' into the 'historical text' of the analogical city. The analogue as a linguistic form is not limited or devoid of content but condenses formal associations. The 'infinite meaning' that Le Corbusier refers to is architecture's history, its forms and elements, texts and drawings, principles and approaches in a constant dialogue, embodied in the singularity of the analogue. The analogue becomes a critical device to deepen and intensify architecture's relationship to the city. The analogue condenses authorship and the collective imagination, analysis and project, theory and method. A rereading of the analogical city as a linguistic form, its categories and project genealogy helps to redefine contemporary discourse on architecture and the city. Against the current instrumental language of efficiency and performance, there is a need to rearticulate formal knowledge, an historical consciousness and architectural agency. To reassert a linguistic approach to architecture and the city as a critical project through a redefined and rewritten analogical city is one model.



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## **Biography**

Cameron McEwan teaches architectural design, history and theory at the Grenfell-Baines Institute of Architecture, University of Central Lancashire, and is a Trustee of the AE Foundation, an independent organisation for architecture and education. Cameron studied architecture at Dundee School of Architecture followed by a PhD on the architect Aldo Rossi and the Analogical City. Cameron's work is focused on the relationship between architecture, representation and subjectivity to engage the city as a critical project. His texts and drawings have been published in *JAE*, *Drawing On*, *Urban Blur*, *Outsiders* for the 2014 "Fundamentals" Venice Biennale, and elsewhere.

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## List of Illustrations

**Figure 1.** Montage panel by author. Giovanni Antonio Canaletto, *La Basilica di Vicenza e il Ponte dia Rialto* (1753), Aldo Rossi's Analogical City: Panel (1976) and Giovanni Battista Piranesi's *Campo Marzio Ichnographia* (1762) to top and base with Piranesi's Frontispiece adjacent to Le Corbusier's perspective view of the *Ville Contemporaine* Central Station (1923) and Rossi's study for Modena Cemetery (1972). The Analogical City and the *Campo Marzio* share a formal language of intense counterpositioning of large and small forms in which elements condense and can be substituted for one another. The seriality of the perspectives share oblique point of view, axial composition and repetition of forms.

**Figure 2.** Montage panel by author. Comparison of page spreads from 'The Lesson of Rome' in Le Corbusier's *Toward an Architecture* (1923) with etchings from Giovanni Battista Piranesi's 'Veduta di Roma' (1748) showing how Le Corbusier erases the context to put into relief the singularity of architecture, while Piranesi exaggerates the scale of the monuments to articulate their singularity. Le Corbusier's studies of the Piranesi *vedute* (1915) show the capturing of architecture's history as the material of design. The elementary solids falling from Rossi's Analogical City reference Le Corbusier's drawing from 'The Lesson of Rome' and suggest how the monuments of the city can be distilled into simple geometric elements.

**Figure 3.** Montage panel by author. The relationship between the *Ville Contemporaine* (1923) plan and its analogues: the regulating lines of the temple, Michelangelo's St Peter's and the Castel Sant'Angelo of Piranesi's *Campo Marzio Ichnographia* (1762). Le Corbusier's cruciform tower is montaged with Bramante's St Peter's plan showing the strategy of scaling and inverting solid and void. Le Corbusier's study of the *Plan Voisin* (1924) coincides with Piranesi's *Scenographia* where both depict the city as a field of singular objects.

**Figure 4.** Montage panel by author. Le Corbusier's substitution of elements from Piranesi's *veduta* of Piazza del Popolo to construct the *Ville Contemporaine* (1923) perspective and plan. The pairing of objects within the *Campo Marzio* can be read in the composition of the *Ville Contemporaine*.