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PIRANESI-VICO-*Il Campo Marzio*:

Foundations and the Eternal City

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July, 1995

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ABSTRACT

This paper undertakes to develop an in-depth interpretation of Piranesi's *Il Campo Marzio*. While drawing heavily from specific details in both the text and images, the study retains a contextual outlook, speculating that Vico's *New Science* can lend meaning to Piranesi's work.

Based primarily on Vico's concept of the Ideal Eternal History, parallels are drawn between the two works. While this provides the key to entering into Piranesi's work, it reveals only its inner horizon, merely describing in different terms what is already there.

The insights provided by this exercise, however, demonstrate that the making of architecture as promoted by the *Campo Marzio* is not unlicensed Romantic freedom, but a fundamental, culturally-bound human activity. The paper concludes, moreover, that the making of the *Campo Marzio* interpretively re-enacts the original imaginative founding of the Eternal City and, as such, constitutes an attempt to re-found Heroic Rome.

RESUME

Nous voulons ici faire une interprétation poussée du *Il Campo Marzio* de Piranèse. Bien que sa source d'inspiration soit surtout les détails spécifiques au texte et aux images, l'étude conserve un point de vue contextuel, émettant l'opinion que le *New Science* de Vico peut éclairer l'oeuvre de Piranèse.

En nous basant surtout sur le concept de l'Histoire éternelle idéale de Vico, nous tentons d'établir un parallèle entre les deux oeuvres. Même s'il s'agit de la clé qui nous permet de pénétrer l'oeuvre de Piranèse, elle nous donne uniquement vue sur son horizon interne, se limitant à décrire ce qui est déjà là.

Toutefois, la compréhension de l'oeuvre que l'on tire de cet exercice nous fait réaliser que dans *Il Campo Marzio*, Piranèse ne fait pas l'apologie d'une liberté romantique sans bornes dans la pratique de l'architecture mais il la conçoit plutôt comme une activité humaine délimitée par la culture. De plus, ce mémoire tire la conclusion que la thèse du *Campo Marzio* constitue une réinterprétation du tissu imaginaire de la Ville Eternelle et qu'elle constitue de ce fait une tentative de recréer la Rome héroique.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I was first introduced to the work of Piranesi over fifteen years ago by professor Eric Haldenby, now director of the School of Architecture at the University of Waterloo. In the intervening years I have accumulated many debts, especially those to Lucie Fontein with whom I have shared numerous readings and discussions.

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My greatest debt, however, is to my family, who not only put up with me for the duration, but provided the foundation that made it possible for me to consider this undertaking in the first place. To them I am truly grateful.

RJA
July, 1995

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

PIRANESI

AR......	Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane...Divisa in Quattro Tomi...*, Rome, 1756
CM......	Piranesi, *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma*, Rome, 1762

tpg	titlepage	(-)
fpc	frontispiece	(-)
tlpc	tailpiece	(pl.XLVIII)

DM......	Piranesi, *Diverse Maniere d'Adornare I Cammini...*, Rome, 1769
PP......	Piranesi, *Prima Parte di Architetture e Prospettive*, Rome, 1743

VICO

AWI.....	Vico, *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians, unearthed from the Origins of the Latin Language*, Naples, 1710 (trans. L.M. Palmer, 1988)
NS......	Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, Third Edition, 1744 (trans. Bergin and Fisch, 1986)
SM......	Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, 1709 (trans. E. Gianturco, 1965)

OTHER

AB......	Steiner, *After Babel*, Oxford, 1975
AC......	Fustel de Coulanges, *The Ancient City*, Johns Hopkins, 1980
AT......	Bloomer, *Architecture and the Text*, Yale, 1993
BC......	Stafford, *Body Criticism*, Cambridge, 1993
HHS.....	Ricoeur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, Cambridge, 1981
MH......	White, *Metahistory*, Johns Hopkins, 1980
QCT.....	Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, Harper and Row, 1977
RHP.....	Ricoeur, *The Reality of the Historical Past*, Marquette, 1984
RP......	Steiner, *Real Presences*, Chicago, 1989
TD......	White, *Tropics of Discourse*, Johns Hopkins, 1978
TN......	Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, Chicago, 1984

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INTRODUCTION

The Question of Meaning

> *"And this more human love (which will fulfil itself with*
> *infinite consideration and gentleness, kindness and clarity*
> *in binding and releasing) will resemble what we are now*
> *preparing painfully and with great struggle: the love that*
> *consists in this: that two solitudes protect and border and*
> *greet each other".*
>
> .....*Rainer Maria Rilke*

THE AIM OF this research is to propose a meaningful interpretation of Giambattista Piranesi's *Campus Martius Antiquae Urbis*, also known as the *Campo Marzio*, first published in 1762. To be truly meaningful such an interpretation must both respect the essential nature of the original work, *and* grow out of questions deeply rooted in the situation and circumstances from which they are posed. These criteria must remain balanced to avoid overwhelming the original and attributing to Piranesi, even if only implicitly, intentions that are proper to the questioner. On the other hand, we must not presume that the truth of Piranesi's work can be recovered: at best we can gain a measure of access to its essential nature with a courteous[1] reading of the documents. This means, among other things, preserving the mystery inherent in the work, even as we bring it forward to our own time. We can never fully explain the work, but we can construct an *image* of it for ourselves: one that will be meaningful (because we have made it for ourselves); and yet one that responds authentically and sincerely to the documents or artifacts in hand. This means not only attending to their formal and literal representations, but also to the "world" that they posit and extend toward us as an initial

gesture of greeting: a handshake.

I have employed two tactics by which to gain imaginative access to the *Campo Marzio*. One draws from the current work of Paul Ricoeur and George Steiner concerning theories of reading, reception and interpretation. The other engages the assistance of the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico. Vico is doubly appropriate in this regard as not only Piranesi's near contemporary and a sympathetic interpretive key for his work, but also as a forebear to the work of Ricoeur.

Although there is no substantiated contact between Vico and Piranesi, their work exhibits the same preoccupations, attitudes and ambitions set in the same historical cultural milieu. Contact *could* have occurred in Naples in 1744 when Piranesi was a twenty-four year old draughtsman and Vico an aging philosopher in the last year of his life, but it's unlikely. And even though there's no direct proof of influence (Piranesi never mentions Vico by name, nor were any of Vico's writings included in the inventory of Piranesi's possessions at the time of his death), it is not unreasonable to assume that Piranesi was aware of Vico's work: it had been published in Venice as well as Naples, and was current in the intellectual circles of Gravina, Bottari and Lodoli, with all of which Piranesi was familiar.

References to the possible influence of Vico on Piranesi are best developed in Calvesi's introduction to the Italian translation of Foçillon's monograph, and the Polizzi-Valone paper delivered at the *Vico e Venezia* conference (see the bibliography). Rykwert also speculates on a Venetian connection through Lodoli. Other references are limited, usually citing the Calvesi article, and/or making general references to philology, linguistics, cultural revival or the "imagination" without really being specific or developing them. Calvesi refers primarily to the early works - the *Grotteschi, Capricci,* and the *Carceri* - with little or no reference to the *Campo Marzio*.

Of the two tactics mentioned above, the one employing Vico is the more direct. By way of seeking relations between the *Campo Marzio* and his major work, the *Principi di Scienza Nuova di Giambattista Vico d'Intorno alla Comune Natura delle Nazioni...* (commonly known as the *New Science*), I approach the *Campo Marzio* on its own ground. Ricoeur operates more in the background of the paper.

This paper began as an exercise in interpretation, reading the *Campo Marzio* by way of the *New Science*. As it turns out, these two works are themselves *about* interpretation, the making of meaning. Thus the study became an exercise in what it was about. The making of meaning begins with questioning and proceeds by way of the exercise of interpretation. Meaning does not exist as a given static correspondence between things and concepts, but is something actively made. It resides in the questioning of the world and the exercise of interpretation that follows. Vico's thoughts on this matter appear in the discussion of metaphor in Chapter One.

The two main contributions of this paper to the study of the *Campo Marzio* come by way of establishing its correspondences to Vico's concept of the Ideal Eternal History. On the one hand it unfolds a wholly contextual view of the work which incorporates, for the first time, *all* of its components including the introductory text. On the other, it supports this view and the correspondences to the Ideal Eternal History with a detailed examination rooted in the specific evidence of the text and plates. Piranesi's actual relationship to Vico is speculative and circumstantial. Although this study is not the first to infer a relationship between the two based on the *Campo Marzio*, it is the first to pursue it to this level of detail.

Chapter One
PRE-FIGURATION

A.   *The Limits of Reason*

I WILL BEGIN the examination of the *Campo Marzio* in the descriptive mode of explanation. This is, first and foremost, an attempt to get "inside" the work, to discover and disclose the internal structures and relationships in the terms posited by the work itself. While this means working directly with the evidence of the work at hand, these documents must be understood as situated in a particular historical context and intellectual climate. While background information such as this contributes to the description and explanation of the work, it must not be misconstrued as the *meaning* of the work.

Our reception of the work is likewise historically situated. Therefore this first chapter also prepares the ground with a brief summary of recent reviews and analyses of the *Campo Marzio*. These analyses, seeking to expose the underlying content of the work, contribute to the explanation or description of the work, but not to its interpretation. Similarly the themes outlined below, evident throughout Piranesi's oeuvre, may help to explain how the work came to have certain qualities (that is: the probable intentions of the author), but they do not disclose the meaning of the work.

.1   *Historical Context*

Epistemological Shifts

Piranesi and Vico must be understood in relation to the epistemological shift that was coming to a head in the eighteenth century. A specific instance of this is the "Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns" in which the debate centred on the question of authority regarding true knowledge of the world. On the one side the ancients represented traditional knowledge founded on belief in an external authority, transmitted by belief and custom. Implicit in this is the fallen condition of man and the remoteness

of truth. On the other side the moderns believed that truth could be progressively and cumulatively revealed through empirical examination of the world we inhabit. Traditional teaching, dominated by the church-oriented universities, promoted rhetoric, the imagination, memory, and allegorical-symbolic thinking as the means to cope with our remoteness from the truth. Modern teaching in the independent academies presumed that the truth was present in our own realm and, though currently obscured, ultimately attainable. It replaced the inductive thinking of rhetoric and the imagination, designed to extend towards a remote truth, with deductive scientific reasoning designed to recover a truth hidden in our midst.

Not only were Vico and Piranesi conscious of this shift, but much of their work is predicated on trying to come to terms with it. Vico picks up the debate in his *Study Methods of Our Time* where he puts forth a resolution by relating it to the natural development of the human mind. In one's early formative years, as in the early years of an emerging culture, a traditional education emphasizing memory, the imagination, and rhetoric helps one to grasp and come to terms with new and unfamiliar surroundings. Once this foundation is established and accepted as a sort of working hypothesis, rational thinking has a provisional ground within which to operate. Modernist teaching presumes direct and unmediated access to the natural "ground" of the world, and thus the redundancy or falseness of this provisional ground. Traditional teaching accepted the provisional ground as an image of a remote truth, a mimetic approximation of this truth in the world of our fallen condition where the governing divinities are remote from the world of experience.

The terms and principles Vico develops to address these issues will become useful when discussing Piranesi's creative imagination. The world of our everyday experience in which we are immersed he calls the *certum*, meaning something that is definite, precise, particular or certain. The particularity of the *certum* subjected it to the contingencies of transformation and decay. This mitigated against its containing truth which, by definition, was an eternal constant. Here Vico evidently resists the truth-claims of modern education.

The contingent aspects of the *certum* were regarded by primitive minds as manifestations of the capriciousness of the gods. Human action was thus closely tied to the world of experience by which the gods made their pleasure known. Truth, on the other hand, resided in an external realm not subjected to the contingencies of the *certum*. This Vico called the *verum*. The *verum*, precisely because it was not particular or certain, had no beginning and no end, and thus was eternal.

The meaning of anything, at any given time, in the *certum* is not in relation to a fixed constant (a being), but in relation to the beginning (birth, origin, *naissance*, nature) and end (revelation) of its becoming.

For Vico the *certum* was a manifestation of the *verum*, a subset of it. Although man was immersed in the *certum*, both *verum* and *certum* were external to his actual being. What man could know of either was limited to what he could "make" of it: an image, a theory, an explanation as an image of truth that could reside outside the *verum*. This mediating construction Vico called the *factum*. *Factum* refers not only to the thing made, but also to the human deed or exploit that produced it. These three concepts are related in two principles:

a) the *verum-factum* principle, in which the "made" is interchangeable with the "true", meaning that we can only know what we make, or what we "make of" something else. Since an individual can only know for certain what is internal to his own being, all certain knowledge is predicated on sensed or felt experience, from which the imagination creates internal images. These images can be acted upon or stored in memory. The fact that knowledge can be stored as images in memory demonstrates its necessarily interior nature. It is this primary interior making as the basis of knowledge to which Vico's *factum* refers. In scientific experiments, which re-make certain aspects of nature in order to understand them, the making occurs not in the experiment, but in the internal images one formulates of the experimentally isolated phenomena. On the other hand, technological making, such as the construction of instruments, apparatus and machines, is externally-oriented. But unlike works of art, which are externally formulated images-as-knowledge, technological products neither contribute to knowledge of the external world nor express it. Rather they collect and organize information about it for the purpose of establishing power over it.

b) the *verum-certum* principle, in which the *certum* is part of the *verum*, and thus a clue to its nature. Relations between these two disparate realms are mediated by allegory. Allegory, as distinguished from analogy, requires a metaphoric leap to

establish greeting points between realms that never meet. Analogy is based on parallel structures that may coexist in the same realm, allowing one to switch back and forth between alternative readings at will. The greeting points established by metaphoric identities are imaginative inventions of the primitive mind. They are the *factum* by which we manufacture our knowledge about the *verum* and the external world.

To posit the *factum* as a man-made image of the truth able, for all intents and purposes, to act in its place, is to presuppose the remote *verum* and thus also its complement, the *certum*. The intertwining of these notions might be expressed as the *verum (factum) certum* principle.

The scientific knowledge of the moderns, to which Vico was essentially opposed, rejected the remoteness of the *verum* and replaced its traditional authority with the certain authority of knowledge-as-information about the objective, neutral, and ever-present external world. The humanly-projected world, in which man devises ways to cope with the *certum*, allowing that it exists externally but can only be provisionally appropriated through imagination and interpretation, is replaced by an explanation which objectively extracts truth from external circumstances. Explanation, deriving solely from the nature of the external world without subjective human interference, reveals the absolute objective truth about reality. It reduces the world to its literal meaning, more concerned with fully and accurately describing "what's out there" than determining its relation to the human condition.

The crisis of the debate is precipitated by the rise of the instrumental-speculative sciences in the academies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This was made possible by the marriage of technology and instrumentation with an empirical quest for knowledge. Galileo and the telescope are the iconic representation of this marriage. The empirical investigations facilitated by these instruments, which were in turn the products of the desire to pursue these investigations, seemed to suggest that universal constants were actually present in the world of everyday experience, hidden beneath the particular, contingent, and mutable forms. These hidden truths, instrumentally or rationally extracted (or projected?), simultaneously "verified" the *certum* and reduced the reality of its concrete particulars to unessential superfluous ornament, masking the "real" truth

behind them. The truthful reality of abstract scientific truth displaced the particular reality of the *certum*. Positing the presence of this hidden truth *within* the *certum* had two consequences:

a) There was no longer a need for some external transcendental realm to harbour truth: it was graspable, present among us, and could be cumulatively revealed. Scientific truth is thus a subset of the actual world, reversing the traditional *verum-certum* relation described by Vico. The *certum* is no longer part of the truth, but it *contains* truth. And because truth was recoverable inside the *certum*, there was less need to acknowledge our condition as fallen, with truth located elsewhere.

b) Because scientific truth was graspable and progressive, and resided in the *certum*, it could "explain" the *certum* and thus offer some operative dominion over it. Its accuracy, reliability, and predictability turned it into a powerful and prescriptive instrument.

The presumptions of science seemed to bear themselves out. Reinforced by instrumental-technological investigation, the scientific world view became progressively and cumulatively more "real". By penetrating below or beyond the distractions of contingent particulars it revealed the abstract truth of reality lurking therein. The contingent aspects of everyday life were reduced from auspicious signs to decorative ornament, unessential embellishments of the necessary and sufficient reasoning required to found the abstract world. Human-based knowledge was rejected as subjective, arguable, and therefore false. It sought truth in the apparently more constant and objective laws and principles underlying the mutable forms of the *certum*. Priority was given to the literal over the poetic, which was abandoned in favour of external objective constants.

This type of research, however, operating within the same domain as its object of study - the *certum* - is at best an immanent, deductive exercise. Its self-referential results tautologically demonstrate the assumptions originally posited. Its revelations occur within an already defined reality or world view, as typological variations or increased specificity which mistake explanation for meaning.

The traditional knowledge of the ancients, however, is rooted in man's essentially poetic nature - his tendency to cope with the unknown through his image-making faculties. Even science and instrumental research today profit from this capacity. The

humility of traditional knowledge accepted the human condition as fallen. Knowledge based on rhetoric, *poesis*, and art sought to establish a provisional image of the truth as the basis for action in a world that, though certain, was not eternal. The traditional view placed the literal-practical experiences of the everyday world inside the context of an imaginative whole where the *certum* was part of the *verum*. Vico's aim is not to recover the specifics of ancient traditions, but to restore the importance of this wholeness, and to reconstruct a whole relevant to his own time. In the "Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns", then, Vico clearly sides with the tradition of the ancients. This, however, is not a slavish devotion. He accepts science as the operating condition of modernity, and acknowledges that we are immersed in progressive historical time which makes the past remote, and its recovery futile. Nevertheless he endeavours to act in the manner of the ancients and to re-insert scientific activity, as an operation conducted in the *certum*, into an imaginative whole. Whereas the ancients inferred their imaginative whole, the *verum*, from their perceptions of the natural world, Vico constructs his from the vicissitudes of history.

The epistemological split between subjective-poetic knowledge and objective-scientific knowledge corresponds to the one that occurred between the productive and the cognitive imagination. By the Romantic era at the end of the eighteenth century, holistic concepts of knowledge and the imagination had refracted and polarized, leading to the simultaneous emergence of art and science as the separate disciplines we know today. In the era of Vico and Piranesi this split, though imminent, was not yet complete. The modern paradigms present in the debate were not yet entrenched as presumed truth, but still in flux and open to challenge. By recovering the issues of this debate at the threshold of modernity we can imaginatively reconstruct the foundations of our present circumstances. Interpreting these in the light of our current concerns, we begin to understand the nature of these foundations, as well as lend meaning to the present.

The Greeks versus the Romans
Favouring the ancients in the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns leads to

the corollary: "To which authority ought one appeal?". In the emerging disciplines of archaeology and art history the Greeks were championed as the most ancient culture and thus the originators of art. They were also considered superior in terms of refinement, proportion, and beauty. Support for the Greeks was especially strong among the German and French, and some English historians and archaeologists.

Piranesi's view with respect to the Greeks as originators of art follows Vico's two-fold approach. On the one hand art, as all cultural products, is specific to each nation, and each rises in parallel from its own origins (*NS*, §47, 63, 144). There is no universal rational basis by which to link all cultures directly. At the same time, the Greeks are predated by several cultures including the Hebrews, the Chaldeans, Scythians, Phoenicians, and the Egyptians (*NS*, §43). Piranesi traces Roman architecture via the Etruscans to the Egyptians, thus establishing a genealogy that links it to pre-Hellenic origins. Vico is very specific about the primacy of the Etruscans over the Greeks:

> ...the fact that the architecture of the Etruscans is simpler than that of any
> other people affords weighty proof that they had knowledge of geometry
> before the Greeks. Etymologies testify to the fact that a good and large
> part of the Latin language was imported among the Latins from the
> Ionians. It is further agreed that the Romans derived from the Etruscans
> the rites of their gods and, along with them, also the sacred phrases and
> priestly language. Therefore, I take it as certain that the learned origins
> of Latin words came from these two peoples. (*AWI*, 39)

The Roman-Etruscan-Egyptian link was also established by Father Carlo Lodoli and the *rigoristi* concerning the materially-founded nature of architectural forms and ornament. Whereas Greek architectural forms were wood-based, and were only later figuratively translated into stone, the robustness of Roman architecture proves that it is, like Etruscan and Egyptian architecture, stone-based. The lineage was direct. Evidence of Greek influence at Paestum and Herculaneum is not, for Piranesi, proof of Greek origins, but rather the incorporation into Italian architecture of Greek forms brought to Roman soil by wandering Greek heroes.

The issue of the beauty and refinement of Greek work is not contested by Piranesi, but dismissed as irrelevant. While beauty may be a legitimate consideration with respect to art, it is a characteristic proper to a rational-philosophical and already

decadent culture. True Roman building was less concerned with vain philosophical prettiness than robust, sensual, corporeal construction. Whereas Greek architecture was conceptual, rational and capricious, Roman architecture was sensual and heroic. Thus Roman architecture was truer to the heroic origins of architecture and cities as described by Vico (*NS*, §774-78). Moreover, Rome is the heroic archetype whose heroic history is recorded in the vulgar tongue (*NS*, §158-60, 613, 950, 1003), whereas Greece moved so quickly to the age of philosophy and refinement that its divine and heroic history remained inaccessible, in divine and heroic speech (*NS*, §158), and philosophy dominated the vulgar tongue. Thus the Romans are the perpetuation of the heroism abandoned by Greece in favour of philosophy, and the city of Rome is the archetype proper to cities and architecture, at least according to the Latin view of the world.

Il Campo Marzio

Within the more specific context of Piranesi's oeuvre, the *Campo Marzio* was published in 1762 at the midpoint of his productive career, which began in 1743 with the *Prima Parte di Architetture e Prospettive*. It follows his work on the Nolli map of 1748 which produced a precisely-surveyed overall view of the Campo Marzio as it then stood. Between the Nolli map and the *Campo Marzio* Piranesi produced his archaeological opus, the *Antichità Romane*, published in four volumes from 1752 to 1756. The large six-plate ensemble in the *Campo Marzio* known as the *ichnographia* (pls.V-X) was produced shortly thereafter, in 1757 (according to its title block). Considered by some to be a fifth volume to the *Antichità Romane*, the *Campo Marzio* actually elevates the findings of the *Antichità* to another level. Publications contemporary with the *Campo Marzio* include several archaeological works similar to the *Antichità* as well as his 1761 re-visit to the *Carceri*, which had first been published around 1749-50.

The *Campo Marzio* consolidates his views on history, architecture, and the controversies of the day, prefiguring the debates and arguments developed in the subsequent *Parere su l'Architettura* (1765) and *Diverse Maniere...* (1769). Although the letterpress text of the *Campo Marzio* is fairly non-contentious, the publication as a whole ranks as one of his most polemical.

.2   *Current Context*

The unfolding of a historical work relates also to the context in which it is received. The various analyses reviewed below, all written subsequent to the end of the Second World War, reveal as much about the preoccupations or agendas of their authors as they do about the work in question. However, as with much of the secondary literature concerning Piranesi's work, they remain at the level of formal analysis of the marks that appear on the plate, or what these reveal of the personality behind them. Reviews of the *Carceri* series, for example, consider its ethereal atmospheric representational effects,[2] its historical precedents,[3] and/or its relation to natural or perspective space.[4]   Critical writings concerned with the *Campo Marzio* address its preoccupation with archaeological themes (either in their imaginative aspect, or in relation to the more scientific type of archaeology emerging in the eighteenth century) or its typological or formal innovations.[5]

The recent critical writings regarding the *Campo Marzio*[6] resort to semiotics and structural linguistics as the current disciplines that address the question of meaning. It is a contention of this thesis, however, that these, too, remain primarily within the realm of explanation.   Whether structuralist or deconstructive, these methodologies seek meaning in immanent structural relations or intra-textual references.   They provide syntactic analyses of planimetric typologies considered as geometrical analogues for language.

Meaning is sought also in innovation; in the relation of the inflected, collaged, recombined forms to existing conditions or traditional models. Piranesi's imaginative method, revealed in his deviation from the norm, is understood as an exhortation to his contemporaries to practise innovative design inspired by antiquity.[7]

The reasoning of semiotic and structural analyses operates at the level of formal manipulation of the evidence.   It examines and reveals only the mechanism of communication itself, the "how to..." of the work, but not the "what" that it might be about.[8] The traditional sense of meaning as transcendent is here replaced by a meaning wholly inherent in the logic of the work itself: as it exists, or the technique *(means)* by

which it was created. Meaning and truth are thus reduced to an inherent certainty, immanent to the work, immediately present, wholly accessible, and without stereometric thickness such as that provided by the *verum - certum* relationship.

Semiotics examines the particular aspects of the work *by way of which* we come to know its meaning. Meaning does not reside in the work, nor therefore in language as such (of which the work may be constructed). Meaning is constructed by the reader/observer in response to the work. It is in human responding that meaning is made (invented, revealed). What we call meaningful works are those that demand or provoke a response, and perhaps even point the way. It is our ability to respond, to be responsible, that allows us to make meaning, which we do inductively.[9]

While authentic interpretation is a specific form of truth anchored in the imagination of the author as well as in the evidence of the work, sufficient courtesy must be accorded to the work to prevent the author's view becoming a conceit. Two types of conceit occur in existing analyses. One attributes to Piranesi motives and attitudes proper to the author or, similarly, invokes the name of Piranesi (as inspiration or origin) to promote the author's viewpoint.[10] Thus conscripted or "enframed" Piranesi's works cease to have their own free voice. Authentic interpretation on the other hand attempts to release the works from such obligations and allow them to manifest their own nature.

The other conceit inscribes Piranesi's work within the grand narrative of a prefigured historical context, assimilating and compromising its inherent "totality" and particularity. Considered in an objective and *already* modern way (i.e. from the "outside" only) the nature of the work as an "irreducible erratic"[11] is not accorded its full status in the smooth flow of history.

.3 *Existing Analyses*

Virtually every analysis of the *Campo Marzio* concentrates on the large six-plate *ichnographia* (pls. V-X) which is clearly the centrepiece of the work. Other plates such as the titlepage, frontispiece, introductory maps, *scenographia*, documentary views and tailpiece are treated (if at all) as accessories. The text, with rare exceptions, is ignored

or dismissed. The dedicatory letter to Robert Adam, in which Piranesi outlines his attitude and intentions, is occasionally quoted as the interpretive key to the work. To interpret, however, is not to discern the author's motives or intentions, but to respond to what he *shows* us, to the nature of the work itself. In this respect the dedicatory letter is another accessory, another piece of the work as a whole as given to us by the author.

The two most oft-quoted secondary reviews specific to the *Campo Marzio* are Vincenzo Fasolo's 1956 essay "Il *Campomarzio* di G.B. Piranesi"[12] and Manfredo Tafuri's "Giovan Battista Piranesi: l'utopie négatif dans l'architecture".[13] An introductory essay by Franco Borsi accompanies the 1972 reprint edition,[14] and it receives some attention in the two English Piranesi monographs.[15] It is often referred to in several of the essays in a collection devoted to Piranesi's influence on French architecture (in particular those concerning Ledoux)[16] and is a significant strand in Jennifer Bloomer's recent *Architecture and the text*.[17] An extract of this together with two other essays in which the *Campo Marzio* figures prominently appears in *The Imagined and Real Landscapes of Piranesi: Critical Writings in America*.[18] Of numerous other references most are derivative of these either in content or attitude.
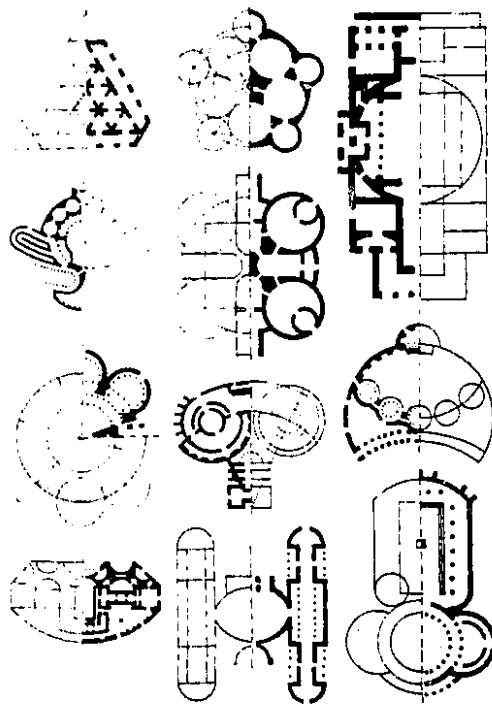

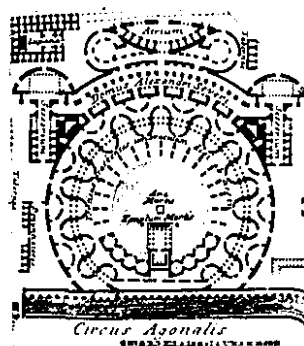Fig.1: *Plans of architectural organisms appearing in the Campo Marzio (after Fasolo as cited in Tafuri)*

Fig.2: *Excerpt from plate VII of the Campo Marzio. Conard sees the hieroglyph of an owl.*

Thematically these works fall into four groups: Those that

a) consider the issue of meaning in relation to the geometrical or typological contents of the work, whether they regard it as a positive (Fasolo and Borsi) or negative (Tafuri) demonstration. Geometry constitutes an analogue for the coherence/fragmentation and meaningful/meaningless aspects of language, and typological variation and invention is an indication of creative power or the futility of formalist exercises.

b) read the geometric figures as hieroglyphic images bearing hermetic meaning (Conard, and Calvesi)

c) seek to understand and disclose the creative process behind the finished work: the author's message, intentions, methods and artistic creed (Wilton-Ely, Wittkower, and Fasolo).

d) perform an operative analysis on the work: appropriating it for their own use, resubmitting it to their versions of the original operative procedures that produced the work (Allen, Bloomer, and Agrest). This "action" mode reveals, at best, a contemporary if not anachronous interpretation of Piranesi's actions, but not of the *Campo Marzio*. Action without content (or context) becomes abstract and empty "procedure" in a figurative guise. Unlike Pierre Menard, who seeks to *become* Cervantes while at the same time remaining Pierre Menard, this type of operation relegates Piranesi to the standing reserve of history.[19]

The first two groups depend on parallel readings constructed by means of analogue relations. These readings of isolated elements or sections of the *ichnographia* rarely consider their relation to the whole or anything outside it. Either they remain passively in a fragmentary state, which is implicitly attributed to the fragmentary nature of Piranesi's work, or else "fragmentation" is elevated to the status of the meaning of the work as a whole. Fragmentation, however, is not an inherent characteristic of the final work. Rather it is a projection of analyses trapped in internal geometries and preoccupied with "decodings" which are mere lateral shifts, transposing one code for another. The work *appears* fragmentary because the analysis stops short of determining its coherence. Still, the geometrical reduction of language to zero may precipitate the crisis which could lead to its meaningful reconstitution,[20] and hieroglyphics, as a stage in linguistic development, may reveal something of the nature of language which could assist this.

The last two groups are concerned with the operative procedures revealed by the work, either as a benign exhortation to create (by which is usually meant "invent new typological forms"), or as a prescriptive code of conduct or "creed" to be adopted as a creative method.

A more detailed review of these analyses is contained in appendix II.

B.   *Towards Interpretation*

The analyses cited in the previous section are preoccupied with extracting the truth of the *Campo Marzio*, explaining what it is, or how it came to be, in order to

Fig.3: *Excerpt from plate VI of the Campo Marzio. Conard identifies three visual tropes: a bearded Egyptian for the whole, the eyes are twins, and the beard is the body of an angel.*

promote it as a model for our own conduct. Our concern here, however, is to extract a meaningful interpretation. This is not to divine the intentions of the author, for these, at best, contribute to an explanation of the work. Rather, it is to establish some genuine form of contact between the work as it stands and our own concerns. In this way the work opens up to us in our own world, but on its own terms, thus casting a new light on our concerns.
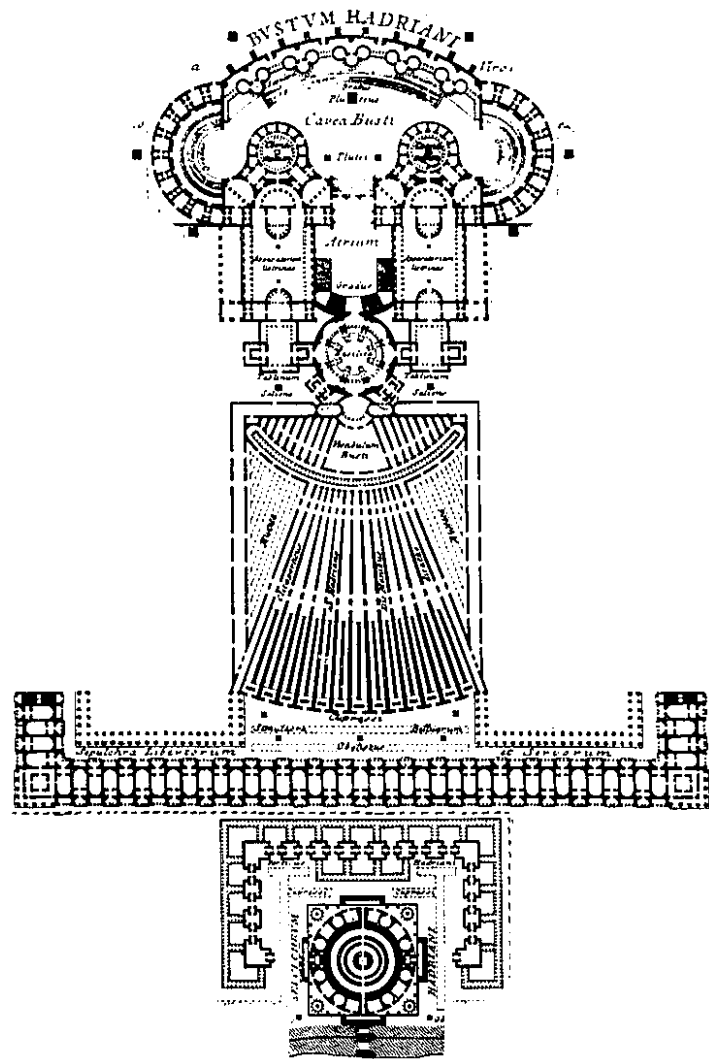
Towards this end Vico offers assistance on two fronts. First, his *New Science* addresses, in a fundamental way, the issue of meaning, knowledge and interpretation in the context of eighteenth century concerns. Secondly, it shares with the *Campo Marzio* the subject of Rome, not only as a city, but as the history of a nation or culture composed of laws and institutions. In Vico's case, Rome is the basis of his concept of the Ideal Eternal History. For Piranesi Rome is already the Eternal City, as much in its history and institutions as its architectonic presence.

The relation Vico establishes between the *verum* and the *certum* resembles that between interpretation and explanation, although interpretation is actually closer to *factum*. Explanation strives to describe the essential characteristics attributed to an object of experience - in the *certum* - in such a way as to render it intelligible. The phenomenal object is "translated" into a rational image. Ideally this translation does not distort the original. The explanation thus formulated should correspond thoroughly and accurately to the nature of the original, admitting little or no subjective interference. Explanatory truth depends on precise correspondence between an object and its intelligible description. This criteria governs truth in the natural sciences which undertake the empirical description of the natural world. In the eighteenth century the emerging human sciences of archaeology, anthropology, and history tended to adopt it as well. Whereas it may be appropriate to the natural sciences concerned with the world external to man (this is debatable, as noted below), it is wholly inappropriate for coming to terms with works produced by human actions and choices.

Interpretation, on the other hand, denies the possibility of establishing precise correspondences as between an object and its explanation. This refutation of explanatory truth implicitly acknowledges the polysemantic nature of the phenomenal world - its capacity to support and sustain various and multiple interpretations. It also recognizes what Vico calls "the extreme poverty of speech", that is: its limited capacity to manage or contend with this multiplicity (*NS*, §581).

Nevertheless, language demonstrates that the human mind develops several tactics to cope with this disparity. One, according to Vico, is to imaginatively invent metaphoric identities between what we do know and what we encounter or desire to

know. This "master key" to his *New Science* (*NS*, §34) is developed in his section on Poetic Wisdom. According to poetic wisdom, the basis of all knowledge lies in the nature of the human mind and the senses as its sole way of knowing things (*NS*, §374). Wisdom and knowledge begin therefore, not with rational and abstract understanding, but with a felt and imagined metaphysics (*NS*, §375). This metaphysics invents fables based on metaphoric relations between the unknown phenomenal world and the intimately known human body:

> ...metaphor...is most praised when it gives sense and passion to insensate things...by which the first poets attributed to bodies the being of inanimate substances, with capacities measured by their own, namely sense and passion, and in this way made fables of them. (*NS*, §404)

> It is noteworthy that in all languages the greater part of the expressions relating to inanimate things are formed by metaphor from the human body and its parts and from the human senses and passions...all of which is a consequence of our axiom that man in his ignorance makes himself the rule of the universe...so that, as rational metaphysics teaches that man becomes all things by understanding them...this imaginative metaphysics shows that man becomes all things by *not* understanding them...for when man understands he extends his mind and takes in the things, but when he does not understand he makes the things out of himself and becomes them by transferring himself into them. (*NS*, §405)

Man comes to truly know things not by rationally absorbing them into the existing framework of his mind (and gaining dominion over them), but by courteously granting them qualities proper to himself that he already knows. To do this he imagines himself *as* the other thing, lending himself to it, and imaginatively entering and becoming it. This not only draws the thing unto himself, but extends his knowledge of the world by imagining himself to experience it *as* another.

This metaphoric identity is not a "figure of speech" as we might understand it today. It is an absolute, unambiguous identity, an imperative and direct expression of identity born of utility and necessity, using the best available means. By contrast, a literary metaphor is a transfer of qualities between two things already recognized as distinct, although reminiscent, perhaps, of an original identity. The primitive mind employed Vico's mechanism of metaphoric identity in two ways:

a) it allowed him to imagine himself as corporeally inhabiting the world, imaginatively projecting himself into it. This endowed the natural world with divinities and a general life force.

b) it allowed exemplary manifestations of certain qualities to imaginatively function as universal representatives of classes of like qualities, all of whose manifestations became identified with the universal model. These imaginative universals, having already been granted human qualities, became Poetic Characters.

Poetic Characters arose from the inability of the primitive mind to separate a concept from its particular manifestation. Its ability to grasp only concrete particulars prevented it from extracting what was common from diverse particulars and thus formulating intelligible class concepts (NS, §209). Poetic characters derived their universality not from generalization or conceptual similarity, but from metaphoric identity. As a non-generic particular elevated to universal status because of its exemplary nature, the poetic character retained all of the peculiarities and idiosyncrasies associated with it. It was not an abstract virtual being, but real, concrete, and specific. The members of its class were not "like" it, but metaphorically identical to it: a primal perception of absolute identity. Thus the poetic character was able to inductively acquire secondary qualities belonging to other particulars in its class. This gathering together of various particular qualities transformed the poetic character into an ideal, but no less real, figure. It was not a generalized concept, but an aggregate unity of real, particular qualities.

Poetic identities, as unambiguous, imperative responses to the world, are by definition their own truths. There are no prior criteria by which to judge them false; they become themselves the criterion of truth. As Vico says:

> ...poetic truth is metaphysical truth, and physical truth which is not in conformity with it should be considered false...the true war chief, for example is the Godfrey that Torquato Tasso imagines; and all the chiefs who do not conform throughout to Godfrey are not true chiefs of war. (NS, §205)

By contrast, rational-philosophical truth is understood in relation to "falseness" which presupposes an already established identity (an imaginative truth). Likewise, intelligible class concepts, and explanations, pre-suppose imaginatively founded classes. An explanation is an interpretation that denies its imaginative foundations, and strives to

establish an objective truth. Similarly, to one immersed in an epistemology founded on metaphoric identification, the identity is an apparent truth, and can be seen as "metaphoric" only in retrospect. An explanation, therefore, is an apparent truth to one immersed in a rational-philosophic epistemology, and can only be revealed as "metaphoric" by an external view. Meanwhile, explanations extract universal concepts and reveal the immanent structural organization of an already prefigured world, while linguistic tropes such as metaphor are reduced from "makers of meaning" to figures of speech. Should the truth-claim of explanation be undermined, however - perhaps through ironic awareness - the necessity for interpretation would be restored. Explanation, which collects information about the world, would be replaced by interpretation which founds the world.

The mechanism of interpretation presumes a consciousness of metaphoric identity. That is: we are no longer immersed in a metaphoric epistemology, but are able to imagine or recollect it. This ironic awareness permits us to simultaneously hold two contrasting views: an acceptance of the metaphoric identity; and an awareness that it is metaphoric and therefore false.

Whereas an explanation limits an object to its own inherent values (based on a metaphoric identity that denies it is metaphoric), interpretation recognizes the gap between itself and the object. Whereas explanation produces a fragmentary world as a collection of autonomously explained objects, interpretation situates these objects in an imagined whole. And , as Vico says in *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, the grasp of the whole through specific study is the flower of wisdom.[21]

Our tendency to lapse into explanation and presumed truth-claims is jolted when we are confronted with an alien object or situation that cannot be wholly explained. This disjunction becomes an occasion to stimulate the imagination and interpretation.

Piranesi, confronted with the ruined fragments of antiquity, resisted the archaeological tendency to explain them and absorb them into the emerging framework of eighteenth century science. Due to their temporal displacement, the fragments themselves have an opacity which resists explanation. Piranesi's interpretive act involved the twofold movement of recognizing their strangeness, and then attempting to

imaginatively inhabit them, or the world that they offered. In doing so he does not impose a structure of meaning from the outside, but discovers one within it, and opens it up into his own world. The meaning thus extracted is a truth that remains faithful to both the object and the interpreter. The Rome thus constructed from the fragments is the "True Rome", the Eternal City. And physical truth which is not in conformity with it should be considered false.

Chapter Two

CON-FIGURATION I

A. *Imagination*

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ITALIAN writers on the imagination such as Conti,
Muratori, Gravina, and Vico, are often considered proto-Romantic. Of these Conti had
begun as a scientist with an interest in Newton's work (it was this that took him to
England where he adopted a more scientific approach to the imagination[22]), and Gravina
and Muratori were confessed Cartesians. Conti discusses the poetic imagination in
theorems and axioms with a mathematical-like precision, distinguishing three types: the
sensific rooted in the senses, the *visific* responding to vision, and the *verisimilar* as the
image of truth. Truth, as an incorporeal entity, could only be enjoyed by reason, but still
required the imagination.

Vico's understanding of memory and imagination closely resembles that of
Girolamo Fracastoro, whose sixteenth century account of the imagination is contained in
the complementary treatise to his dialogue on poetry.[23]

Fracastoro redefined the imagination to avoid apologizing for what the
Renaissance had seen as its dangerous poetic power.[24] Essentially he differentiated
phantasy from the imagination, leaving phantasy at the cognitive frontier of passive sense
perception, and removing the imagination to the higher realm of the active mental
processes. Phantasy was "the simple and separate presentation of one sensible object
after another, allowing the passive mind to wander from image to image". Although it
made no true-false distinctions, it did recognize the difference between appearance and

reality, and attempted to establish the veracity of images *vis à vis* the reality of external objects. It had no idealizing or recombinatory power. Imagination on the other hand was an active agent, transforming the images supplied by perception and evaluated by phantasy. The imagination

> ...learns, moreover, to enumerate, to imagine, and to remember, and, after that, to achieve many other greater ends.[25]

Just as sense perception is the prime aspect of phantasy, so to *enumerate* is the prime aspect of the imagination. The power to imagine is the power to enumerate: to recognize individual aspects as belonging to the same series. It is to accept the many insofar as they may be gathered into a unity (an anticipation of Baroque unity in variety?). Whereas the phantasy knows the many only as the many and disparate,

> ..to imagine is nothing but to receive the many as many, to compare them in respects in which they are related, and to see how each individual is related to the whole.[26]

Memory here is not the mere recollection of sensory images (phantasies) but of the associations established by the imagination. The art of memory artificially employs this technique to emplot separate images by mapping them onto a pre-existing composite figure which the mind can hold and comprehend. This "con-figuration" as enumeration or emplotment, thus links imagination (together with invention as "creation or discovery of the figure" and invention as "content from the survey or inventory gathered by the senses") with memory, and ultimately epistemology.

Vico first develops his idea of the faculty of the imagination in *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*. He, too, links it to memory but also, as a faculty, to what he will ultimately call the *factum*:

> ...faculty [from *facere*, to make] is the ability to turn power into action. The soul is power, sight an activity, and the sense of sight a faculty. Therefore the scholastics speak quite elegantly when they call sensation, imagination, memory, and intellect the faculties of the soul. But they spoil that elegance when they declare that colours, flavours, sounds, and touch are in things. For if the senses are faculties, we make the colour of things by seeing, flavour by tasting, sound by hearing, and heat and cold by touching. (*AWI*, 93)

> Undoubtedly the imagination is a faculty, for we use it to feign images of things. (*AWI*, 94)

The Latins called the faculty that stores sense perceptions "memory"; when it recalls perceptions they call it "reminiscence". But memory also signified the faculty that fashions images (which the Greeks call *phantasy* and the Italians call *immaginativa*). For an ordinary Italian, *immaginare* is equivalent to the *memorare* of the Latins. (*AWI*, 96)

Is this because we can feign only what we remember and can remember only what we perceive through the senses?....Poets [have never] thought up any form of virtue that does not exist in human affairs. On the contrary; they elevate some form of courage chosen from reality beyond belief and mold their heroes on it. Therefore, the Greeks have handed down in their myths the tradition that the Muses, forms of imagination, were the daughters of Memory. (*AWI*, 96)

In the *New Science* he links the imaginative faculty to memory in children:

In children memory is most vigorous, and imagination is therefore excessively vivid, for imagination is nothing but extended or compounded memory. This axiom is the principle of the expressiveness of the poetic images that the world formed in its first childhood. (*NS*, §211-212)

and later to the poetic understanding of man as a divine creation:

...To the head they assigned all the cognitive functions, and as these all involved imagination, they located memory (*memoria* being the Latin term for *phantasia*, or imagination) in the head. And in the returned barbarian times *fantasia* was used for *ingegno*, and an ingenious or inventive man was called a fantastic man...Imagination, however, is nothing but the springing up again of reminiscences, and ingenuity or invention is nothing but the working over of what is remembered...[the human mind] exercised all its force in these three excellent faculties which come to it from the body. All three appertain to the primary operation of the mind, whose regulating art is topics, just as the regulating art of the second operation of the mind is criticism; and as the latter is the art of judging, so the former is the art of inventing. (*NS*, §699)

The synthetic aspects of Fracastoro's productive imagination, the power to *enumerate*, here appear as ingenuity or *ingegno*, which Vico had already described in *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*:

Ingenium is the faculty that connects disparate and diverse things. The Latins called it acute or obtuse, both terms being derived from geometry. (*AWI*, 96)

..in my essay *On the Method of Studies of Our Time* I argued that it is possible to avoid the pitfalls of physics through the cultivation of *ingenium*....method inhibits intuitive wit while aiding facility, it dissolves

> curiosity while providing for truth. Geometry does not sharpen wit when it is taught by method only, but when it is employed with creative wit upon diverse complicated, different, and disparate [problems]. Therefore, I wanted it to be taught in the synthetic rather than the analytical way, that is, through demonstration by composition, so that we do not just discover the truth, but make it. (*AWI*, 104)

Vico neatly summarizes the relationship of memory, the imagination, and invention in the *New Science*:

> Memory thus has three different aspects: memory when it remembers things, imagination when it alters or imitates them, and invention when it gives them a new turn or puts them into proper arrangement and relationship. For these reasons the theological poets called Memory the mother of the Muses. (*NS*, §819)

For Vico, the embodied imagination is *the* fundamental faculty of knowledge, whether it operates at the level of primal perception or in the so-called higher processes of the intellect. In perception it creates metaphoric images which are not objective sensory impressions, but imaginative human constructs by which the world becomes endowed with human qualities. This capacity to imagine the world in terms he already knows makes it possible for him to imaginatively project himself into the world. Thus, in a certain sense, he can imaginatively enter the body of the world, *become* the world, and come to know it from the inside. One does not absorb the world, but extends oneself into it.

Vico's concept of the imagination is also the means by which the poetic characters were created. The first metaphoric identification created a centripetal mass to which qualities accrued, augmenting it over time with a series of additions. At any given time, however, all of these qualities can be simultaneously grasped as a whole.

Piranesi's poetic imagination operates on the ruins and fragments in the *certum* in much the same way as the primitive imagination operated on fragmentary perceptions of the natural world. He grasps them in a wholly corporeal sense, as the remains of ancient heroic bodies. Where their anatomy has not been revealed through the scars or decay of time, he imaginatively invents it.

But he also imagines poetic characters. It is easy to speculate that he imagined

some sort of metaphoric identity between himself and the heroes who founded the original cities. Certainly he conducts himself in a heroic Roman manner. Yet he always signed himself *architetto Veneto*, recalling his Venetian heritage. This is not so strange, however when one recalls that Venice had seen itself as the true bearer of the Roman spirit since its inception, shortly after the fall of Rome. Vico, moreover, regards Venice as one of the five remaining aristocracies in the western world: that is, the heroic form of government.

The most significant poetic character though, is Rome, *urbis*, the Eternal City. In the *Campo Marzio* Piranesi reconstitutes mythical Rome as a fabulous truth, again in the same manner the primitive mind fashioned Jove: out of fragmentary bits of real stuff. The result is a Rome that is *more* true than an archaeologically reconstructed one. Still, archaeological precision was important to Piranesi. On the one hand it provided a full and detailed cataloguing and description of the remains of antiquity which had to be respected. At the same time, it thoroughly exhausted the explanatory potential of the remains without sufficient results, demonstrating the necessity of interpretation to imagine the whole from which they came.

The concept of the imagination held by Vico and Piranesi stands in sharp contrast to that of the Romantic movement, with which they are often associated and to which modernity is the heir.

The Romantic imagination undergoes a split along the lines first posited by Descartes' separation of body and mind. On the one hand, the emerging scientific disciplines, in their empirical quest for truth in the realm of experience, employed those aspects of the imagination associated with perception and cognition. What they produced, however, were not considered metaphoric images, but explanations, which supposedly corresponded objectively to the truth of the world.

At the same time the other aspects of the imagination, those associated with its synthetic role of "invention-as-creation", became linked to poetic-artistic creation as exemplified in the genius of the individual artist. In this strictly modern sense of the imagination, one escaped the everyday bounds of the corporeal world, creating visions

of worlds beyond experience. No longer an essential connection to reality, the imagination became the source of fiction as "unreal fantasy".

Science posited an objective truth, comprised of unchanging principles, contained within and beneath the mutable and contingent forms of the *certum*, and to be extracted through explanation. The *verum* was no longer required as an external refuge for truth.

Art, on the other hand, now detached from supposed empirical truth, operated solely in the *verum* which, now the domain of the individual subjective imagination, no longer qualified as the realm of eternal truth. Once a shared constant, the *verum* became fragmented, individualized, and subjective.

Science's desire to make truth objective and graspable required that it be situated in the *certum*, that it be based on explanation of sense-data objectively gathered through the senses, and organized and evaluated by reason and judgment.

The *verum* became dominated by the irrational aspects of the imagination - individual, subjective, interpretive - now seen in *opposition* to the former, divorced from objective truth and therefore false.

Still, science continued to operate with the imaginative principles of enumeration and emplotment to configure the data and arrive at a narrative explanation. However this was considered an objective truth rather than an imaginative construct. Science proceeded to construct a rational superstructure on foundations whose imaginative nature it refuted. Moreover, science, assuming itself to be the truth of the world, sought to *explain* the imagination, seeking within it intersubjective constants rooted in feelings and emotions such as pleasure, horror, and delight. Style, and aesthetic theories of taste or the sublime, can be considered the results of such efforts.

This scientific attitude towards the imagination appears in the proto-Romantic writings of Joseph Addison, who influenced Conti and other eighteenth century Cartesians.

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) published several articles on the imagination in *The Spectator* which he founded with Richard Steele. These included "The Nature of the Imagination and its Dependence on the Sense of Sight", and "The Function of

Imagination in History and in Science ...". The association of the imagination with the sense of sight emphasized its relation to distant things, beyond the immediate reach of the body, a relation free from corporeal constraint. Sight

> ...may be considered as a more delicate and diffusive kind of touch, that spreads itself over an infinite multitude of bodies, comprehends the largest figures, and brings into our reach some of the most remote parts of the universe.[27]

and

> ...by the pleasures of the imagination, I mean only such pleasures as arise originally from sight.[28]

With its gaze sight does everything touch can do but over a greater range, and in colour as well, for "the eye takes most delight in colours". Addison speaks also of inner visions and the power of words, in the employ of the creative imagination, to conjure up idealized poetic images.

The function of the imagination in science and history, according to Addison, is based on its relationship to sight. Historians, natural philosophers and geographers must all "describe visible objects of a real existence",

> But among this set of writers, there are none who gratify and enlarge the imagination, than the authors of the new philosophy, whether we consider their theories of the Earth or Heavens, the discoveries they have made by glasses, or any of their contemplations of nature.[29]

The link between the visual-visionary aspects of imagination and an emerging science founded on the visible world was furthered by science's preoccupations with optical instruments (the telescope, the microscope, etc.) and the pleasures of the new worlds to which they gave access. These instruments provided powerful seventeenth and eighteenth century metaphors to reinforce those aspects of the imagination associated with vision.[30] Or was it the visual emphasis of the imagination that initially motivated science in this direction? Or, yet again, was the imagination simply being cast in a visually-based scientific light? Were these scientific instruments the rational, objective tools we understand them to be today, or did their metaphoric power reveal an imaginative foundation? Is scientific invention really much different from imaginative-poetic invention as the survey, enumeration and emplotment of phenomena?

Addison, however, considers the imagination's dependency on sight to be a

limitation of its powers when compared with reason and understanding. If one attempts to conceive excessively large or small quantities "the imagination , after a few faint efforts, is immediately at a stand" whereas "reason can pursue a particle of matter through an infinite variety of divisions". The imagination "can neither widen nor contract...to the dimensions of either extreme....This defect of imagination may not be in the soul itself, but as it acts in conjunction with the body." We can only hope that "perhaps, the imagination will be able to keep pace with the understanding and to form in itself distinct ideas of all the different modes and quantities of space." Thus imagination in the scientific realm appears completely supplanted by reason with all traces of its legacy suppressed.

B.   *Instrument*

.1   *Instruments and the Imagination*

The epistemological split accomplished by the Romantic movement separated science from art and opposed one to the other. Similarly, Enlightenment science distinguished instruments from images, denying their common poetic origins. Instruments in the service of science were considered neutral objective agents, able to extract the truth about reality. By contrast, images as artistic inventions, were considered by science as fictional or misleading phantasms with respect to the objective truth of reality. Even in the artistic realm they were considered personal subjective truths: interpretations.

The notion of instrument we hold today retains the dual active-passive aspects once associated with the imagination. In the passive sense instruments reveal certain aspects of the world around us by extending our senses into this world (a microscope or telescope, a prosthetic arm), and by extracting and storing information from it (various measuring and orientation devices such as an astrolabe, a thermometer or an altimeter). In its operative sense it is an active agent, performing precise or specialized operations, usually directed towards some predetermined end. To be instrumental is to be an effective agent, or means, bridging the gap between a desire and its fulfilment, effecting

a change in the external world. Such an instrument would be a scalpel, a medication, or a prescribed procedure.

In our technological-scientific world, however, where as Heidegger says everything is on standing-reserve awaiting our call,[31] all instruments are in effect operational in that what they reveal of the world is collected as information to be put to some immediate or future use. This technological attitude reinforces the operational aspects not only of science, but also of the imagination. The idea of invention as survey, inventory, extraction, and discovery in the sense of disclosure, which originally linked science and imagination, today completely gives way to its active creative sense of making something new, of what we call "inventing".

In the eighteenth century, however, both parts of this duality were wholly present, and the split between science and the imagination not yet fully complete. In fact much of Piranesi's and Vico's work resists this split and reconsiders the original wholeness of the imagination with art and science as complementary rather than opposed forms of knowledge.

It is in the revelatory aspects of instruments and the survey-inventory-content aspects of invention that science's relationship to the Romantic-Modern imagination becomes evident. Just as the imagination revealed the world through images or *phantasia* constructed from sense perceptions, so also the earliest scientific instruments were imaginative inventions, revealing the world through mimetic constructions which gathered and configured phenomenal data. Based on an original metaphoric identity the analogous construction established metonymical relationships between itself and the phenomena wherein, under certain circumstances, the construction was able to substitute for or act in place of the phenomena. These metonymical correspondences were guided by the principle of sympathetic appropriateness (based on appearance, performance, or some other identity) making the construction, in a sense, an appropriation of the phenomena. Construction conferred upon the phenomena a structure, configuring and emplotting certain of its various aspects. This integrative action by which disparate parts or observations maintain their autonomy yet are also united into a whole is a synecdochal operation which corresponds to Fracastoro's notion of the active imagination. In the

process the phenomena acquired a figure: it was "figured-out" and named. This figuring-out of the phenomena, as a remaking or re-description of them, served also as an explanation or understanding of them: a rational appropriation that was nevertheless founded on earlier metonymical relations.[32]

The imagination (and instruments) thus revealed, named, measured, and invented the phenomena of the world in terms about which men knew or cared, with his body and emotions as the original measuring stick or instrument. Instruments as constructed devices occur primarily in what Vico termed the "Speculative Sciences" dealing with the natural physical world created by God. Its two branches were Cosmography and Astronomy, the latter which subdivided into Chronology and Geography. Since the matter of these sciences was created by God, man could only know them through his instruments: what he made of them, and thus only the metonymically reduced (or projected) aspects of them.[33]

.2 Poetic Instruments

Although Vico spends little time with the speculative sciences (36 pages), his prime concern being the social practical sciences wholly invented by man and in use among the nations, he does examine their poetic nature and the means by which man invented them.

Cosmology concerns the imagined relations between the world of man and the universe populated by divine beings. The poetic cosmos consisted of three kingdoms: the upper celestial world ruled by the powerful thunder-god Jove, the terrestrial world governed by Saturn[34] (Cronos to the Greeks), and the underworld ruled by Dis, god of heroic riches (gold and grain), although its first deity was Diana. According to Vico Diana was actually present in all three realms: on earth as Cynthia, the huntress and sister of Apollo, in the lower world as Ceres, goddess of agriculture, grain and growth who spent six months of the growing season above ground, and six months below; and Proserpine, goddess of graves, burial and souls.[35]

Relations between the upper kingdom and the earth were initiated by the augurer who began by using a rod or wand called a *lituus* to mark off a region in the sky to

contemplate. This was the *templum caeli* or templum which he then inscribed on the ground using the *lituus*. *Caeli* derives from *caelum* which refers to the celestial sky or heaven, but also to the engraver's chisel or burin (from *caelare*, to carve, cast, or engrave).[36] The *templum caeli* was both the "celestial" temple and a template for the "inscribed" temple within which the gods manifested their presence. This temple set out the bounds, limits and orientation of the region within which the relationship between the two *templa* held. It could be a point, a building, or an entire region.

In the *Campo Marzio* Piranesi represents the *templum* as a compass (*ichno.*, pls. V and X) retaining both meanings of orientation and boundary (to encompass). This reading is reinforced by the inscription on the compass tablet (which actually refers to the tablet lying on top of it):

> *Topographia Romae Longitudinem Campi Marti Adusque Pontem Milvium Demonstrans*

One of the intents of the *Campo Marzio* is set out in the first chapter of the text entitled "Of the Location and the Original Extent of the Campo Marzio." Extension of the traditional bounds of the Campo Marzio to encompass the Milvian Bridge incorporates into the story of Rome the site where Constantine's transformation to Christianity occurred in AD 312. Piranesi's text actually ends at the fall of the empire (as he said it would in his opening sentence), prior to the birth of Constantine. However the final paragraph (Ch.6, §XVIII) discussing the year of Rome 1023 (AD 270, the approximate birth of Constantine) speaks of the *tempio al Buon Evento*, which he locates in the centre of plate VII of the *ichnographia*. Could the birth of Constantine (and Roman Christianity) be the good event (event with the sense of accident, fortune, fate as opposed to mere occurrence) in the midst of human corruption and the fall of the empire?

The directional indices T-M-P-L suggest *templa*, however their use is fairly conventional.[37] *Tramontane*, literally "between the mountains", is the name of the north wind or the north star as seen over the Alps. *Meridióne* is south, from the Latin *meridianis* for midday when Dianus, god of light and the sun, and male counterpart of Diana, is highest in the sky. *Ponènte* is west or the west wind, possibly from the Latin *ponere* "to put, or set down" in relation to the setting sun, while *Levante* is east, possibly from *levare* "to raise" in relation to the rising sun.

Levante-meridióne-ponènte chronicle the rising and setting of the sun, while *tramontane* points to a distant reference or bearing. Read in relation to the *ichnographia* as a whole, centred on the mausoleum of Augustus near the intersection of plates VI, VII, VIII, and IX, it is the key to the following reading:

a) plate IX and the distant plate X are sources for guidance or reference, beyond our reach.

b) plate VIII relates to the rising sun, the emergence of an empire, culture or nation in Vico's violent and aggressive heroic age.

c) plate VII is the meridian, the sun at its zenith, the light of reason and egalitarian democracy at its peak in Vico's age of man, which first began with Saturn-Cronos.

d) plate VI is the twilight of the empire, fallen into redundancy and decadence with reason taken to the extreme, the loss of social public space, and the interests of autonomous individuals put before those of the public.

Relations between the earth and the lower kingdom are manifest in the mother-daughter pair of Ceres and Proserpine. The earth, on which the *templum caeli* is inscribed, is the source of agriculture (grain) and thus all riches (gold). The burin (auger) with which the augur inscribed it, is also the *buris* or copper ploughshare with which the founder sets out the boundaries of the city.[38] The plough breaks the earth to bring water and air to the netherworld, which lay only at the depth of a furrow (*NS*, §714-16, 721). It is the instrument of cultivation, of wealth, and of city founding. It establishes territory and ownership by setting out the boundaries, by working the land, and by appeasing the ancestral souls who inhabit it.

According to Vico, poetic cosmography is replaced around the time of Homer by poetic astronomy in which the gods, who until then dwelt amongst mortals, were elevated to the celestial planets (because they appeared larger), and the heroes, together with the hieroglyphs signifying their institutions, to the constellations (*NS*, §728). The *cele*bration of these figures, that is, their elevation to the heavens, became the eternal record (and memory) of Divine history, stationing them according to their natures (*NS*, §730). Although the relations between these bodies and the earth is observed and measured through the quadrant and astrolabe,

> ..the predominating influences which the stars and planets are supposed to have over sublunar bodies, have been attributed to them from those which the gods and heroes exercised when they were on earth. (*NS*, §731)

Armillary spheres, and early quadrants and astrolabes essentially revealed the order of the heavens. Astrolabes for instance appear to our eyes as miniature representations of the observable phenomena of the heavens, etched onto copper or bronze plaques (as if by the light of the celestial bodies themselves) as templates to assist the taking and recording of measures. These instruments, fashioned after the *templa caeli*, later became way-finding navigation devices, allowing one to situate oneself in relation to the revealed order.

Poetic chronology conformed with poetic astronomy and cosmology. Saturn (Chronos, time) from *sati* (sown fields) indicates that the first nations counted their years by harvests of grain. Hercules made this possible with his clearing of the forests for agriculture, and his founding of the Olympiads in celebration of his victory over the forests (the Nemean fire-breathing lion). The measure of time became conical stacks of grain (*metae*) with eggs on top, representing the deforested clearings or eyes. Astronomers associated the fire-breathing lion with the sun and the egg with its elliptical orbit (*NS*, §733). The *metae* (with eggs or orbs on top) which trace the path of the sun's shadow on the ground, not only mark time, but are also a fulcrum or turning point between the two realms. Obelisks (complete with eggs) were figuratively used as markers to indicate turning points on a racetrack (at the opposite end to the *carceri*, the tiny cells in which the horses were held at the starting line). In the *Campo Marzio* Piranesi locates a gigantic sundial complete with obelisk in the top right corner of plate VII, diagonally opposite the *carceri* (prison) of Clement X. He devotes an extremely long section in the text (*CM*, Ch.5, §XII, year of Rome 743) to this gift of Caesar Augustus to the sun, including a long technical discussion of the workings and relations of the sun, shadows, and the measurement of time.[39] The obelisk is associated with the sun and with Augustus (and coincidentally the coming of Christ and the start of Christian time), with light and shadows, with birth and death, all as temporal markers and turning points in human affairs. Poetic chronology measures the passage of time in terms about which we *care*. To understand time only in terms of the astronomical year is to mathematically measure earth in terms of the measurements of the heavens, without considering the events on earth which originally formulated the heavens (*NS*, §739-40).

"Poetic geographers", both Greek and Latin, appropriated or interpreted the world in the same way as early men populated the heavens: by making use of the semblances of things known or near at hand (*NS*, §122, 741) and projecting them onto the world. Movement was facilitated by navigational use of astronomical instruments which depended on cosmographical relations. The migrations of the Greeks spread their letters and the names of their gods and heroes, which made their way to Rome indirectly by way of the Greeks of Latium. The barbarian Latins received them, even exchanging the name of their true founder, Fidius, for Hercules, the true founder of the Greeks. In this same way the Greek Aeneas became accepted as the founder of the Roman people in Latium, even though he may never have left Troy.[40]

Heroic cities

..were founded by Providence in natural strongholds, to which the ancient Latins in their divine age must have given the sacred name *arae*, altars. They must also have called these strong positions *arces*, fortresses...In like manner the arae must have been extended to the whole district held by a heroic city which was called *ager* when considered with reference to the frontiers dividing it from foreigners, and *territorium* when considered with reference to the jurisdiction of the city over its citizens. (*NS*, §775, also §525, 546, 611)

All ancient geography was strewn with such altars. Vico links the word *ara* as altar to vow, and to sacrificial victim,and thus to *aruspex*, "he who divines from the entrails of victims slain before the altars." (*NS*, §776)[41] Romulus founded Rome on the altar of Hercules,

...within the asylum opened in the clearing; for it remained true among the Latins that never was there mention of a clearing or a sacred grove without allusion to an altar erected therein to some divinity. So by telling us that in general the asylums were an ancient counsel of the founders of cities, Livy discloses to us the reason why in ancient geography we read of so many cities with the name *Arae*. (*NS*, §777)

Numerous groves (*lucus*) and altars (*arae*) are scattered throughout Piranesi's *ichnographia*, recalling the original constitution of the city. In creating the *ichnographia* Piranesi treats the found ruins as monuments or altars, foundations upon which to imaginatively reconstruct the city according to the original principles. By poetic identification heroic cities were all called *arae* or altars, and

..from the defense of their altars the Greeks conceived the idea of Mars, whom they called Ares...

Mars (Ares, altars) is fundamental to the concept of city. The *Campo Marzio* is a field of altars, of cities: a history of "city" from its agrarian beginnings. *Ara* was also

...the root of the Latin word *aratrum*, plough, the mouldboard of which was called *urbs*.... also the words *arma* and *arcus*. For they justly conceived strength to consist in thrusting back harm and holding it at a distance. (*NS*, §778)

Thus from *ara* as altar, plough, cleared (*arable*?) land for agriculture, and *arca* as a stronghold protected by Mars or Ares, come asylums (in the clearings), where families form, cities are founded, fame spreads, nobilities arise, and heroism guards against external danger (*NS*, §17-18).

.3 *Instruments and Technique*

Little is known about the actual instruments Piranesi used, although literature on eighteenth century etching describes those generally available, and he describes his working method for making surveys in the preface to the *Antichità Romane*. He was also said to have been innovative, creating comb-like devices to make poché for instance. The inventory of goods he left at his death is not sufficiently descriptive to determine the originality of his tools (but it does reveal that he owned armillary spheres (p.622 recto) and a *camera ottica* with 3 lenses (p.628 verso)). It is interesting however to consider the poetic relationship his tools and techniques might have had to his work. Diderot's *Encyclopédie* offers a starting point by its grouping of etching and engraving instruments with those for leatherworking and medicine. The essential aspect of the tool is its cutting or incising; its ability to reveal the unseen by removing occluding matter, as in surgery or excavation, or inscribing furrows modelled on a remote template, as in augury or city-founding.

In *Body Criticism* Barbara Maria Stafford examines the relation between the graphic and the surgical arts. *Graphein*, related to hieroglyphics and Celtic runes, "refers to the physical activity of burying or digging into resisting surfaces." (*BC*, 55).[42] Catalogues of antique coins, cameos, and inscriptions flourished in the eighteenth century, indicating the importance of such carved and engraved items as sources of information,

but often reducing the activity of engraving to mere technical illustration. Works such as these were important sources for Piranesi as were hieroglyphs, coins, inscriptions on monuments, and the burial inscriptions of the Etruscans. Stafford discusses how Piranesi transformed the etching needle into a surgical tool to reveal the past, refusing to separate technically informative engraving from imaginative representation (*BC*, 58), and helping his contemporaries "to recontextualize the ruins of the past into the living organism of modern Rome" (*BC*, 70). She extends the metaphor, drawing similarities between etching, archaeological excavation, and surgical dissection of the body; and hence between bodies and ruins. The scarred corroded state of these heroic bodies corresponds to the excavating and etching processes by which they were revealed:

> There was an intimate connection, then, between the etching process and the exploration of hidden or physical material or topographies. Important, too, was the entire panoply of probing instruments, chemicals, heat and smoke, revealing and concealing grounds. There was also a metaphoric aptness in the medium that made it an unusual, but effective, vehicle for anatomical publications. (*BC*, 70)

The nature of the instruments, then, participates in the symbolic aspects of the work, and appropriateness of representation extends beyond mere visual appearance. Only when instruments become autonomous tools, and image separated from substance, do we get modern "instrumental representation" in which representation is reduced to the identifiable relationship between the image and that which is represented.[43]

In the *Campo Marzio* Piranesi combines techniques of scientific precision with poetic evocativeness in both the contents and character of the images. The *ichnographia* for instance accurately plots existing remains, and then uses imaginative-inductive reasoning to fill in the gaps. Four-fifths of the image are presented in pure orthographic projection, with no shadows and only topographical shading. It reeks of precision. Nevertheless the apparent swirling of forms about the Mausoleum of Augustus, together with the lack of a horizon, induce a dizzying sense of vertigo and disorientation. The democratic precision of the plan is meaningless: only the centripetal force of Augustus' mausoleum holds it together. Meanwhile the top left of the image is illusionistically rendered with a stack of spiralling tablets complete with shades, shadows, and enigmatic

symbols and images. Similarly the Frontispiece, an imaginary reconstruction of the area across the Tiber to the north and west of Hadrian's Mausoleum, combines an illusionistically rendered tablet announcing the title of the work with an aerial view which again has no horizon (is it a perspective? axonometric? *plan oblique*?) and few if any shadows. Together with its rigorous hierarchy of bilateral symmetries, and the sharp and distinct forms of the imaginative reconstruction (whose rigid lines might well have been engraved rather than etched) create an image of striking hallucinatory clarity and scientific precision.

But the issue goes beyond just appropriateness of character: the *Campo Marzio* plates draw sympathetic power from the manner of their making. The copper plates themselves are grounded sites of speculation, of haruspication or divination. The furrows carved by the steel *burin*, turning the burr to one side as a clod of earth, trace lines that do not represent or reveal the city, but constitute a re-founding process. The accuracy and precision of the inventory survey, its fidelity (both in the sense of allegiance and of protection) to the philological evidence, establish its authenticity and thus its authority. The plates are not representations but **replicas**. They do not substitute for an absence, but reply, as a responding echo or answer to an original call. To reply is to fold something back on itself (as did the *templa caeli*); to respond (from the Latin *spondere*: to pledge, promise or vow) is to accept responsibility, accountability. The plates, as replicas, are an answering call, faithfully responding to its philological situation while maintaining allegiance to the divine template.

These statements are not pseudo-poetic interpretations, but speculations into the nature of Piranesi's activity, especially in relation to archaeology and the *Campo Marzio*. The metaphoric aptness of the medium is in fact part of the content in his response to the crisis of science and the imagination facing the eighteenth century. The essence of this response, as we shall see, is to seek an ethical ground for meaningful action.

Chapter Three
CON-FIGURATION II

THE NUMEROUS PARALLELS that can be drawn between the *New Science* and the *Campo Marzio* are no doubt due to the fact that the literal content of both is the city of Rome: its laws, its history, its essential nature. But there are more profound structural relations between the two which, with the assistance of the *New Science*, we can excavate and develop. In effect we will be asking the *New Science* to *lend* a meaning to the *Campo Marzio* by considering the *Campo Marzio* as though it were in fact the *New Science*. This subjunctive relationship resembles that implied by Vico's poetic metaphor[44] and will be the basis of the interpretive exercise of this chapter. It begins with what might be called a forensic description of the *New Science*, intended to extract elements of content and structural organization that might be of use in reading the *Campo Marzio*.[45]

A.   *The Structure of the New Science*

.1   *Organizational Structure*

The *New Science* opens with an engraved frontispiece followed by a written introduction entitled "Explanation of the Picture Placed as Frontispiece to Serve as Introduction to the Work." As Vico explains the frontispiece is intended to

> ... serve to give the reader some conception of this work before he reads it, and, with such aid as imagination may afford, to recall it back to mind after he has read it. (*NS*, §1)

Thus it facilitates understanding by prefiguring the work as a whole, and by providing an image onto which more detailed understanding may be grafted as it is acquired (which further allows it to function as a mnemonic device). Such connections between knowledge and memory, forged by way of mutual reliance on images, were evident in the science of hieroglyphics, popular since Renaissance interest in esoteric wisdom, and the art of memory, which was already fading in Vico's day.

Fig. 4: *Frontispiece from Vico's New Science, 1744 edition*

In a short paper presented at the 1978 *Vico/Venezia* conference, Margherita Frankel suggests that the frontispiece or "Dipintura" also had another function.[46] She postulates that the structure of the work as a whole corresponds to Vico's theories of history, writing and language (that is to say: it demonstrates what it sets out to explain), and that the frontispiece plays an essential role in this. According to Vico each of the three distinct ages in his theory of history had its own particular "mode" or way of responding to the world, and thus its own characteristic forms of writing, of language, and institutions. The first or divine age of the gods encountered the world metaphorically and established "meaning" through a mute language of signs and physical objects. In the second or heroic age, metaphorically established identities were reduced to metonymical correspondences which operated on the interchangeability of various aspects, such as agent for action or cause for effect. Heroic emblems, images, similitudes and other comparisons were both linguistic medium and content. These various aspects could be integrated and emplotted to create meaningful figures. Finally, in the third age, human language is based on spoken words

with mutually agreed, conventional meanings, setting it at an ironic distance from the natural phenomenal world.

How can a discursive work written in this third age embody characteristics of the first two? Frankel's answer is that the frontispiece is a second age emblematic assembly of first age hieroglyphic elements. It is in effect the embryonic kernel from which the rest of the *New Science* develops. Together, the frontispiece and accompanying discursive introduction demonstrates a complete cycle of Vico's three ages. Examination of the remainder of the work reveals a series of complete cycles, duplicating within the structure of the work the rising and evolving of the world of nations. As Frankel suggests, this might account for the apparently chaotic and repetitive organization of the work. The cycles begin with the "Dipintura" as the embryonic condensation of the whole book, and spiral outward with each reiteration until finally they encompass the living world of the reader.

If we test Frankel's thesis by examining the work directly we discover something else. The succession of cycles form a pattern that corresponds to the succession of stages within them. The frontispiece-introduction cycle is the core pattern: the hieroglyphic cycle. Cycle two (the heroic cycle) is wholly contained within "Book One: Establishment of Principles". It begins with a chronological table, and moves from fragmentary elements/axioms to principles and finally to method as a discursive linking of the elements. This internal progression corresponds to metaphor - metonymy - synecdoche. The organization of the axioms *within* the section on principles also corresponds to this structure.[47]

The third cycle, "Book Three: Poetic Wisdom", is the heart of the work. It contains Vico's understanding - from a human point of view - of the common nature of the nations, and of his science as a whole. Here he discusses the poetic foundations of not only the man-made practical-social sciences with which he is primarily concerned, but also the speculative sciences which concern the nature of the god-made natural world. The social sciences section has four parts: Poetic Logic (*NS* §400-501), which examines the poetic nature of language as the product of imaginative genera first established in the age of the gods, and dependent on the primary institution of religion; Poetic Morals (*NS*

§502-519) deriving from man's response to the gods and leading to the second primary institution of marriage and the emergence of heroes; Poetic Economics (*NS* §520-581) which centers on families, produced initially by marriage, then extended to include others under the care of the family head (hero); and finally Poetic Politics (*NS* §582-686) in which the amalgamation of families and the establishment of territory and ownership (by the third primary institution of burial) leads to the development of cities. Cities represent the culminating achievement of the age of the heroes and bridge across into the age of man. This section is built primarily on a description of the founding and development of Rome and Roman history and law as ideal models. Although Vico's history ends where the age of man (or known history as recorded by Livy) begins, he indicates that abstraction, and the decadence of the institution of marriage which had originally produced families and cities, now results in the Academies of the "schoolmen."[48]

The fourth cycle comprises the three remaining chapters of the text, each of which develops a specific example for one of the three stages. "Book Three: Discovery of the True Homer" considers the nature of the Greek nation which for Vico is the "type" for the age of mythical fabulous origins.[49] "Book Four: the Course the Nations Run", sets out Roman history based on Roman institutions and law as the model (and proof) of the pattern of the Ideal Eternal History that underlies the work as a whole. Roman culture is the "type" of the Heroic Age, and as cities are creations of the heroic era, Rome is the prototypical city par excellence.[50] Finally "Book Five: The Recourse of Human Institutions Which the Nations Take When They Rise Again", brings us to the age of man and the threshold of the Europe of Vico's day. An implicit fifth cycle begins with the "Conclusion Of The Work", moves to the Appendix: the "Practic of the *New Science*", and then to the world of the reader of the work.

In constructing this work Vico has actually employed the principles of forensic rhetoric to address the past as set out by Cicero, including the various enthymatical sources for proof: the probable, the necessary, and the example.

The heart of the work is the third cycle of "Book Two: Poetic Wisdom". The introduction to this book reiterates the necessarily fabulous origins of all nations and how the first sages were -in terms of the Greek nation - the theological poets. The conceits

of nations and scholars are recalled to remind us that these fabulous origins were products of the imagination of the first men, and thus cannot be understood rationally, although the Greek philosophers were able to translate them into philosophy (*NS*, §361).

Wisdom for Vico

> ... is the faculty which commands all the disciplines by which we acquire all the sciences and arts that make up humanity (*NS*, §364)

and

> ... we must trace the beginnings of poetic wisdom to a crude metaphysics (*NS*, §367)

His intention is to

> ... show clearly and distinctly[51] how the founders of gentile humanity by means of their natural theology (or metaphysics) imagined the gods ... (*NS*, §367)

and how they proceeded to create, invent (discover) or found the various branches of science that followed from this poetic origin. Thus Vico's Science

> ... comes to be at once a history of the ideas, the customs, and the deeds of mankind...[and the source of] the principles of the history of human nature, which we shall show to be the principles of universal history, which principles it seems hitherto to have lacked.
> (*NS*, §368)

This history of human ideas, one of the seven principal aspects of his Science,

> ... will present the rough origins of both the practical sciences in use among the nations and of the speculative sciences which are now cultivated by the learned. (*NS*, §391)

Practical science and speculative science are the two main branches of knowledge deriving from poetic metaphysics. Practical science concerns those things which we have made ourselves (as a direct response to necessity or utility) and thus can come to know intimately. Fully four-fifths of the book on poetic wisdom deals with these practical sciences which include:

a) Poetic Logic by means of which the theological poets invented languages
b) Poetic Morals by which they created Heroes
c) Poetic Economics by which they founded families
d) Poetic Politics by which they founded cities

Only one fifth of the book remains for the speculative sciences, the mother whom is Poetic Physics. These sciences study those things of natural or Divine origin which we have not made ourselves, and thus can never fully come to know; we can only speculate about their true nature.[52] Poetic Cosmography, by means of which the early sages fashioned for themselves a universe of gods, follows from Poetic Physics as does Poetic Astronomy, by means of which the planets and constellations were carried *from* earth *to* heaven. Poetic Astronomy subdivides into Poetic Chronology, as the creation of |measured| time, and Poetic Geography, which enabled the description of the whole world in terms of the known world.

This emphasis on the social sciences inverts the priorities indicated by the academies and the emerging speculative sciences, but reveals their common roots and interrelations, as previously discussed with relation to images and instruments.

.2 *Substantive structure*

Following his description of the frontispiece Vico announces that his *New Science*

> ...discovers the origins of divine and human institutions among the gentile nations, and thereby establishes a system of the natural law of the gentes, which proceeds with the greatest equality and constancy through the three ages which the Egyptians handed down to us... (*NS*, §31)

He then lists the three ages with their corresponding natures, governments, kinds of language, and letters. The relation of letters and language,

> ...born twins and |proceeding| apace through all their three stages...|will enable linguistic scholars| to make discoveries of antiquities far beyond their expectations and ours. (*NS*, §33)

This discovery Vico calls the master key of his Science since it reveals the fact that

> ...the first gentile peoples, by a demonstrated necessity of nature, were poets who spoke in poetic characters...which were certain imaginative genera (images for the most part of animate substances, of gods or heroes, formed by their imagination) to which they reduced all the species or all the particulars appertaining to each genus...These divine or heroic characters were true fables or myths, and their allegories are found to contain meanings not analogical but univocal, not philosophical but historical... (*NS*, §34)

Axiom XVIII (*NS*, §152-53) reiterates the principle of language as the embodiment of the ideas and customs of its culture, and thus the ability of "etymological excavation" of Latin speech to provide philological proof of the natural law of the gentes, via its pre-eminent example: the Romans.

Vico develops this master key in terms of the relationships between language, imagination, and the world. Embodied imagination mediates the world and our experience of it, and this is the basis for our language. What ultimately appear to us as tropes, or figures of speech, were originally modes of engaging the world. These modes appear as figurative only when one ceases to be immersed in them.

"Book II: Poetic Wisdom" (the core of the work) opens with Poetic Metaphysics (Natural Theology) as the primary science founded on the primary institution of religion. The first sub-section, Poetic Logic, concerns the imaginative foundations of speech and language, rooted in the four tropes of metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony (*NS*, §404-09). These four tropes, as modes of engaging the world, follow each other in historical sequence, with residues of the former retained "figuratively" in the domain of the latter. In each of these epistemological-ontological modes the corresponding trope prefigures the world and establishes the nature by which the primary institutions (religion, marriage, burial) will manifest themselves.

The decadence of the human age, and the ultimate return to bestial behaviour giving rise to a new age of the gods, is the result of an ironic distance in which one comes to recognize disparities between figurative representations and "literal" reality, in which literal reality is considered the truth. So-called literal reality, however, remains a figurative construction, and the perceived disparity introduces in a real way the possibility of falsehood or misrepresentation in which individual perception or opinion becomes a factor. This opens the possibility for excessive individuality, boundless liberal freedom, and a "deep solitude of spirit and will" (*NS*, §1106). It undermines the nature of truth, which has become merely subjective, and necessitates the reestablishment of bounds and an authority in the form of a return of the gods. We see thus that not only the historical *content* of language (etymologically extracted) but the *mechanism* of so-called figurative language holds the key to historical understanding.

By this analysis Vico also shows tropes and figures (the imagination) to be the foundation of rational thought. Scientific knowledge is merely the "truth" provided by prefiguration, raised to the level of "abstract concepts" by reason, and submitted to criticism (judgment) for logical consistency and internal coherence. Poetic invention is the meaningful figuration of reality and Poetic Wisdom is a sort of proto-science. Philosophy-science-reflection is thus not the opposite of poetry-art-making, but another mode of it, one that risks slipping into decadence if not restrained. And when commonwealths

> ...fall from a perfect liberty into the perfect tyranny of anarchy or the unchecked liberty of free peoples, which is the worst of all tyrannies... [then] providence applies one of these three great remedies in the following order of human civil institutions.
>
> It first ordains that there be found among these peoples a man like Augustus to arise and establish himself as a monarch and, by force of arms, take in hand all the institutions and all the laws....
>
> Then, if providence does not find such a remedy within, it seeks it outside...and decrees that they become subject to better nations which, having conquered them by arms, preserve them as subject provinces....
>
> But if the peoples are rotting in that ultimate civil disease and cannot agree on a monarch from within, and are not conquered and preserved by better nations from without, then providence for their extreme ill has an extreme remedy at hand. For such peoples...have fallen into the custom of each man thinking only of his own private interests and have reached the extreme of delicacy, or better of pride, in which like wild animals they bristle and lash out at the slightest displeasure ...they live like wild beasts in a deep solitude of spirit will, scarcely any two being able to agree since each follows his own pleasure or caprice. By reason of all this, providence decrees that, through obstinate factions and desperate civil wars, they shall turn their cities into forests and the forests into dens and lairs of men. In this way, through long centuries of barbarism, rust will consume the misbegotten subtleties of malicious wits that have turned them into beasts made more inhuman by the barbarism of reflection than the first men had been made by the barbarism of sense... And the few survivors in the midst of an abundance of the things necessary for life naturally become sociable and, returning to the primitive simplicity of the first world of peoples, are again religious, truthful, and faithful.
> (*NS*, §1102-06)

The ironic condition thus contains the seeds of its own destruction thus perpetuating the cycle. But this cyclical recurrence relates only to the gentile nations upon which Vico claims to base his science. Because the gentile nations were founded on corporeal images and signs, they were always removed from their gods, necessitating interpretation (divination) through augury. Divination produced the multitude of gods, reflecting the multitude of interpretations sustainable by the phenomenal world. Hebrew faith, however, based on an absolute spiritual God who spoke to them directly without intermediary signs, banned divination (*NS*, §167, 365, 381). Vico's science, based as it was on signs and images, had to exclude the Hebrews. He distinguishes the gentiles from the Hebrews based on concepts of providence and divination:

> The Hebrews thought God to be an infinite Mind beholding all times in one point of eternity, whence God, either Himself or through the angels that are minds or through the prophets to whose minds God spoke, gave notice of what was in store for His people. The gentiles fancied bodies to be gods, that by sensible signs they might give notice of what was in store for the peoples. On account of the attribute of His providence, as true among the Hebrews as it was imagined among the gentiles, all humankind gave to the nature of God the name divinity by one common idea, which the Latins expressed in *divinari*, to foretell the future... (*NS*, §9)

> ...in keeping with the full meaning of applying to providence the term "divinity," from *divinari*, to divine, which is to understand what is hidden *from* men - the future - or what is hidden *in* them - their consciousness. It is this |divinatory providence| that makes up the first and principal part of the subject matter of jurisprudence, namely the divine institutions |e.g., augury| on which depend the human institutions which make up its other and complementary part. (*NS*, §342)

Wisdom among the gentiles began with the Muse. At first it was defined as the knowledge of good and evil[53] and was later called divination. The vulgar wisdom of all gentile nations was then

> ... the science of divining by auspices...|and| consisted in contemplating God under the attribute of his providence, so that from *divinari* his essence came to be called divinity. (*NS*, §365)

On the other hand the "true religion of the Hebrews, from which |the| Christian religion arose" was founded by God upon the prohibition of the practice of divination as something naturally denied to man.

> Finally among the Hebrews, and thence among the Christians, wisdom was called the science of eternal things revealed by God; a science which, among the Tuscans, considered as knowledge of the true good and true evil, perhaps owed to that fact that the first name they gave it, 'science in divinity'. (*NS*, §365)

Vico defines the truth of the Hebrew religion in the same way he defines poetic truth. Poetic truth is based on absolute and imperative metaphoric identification, taken as an essential truth because there are no other prior identifications by which to judge it false. Because Vico's chronology of the world begins with the universal flood, the oldest and therefore archetypical God is the God of Noah. No earlier divine formulations survived this "clearing" of the world to challenge His authority. And because Noah's God had no corporeal limitations, His being and His power were absolute and infinite. The Hebrew faith, moreover, was manifest in laws based on the received word of their God. The incorporeal and eternal nature of these laws matched that of their God, as did their power and authority.

These characteristics of the Hebrew religion which make it unsuitable as a component of the *New Science*, nevertheless constitute, for Vico, a model for both Roman Civil Law and Natural Science as systems that claim absolute authority. Certainly his legal background, and his promotion of the greatness of Rome based on her heroic legislative power (*NS*, §1003) lead him to appreciate the law-based Hebrew religion. He discusses the relationship of science to religion in terms of wisdom:

> ....among the Hebrews, and thence among us Christians, wisdom was called the science of eternal things revealed by God; a science which, among the Tuscans, considered as knowledge of the true good and the true evil, perhaps owed to that fact the first name they gave it, "science of divinity." (*NS*, §365)

Science explains

> ...the particular ways in which [things] come into being; that is to say their nature, the explanation of which is the distinguishing mark of science. (*NS*, §346)

Science thus *explains* the *true nature of things* as their eternal truths. Whereas the Hebrews got this directly from God, the gentiles had to divine or interpret it from the particulars of the *certum*:

> Wisdom among the gentiles began with the Muse, defined by Homer ...
> as "knowledge of good and evil," and later called divination. (*NS*, §365,
> see also §381)

The direct access that science presumes to have to the true nature of things, disclosed through explanation, is modelled on the truth presumed by the Hebrew religion in their direct access to God. The essential difference drawn by Vico between Hebrews and gentiles corresponds to the difference between science, which presumes to be *the* true explanation, whereas interpretation which presumes itself to be a *factum*. The Hebrews *believed* their access to God was direct; the gentiles *believed* they had to contemplate God under the attribute of His providence (*NS*, §365, 381). This is not to objectively affirm that the Hebrew or Christian God is the One True God. Rather, what sets the Hebrews apart is that they *believed* that their access was direct (*NS*, §350), just as science believes its own truths. For Vico, science and the Hebrew faith, which take themselves to be true and are founded on this very premise, typify the condition or state of direct access. Each of them guards its exclusive nature by prohibiting what, in their own strict terms, they would consider divination or interpretation. However, in presenting them as models which presume themselves to be true, there is no indication that Vico accepts them as such.

While some may take the *New Science* to be an affirmation of the truth and superiority of the Christian religion,[54] the statements they construe as such might also be a sop to the censors,[55] for this was still a real concern in the eighteenth century. However, considered in relation to the objectives of the *New Science*, the role of Christianity is more critical than either of these two interpretations allow.

If the Ideal Eternal History of the *New Science* is a poetic elevation of the particular history of Rome to universal status, as is evident from Vico's characterization of Rome as the heroic archetype (*NS*, §1003), then Christianity, as a significant episode in this history, must be incorporated. Vico, however, turns this to his own purposes. Just as the Hebrew religion is the archetype for direct access to God, and the gentile religions manifest a relation to God based on divination, so the Christian religion represents a tactic which might be called "reconciliatory inclusion."

Vico describes the Christian religion as a *mixture* of:

a)   poetic civil theology produced by the theological poets of all gentile nations, regulated by sensible signs believed to be divine counsels sent to man by the gods,

b)   natural theology of the metaphysicians [scientists] which demonstrates providence by eternal reasons which do not fall under the senses, and

c)   lofty revealed theology, based on supernatural faith superior not only to the senses but to human reason itself
See (*NS*, §366)

Providence guides nations from initial poetic theology, by way of natural theology, to revealed theology. While this may imply some form of evolutionary progress in which one stage supersedes another, it also describes a figure of movement within a field of ever-present possibilities. These possibilities include the sense of the poets, the intellect of the metaphysicians, and the faith of the true believers. In this sense the virtue of Christianity is not superiority based on direct access to revealed divine truth, but its integration of the poetic, the scientific, and the divine, as *types* of relations between the mind of man and the world of God or nature. Vico's objective here is to grasp the *totality* or *wholeness* of this religious aspect of human experience, based on commonality, not unity. Through the terms of divinity and providence he demonstrates the ground common to Christians, Hebrews and gentiles. The Hebrews stand, not in opposition to the gentiles, but at one extreme end of the range of possibilities providence offers. They are not outside the continuum, but they represent the limiting condition. At the same time, gentile fables, understood as specific interpretations of God's counsel, become recognized as their own truths rather than falsehoods.

Throughout the *New Science*, Vico himself employs this tactic of reconciliatory inclusion.[56] While it produces a condition of plenitude or abundance, it also produces dilemmas, contradictions, and paradoxes which must be resolved. Providence and divination, for instance, are the common principles - differently realized - that relate the Hebrews and the gentiles. According to Vico, divine providence, as a concept, can also resolve the opposition betwee. .he Epicurean chance of sceptical philosophers and the fatalism of Stoic determinists (*NS*, §130, 345, 1109). Divine providence also relates the *certum* to the *verum*, and accounts for the *factum*.

To unravel the complexity of this abundance or plenitude, Vico describes it as developing cumulatively over time. As each new age emerges in diachronic sequence, remnants of the former persist, creating a complex, often contradictory synchronic tableau in which past, present and future coincide. To describe this synchronic intermingling he often uses the image of a river flowing into the sea:

> The poetic speech which our poetic logic has helped us to understand continued for a long time into the historical period, much as great and rapid rivers continue far into the sea, keeping sweet the waters borne on by the force of their flow... (*NS* §412)

> We have seen that the generation of commonwealths began in the age of the gods, in which governments were theocratic; that is, divine. Later they developed into the first human, namely heroic, governments, here called human to distinguish them from the divine. Within these human governments, even as the mighty current of a kingly river retains far out to sea the momentum of its flow and the sweetness of its waters, the age of the gods coursed on, for there persisted still that religious way of thinking according to which it was the gods who did whatever the men themselves were doing... (*NS* §629)

> ...we shall find that the succession admits of natural mixtures, not of form with form (for such mixtures would be monsters), but of a succeeding form with a preceding administration. Such mixtures are founded on the axiom that when men change they retain for some time the impression of their previous customs. (*NS* §1004)

However Vico also describes the *simultaneous* appearance of various ages and language types:

> To enter now upon the extremely difficult |question of the| way in which these three kinds of languages and letters were formed, we must establish this principle: that as the gods, heroes, and men began at the same time (for they were, after all, men who imagined the gods and believed their own heroic nature to be a mixture of the divine and human natures), so these three languages began at the same time, each having its letters, which developed along with it. They began, however, with these three very great differences: that the language of the gods was almost entirely mute, only very slightly articulate; the language of the heroes, an equal mixture of articulate and mute, and consequently of vulgar speech and of the heroic characters used in writing by the heroes, which Homer calls *semata*; the language of men, almost entirely articulate and only very slightly mute, there being no vulgar language so copious that there are not

more things than it has words for. Thus necessarily the heroic language
was in the beginning disordered in the extreme; and this is a great source
of the obscurity of the fables.... (*NS* §446)

While it may appear that the diachronic narrative is a device to facilitate explanation, it could also be that the synchronic-diachronic dialectic corresponds to Vico's complex notion of time in which history is simultaneously diachronic *and* synchronic.[57] He sets out his concept of time in *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians* relating it to space and motion:

> Time is a composite mode because it involves two places, one of which stands still while the other is in motion. The originators of the Latin language...used the particles indicating time and space interchangeably....From these examples it emerges that motion is composite, for it consists of terms such as *unde* (whence), *qua* (by what way), and *quo* (whither). (*AWI*, 80)

Likewise, time retains cyclical qualities based on the sequence of gentile ages, together with linear qualities of truth progressively revealed between genesis and revelation.

This dialectic also appears when he attempts to unravel certain complex or contradictory conditions by seeking common origins. His tree of knowledge, for instance (*NS*, §367), suggests that all branches spring from a common trunk. If the potential for all knowledge is embryonically present in the original kernel, then even though it unfolds linearly, as certain potentials are inductively realized by human choice, it is also synchronic.

According to Frankel's hypothesis this linear unfolding follows a sort of expanding spiral pattern which is not progressive, since it retains the same essential core. The manner in which it unfolds varies as its original nature (*NS*, §147) and the clearing into which it emerges. Writing on Vico's linguistic theories Antonio Pagliaro points out that, after giving a diachronic image of the three stages of language - divine, heroic and human - Vico realized and explicitly declared, that the different factors are present in each of them and operating synchronically.[58]

The three ages are as poetic characters invented or called upon by Vico to reveal various aspects of a composite reality that coexist and interact.

> ...These [eleven] triadic special unities...are all embraced by one general unity. This is the religion of a provident divinity, which is the unity of spirit that informs and gives life to this world of nations...
> (*NS*, §915)

Thus providence is not merely the guiding presence, or the pattern of the sequential ages, but the cumulative and composite presence of all three parts of each triad existing simultaneously at any given time.

Within this conceptual and temporal thickness (or synchronic plenitude) where, as T.S.Eliot suggests "all time is eternally present,"[59] historical origins can be imaginatively reconstructed through memory-invention. In the same way, already-present prophesies become apparent through imagination-invention. The relation between origin-memory and prophesy is neither prescriptive nor fatalistically predetermined, but arises because both are products of the same human imagination, and parts of one are necessarily contained within parts of the other. And neither of these can ever be absolutes: as boundary conditions they are fashioned in the image of the cultural clearing we create for ourselves, the lions we choose to slay.[60]

B. *The Structure of the Campo Marzio*

Based on the preceding analyses and discussion of the *New Science* we will now ask it to lend a meaning to the *Campo Marzio*. This lending corresponds to the "lending of oneself" that occurs in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's description of a handshake. This lending, however, is merely provisional, as was the identity first established by metaphor to allow something to be comprehended. Once established, this identity mutates into metonymy and synecdoche as the receiving thing takes on its own characteristics.

Since both the *New Science* and the *Campo Marzio* have Rome as their subject,[61] similarities of content between the two are bound to exist. However our wager is that the *New Science* also provides the initial program for the organization and content of the *Campo Marzio*.

.1   *Organizational Structure:*

One key element missing from previous analyses of the *Campo Marzio* is a description of the structure of the publication as a whole. The forty-eight numbered plates are preceded by two unnumbered ones (the titlepage and frontispiece) and a letterpress text, in both Latin and Italian. This includes a three-page dedicatory letter to Robert Adam, followed by sixty-eight printed pages. A pair of small plates are placed above the letter (one for each language) and another pair close the text.[62] These two plates plus the text constitute a tripartite introduction which recalls the frontispiece and explanatory text of the *New Science*.

Titlepage

The titlepage (tpg) is a giant stone slab inscribed in Latin with the title of the work, the date and the name of the author, indicating his honourary membership in the Royal London Antiquarian Society. More important than the inscriptions, however, is the cracked stone slab on which they appear. These cracks, as we shall see, form a sort of lithographic "template" for what follows.

Frontispiece

The frontispiece (fpc) is a three-dimensional reconstruction of the area directly to the north of Hadrian's mausoleum. Both the projection and style are unusual in Piranesi's oeuvre. Since parallel lines do not seem to converge it cannot be a perspective; as the façades seem orthographically correct it is more likely an *elevation oblique*. Most

Fig. 5: *Titlepage from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

interesting though is the complete lack of horizon.[63] The view is entirely self-contained. Whereas a horizon would establish a relation to the sky or distant landscape, this view fixes the observer's viewpoint within the realm below the sky, allowing no relations to any outside domain. The subject of the view appears to be a "heroic" reconstruction of an area that is actually *outside* the Campo Marzio. The Tiber runs horizontally across the bottom third, and in the bottom right corner, within the Campo Marzio proper, a stone tablet repeats the information of the titlepage, this time in vulgar Italian. The tablet and associated fragments and ruins are portrayed in chiaroscuro fashion

Fig. 6: *Frontispiece from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

with deep shadows, tectonic decay and organic growth: a merging of the human and natural worlds occurring within historical time. The reconstructed aerial view of the upper two-thirds, on the other hand, is rendered with crisp, straight lines that might well have been engraved rather than etched. It appears in extremely harsh light with a minimum of shadow. There are no signs of ruin or decay, nor even of life, as though it exists outside of experiential time. All natural elements (trees and water) are subjected to a rigorous rational ordering on a regularized flat plane. The harsh lighting, absolute regularity, and precision draughtsmanship create the appearance of a surrealistic dream: reason pushed to its hallucinatory limit. As with all true frontispieces it initiates our entry into the world of the work it precedes, and prefigures, by foreshadowing what is to follow.[64]

Text

The six chapters of the text tell Piranesi's story of the chronological development of the Campo Marzio from its original founding and naming to the ultimate demise of the Empire. This corresponds to Vico's heroic and human ages. The bulk of Vico's work, however, is situated in the Divine and heroic ages of myth and fable that precede the age of man. His chronological table ends with Scipio Africanus and the second Carthaginian War (Year of Rome 552; BC 201) at the beginning of the human age and certain history as recorded by Livy. It is as though Piranesi wished to pick up the story where Vico left off, overlapping the heroic age and continuing into the human age.

Maps

The text is followed by a series of maps (pls.I, III, and IV) illustrating the developments described in the text. A double size scenographic view (pl.II) is inserted into this series directly after the topographical map and just before the era of human habitation. The time horizons of the maps correspond to the various chapters of the text as follows:

a)	Chapter I:	Plate I	Divine
b)	Chapter II:	Plate III	Heroic
c)	Chapter III:	Plate IV, figure I	Human
d)	Chapter IV:	Plate IV, figure II	(republic)
e)	Chapter V:	Plate IV, figure III	(monarchy)

Chapters I and II (and consequently plates I and III) correspond to Vico's heroic age from the founding of Rome to the expulsion of Tarquinius Superbus, the seventh and last king of Rome, and the return of the land to the people. This signalled the shift from the age of Kings to that of Aristocratic Commonwealths; popular commonwealths begin only with the later Publilian and Petelian laws (*NS*, §26). Plate IV, and thus chapters III to V, correspond to Vico's human age, ending with Augustus' monarchy as the last gasp of the Empire before its collapse. The three maps thus repeat the cycle initiated by the tripartite introduction (tpg-fpc-txt), which is also contained within the text.

plate I

Entitled *"Topographia Campi Marti cum notis locorum de quibus sermo..."*, this plate illustrates the natural topography of the site along with the two major roads that predate development of the area: the Via Salaria and Via Flaminia. Buildings are indicated by notations only. It also indicates, by means of a dotted line, Julius Caesar's proposal to reroute the Tiber and thus widen the space between the river and the line of hills to the East. In doing this it would annex to the existing Campo Marzio the area indicated in the aerial view in the frontispiece "...and make as a Campo Marzio the Campo Vaticano"

Fig. 7: *Plate I from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

(*CM*, Ch.1, §VIII). This plan was of course never carried out, but Piranesi uses it to support his argument in Chapter One that the original Campo Marzio filled the entire plain between the river and the hills, making this expansion project a necessary and serious consideration. When read in conjunction with this annexation project, the frontispiece might appear to be a speculation concerning development subsequent to that of the Campo Marzio: a futuristic or idealized vision of the city.

plate III

This plate corresponds exactly to the scope of Chapter Two in the text (from the founding of Rome to the expulsion of the kings), although figures II and IV are also used in chapter one as arguments for the extended boundaries of the Campo. Figure II illustrates the argument that because the vice of the tyrant Tarquinius knew no bounds, there is no reason to suppose that the extent of his usurpation of the Campo would be

limited by anything other than the natural topography. Thus, Piranesi argues, at least from the time of Tarquinius on, and because of his great vice, the Campo was as large as he (Piranesi) now claims. He seeks further support for his claim through interpretation of a statement by the geographer Strabo who describes the "marvellous greatness" of the long straight stretch of the Campo between the hills and the river through a poetic simile as "that which (*come quella*) is wide open and invites speed". For Piranesi the "marvellous greatness" refers not only to the magnificence, but the *extent* of the area, and the poetic simile of "being wide open and inviting speed" is proof enough

Fig. 8: *Plate III from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

that it was in fact used for speed in the form of horse racing and attended by large gatherings in the wide open spaces.[65]

plate IV

The first figure in this plate, the final map in this series, covers the period of Chapter Three: from the expulsion of the kings in the person of Tarquinius Superbus to the age of Caius Flaminius. Figures II and III in this same plate collectively represent the period of Chapters Four and Five: from Caius Flaminius to the death of Augustus, with Chapter Five devoted exclusively to Augustus. Plate IV, then, represents the whole of the age beginning with the Republic at the end of the reign of the kings (Yr.245; 508 BC) and concluding with the founding of the Empire (Yr.726; 27 BC): Rome at its greatest development prior to decline. The decline is not illustrated, although Chapter Six, covering the era from the death of Augustus to the fall of the Empire, refers us back

to the ruins and fragments illustrated in the *scenographia* (pl. II) which is inserted into the cycle of plates I-III-IV.

plate II

Plate II is known as the *scenographia*. As its full title tells us,[66] it is an overview of the ruins of ancient buildings as they remained in Piranesi's own time, shown distributed across the site which has otherwise been reduced to its rude or natural state with all other buildings removed. This clearing of the site corresponds to Vico's poetic interpretation of Hercules' slaying of the Nemean lion as a heroic description of the clearing of the primeval forests. These

Fig. 9: *Plate IV from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

heroic clearings (known as *luci*: the eyes which admitted light into the forest) afforded a clear view of the sky and permitted inscription of the *templa caeli* on the ground. They also made room for agricultural development and the asylums wherein the heroes offered protection to the barbarians who emerged from the forest. In these clearings altars (*arae* or *aram*) were erected. For Vico all of these - the *templa caeli*, agriculture, asylums, altars - are the founding bases for the first cities, which were also called *arae*, thus linking altars and the arable land of agriculture (*NS*, §3-4, 14-18, 106, 564, 775-78).[67]

Piranesi's clearing is not of the primeval forest, but of the returned barbarian times. He strips away all encrustations not proper to the heroic or early human era of Rome, that is to say: all "unauthentic" material. This resembles his clearing of the literary-textual ground of the various opinions of traditional authorities in Chapter One.[68] Clearing is an operation essential to founding or re-founding. Barbarism itself has a sort of purging or clearing function; it is the means by which Providence enters the world,
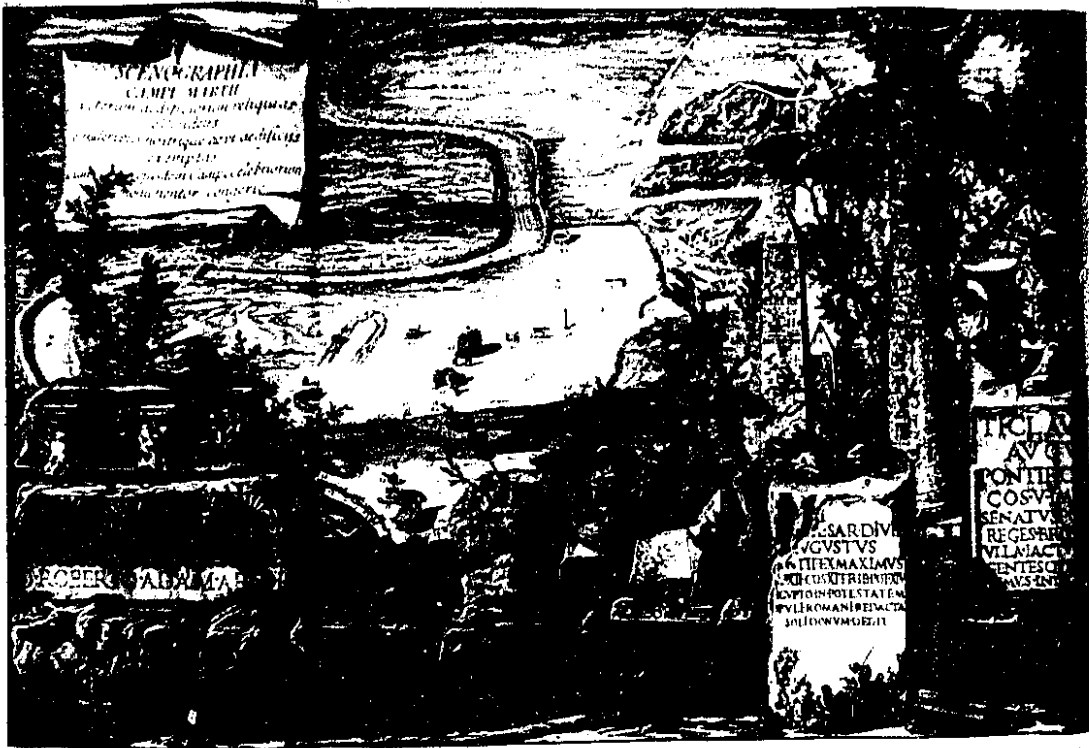
Fig. 10: *Plate II (scenographia) from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

in reverse as it were, to restore the course of history to its ideal eternal configuration.

The elevated viewpoint of the *scenographia*, situated over the traditional site of the founding of the original heroic city, reveals the prospect of the *tabula* (almost) *rasa* from the Tiber Island around to the Milvian Bridge. Unlike the oblique projection of the frontispiece with no horizons, the foreshortened perspective of this view is contained between the horizontal obelisk in the foreground and the horizontal stretch of the Tiber in the distance.

Usually flanking the *scenographia* are two legend tablets printed on separate plates. One identifies ruins situated in the plain, the other the heap of isolated and ungrounded fragments Piranesi claims to have found in the Campo. Whereas the situated ruins mark the landscape, the foreground elements framing the view all bear some form of marking or inscription of their own. These include:

a) the vulgar letters of incised Latin inscriptions, including one to Robert Adam.
b) hieroglyphic inscriptions on fallen and standing obelisks.
c) a pictorial history of the wars of Marcus Aurelius in a bas-relief band spiralling around a cylindrical column similar to the Column of Trajan.
d) vulgar letters stamped on a lead sewer pipe.
e) a column capital ornamented with the trophies of war.[69]
f) the printed scroll of the title.

across all of which scramble mute, gesticulating figures, reduced to sub-human beasts in the presence of these heroic remains. Piranesi discusses several of these fragments in detail in Chapter Six of his text (see below). Together with the situated remains these are the "stuff" out of which Piranesi will imaginatively construct the new heroic Rome on the freshly-cleared ground. And this construction will be an act of poetic logic, treating the found remains as examples of linguistic tropes to be interpreted.[70]

Although this plate seems out of sequence both in relation to the other maps and in that it is not referred to until the final chapter of the text, it nevertheless has a place between the purely natural state of plate I (the absolute origin to which it is *almost* a return, albeit with remnants of an intermediary time), and plate III (which locates the ruins in notational form and describes the history and development of the Campo during the age of the Roman kings from the heroic founding of Rome by Romulus to the expulsion of the seventh and last king, Tarquinius Superbus).

The implication of this reading is that, in his fallen condition, man finds himself amidst the fragmented remains of his own creation, from which he must heroically arise as he once did from the natural state. The temporally alien ruins are now part of the philological "given" along with the natural world of God's creation. These ruins, as philological traces, are the subject matter of Chapter Six which, along with the *scenographia,* lays the foundation for the construction of the *ichnographia:* the *certum* out of which the *verum* is to be extracted (imagined, invented, made).

plates V - X

This set of three-plus-one plates is followed by a group of six which can be read *sequentially* (V through X) as well as simultaneously when assembled to form the large *ichnographia*. This is the centerpiece of the publication, as was Vico's section on Poetic Wisdom. We will examine the *ichnographia* in some detail shortly.

plates XI - XLVII

The remaining plates, with the exception of the final tailpiece (pl. XLVIII) are a collection of scenographic views, orthographic plans and sections, and single and composite images with no regular format, orientation, or dimension. Seemingly culled from various sources and assembled to support a thesis, this graphic appendix demonstrates the fragmentary nature of the documentary evidence which Piranesi has configured in the *ichnographia*. This appendix is essentially an expansion of the theme of the *scenographia*, seeking a text rooted in found artifacts rather than in literary quotations.

plate XLVIII

The tailpiece (tlpc) is a set of three plates which recalls, in style, technique and projection, the hard lines and stark light of the frontispiece. In returning us not to the first plate, the titlepage, but to the second, the frontispiece, the tailpiece eliminates the titlepage from the cycle of the whole publication in the same way that the *scenographia* eliminates the *topographia* (pl.I) from the map cycle.
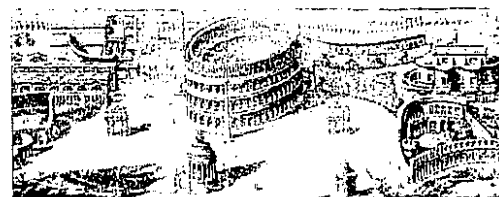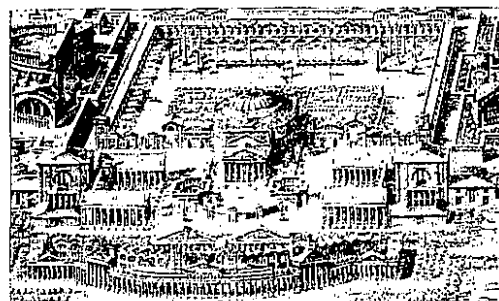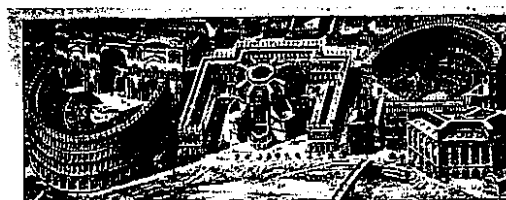
Fig. 11: *Plate XLVIII (Tailpiece) from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*
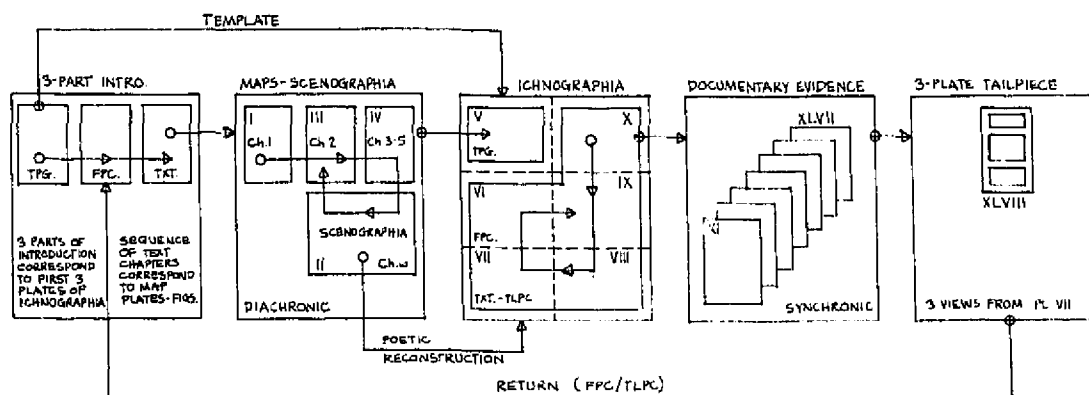
FIG.   STRUCTURAL ORGANIZATION OF THE CAMPO MARZIO

Fig. 12: *Organizational Structure of Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio*

The structural anatomy of the work as a whole can be diagrammed as in the figure above. Within this overall scheme we can now examine several of the parts in more detail. We will begin with the *ichnographia*, the centrepiece of the work and itself a microcosm of the whole.

.2   *The Ichnographia*

We first encounter the *ichnographia* sequentially as plates V through X, and then assemble it as a sort of heroic-scale duodecimo format broadsheet of six double size plates, twelve times the size of a standard book plate. The assembled *ichnographia* is rhetorically rendered as a fragment of the Severan marble map of Rome,[71] mounted to a wall by eleven large iron spikes. The top right corner is cracked, and in the top left corner an inscribed stone tablet acts as a literal title block (it is also the first one encountered sequentially). From this title block a set of smaller stone tablets, seemingly in defiance of gravity, spiral out towards the viewer around a circular medallion. While these tablets are illusionistically rendered with shades and shadows, the draughted plan view of the *ichnographia* appears scientific and precise. Unlike Nolli's convention, in

Fig. 13: *Plates V - X (Ichnographia) from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

which the figure-ground characteristics of buildings and open space are evident (only public interiors are not pochéed), Piranesi's view is a true plan section. The Tiber passes through diagonally from top right to bottom left, its double bend wholly within the middle plate on the left (pl. VI). At first appearance chaotic, even violent, in its assembly of buildings and spaces, closer inspection reveals several graphic-geometric organizing devices.

The area above the Tiber, which in fact lies *outside* the Campo Marzio proper, contains the large composition that is the subject of the frontispiece. Surrounded by geometric canals for graphic emphasis, it is oriented so as to add another quarter-turn to the counter-clockwise spiral of the tablets of the title block (pl.VI). This composition, pinned to the Tiber by the *Sepulchrum Hadriani*, appears to be a title block tablet which has spirally descended into the plane of the *ichnographia*.

Above the *Sepulchrum Hadriani* an east-west axis leads through the only gap in the "moat", via the *Area Martis* and *Horti Neroniani* to the *Pyramis Scipionis Africani* and *Nympheum Neronis* at the edge of the *Mons Vaticanus*.[72] On the other side of the Tiber another axis formed by the *Equiria* extends diagonally from the top right to the Mausoleum of Augustus in the centre formed where the bottom four plates meet. The mausoleum itself forms a local centre for various arcs, radiating lines, and especially the axis of the *Bustum Caesaris Augusti*. Each of these bottom four plates (VI, VII, VIII, and IX) has its own character and suggest, in their graphic composition, a clockwise motion around the mausoleum. Plate X is tied in to this cycle by way of the axis of the *Equiria*, thus linking all plates on the same side of the river. We will now examine each of these five beginning with plate X.

plate x

Plate X, the last one we encounter sequentially, is the only one with a dual character. Bisected vertically by the river, the left side contains the compass tablet from the title block spiral indicating the cardinal directions and orienting the plan as a whole (see chapter two on instruments). A triangular *natatio* dovetails this side to the river just above the *pons Fabianus*. The right side, with the cracked corner, is dominated by a single composition. Three large circular "play" areas surrounded by statues of illustrious heroes create a triangular form, in which a six-pointed star centred on the Temple of Vulcan, is a factory for military arms and machinery. The base of this triangle aligns with the *Equiria* along which stretch tombs, *memoriae*, and a temple to Jove. This plate at the north end of the Campo extends almost to the Milvian Bridge which Piranesi wants to include in the area of the Campo Marzio (*CM*, Ch.I) as indicated in the inscription on
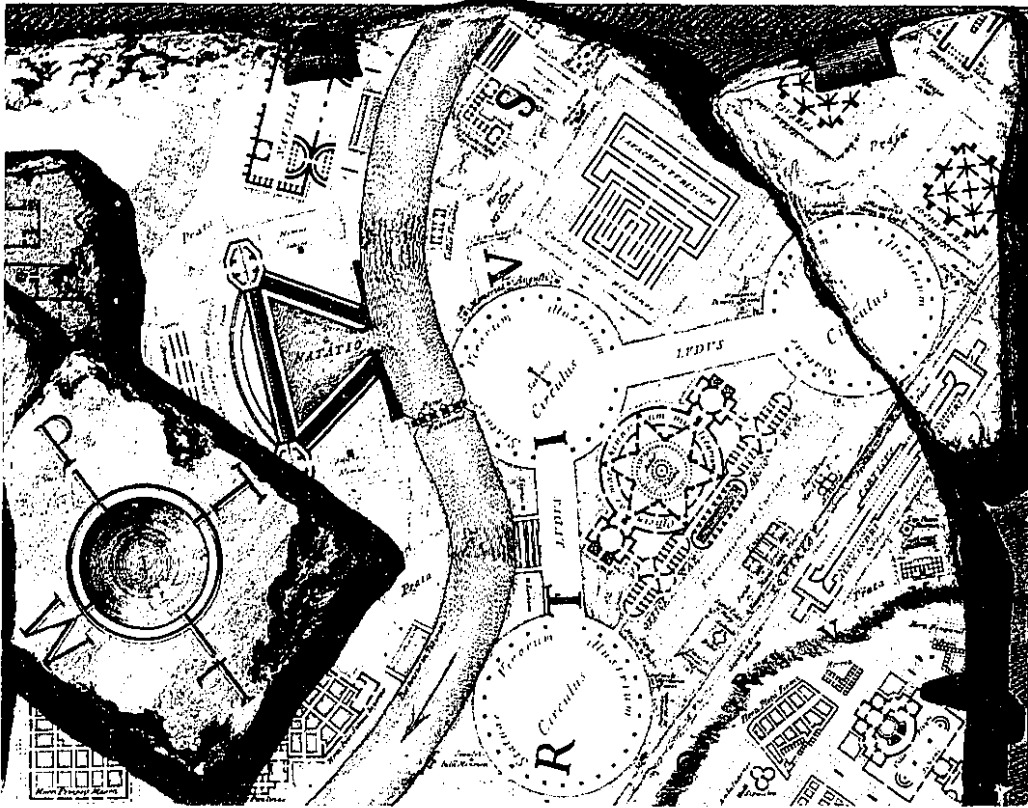
Fig. 14: *Plate X from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

the compass tablet. By establishing this boundary, at the limit of the flood plain where the river meets the row of cliffs to the east, Piranesi incorporates into the *Campo Marzio* site of the conversion of Constantine and thus the Christianization of Rome. Similarly the figures represented in this plate relate to Greek Roman, Hebrew and Christian divinities (Christian trinity, Jewish star, altar of Vulcan and Temple of Jove) made spatially concurrent (*NS*, §1094). On the left side the compass, as *templum*, also gives orientation, defines an origin, and encompasses boundaries, although its chiaroscuro rendering contrasts with the draughtsmanship of the right side. This plate leads us to the next by way of the axis of the *Equiria* and the flow of the Tiber.

plate ix

This plate consists primarily of isolated compositions which float freely or loosely align themselves with various given lines such as the *Equiria*, the rivers, or the landscape contours. This is the only plate in which naturally occurring forms other than the Tiber play a significant role. The buildings and monuments are strewn like debris across the
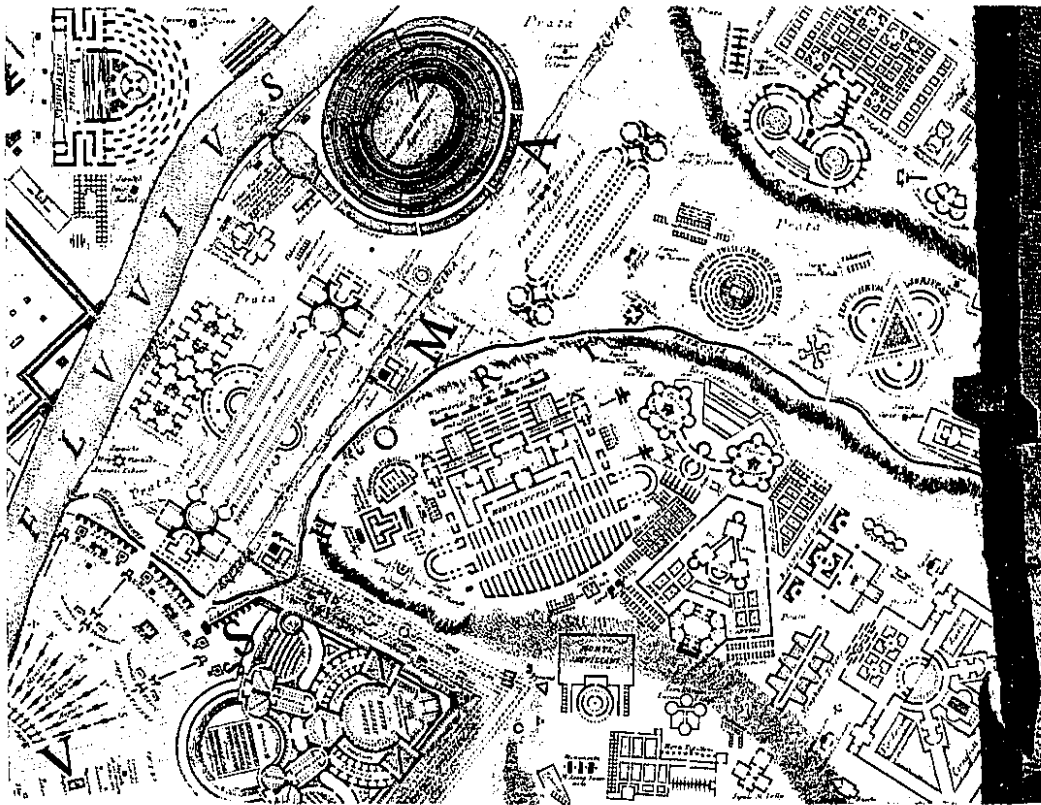
Fig. 15: *Plate IX from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

landscape. The alphabetic letters of the map, similarly dispersed, seem to become additional geometric planforms, just as the plans with which they mingle seem to become cryptic alphabetic characters. The *Naumachia Domitiani*, spiralling on the east side of the river, provides an *umbilicus*-navel-like organic counterpart to the triangular *natatio* of plate X, which suggests a divine birth. As well, most of the phallic forms of the *ichnographia* occur in this plate. These suggest the theme of animal birth in an era before nature - or man - became domesticated, corresponding to Vico's first barbaric age of feral wanderings.

plate viii

The bottom right plate illustrates a clash of large scale, rigidly formal compositions with multiple and redundant symmetries. An apparent collage or superimposed patchwork of heroic plans gives the impression of a Titanic battle or linguistic Babel. These characteristics, often attributed to the *ichnographia* as a whole, are generally confined to this plate alone, the sole exception being some interference in
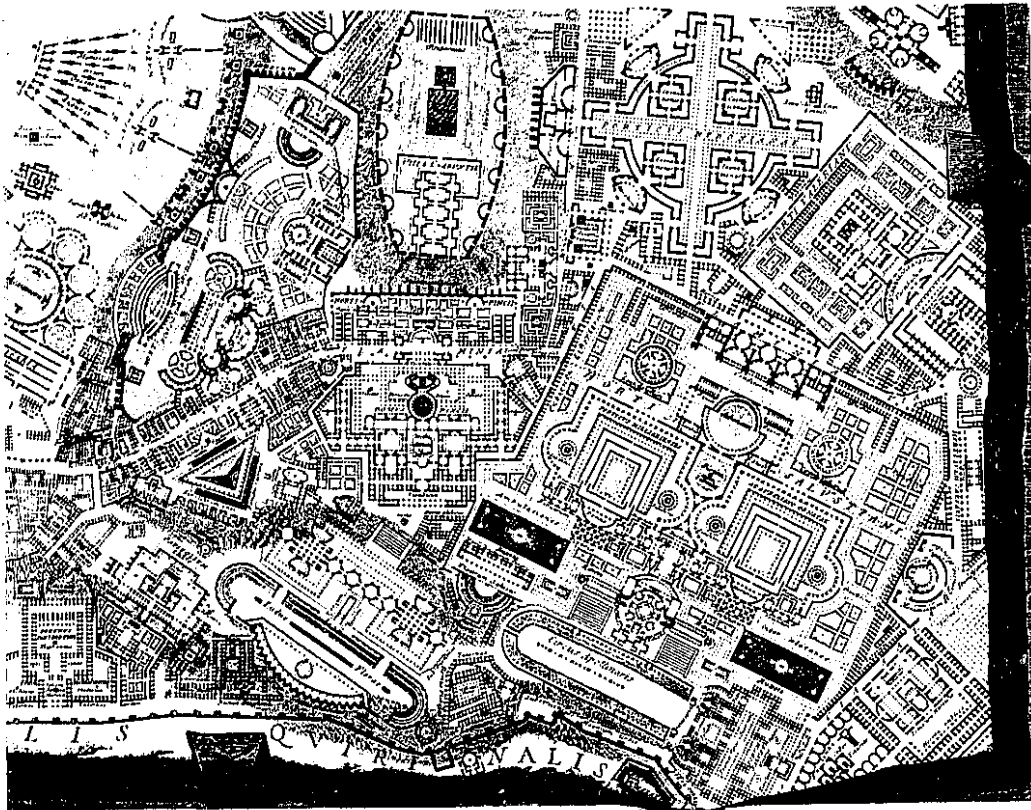
Fig. 16: *Plate VIII from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

plate VII. On the other hand the free-standing lozenge-shaped *Villa L. Arunti*[73] appears, top-center, as an intruder from the plate above. The dominant composition on the plate, the *Horti Salustiani*, is situated on the Quirinal hill where the Romans had built a temple to the goddess Salus, the personification of health, prosperity and public welfare. All of the characteristics of this plate recall Vico's description of the Heroic Age, many of whose qualities Salus personifies. The doubled bilateral symmetry of the composition also suggests the parental structure of the family out of which the heroes emerged. The overall form of this piece resembles that of the major composition in plate VI, while contained within it is the memory of the *Vivaria-Cochlearum* configuration in the top right corner of plate X.

plate vii

Aside from some minor interference from plate VIII at the bottom right, the organization of this plate creates a rational organic network in which the buildings are integrated into a fine-grained texture, responding to one another with localized axial or
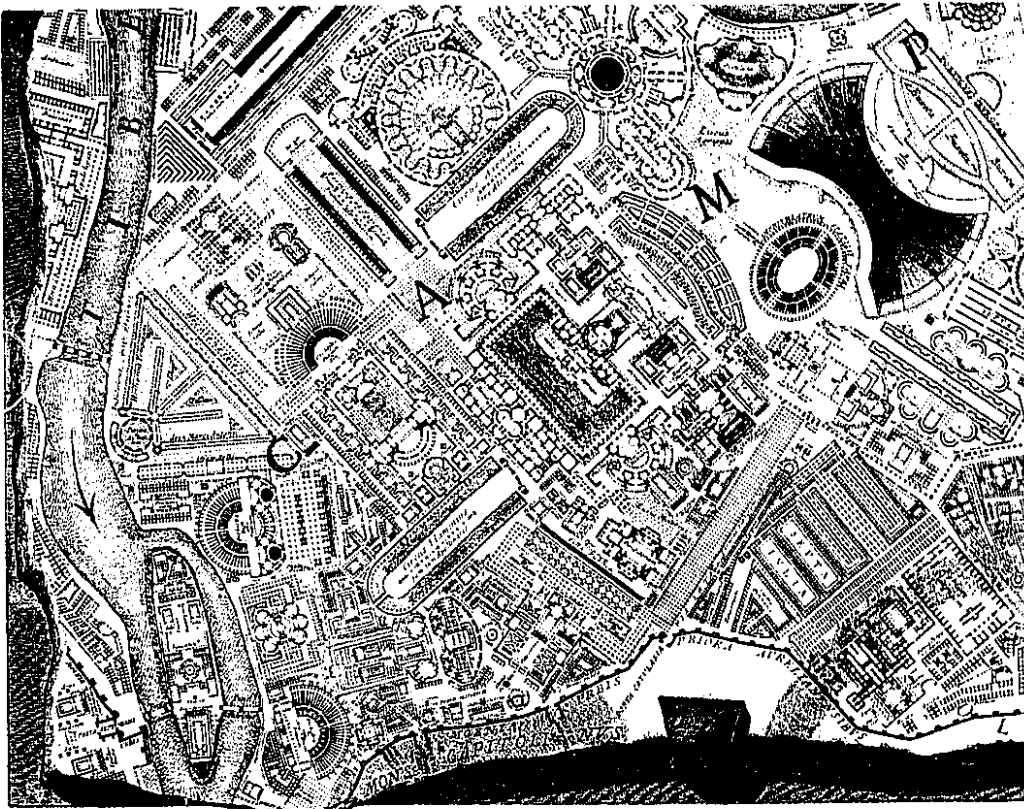
Fig. 17: *Plate VII from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

pivotal relationships. Most align with the cardinal directions, although the bottom left inflects towards the axis of Tiber Island. Near the mausoleum of Augustus larger elements such as the *Amphiteatrum Statilii Tauri* seem to break off from the network and float free in a central zone near the mausoleum of Augustus. The area of this plate corresponds to the traditional limits of the Campo Marzio as accepted in Piranesi's day and mapped by Nolli in 1748. Most of the textual references as well as the three views in the tailpiece come from this plate. Everything relates to the Campo Marzio as known in the human era, including the Temple of Janus, the Carceri of Clement X, and the start of human time in the bottom left corner (see chapter two on instruments).

plate vi

In plate VI, the canals define an integrated, compact mosaic in which all pieces fit neatly together with no residual spaces. The upward bend in the Tiber suggests an intrusion from below, while the canal pattern extends off the plate to the right. Below the raised bend in the Tiber two complete figures[74] relate this plate to the area belonging
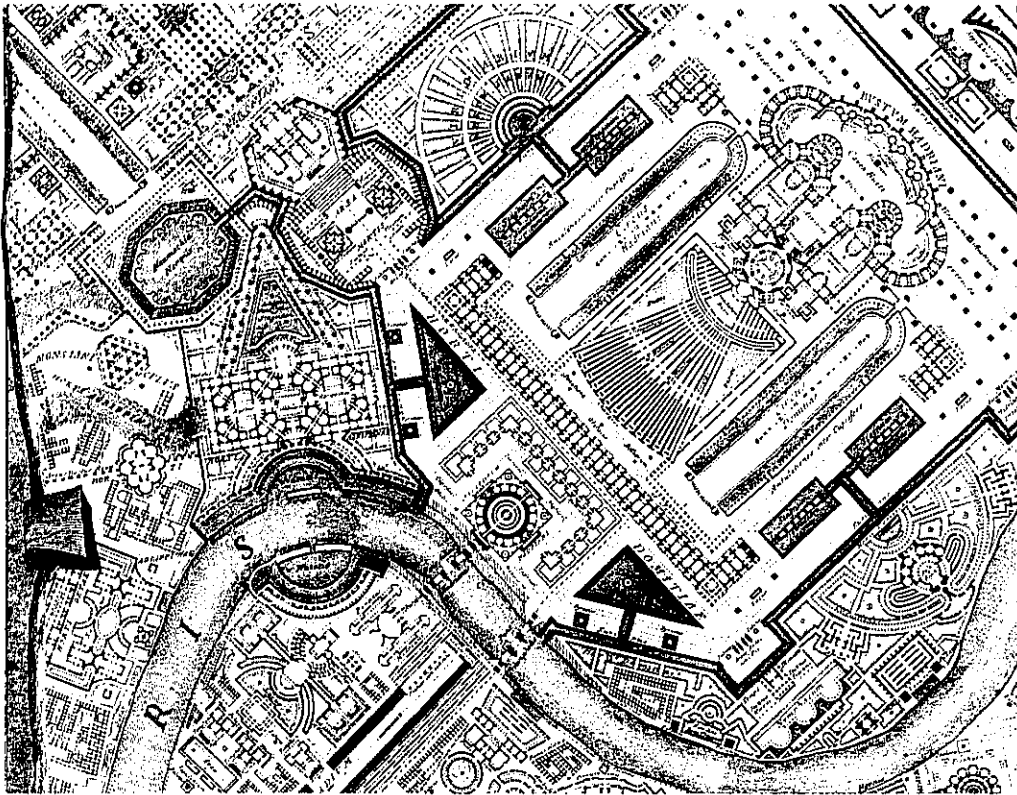
Fig. 18: *Plate VI from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

to plate VII.

The large canal-encircled complex appropriates building types and formal strategies from other plates and creates a heroic scale Baroque plan across the river from the Campo Marzio. But is it heroic or decadent? Of the Emperors represented here only Hadrian (AD 117-38) is held in high regard, having presided over one of the happiest and most peaceful of Roman periods. The others, Tiberius (AD 14-37), Nero (AD 54-68), and Domitian (AD 81-96) were the most brutal and cruel of the emperors between Augustus and Hadrian, with the possible exception of Caligula (AD 37-41). Aside from the paired circuses of Hadrian and Domitian, everything within the canal enclosure relates to death: *sepulchra* (tomb, grave) for slaves and freemen and emperors, *bustum* (tomb, pyre), and the cloister in which Dis judges the souls or remains of the dead (*clitaeporticus ab Hadriano Dis Manibus Dicatae*).[75]

One gains entrance to the enclosure from the south along the *Via Triumphala* and the *Pons Triumphalis*, or the *Pons Aelius Hadrianus* and Hadrian's tomb.[76] From the west one enters it via the *Area Martis* and *Templa Martis* which terminate the triumphal

route that began in plate VII near the *Templum Jani* (Janus) at the beginning of human time.

If plates X through VII embody, respectively, characteristics of Divine, natural, heroic and human times, then in a Vichian scheme we would expect plate VI to be the *ricorso*: the return to barbarianism that has no other purpose than to provisionally restore man to the proper path, in spite of his failings, and to do so by turning these failings "inside-out". That is, the failings, ironically, become the source of virtues (*NS*, §38, 132-33, 629, and 1108-09) as Providence, entering the world, as it were, in reverse, weakens, undermines, and twists these ignorant human characteristics to the public good. The self-conscious irony of reason and philosophy are turned back on themselves.[77] If we examine this plate in the light of irony and Vico's descriptions of the return to the barbarism of reflection, we can discern the "negative utopia" of which Tafuri speaks.[78] In Vico's barbaric times people become

> ...slaves of their unrestrained passions - of luxury, effeminacy, avarice, envy, pride - and in the pursuit of the pleasures of their dissolute life |fall| back into all the vices characteristic of the most abject slaves... For such peoples, like so many beasts, have fallen into the custom of each man thinking only of his own private interests and have reached the extreme of delicacy, or better of pride, in which like wild animals they bristle and lash out at the slightest displeasure. Thus no matter how great the throng and press of their bodies, they live like wild beasts in a deep solitude of spirit and will, scarcely any two being able to agree since each follows his own pleasure or caprice. (*NS*, §1105-6)

In the mosaic-like geometry of the plate each separate cell maintains its own internally consistent geometry, but remains isolated from the adjacent cell. The canals and other lines limit the "social" interaction (or interference, even) between the cells to mere adjacency, creating a solitude which allows each to follow their own whims without external relations or responsibility. The titanic clashes of plate VIII, reduced to democratic individuality in plate VII, have become hedonistic solipsism in plate VI. This form of scepticism, which denies the possibility of any knowledge other than one's own existence, is exactly the form of Cartesianism that Vico saw as the epitome of barbaric

reflection and set out to undermine, or "turn". The fatal flaw of democratic pluralism is its tendency towards the autonomous relativism of the individual.

The location of this zone, across the river and therefore outside the Campo Marzio and the centripetal ordering power of Augustus, gives us some hope that this "negative utopia" of Tafuri is not our certain destiny. Still, it remains as a necessary danger, and that is its saving power. The collapse of the Empire, originally brought about by the likes of Tiberius, Nero and Domitian (*NS*, §243), need not be our fate, thanks to the grace of Constantine and his conversion to Christianity. The answer is suggested in the intersection of the line of the *Equiria* (the Judeo-Christian axis extending to the Milvian Bridge) with the centre formed by Augustus. The *Equiria* itself stops at the *Petronia Amnis* (river Petronia, but also: line of amnesia?) but its north-south alignment with the traditional *cardo* (axis or turning point) is repeated in the structures of plate VII.

By repeating the subject of this plate in the frontispiece as an ominous foreshadow, and by returning us to it from tailpiece, Piranesi emphasizes its pivotal role. The frontispiece renders it as an homogenous, horizonless, self-contained space of hallucinogenic clarity. Containment is reinforced by the canals and limited access points. Unlike the smaller but more robust *Horti Salustiani* of plate VIII, the heroic grandeur of this composition leaves one with a feeling of redundance and empty self-importance.

Schematically, then, the bottom four plates of the *ichnographia* revolve around the Mausoleum of Augustus in a Natural-Heroic-Human-Barbaric cycle. Although a sequence is suggested, they are in fact presented synchronically on the same plane. The top right plate, partly coplanar (synchronous) with these, describes divine and remote origins, represented concentrically and encompassed by the Christian trinity of *statuae virorum illustrium*. The top left plate (plus the compass tablet from the right plate) however describes a spiralling diachronic descent into plate VI. The synchronic clockwise spiral of plates X-IX-VIII-VII-VI is matched by the diachronic counterclockwise spiral of plates V-(X)-VI. The *ichnographia* "broadsheet" presents a compact (condensed but not reduced) synoptic view of the whole, which includes the diachronic descent.

Fig. 19: *Plate V from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*

This diachronic spiral of the "title block" tablet (pl. V), as with other frontispieces, is a port of entry into the work. It establishes the context or terms in which what follows is to be engaged. It is not only an anticipatory foreshadowing, but an interpretive key, a microcosm of the subsequent whole, mapping out yet-to-be-encountered geometries.

plate V

The main subject of the plate is a large stone tablet with an inscription and scale under a bas-relief frieze. Two faces of the same coin bracket the frieze: one with a winged Muse indicates R. Adam's membership in the Academy of St. Luke and dates the *ichnographia* to 1757; the other displays the twinned heads of Adam and Piranesi. The figures in the frieze, mostly in groups of three, appear to be engaged in founding rituals such as leading an ox-drawn plough, or reading auspices with divining rods or *litui*. A series of images down each side of the tablet recalls various fabulous and mythological figures including angels, heroes, and the she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus. Beyond the left edge of the tablet an Eagle, Roman fasces, and a group of five figurative symbols

appear as if on an underlying tablet.[79] The stack of smaller rectangular tablets at the right spirals up around a circular medallion which represents what might be one of the pivotal events in the founding of the Italian peoples: Aeneas' encounter with the Italian king Latinus. On the uppermost tablet the topographic map indicates the geography of the larger region, and other factors relevant in the siting of Rome at the ford point created by Tiber Island, thus allowing the Via Salaria to cross from Latium to Etruria. As its title on the tablet below states, it also demonstrates the extent of the Campo Marzio up to the Milvan Bridge.[80] This lower tablet also indicates the cardinal directions.[81]

The large inscription, all in Latin, dedicates the *ichnographia* to the devoted architect Robert Adam.[82] Piranesi dedicates it *in sui amoris argumentum*, literally "according to his love of argument". Argument must be understood however not as "eristic dispute", but in the rhetorical sense of "the subject, the topic at hand", perhaps with connotations of theme and plot, or evidence and proof.[83] The darkening of the first four letters of *"amoris"* reveals, backwards and forwards, the subject to which the argument refers (Roma, amor).

Finally, along the bottom edge of the plate a thin strip of the *ichnographia* itself appears. Midway between the *Pyramis Scipionis Africani* that terminates the east-west axis from plate VI, and the *Stagnum Neronis* to the right, a small point is labelled *"Ilex cum literis aereis etruscis"*. *Ilex*, literally oak trees, were the sign to Aeneas indicating the founding site of Alba, the precursor to Rome (*Aeneid*, VIII). In Vico's etymology however, as well as Vergil's description, it is associated with laws and legislation (*i lex*) (*NS*, §240). The images and phrases of plate V collectively refer to historical and mythological foundations and origins, to beginnings and to the fulfilment of prophecies.[84]

Scipio Africanis Major, patriarch of the family whose tomb terminates the triumphal axis of plate VI, was, for Vico and most historians, one of Rome's greatest men.[85] Vico ends his chronology with Scipio at the close of the heroic age and the threshold of the human one. Speaking of the eloquence that arose by way of philosophy, but was ultimately the undoing of humanity, he says:

OUTSIDE THE CAMPO MARZIO PROPER

INSIDE THE CAMPO

V

DIACHRONIC DESCENT

DIVINE BIRTH

X

OUTSIDE THE CAMPO

P
T
W
7

AGE OF DIVINE GODS

INSIDE THE CAMPO

VERUM - HISTORY

ORIGIN
MEMORY
PROPHECY

CAMPO MARZIO

VI

AGE OF BARBARIC AND IRONIC REFLECTION

HUMAN BIRTH

IX

AXIS OF REASON

JUDEO-CHRISTIAN AXIS

TOPOS - NATURE

OUTSIDE THE CAMPO MARZIO

MONARCHY OF AUGUSTUS

SYNCHRONIC CORSO WITHIN THE PLAIN OF THE CAMPO

INSIDE THE CAMPO MARZIO

CERTUM - FACTUM

VII

CENTRIPETAL

VIII

AGE OF HUMAN REASON

SPIRAL OF

AGE OF HEROIC CLASHES

INSIDE THE CAMPO MARZIO

Fig. 20: *Anatomy of the Ichnographia*

> Such eloquence, we resolutely affirm, flourished in Rome in the time of Scipio Africanus, when civil wisdom and military valour, which happily united in establishing at Rome on the ruins of Carthage the empire of the world, must necessarily have brought in their train a robust and most prudent eloquence....But as the popular states became corrupt, so also did the philosophies. They descended into scepticism...Thence arose a false eloquence, ready to uphold either of the opposed sides of a case indifferently. (NS, §1101-2)

Scipio's greatness held the power of Rome, but also the seeds of its destruction. The strategic location of his tomb at the bottom left corner of plate V situates him:

a)   in the diachronic spiral between the "heroic-human" title block tablet and the decadent composition of the frontispiece.

b)   at the end of the triumphal route that winds its way through plate VII (the time of man) and plate VI (ricorso)

c)   at the base of the *Mons Vaticanus* where memory and prophecy coincide.

Thus, if Christianity or a monarchy cannot help us avoid the fall into decadence (that is: keep us within the Campo Marzio proper), the only way out (by way of the *Area Martis*) will be Providentially provided: turning barbaric vices into heroic virtues.

.3   Titlepage, Frontispiece, Scenographia and Tailpiece

If we examine these four "peripheral" plates in relation to the *ichnographia*, some interesting relationships emerge. The titlepage is represented as a large stone tablet with two diagonal cracks and the bottom right corner broken off. If we invert it bottom to top and take an impression, the triangular fragment at the bottom right will match the one at the top right in pl.X, and the two cracks will correspond to the two major axes of the *ichnographia*. The intersection of the two cracks is the location of the Mausoleum of Augustus, the centripetal monarchy. As a stone "template" the titlepage is an introductory key to an after-the-fact reading of the *ichnographia*, but perhaps also suggests that this pattern underlies or precedes the *ichnographia*.

In the frontispiece, the disjunction between the decaying tablet, which sits in and obscures the actual Campo Marzio, and the rigidly rendered view of the area *outside* the Campo Marzio, is the first hint that the *Campo Marzio* might be about something other
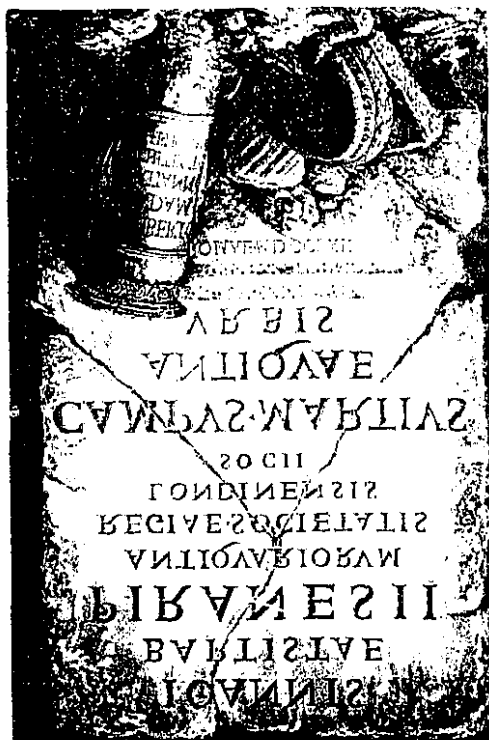
Fig. 21:   *Titlepage from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio (mirror image)*
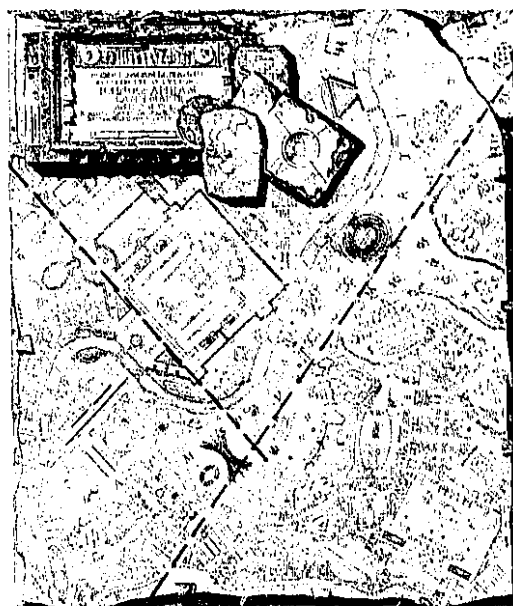
Fig. 22: *Ichnographia from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio*

than the Campo Marzio.

The three views of the tailpiece are located in plate VII across the river from those of the frontispiece. If the *ichnographia* is indeed a compact version of the whole, then the relation of the frontispiece to the tailpiece resembles that of plate VI to plate VII.[86] In addition, each of these plates relates in a similar way to its respective whole. The frontispiece, for example, is the point of return to which the tailpiece refers by means of projective and stylistic similarities, by-passing the titlepage. Similarly the clockwise motion around the Mausoleum of Augustus returns to the "frontispiece" of the *ichnographia* (pl.VI), by-passing the title block (pl.V) by means of whose descending spiral we first entered the plan. Finally, in the cycle of maps which illustrate the text, the initial topographical map (pl.I) is isolated from the rest by the insertion of the *scenographia* (pl.II) to which the text returns in its final chapter (*CM*, Ch.6). See also figure twelve.

By a series of parallel structures, then, the frontispiece, the *scenographia*, and
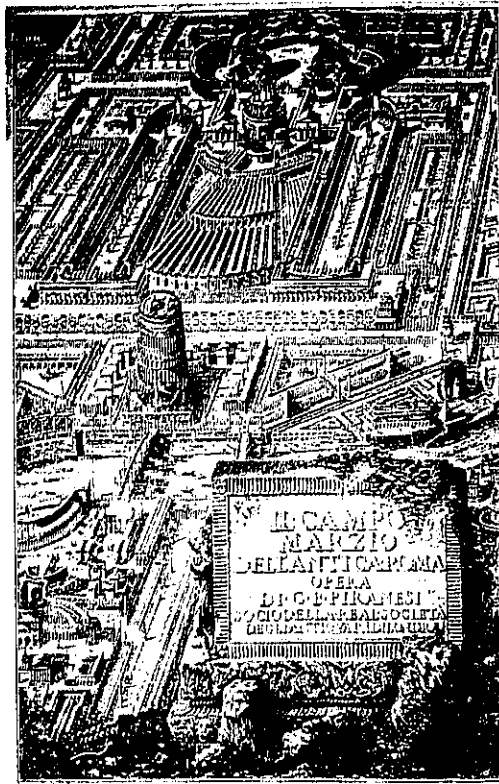
Fig. 23: *Frontispiece from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio, 1762*
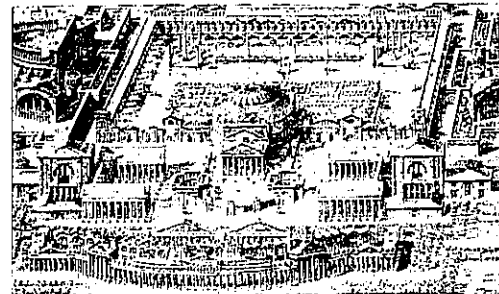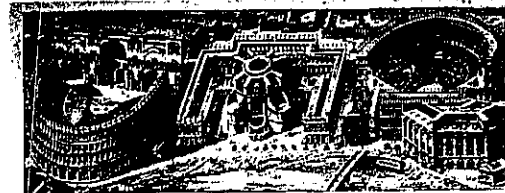
Fig. 24: *Plate XLVIII (tailpiece) from Piranesi's Il Campo Marzio*

plate VI of the *ichnographia* are points of return which isolate, respectively, the titlepage, the topographical map (pl.I) and the title block (pl.V) from their particular cycles. The latter three, rather than points of return, are pattern templates, mapping out primordial movements and landscapes in relation to which later developments accrue and which, paradoxically, are manifest in the very things that seem to obscure them. Thus structurally we have:

a)	template:	tpg	pl. V	topo (pl.I)
b)	point of return:	fpc	pl. VI	sceno (pl.II)
c)	present state:	tlpc	pl. VII	views (pls.XI-XLVII)

The *ichnographia*, as the centrepiece, contains the cumulative results of the diachronic narrative that precedes it in the maps and *scenographia*, together with the synchronic evidence as documented in the thirty-seven plates of views that follow it. And just as the multiple views of the tailpiece return us to the frontispiece, so the multiple views of the documentary evidence return us to the siting and assembly of fragments in

the *scenographia*, re-initiating the cycle that includes the next two maps and the *ichnographia*.

.4   Text

In the *New Science*, Vico's description of the frontispiece serves as discursive introduction to the work as well as the human language counterpart to the mute and hieroglyphic symbols in the image. This cycle is the paradigm by which Vico organizes the entire work. Piranesi's introductory sequence follows a similar paradigm with the text as the narrative to the mute aspects of the titlepage and frontispiece.

In six chapters[87] the text traces the development of the Campo Marzio from its original founding through the age of the Roman kings (ending with Tarquinius Superbus) and the subsequent Roman Republic, to the rise of the Empire (beginning with Augustus in 27 BC), its decadence (under Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, et al), and its ultimate fall. The history is narrated chronologically by the "Years of Rome", indexed to the traditional founding by Romulus in 753 BC (Yr.1).[88] It continues to the construction of the Aurelian wall (Yr.1023; 270 AD), a cycle of almost 1100 years ending just prior to the reign of Constantine I (306-37 AD) and the beginning of Roman Christianity.

Laced with personal opinion, the narrative resembles an oratorical confrontation in which Piranesi does not merely refer to ancient writers and authorities, but actually seems to conjure them up for purposes of lively debate.[89] The effect is to compact, into an animated present, the history of the Roman rhetorical and discursive tradition. His aim, it appears, is to level the historical/textual field by clearing it of all arguments that might contradict his own opinions. Since the evidence is meagre, he claims, all is subject to interpretation. Consequently the arguments that he imaginatively extracts (invents) from the documents and artifacts are equally valid, and more meaningful.

Between the first three chapters and the last three there is a general reversal in the relation of the footnote to the body of the text. The footnotes to earlier chapters contain the textual references and factual substantiation to back up the arguments, interpretations

and opinions espoused in the body. The substance of the argument resides in interpretive opinion since the "facts" are disputable: the "truth" is what you make of the evidence. This poetic rendering of the evidence from the period that corresponds to Vico's heroic Age, corresponds to Vico's poetic interpretation of the heroic fables. The later chapters - more familiar history with more reliable factual evidence - carry the drier historical data and cataloguing information in the main body while the footnotes serve as clarification, commentary, and opinion. For Piranesi, however, opinion remains necessary to interpret and construct truth out of the indisputable facts of the *certum*. We might speculate that the evidence-interpretation reversal in the chapters corresponds to the shifting location of truth from era to era.

Truth in the heroic era was accepted as an imaginative construct, imagination being understood as the image-making faculty that mediates between the phenomenal world and the intellect. In the human era it is generally believed that truth resides among us, in the certainty of the phenomenal world, and that the products of imagination are fictitious or remote. The presence of truth in the phenomenal world seems to be confirmed through instrumental observation and measurement. The instrument appears to provide access to the truth, making it transparently evident in the things around us. However, the instrument itself is essentially an image of the phenomenon, and the truth it reveals is the truth that it makes, which it does in its own instrumental terms. The power of instrumental thinking is to establish metaphorical identities between the instrument and the phenomenon, configuring the phenomenon and bringing it within our grasp. The danger is to lose sight of this fact, and to assume that metaphoric-instrumental relations stand on their own as absolute and transparent truths. The implications are that:

a) the phenomenon is the sum of its instrumental qualities,
b) the phenomenon and its instrumental description are identical and therefore interchangeable, and either
c) the apparent redundancy of the phenomenon and its instrumental image cause the two to collapse into one another, or
d) an ironic relationship emerges to remind us of the difference and to wedge the two apart.

The way out of this predicament is to recognize the nature of instrumental relations as imaginative, the key to which is provided by working *through* the ironic mode.

In the text as well as the reconstructions Piranesi amasses the philological evidence, but continually subjects it to imaginative verification, expressed as opinion whether in the text or in the footnotes. Chapters Two to Five concern primarily the historical development of the area and require little elaboration, although the first and last chapters merit a closer look.

Chapter One

Chapter One opens: *"Dovendo trattare delle Opere del Campo Marzio dall'edificazione di Roma sino alla decadenza dell'Imperio Romano..."* (*CM*, Ch.1, §1). The choice of the word *edificazione* in this initial statement is not insignificant. In this context it might be interpreted as "foundation" which could also have been written *fondazione*, if referring to the institution of Rome as a corporate body, or *fondamento*, if referring to an architectural foundation as a supporting structure. As it is, it carries with it not only a sense of "building", as of edifices built upon the foundation as a starting block, but **also** the sense of a foundation as beliefs and knowledge with a strong moral dimension, residual in English as "edification". Its Latin roots take us to *aedes* or *aedis* for shrine, temple or building, and *facere*, to make or build. The implication is not that the temple is a building for moral teachings, but rather, that in constructing our buildings and other institutions, we are also laying the foundations for our knowledge and beliefs: that through such acts we make ourselves into what we become, or what we believe we are. Edification establishes the "good example" as the paradigm for future building.

The "building blocks" of Rome that Piranesi examines in the first three chapters are the words of the ancient authorities in their recounting of myths, legends, anecdotes, and other interpretations. To him these are as real and concrete as the ruins and fragments themselves, and they are the basis by which he seeks the most ancient (*anticamente*) sources of Rome's greatness.

His most dependable sources in this enterprise seem to be Livy and *Dionigi*.[90] Their evidence is often folded into more "complete" or "originary" views that reconcile apparent contradictions and maintain their legitimate authority.[91] Strabo proves to be particularly valuable in arguments based on experiential perceptions and responses to the landscape, however this poetic approach is accompanied by a thoroughness, exhaustiveness, and precision in constructing a meaningful foundation.

At issue in the first chapter is the boundary of the Campo Marzio, which Piranesi argues should extend to the Milvian bridge (*CM*, Ch.1, § VI). This would bring it near the small village of Rubra Saxa on the Via Flaminia where Constantine defeated Maxentius following his conversion to Christianity. The defeated Maxentius was killed while attempting to escape across the Milvian bridge into Rome.[92]

By extending the bounds to the Milvian bridge Piranesi would thus bring the event of the Christianization of Rome within the actual territory of the Campo Marzio as an area, and within its scope as a history of the Roman nation. Events are indissolubly linked to their location as situated occurrences: topography and history are fabricated from the intertwined images of place and event.

Chapter Six

The sixth and final chapter concerns the era from the death of Augustus to the ultimate fall of the Roman Empire. A brief summary of the exploits and power of Augustus indicates that he essentially turned the Campo Marzio over to the citizens to indulge in their games and pleasures while he centralized and fortified his power. Between Augustus and Hadrian there is little development in the Campo, except under the decadent reigns of Nero and Domitian. Nero generally improved the "ornament" (which might be understood as equipment, apparatus or infrastructure) and constructed the baths that were later renamed after Alexander (due to the hatred for Nero). Domitian's main contribution was the Naumachia found in plate IX.

But the central issue of Chapter Six concerns the interpretation of names, inscriptions and other markings found in the fragmentary remains illustrated in the documentary appendix (pls. XI-XLVII) and the *scenographia*. The linguistic overtones

of this theme - which is developed primarily in terms of inscriptions of vulgar discursive letters - extends to the tropic-figurative dimension of ornament and hieroglyphs as previously discussed with respect to the *scenographia*. Whereas the *scenographia* and *ichnographia*, as drawings, can effectively show this, the discursive text is limited to what it can say.

However, even as the text literally describes the decline of Rome in articulate vulgar language, it points us back to the *scenographia* and the possibilities of poetic interpretation of the remnants of the heroic and early human eras. Although not originally mute these remains, separated from their original context by virtue of historical change and barbaric collapse, no longer conform to any customary or intelligible class concepts. Surrounded by the clearing of this silence, the poetic aspects are coaxed out under the tutelage of Piranesi.

The text discusses several examples, including the lead pipe stamped *Templo Matidiae* (pl.II, item 15, bottom right) which identified the remains of the temple Hadrian built to the daughter of Marciana (*CM*, Ch.6, §7). However the largest discussion is reserved for the column built in memory of Antoninus Pius, son of Hadrian. This column (pl.II, item 1, right side), resembling Trajan's column with the spiralling pictorial band (*fascia*) wrapped around it, illustrates the exploits of Antonius'son Marcus Aurelius, who dedicated it to his father (*CM*, Ch.6, §9-10). Apparently there was some confusion between the identity of this column and another smooth one (pl.II, item 2, right side) dedicated to Antonius by his two sons, Marco and Vero (*CM*, Ch.6, §8,10). Although this was sorted out when the column bases were excavated revealing the inscriptions, Piranesi cautions against taking the inscriptions literally. Often, he says, capricious and superfluous things were placed in the inscriptions, so while they can be used for evidence and justification, the additional qualities may lead one astray. The *fact* of the inscription is more important than the literal specifics of what it says; the actual interpretation must be left open. In order to grasp the inscription's significance, he says, one must understand the concept of the *medaglia* (medal or coin) which has two sides. Each of these sides is to be understood in relation to the other "flip" side, and thus the whole of which it is part (*CM*, Ch.6, §10). The inscription in articulate language is only a portion

of the iconic whole of a coin, a column pedestal, or even a fragment. From the iconic whole of the fragment, with its intelligible aspects suppressed, the poetic obverse emerges to allow the observer to imaginatively complete the interpretation. This equally real poetic obverse proves to be a fundamental characteristic of the artifact both in terms of its primacy, and in terms of its founding capacity.

Chapter Six ends with an inscription taken from one of the last works completed in the Campo prior to the fall. This group of tripartite temples and gates was dedicated to the Emperors Gratianus, Valentinianus, and Theodosius who presided over the divided empire in the last half of the fourth century A.D. With the death of Theodosius in 395 the separation of East and West became permanent. Rome, deprived of its support from beyond the Adriatic, became vulnerable to attack and was sacked by the Goths in 410. Further invasions throughout the century brought about its complete collapse. The inscription, then, must be understood not for what it says, but what it represents: the end of the Empire. This reading is reinforced by the location of the structures to which it refers. Even though situated in the area associated with plate VII (the "human" era), this complex of structures actually appears on plate VI (the "barbarism of reflection"), just below the bend in the river.

The end of the text is here metaphorically identical to the end of the Empire, and the end of articulate language. The narrative cycle of the text - from *edificazione* to *decadenza* - corresponds exactly to a single cycle of the Ideal Eternal History. However, as the *scenographia* shows, this is a necessary precedent to poetic recovery.

The (Ideal) Eternal City

Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* appears to confirm Vico's Ideal Eternal History by imaginatively extracting it from the antique ruins and fragments of heroic Rome. While both are modelled on Roman history and draw from the same sources for their content, the structural characteristics of the two works are also strikingly similar.

Vico sought the key to the Ideal Eternal History in language, which he regarded as the trace of the modifications undergone by the human mind. The root metaphor for the Ideal Eternal History thus lies in the linguistic tropes, each of which typifies a

different relation between an object in the world and our mental image of it. Likewise, the Ideal Eternal History is the root metaphor for the *Campo Marzio*, and Piranesi extracts it from the tangible inscriptions and fragmentary remains of antiquity. Vico invents the Ideal Eternal History according to the principles he identifies for the emergence of poetic characters, which in turn follows the tropic structure of the imagination and language. Essentially he elevates the particular history of Rome to the status of imaginative universal which allows it to function as a pseudo-transcendental universal (*NS*, §1003). Similarly Piranesi treats ruins and fragments less as incomplete pieces of absent wholes than as artifacts which are bearers of worlds to be imaginatively encountered and released. These artifacts, as with the altar that centred the hero's asylum (*NS*, §17), become the focal points for Piranesi's reconstruction in the *ichnographia*. Vico and Piranesi, each in their own way, are operating according to the principles by which that which they are studying was originally founded. Each is engaged in an operational re-founding.

The Ideal Eternal History is apparent not only in the *ichnographia*, but throughout the entire work. A structure of spirals, cycles, and points of return is evident in the *ichnographia* (pls. X→ XI→ VIII→ VII→ VI→ IX→), in the maps (pls. I→ II→ III→ IV→ II→) and the corresponding chapters of the text, and in the work as a whole (Tpg→ Fpc→ Txt→ Maps→ Ichno→ Views→ Tlpc→ Fpc→). The literal description and graphic character of the plates corresponds consistently to the character of Vico's ages, and they occur in a spiralling sequence that corresponds to that of the Ideal Eternal History. While these correspondences might simply reflect the spiral structure of Latin time explicit in the structure of their language, they nevertheless represent Latin truths.

The *Campo Marzio* also manifests the synchronic-diachronic dialectic of Vico's complex notion of time. The text and maps follow a diachronic sequence with cyclical implications, while the views (pls XI-XLVII) document the synchronic status of the evidence. The *ichnographia* incorporates both. Across the river from the Campo, plates V and VI illustrate a spiralling diachronic descent. The Campo itself, to the full extent claimed by Piranesi (i.e., bounded by the wall of the old city, the cliffs, and the river),

is an abundant and plentiful synchronic tableau within which a spiralling figure traces the Ideal Eternal History of Rome. Incorporated in this figure are gentile cyclical time (IX,nature →VIII,heroic →VII,human →VI, decadent) with Judeo-Christian "truth" as one pole of possibilities (X,divine) connected by the linear time of revelation (*Equiria*).

The *Campo Marzio* is an interpretation of the *New Science* which fuses the fragmentary remains with the Ideal Eternal History and welds it all to the Roman landscape and topography. It represents the Ideal Eternal History of Rome from agrarian beginnings in the fields (Campo) to the Eternal City (Mars, Ares, altar, city, defence). It tells the history of the city as recorded on the landscape in which it was made. The landscape is simultaneously a generator of history and recorder of it. In the same way that the constellations of poetic astronomy were a memory system, not to memorize the stars but to memorialize the gods and heroes, so the landscape is a memory system for history and the acts of man.

The Ideal Eternal History is specifically Roman, not only because it is an elevation of actual Roman history, but because it conforms to the cyclical structure of the Latin language as well as its dependence on origins for meaning.[93] By conforming with Vico's "Roman" modelling of the Ideal Eternal History, the *Campo Marzio* discloses the Roman-ness of the remains it treats. Furthermore, since cities are heroic in nature (*NS*, §611, 774-78) and Rome is the archetype of heroic nations (*NS*, §158-160, 553, 1003), Rome is the archetype for cities (and architecture). Piranesi confirms the heroic nature of the area of the Campo Marzio in his description of the horse races, games, and exercises that took place within it, and established its nature, orientation, and boundaries (*CM*, Ch.1).[94]

More detailed research in this area will likely strengthen the relationship, while also indicating where Piranesi's version differs from Vico's. For instance, Vico makes minor adjustments to the history of Livy to have it conform to the eternal pattern. Piranesi on the other hand takes Livy more at his word, although he challenges many other historians (esp. Donati and Nardini) in order to promote his view (*CM*, Ch.1, §I-III). Similarly Piranesi is preoccupied with visual, graphic, geographic and architectonic tropes rather than literary or legal ones.

Borrowing from the *New Science* has opened up another possible horizon of understanding for the *Campo Marzio*. But while we may now engage in a more informed reading of what's already there in the work, we have not yet begun to interpret it. Vico has helped us circumvent the conceit that prevents us from recognizing what is there in its own terms; that is, he has helped us in the process of configuration. This, however, as a syllogistic argument, remains immanent to the work itself, and even though it sets the trajectory for the subsequent process of re-figuration, we must complete this re-figuration ourselves. We do this in terms of our own questions from our own time, perhaps as provoked by our encounter with the work. The ability of the work to speak to us today, its interest for us, lies in its capacity to provoke (or reveal) these questions within us.

Chapter Four
RE-FIGURATION

THE PROJECT THUS far has been to uncover certain structural relations between the *New Science* and the *Campo Marzio*, and to reveal an eighteenth-century paradigm shar.. by Piranesi and Vico. This paradigm emerges not from a set of accepted tradi.. ..ns, but from a set of questions and challenges to the eighteenth century dialectic between the tendency to

a) reject traditions and traditional knowledge, and to wholly favour speculative sciences, scepticism, unbound flights of fancy, and unrestrained innovation, or

b) indulge in a slavish imitation of the mute forms of the past without reference to their original generative matrix or their chronological-geographic situatedness.

The response of Vico and Piranesi was to restore the configurational dance that balanced tradition and innovation, and in so doing to develop and demonstrate the complex figure of the Ideal Eternal History (of Rome).

It remains now to return to our initial task which was to extract a meaningful interpretation by posing relevant questions from within our own time. Indeed, the issues Vico and Piranesi were struggling with lie at the root of many of our modern dilemmas, such as the relation between reason and imagination; science-as-technology and art; and text and image. They reply by reconstituting the fold by which the two contiguous parts were once related, and by which they were first separated and laid side by side on the analytical table.[95] They reveal imaginative responses to the world as the "non-rational" foundation upon which all rational structures are erected. Our task then becomes a continuation of the project initiated by Vico and Piranesi. In order to unfold their work in our time and space, endeavouring first to understand then to interpret it, we exercise our inductive imagination to project ourselves into the world it offers to us.

The territory staked out by this world is held together by its own internal structure and logic. It is circumscribed by its own internal horizon which creates a bounded clearing or asylum into which we are welcomed. In creating this clearing it necessarily dismantles or "unmakes" a portion of its host world, slaying the Nemean lion. By entering into this strange-but-familiar, foreign-yet-accessible clearing we expose ourselves to the world of the work, and inductively augment our own world of experience.

The schematic exegesis of the *Campo Marzio* in terms of the *New Science* initiates this process of augmentation by securing an entry not limited to naive literal interpretations. This final chapter is less a conclusion than a summary of issues raised in our encounter with these works. Its purpose is to open up imaginative possibilities rather than close them down.

When we consider the *Campo Marzio* from the point of view of its author, it may be about several things:

a)   the Ideal Eternal History of Rome
b)   the appropriateness of Rome as the authoritarian model for cities and architecture, and/or
c)   a warning of imminent danger inherent in modern rational-sceptical thinking.

While these may be valid readings, they limit discussion to internal examination of these issues. If, on the other hand, we consider the *Campo Marzio* from the point of view of what it *is, for us*, independent of the author's presumed intentions or message, then an authentic interpretation of the work emerges. Such an interpretation describes, for us, what the work really appears to *be*, aside from any encoded messages. Only when we grasp it as such can the work begin to speak to us.

The *Campo Marzio*, in these terms, appears to be a demonstration of imagination and practice as founding-inaugurating activities. Imagination or interpretation, exercised within a bounded field of multiple possibilities, actualizes the particular historical ground of a nation or culture. This *exercise* of the founding imagination, in or upon the world of experience, is the nature of architectural practice.

A.   *Plenitude and Dialectics*

Due to its polysemantic nature, the world within which practice is exercised supports many possible interpretations. This abundance or plenitude permits multiple dialectics to open up within its bounds. In the *New Science* these dialectics include the following pairs:

a)   ancient and modern epistemologies
b)   art and science-philosophy-metaphysics
c)   *verum* and *certum*, mediated by the *factum*
d)   Stoic fate and Epicurean chance

Vico's intention here is to recover the *totality* or aggregate *wholeness* (not the homogenous unity) of the topic or *argumentum* within which the figure of each component of the dialectic is inscribed. The Ideal Eternal History describes the figure inscribed within this field by the modifications of the human mind, but without prescribing specific actions. The constancy of this figure demonstrates, for Vico, the presence of divine providence in the world of human affairs. But unlike philosophy or science, the Ideal Eternal History does not propose to locate truth in the *certum*; merely to reveal the role of providence in maintaining the relation between the *verum* and the *certum* by way of the *factum*. The Ideal Eternal History is comprised of elements of human history, the results of change produced by human choices under the auspices or guidance of divine providence.

The interplay of synchronic and diachronically emerging elements, occurring wholly within the present of the Ideal Eternal History, produces the aggregate-like abundance in which these elements resist collapse into one another (that is: do not fit neatly into a single story line). In the Ideal Eternal History the diachronic explains things as a progression; the synchronic configures them as a whole. By working *with* this dialectic the Ideal Eternal History copes with complexity and abundance. It reconciles the scientific tendency to unify, blend and homogenize the whole, with the recognition that we are immersed in historical time in which the past is qualitatively different from the present, and irreducible to it. It configures the disparate elements into a rhetorically constructed whole that preserves the specificity and strangeness of each, and thus the

dialectics between them.

In the *Campo Marzio* this complex intertwining of past and present, diachronic and synchronic, is graphically represented in the *ichnographia* where Piranesi extracts the Ideal Eternal History from the landscape and fragmentary remains. On the ground constituted by these situated ruins the *ichnographia* creates a figure which enfolds the various ages into a larger configuration that preserves and sustains them complete with their internal differences and dialectics. The power of the *ichnographia* is this enfolding capacity by which it accommodates conflicting elements and opens itself up to multiple readings. This power and its ability to support multiple narratives is also the source of its misappropriation by various readers, a misappropriation which is not an error: merely a partial reading.

The synchronic-diachronic interplay evident in the *ichnographia* is consistent with the process by which it was invented. In the *New Science* Vico considers all aspects of our image-forming faculties as intertwined. Thus imagination as the initial mimetic formation of images through perception, memory as recollection of stored images, and invention as *ingenium* or ingenuity as the recombination of images, are all operations rooted in the body and its senses (*NS*, §819). These three aspects of memory unite the past (memory), with the present (perception), and the future (invention). In creating the *ichnographia* Piranesi employs these relationships by imaginatively extracting memories and prophecies from erratic remnants of the past. With these he constructs an unreduced impression of Eternal Rome, valid past present and future, with its internal contradictions intact. Far from destructive, these internal contradictions keep the tradition of Rome open and alive and, as they do for the heroic age from which it emerges, provide the strength that prevents it from slipping into decadence.

The Ideal Eternal History also restores the sense of external authority lost with the passing of the heroic age. While this is intended to counter what Vico sees as the corruption, decadence, and unbounded free-will produced by philosophical scepticism (*NS*, §350, 386ff.), it must avoid falling into the apathy of fatalism in which human action has no effect on the course of events. Human choice, free-will, and meaningful human action must all have a place within the framework or bounds circumscribed by this

authority. Thus it is the configuration, not the specifics that is eternal. Each nation constructs its own version of the Ideal Eternal History which responds to its particular conditions, boundaries, and constraints. All of these binding conditions belong to the realm of the *certum*; none are eternal. They include those of the human condition shared by all, such as an embodied imagination cast into a sensible world, as well as those conditions peculiar to each nation. Human action, as the struggle to deal with these conditions, is captured in the Latin *certo* (*adv.* surely, in fact, really; *vi.* to fight, to struggle, to strive). Human knowledge, guiding this action, must deal with the binding, the variable, the contingent, and the probable of the *certum*. For this, argument, topics, and rhetoric are better suited to finding one's way.

The dialectic of fate and chance as authority and freedom, or binding and releasing, characterizes the plebeians struggle for liberty against the oppression of the hero-fathers. According to Vico, constant resistance of the feudal slaves to the binding authority of their masters is the essence of the heroic age. It is this internal struggle that gave it strength and made it great. The dynamic balance of forces maintained the centripetal-centrifugal tension of the struggle as an active exercise of free-will within and against the binding authority and limiting conditions.

B. *Fundamental Practice:*

Man's attempts to act meaningfully in the phenomenal world in which he finds himself have always depended upon his imagination. The image-making capacity of the imagination provided our first cognitive link to the world through metaphoric identities. Later, these identities became progressively differentiated from each other and integrated into a coherent world view. In this process we map out our field of action in the world, construct and define its boundaries, determine its contents, and give it a grain or orientation. This founding capacity of the imagination - to inaugurate a world - corresponds precisely to Piranesi's exercise in the *Campo Marzio*. The Campo Marzio - as a piece of the landscape - is at once the real and the metaphorical ground upon which Rome is founded. These two are fused together by the Ideal Eternal History which

Piranesi inscribes upon it. The primitive imagination operated on fleeting and discontinuous impressions in order to fix and stabilize them and integrate them into a whole. Piranesi does the same with the fragmentary remains of antiquity, now part of his received *certum*. He employs the imagination in its creative-productive sense as *ingenium*, but never loses contact with the *certum*.

As the world produced by the primitive imagination gained credibility, it received "verification" and became accepted as the "truth" of reality; as fact rather than a *factum* made by man in his encounter with the world. Originally founded and constituted by the imagination, but now accepted as unquestioned fact, this world had little further need for the creative aspects of the cognitive imagination, reducing it to a neutral means of perception. Within this (imaginative) world, reason and judgment became the prime operating principles, erecting, as it were, a rational superstructure on imaginative foundations. Imagination's founding powers, now forgotten or ignored in the world of appearances, migrated to poetry and the arts. There they founded alternatives to the "real" world, known as fictional or "imaginary" worlds because they did not conform to the customarily accepted one. Imagination, *ingenium*, invention, *fantasia* all came to stand for creations unrestricted by reality, assertions of the subjective powers of individuals to escape the bonds of reality.

This desire for escape characterizes the Romantic imagination which became celebrated as a release from reality rather than our essential connection to it. It promoted the power of the individual genius as a sort of Romantic hero, unbound by the *certum* or by convention, who maintained allegiance only to his own subjective truth. He became hero-as-leader, not hero-as-protector.

The imagination of the Vichian hero had been the power and insight to discern truth in reality. It had inscribed and circumscribed a clearing in the world into which the extended family of the hero was welcomed. In this asylum the family had shared the world view described there by the hero. Imagination had a founding, constituting and binding role, establishing the clearing, the nature of its ground, and the limits of its horizon. The Romantic hero, by contrast, displayed no civic responsibility to his

followers, created no asylums, and left only a wake in his path.

Piranesi and Vico champion the founding imagination rather than its Romantic counterpart. They seek to avoid the fall into individualism that makes us prey to sceptical philosophy; at the very least they try to warn us of its dangers. In the *Campo Marzio* Piranesi's imagination operates strictly on the philological remains of antiquity. The world he projects is neither rationally deduced from the remains (as would be a scientific archaeological reconstruction) nor a romantic fantasy. It is an imaginative truth, a *factum* constructed or induced from the hard evidence at hand.

Science, as "natural philosophy", assumes that the world of appearances imaged forth by the imagination is identical with the natural world, and sets out to establish the absolute truth of that world. The human sciences, such as history and archaeology, attempt to do the same with the received artifacts of past worlds. Their conceit is to assume that they are operating in the *verum* rather than the *certum*. Were that the case, reason, deduction, and judgment would be indeed be appropriate procedures to use.

The founding imagination on the other hand accepts that it is operating in the chaotic flux of the *certum*, and merely seeks tactics by which to cope with this condition. Vico outlines these tactics in the four tropes as the basis for his historical cycles, and employs them himself in the construction of his Ideal Eternal History. Piranesi employs them, too, in his reconstitution of Rome in the *Campo Marzio*: an imaginative construction that is neither an ideal nor a fantasy, neither fact nor fiction, but a *factum* that captures and re-presents the essential Rome as revealed in his configuration of the fragments. This *factum*, as a re-making of Rome, lies midway between the *verum* and the *certum*. As an approximation of truth, constructed in the *certum* out of actual remains, it reveals what we can know of Rome. This re-creation re-enacts the original founding process, and is essentially a poetic re-founding of Rome on an imaginatively constructed ground, a ground which mediates the *verum-certum* in a particularly Latin-Roman-Heroic way.

The theme of foundations, both as origins and as structural underpinnings, appears constantly throughout Piranesi's *oeuvre*. His first published work, the *Prima Parte di Archittetura* of 1742, understood in the context of its introductory text, concerned his professional *prospects* as much as it did perspective. The *Invenzioni Capric di Carceri all Acqua Forte Datte in Luce* ...(1749-50), with its subterranean womb-like structures, is about new beginnings (*carceri*)[96] and rebirth (*dare alla luce*)[97] as a reinvention or reincarnation of oneself. His numerous archaeological works are filled with excavated treasures, underground tombs, subterranean waterways, and real or invented substructures for actual remains.

Metaphorically, these actual foundations are the origins and underpinnings of the world of human experience. As with Vico, these origins inhabit a mysterious, irrational realm which can only be brought to light by imaginative reconstruction.

Much of Piranesi's practice is devoted to re-establishing these foundations; essentially to re-founding practice as meaningful, situated action. Although the noun "practice" is grammatically correct here, it should be understood in its most active sense. *Praxis*, as the active use or application of knowledge, is distinguished from *theoria* as the inactive viewing of contemplation. The Latin equivalent of the active sense of practice leads to three roots:

a) *factare*: to keep doing or making, implying a sense of customary or habitual action, but also related to Vico's *factum* which incorporates the thing made with the human deed or accomplishment that produced it.
b) *tractare*: to draw, transact, or carry on as a form of habitual conduct.
c) *exercere*: to train or drill (as in military exercises), or to engage, occupy, or cultivate (as with the mind).

Exercere further leads to *ex* (out of, or from) and *arcere* (box, enclosure, restraint) which recalls *arca* (box, coffin, prison cell) and *carceri*. Practice, as Piranesi might have understood it in its most abundant sense, would have been an amalgamation of these concepts. Certainly the Campo Marzio was related to horse races, wrestling, and other military exercises; and it is certainly intended to engage, if not cultivate, our minds. This active sense of practice as exercise is reinforced by the graphic characteristics of plates X to VII representing the Campo Marzio proper. Their forms suggest movement and action as they encounter one another, collide, jostle, and finally settle into a

regularized pattern. By contrast the static nature of plate VI suggests a contemplative character, as of spectators removed from the action.

In a small but telling detail, Piranesi locates, in the top left corner of plate VI near the *Mons Vaticanus*, three *Turres Speculatoria* (spectator towers) overlooking the circus. These appear nowhere else in the *ichnographia*; their equivalents in the Campo Marzio proper appear in plate IX as *Turres Expugnandae*. *Expugnare*, which means to storm or conquer, is used figuratively as "to achieve, or to accomplish." Plate VI, separated from the action in the Campo by the Tiber, is reduced to the status of a contemplative spectator with an ironic viewpoint.

Piranesi sets out to restore the same wholeness to architectural practice that Vico sought to restore to education.[98] Practice employs the founding imagination, responding to the givens of the *certum* including not only antique remains, but also the landscape, myths, traditions, and the Ideal Eternal History. But this response is necessarily an interpretive exercise that rejects slavish copying.

The text of the *Campo Marzio* specifically addresses the issue of founding from its opening sentence, in which Piranesi proposes to treat the history of the Campo Marzio from its *edificazione* to its fall. Piranesi's chosen medium of etching and engraving has already been discussed as a mimetic re-enactment of founding rituals.[99]

Founding in this sense is a "fixing" or inauguration of something that, as Heidegger would say, starts it on its way to being. By means of this inauguration something is inscribed in the world, in its soil. Its position is fixed in the landscape, the territory over which it governs is marked out. But while this founding establishes its own clearing in the *certum*, it does so as a response to an interpretation of the *verum*. This is essentially Vico's *factum* by which man makes his own world between the mysterious subterranean irrational realm of the *stultus* and the domain of the gods above the horizon. This making-founding binds the *verum-certum* in a dialectical relationship similar to fate-chance or Providence-free will. The nature of this bond, metaphorically or instrumentally forged, sets out the bounds, orientation, and texture of the ethical clearing in which authentic practice takes place.

Re-founding, as a mimetic re-enactment of the first, is an innovative second movement which challenges, interprets and inductively extends the bounds established by the first. It is both an un-founding and a founding, a composite marriage of tradition (passive resistance to change) and innovation (active resistance to the bounds of tradition). Just as the original founding operated metaphorically on the natural world of the *certum*, so re-founding - in the case of the *Campo Marzio* - operates on the fragmented traces of the heroic era. These fragments are as bits of "text", released by their "strangeness" from ostensive and descriptive reference to the world, gathered together and set in a clearing by Piranesi (plate II). With these bits he undertakes to re-found Rome in the heroic spirit which he, as a Venetian architect, has inherited.[100] Using heroic fragments, acting in a heroic manner, Piranesi sets out to re-found Rome as the archetype for cities, building, and the practice of architecture.[101]

This practice of re-founding, as an interpretive act in relation to a pre-existing ground, is a complex movement similar to Vico's tropic cycle. It is essentially the integrative act of synecdoche or configuration which presumes - and retroactively demonstrates by its very accomplishment - the "figurability" of the fragments in the pre-figurative realm. This is not to attempt to reconstruct their now absent wholes, but to marshall the parts into a new configuration. The momentum created by this movement, initially immanent to the work, spills over into the world of the practitioner, bringing forth these alien bits to inductively challenge and transform the bounds of the present. This challenge is not to return to the era of the past, but to bring to light the underpinnings of the present, and to extend the present bounds to accommodate them.

In this second movement, the past - history as a cultural human construct - is now part of our *certum*, the received ground upon which we establish our practice.

It could be said that the *Campo Marzio* is a practice of the *New Science* in that it takes the *New Science* as its program and re-makes it. This would be *praxis* as interpretation or extraction of meaning, as Vico himself recommends (*NS*, §345, 349). Such a practice would not represent the original in a referential way, but substantially reconstitute it in a way that makes it immediately and wholly present to the practitioner. It is more likely, however, that Piranesi learns from Vico and sets out to establish his

own grounds for practice. Chapter One of the *Campo Marzio* establishes the fundamental criteria: the size and extent of the Campo Marzio as a metaphorical ground. The bounds of the traditionally accepted Campo are challenged, and new ones proposed, extending its limits to correspond to the geographically delimiting features of the flood plain of the river (pls. III, IV and VII-X).

Meanwhile the *scenographia* (pl.II) reveals the nature of the underlying ground, comprised of topography and remains, set in the bounded clearing of the Campo. The project of the work is to reconstruct the texture and thickness of this ground out of these diverse and mysterious elements. This construction is as real and meaningful for us as were the gods to primitive minds. As the gods were their metaphorically imagined and constructed "other", so culturally received history is for us.[102]

Practice, however is not the application of method; rather it is the *exercise* of freedom within a bounded clearing that permits, but limits it. The nature of this exercise is to challenge and extend those limits. The ground of the Campo Marzio was founded as a place for heroic exercises and games from horse races to wrestling matches. It is defined by the nature of activities that took place within it. Piranesi's poetic interpretation of Strabo's description, for instance, regards the long straight run of the *Equiria* as "inviting speed," therefore speed *must* have occurred. Similarly the large open spaces permit the gathering of large crowds to witness and participate in the games, therefore they *must* have come (*CM*, Ch.1). The nature and texture of the ground configures and is configured by the activities it accommodates.

Practice is an active engagement which both appropriates and imaginatively re-figures the ground. In doing so it re-enacts original heroic founding. Creation of the *Campo Marzio*, as with Vico's Ideal Eternal History, is an exercise in inductive making which maintains the struggle inherent in the fallen human condition, its critical apposition to the *verum* as the realm of God, and to history as a man-made "other". Practice is the simultaneous exercise of imagination in all of its senses. As perception, memory, or "invention-extraction" it establishes and inscribes our bounds in the *certum*; as free-will, *ingenium*, or "invention-creation" it challenges these, and seeks a new beginning.

1.   The notion of courtesy as a theory of reception in reading any text, not only historical documents, is expounded by George Steiner explicitly in *Real Presences*, (Chicago, 1989), and implicitly under the notion of "translation" in *After Babel*, (Oxford, 1975). The courteous reader grants that the author - or more precisely the text - cannot be held to subscribe to the same assumptions, views and values as the reader himself. Paul Ricoeur addresses this issue throughout his writings, both in relation to texts and the historical past, in all cases balancing the meaningful access we have to these with the inaccessible and mysterious residue which we can approach only analogically - through narrative and the imagination.

2.   Prototypical of what Tafuri calls Romantic-Existential interpretations is Quatremère de Quincy's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. In this group he includes J. Adhémar and A. Huxley *Prisons, with the "Carceri" Etchings by G.B. Piranesi*, London: Triannon Press, 1949; and M. Yourcenar, *"Le cerveau Noir de Piranèse"*, Paris, 1962. These interpretations take as their point of departure the dream-like appearance of the *Carceri* prints.

3.   Thematically, to engravers of prison scenes such as Daniel Marot or Filippo Juvarra, stylistically to Tiepolo in whose studio he worked for a brief time.

4.   Its formal relation to the *sceno par angolo* stage-set perspectives of the Bibienna is often mentioned, and modern studies such as those by Ulya Vogt-Göknil and Manfredo Tafuri see it as undermining the laws of linear perspective. See Vogt-Göknil, U. *Giovanni Battista Piranesi's "Carceri"*, Zurich: Origo Verlag, 1958, and Tafuri, M. *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, Cambridge: MIT, 1987, p.26, n.3.

5.   The major reference for this is Tafuri's *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (*op.cit.*), but also important are Vincenzo Fasolo, "Il Campo Marzio di G.B. Piranesi", *Quaderni di Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura*, XV, 1956, pp.1-14, and Franco Borsi, "introduzione e Appendici Documentaria al Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma" in *Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma*, Firenze: Edizioni Colombo Ristampe, 1972, pp.5-12.

6.   Such as those by Tafuri, Fasolo, and Borsi (*op.cit.*)

7.   This view in particular is shared by Wittkower and Wilton-Ely. See Wittkower, R. "Piranesi's Architectural Creed", *Studies in the Italian Baroque*, London, 1975, pp.235-46, and Wilton-Ely, John. "Vision and Design: Piranesi's 'Fantasia' and the Graeco-Roman Controversy", *Les Actes du colloque 'Piranèse et les Français: 1740-1790*, Rome: Academie de France à Rome, 1976, pp.529-54.

8.   What is communicated in language is not "language" per se, but something else: what the work is *about*, the meaning of the work. Language itself may have no outside, there may be no *hors texte*, but there is something *else* outside it to which it points. Analysis of meaning requires an inductive approach.

Conflating the "how" and the "what" is a modern conceit more concerned with the power to achieve ends than what the nature of those ends might be. The "how to.." leads to the "how then to...", initiating a self-perpetuating endless quest for power. The end - the "what" - is left open to the system, and thus in an instrumental realm outside the domain of human meaning and responsibility.

9.   The structure of inductive reasoning takes us beyond the confines of the work in a way similar to Ricoeur's concept of metaphor and interpretation, Vico's concept of metaphor and poetic logic, and Heidegger's concept of the thing in which the definition sets it on its way to becoming. See Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" in *Basic Writings*, Wm. Lovitt trans., J.Glen Gray ed., San Francisco: Harper Collins, p.8

10.   In a variety of critical writings Piranesi has been labelled everything from late Baroque to a proto-exemplar of Romanticism, Neoclassicism, Surrealism, Modernism, Post-Modernism, and Deconstructivism. While these designations are patently absurd, the various and multiple citations assert the fecundity and richness of his work, suggesting by their very existence that it circumscribes many contradictory movements which consequently find some sort of unity or coherence in its complexity. This unity - even if based on misreadings - incorporates the traits out of which subsequent generations formed what we now call "modernity", thus suggesting that Piranesi is situated at the threshold of the modern era. This is not to say that he plays a causal or deterministic role, nor is it to preclude the roots or modernity from much earlier origins. It is merely to identify the work of Piranesi as a decisive moment in the emergence of this era: he is distant, yet still within our horizon.

11.   "Erratic" is used primarily in the glacial sense as a foreign body or object (boulder) which retains its own integrity even while swept along in the flow. In this sense all authentic works of art have an "erratic" quality with a sense of displacement.

12.   *Quaderni dell'Istituto di Storia dell'Architettura*, Università di Roma, n.15, 1956, pp.1-14.

13.   Published in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, n.184, mars/avril 1976, pp.93-108, and subsequently, in slightly revised form, as chapter one in *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, pp.25-54.

14.   *Piranesi: Il Campo Marzio dell'Antica Roma*, a cura di Franco Borsi, Florence: Edizioni Colombo Ristampe, 1972, pp.5-10.

15.   Scott, Jonathan. *Piranesi*, London: Academy Editions, 1975; and Wilton-Ely, John. *The Mind and Art of Giovanni Battista Piranesi*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1978.

16.   *Piranèse et les Français*, ed., Georges Brunel, Rome: Academie de France à Rome, 1976.

17.   Bloomer, Jennifer. *Architecture and the Text*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, pp.67-87.

18.   Diana Agrest, "Piranesi and the Modern Urban Discourse", and Stanley Allen, "Piranesi *Campo Marzio*: Reader's Guide", in *The Imagined and Real Landscapes of Piranesi: Critical Writings in America*, New York: Columbia University School of Architecture, 1993, pp.6-17.

19.   Borges, J.L. "Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote"*, *Labyrinths: Selected Writings and Other Stories*, NY: New Directions, 1964, pp.36-44.

> The first method he conceived was relatively simple. Know Spanish well, recover the Catholic faith, fight against the Moors or the Turk, forget the history of Europe between the years 1602 and 1918, *be* Miguel de Cervantes. Pierre Menard studied this procedure....but discarded it as too easy...To be, in the twentieth century, a popular novelist of the seventeenth seemed to him a diminution. To be, in some way, Cervantes and reach the *Quixote* seemed less arduous to him - and, consequently less interesting - than to go on being Pierre Menard and reach the *Quixote* through the experiences of Pierre Menard. (*ibid.* p.40)

20.   By reducing language to incoherent fragments the primal condition that anticipates language and meaning is restored, although the development of language itself depends on some form of authentic engagement.

21.   Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, Elio Gianturco, trans., New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1965, p.77, as cited in Verene, *Vico's Science of Imagination*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981, p.21

22.   He even planned a treatise on poetic images to be modelled on Bacon's idea of science as memory, imagination and understanding. See Victor M. Hamm, "Antonio Conti and English Aesthetics", *Comparative Literature*, v.8, pp.12-27, 19--.

23.   Fracastoro, Girolamo. "Turrius sive De Intellectione", in *Hieronymi Fracastorii Veronensis Opera Omnia, Secunda editio*, Venice, 1574, pp.121-148. See Murray W. Bundy, "Fracastoro and the Imagination" in *Philological Quarterly*, v.XX, July 1941, pp.236-249. Vico was certainly aware of Fracastoro, one of the few contemporaries to whom he refers (*NS* § 542)

24.   Typical of Renaissance works concerned specifically with the imagination was Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola's *de Imaginatione*. The Renaissance imagination remained associated with mechanisms of perception, much as it had been in the accounts of the Middle Ages and Classical Antiquity. *Fantasia* was the sensible particular of the corporeal world, to be verified by reason or judgment. The intellect, as the universal

intelligible realm devoid of matter, required the imagination to behold truths. Thus imagination was the potential instrument of good prophecy or the revelation of faith, although it remained untrustworthy and unreliable. Read in the context of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *On the Dignity of Man*, which describes man's freedom of will to rise to the angels or descend to the level of brutes, *de Imaginatione* is a work of ethics and values as well as cognitive psychology, promoting a prudent exercise of the powers of the imagination. Unlike later eighteenth century works however, it is not about artistic creation, aesthetics, or taste. See Pico della Mirandola, Gianfrancesco. *On the Imagination*, Harry Caplan trans. and ed., New Haven and London: Yale University Press and Oxford University Press, 1930.

25. Fracastoro, *op. cit.*, p.125 verso as cited in Murray Bundy, "'Invention' and 'Imagination' in the Renaissance". *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, v.XXIX, 1930, p.242.

26. Fracastoro, *op. cit.*, cited in Bundy, *ibid.*, p.242.

27. Joseph Addison, "The Nature of the Imagination and its Dependence on Sight", *The Spectator*, 1712. Quoted in Needham D. de l'U., H.A. *Taste and Criticism in the Eighteenth Century*, London: George G. Harrap and Co. Ltd., p.96

28. *ibid.*, p.97

29. *ibid.*, p.110

30. Nicolson, Marjorie. *Science and Imagination*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956.

31. Heidegger, Martin. "The Question Concerning Technology" in *Basic Writings* , Wm. Lovitt trans., J. Glen Gray ed., San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1977.

32. As prosthetic extensions of the body, or metonymical-analogous reductions of the world, instruments mediate the same body-world realm as the cognitive imagination. It is through these inventions of our own making that we know (or construct) the world. But whereas the imagination is rooted in the body and its perceptual processes, the instrument existed external to it. The instrument creates an objective image of the world and puts it within our grasp. The active imagination, freed from corporeal responsibility, becomes "instrumentalized" in a similar fashion, and together with reason creates objectivized phantasia (theories) which can be used to effect changes in the world. What we know of the world is what we make of it: the imaginative and "instrumental" aspects of phenomena, all of which embody, originally, human intention.
displacement of the body

33. Widespread increase in the development of scientific instruments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is indicative of the epistemological shift towards the speculative

sciences. Restoring the balance lost by this shift is one of the motives behind the work of both Vico and Piranesi.

34.   Saturn was a mythical king of Italy and its most ancient divinity. His name is said to have derived from sowing (*sero, sevi, satum*), and he was reputed the introducer of civilization and social order, seen as inseparably connected to agriculture. The agricultural prosperity of his era made it the golden age of Italy, which is associated with his wife Ops, the representative of plenty.

Saturn came to Italy in the reign of Janus, and formed a settlement on the Capitoline Hill, known as the Saturnine Hill, at the base of which was later constructed the temple to Saturn. He taught the people agriculture, and suppressed their savage mode, introducing civilization and prosperity and abundance associated with the feast of Saturnalia

Vico associates Saturn with the beginning of human time, measured in grain harvests: the golden years. Piranesi locates Saturn's temple and a statue of Janus in plate IV of the *Campo Marzio* next to the *carceri* Clement X, which was actually built by Appio Claudio in the year of Rome 303 (450 BC). This location (truncated from the bottom left of plate VII of the *ichnographia*) faces back to the pre-recorded history of the imperial city and forward to what Piranesi describes in the text of the *Campo Marzio* as a luxurious and prosperous public realm (*CM*, Ch.4, esp. §XII).

The coincidence of the *carceri* with the origin of human time is no accident. *Carceri* also refers to the enclosures at the starting gate of a racetrack, and thus represent beginnings, points of emergence, a form of birth or rebirth. This suggests the gestative and regenerative powers of the enclosure, whether it be a womb, an underground prison, or the earth. Piranesi relates an anecdote recorded by Pliny concerning the *carceri* of Claudio Decimviro (*CM*, Ch.3, §III) in which the pious act of a daughter breast-feeding her mother imprisoned there lead to the release of the mother and the subsequent construction of a temple over the site.

Although there was much debate over the location of this prison, it was known to exist. Calvesi claims that Piranesi's *Carceri* are based on a set of ruins which he found in this location and which he claimed revealed a series of underground structures running up the side of the Capitoline.

In light of this reading the original *Carceri* series mark a period of regenerative metamorphosis in which Piranesi continued to question his original ambitions to create grand structures (as first expressed in the *Prima Parte*, 1743), and turned inward to reformulate or reinvent himself.

35.   (*NS*, §714 - 716). Conventional accounts consider Proserpine as the daughter of Ceres.

36.   (*NS*, §711-12) Vico actually makes the celestial-burin connection himself, claiming that the mountaintops were imagined to be synonymous with the sky, and that their sharpness was the means by which the term for sky transferred to the term for engraver's tool

37. Only in plate I of the *Campo Marzio* does Piranesi use other references for the cardinal points: *Orient* in place of *Ponènte*, *Occident* in place of *Levante*, and *Septemtrione* in place of *Tramontane*. *Septemtrione* are the seven ploughing oxen in the constellation of the great bear which is associated with the north star of *tramontane*. It is the more common word for north, although Piranesi is not unique in his use of *tramontane*.

38. (*AC*, 129) Coulanges also refers to the ancient *asylum* of Romulus which was in fact not the city of Rome, but an appendage to the city, "situated at the foot of the Capitoline hill, whilst the city occupied the Palatine" (*AC*, 127). This location corresponds to the location of the temple of Saturn and the Carceri of Clement X.

39. For this discussion he draws on the writings of Ruggerio Giuseppe (Roger Joseph) Boscovich, a widely known scientist and academician of the day, who's interests included optics, light, Newton, and the conics. He published several works related to the time and the obelisk including *D'un'antica villa scoperta sul dosso del Tuscolo: d'un antico oralogio a sole, e di alcune altre rarità...luogo di Vitruvio illustrato (1746)* and *De Obelisco Caesaris Augusti e Campi Marti ruderibus nuper eruto...(1750)*.

40. Vico quotes both Strabo and Homer on this point. (*NS*, §772)

41. It is noteworthy that *arca(e)* is also "safe, coffin, ark, and prison cell" and *arcere* is to shut up (as *carceri*).

42. *Hiero* means "divine or priestly", perhaps from Greek for "hawk" (the augurer's sign), and *gluphein* is to carve. Italian *graffio* is a scratch, *grafia* is writing or spelling.

43. Thus the image becomes redundant, wholly dependent on its referent for meaning; a derivative reduction of the original which adds or reveals nothing. This ignores the specificity of the so-called representation's situation, which is necessarily different from its referent's. See Dalibor Vesely, "Architecture and the Poetics of Representation", *Daidalos* , v.25, Sept. 1987, pp.24-36.

44. For instance, the creation of Jove, the thunder-god, might have resulted from the following primitive response to the experience of thunder: If that were me making that sound it would be anger, and I would be an enormous and powerful being.

45. The term "forensic", today associated with criminal evidence and the law courts, comes from the Latin adjective *forensic* referring to the forum as the place of public address. According to Aristotle the three types (or causes) of rhetoric were:
    a) deliberative: addressed to a judge of the future, dealing with contingent things beyond our control. It argued by "example", based on inductive logic.
    b) forensic (also called judicial): addressed to a judge of the past, arguing by "enthymeme", based on deductive logic applied to signs (evidence) and probabilities.

c)   epideictic: addressed to a mere spectator or critic, for purposes of amplification. As used here forensic is a type of description that works with the evidence to open up probabilities for meaning; probabilities that remain only probabilities until realized in the final act of interpretation.

46.   "The 'Dipintura'and the Structure of Vico's *New Science* as a Mirror of the World", *Vico: Past and Present*, ed. G. Tagliacozzo, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1981, pp.43-51.

47.   Axioms I to XXII, after first clearing the ground of what Vico considers specious arguments, establishes the foundations for the true (*verum*) and the certain (*certum*), which is part of the true.   The certain elements include Language, Greek and Roman history, and the common elements.

Axioms XXIII to XL deal with the history of Religion from the first branching of the Hebrew and Gentile streams through idolatry (Gods; XXXI-XXXVIII), Divination (Heroes; XXXIX) to Sacrifice (Human; XL).   This cycle as a whole considers human relations to the Gods.
Axioms XLI to LV addresses historical (heroic) mythology, as evidence of the truth of the Christian religion.   Mythologies, as products of the *certum*, are part of the *verum* of Christianity.   Christianity's access to the truth via the Hebrew religion allows it to reinterpret mythological history so as to reveal its errors, demonstrate that it springs from the same origin, and reconcile it to this truth.   Christianity thus appropriates mythology and moves it to a "higher plane".

Axioms LVI to LXII return to the human, examining the nature of speech as originally occurring in verse.

Axioms XLIII to XCVI consider the Ideal Eternal History as an historical constant in terms of historical events, and

Axioms CIII to CXIV demonstrate that the Natural Law for the Gentes, which is the basis for the Ideal Eternal History as established by the philological evidence, is in fact a Natural law (and therefore true) as opposed to a certain law, and is thus established by the grace of Providence.   With this we return to the original verum-certum distinction of the first set of axioms.

48.   (*NS* §239), although the reference to schoolmen comes from the *Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*.

49.   Since it passed so quickly from this era to the age of the philosophers in which Homer is writing it has little heroic age and the mythical structures of the divine age are embedded in and the basis of the vulgar tongue of the philosophers.   For Vico this is also a problem for French and Greek: passing too quickly doesn't let the nation fully

develop/unfold in each era. See (*NS*, §159, 461).

50. Rome, according to Vico, was founded by violence during its heroic era, clearing an asylum amidst the vulgar Latins who recorded their heroic nature in what became the Italian language. See (*NS*, §160)

51. a dig at Descartes?

52. To aid ourselves in this we devise instruments and experiments, but at best these render an image of the demonstrable, measurable, instrumentalizable aspects of things: never the truth which is God's alone.

53. Homer, the Odyssey [8.63] as cited by Vico (*NS*, §365)

54. Hayden White states that Vico considers Christianity as the true religion which is
       ...in Vico's view, guarded in a special way against the fall into ironic
       consciousness which besets its pagan counterparts...thus Christianity stands
       as the divinely provided solvent of ironic consciousness, as the measure
       of all truth...
    See Hayden White, "The Tropics of History: The Deep Structure of the *New Science*", *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p.215.

55. Sections in the *New Science* often considered in this respect include: (*NS*, §9, 13, 167-68, 334, 948, 1047, 1092, and 1094)

56. As a tactic this dates back at least as far as Nicholas of Cusa's *doctrine of ignorance* as a means to resolve and unite opposites. And it continues to be a useful tactic appearing in the concept of *verwindung* as first named by Heidegger and later employed by Vattimo in his concept of weak thought (which intentionally leaves itself open to this sort of resolution).

    Vico had also used this technique before, in both *The Study Methods of our Time*, in which he seeks a definitive resolution to the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns, and *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians*. It appears elsewhere in the *New Science* as well, attempting to show that the speculative and social sciences necessarily derive from the same metaphorical-imaginative origins, and that "science" is erected as a rational superstructure on poetic foundations.

57. This ironic resolution requires an elevated overview of the issues in order to reconfigure them. This may be part of the role of the *ichnographia* within the *Campo Marzio*. It seems also to be part of the strategy of the *Parere su l'Archittetura* in which the dialogue is less a partisan debate than it is an *argumentum* (in the rhetorical rather than the eristic sense): a setting out of the issues between strict Stoic determinism (Didascolo) and

Epicurean chance or novelty (Protopiro).

58. Pagliaro, Antonino, *La dottrina linguistica di G.B. Vico*, Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, ser.8, v.8, n.6, 1959. As quoted by M. Frankel and G. Tagliacozzo, "Progress in Art? A Vichian Answer," in *Vico Past and Present*, pp.238-51.

59. Eliot, T.S. "Burnt Norton", in *Four Quartets*, London: Faber and Faber, p.13

60. Vico interprets Hercules' slaying of the Nemean Lion as the clearing of the forests, the making way, in which man created the asylums into which he could emerge and commence his own being. This, together with the inscription of the *templum caeli* and the construction of the altars, was the beginning of the first cities.

61. Vico's Ideal Eternal History is essentially an elevation of the actual history of Rome to universal status, in much the same way as a poetic character became an imaginative universal. His chapters dealing with Homer are designed to enfold Greek history into the Roman type, and to distinguish Greece as the archetype for mythical civilizations. Homer is of the heroic age (he is not a philosopher: see *NS*, §781-82, 836, 896), but the Greeks passed quickly from the divine age to that of men. Their mythical structures were embedded and preserved in heroic language only (*NS*, §158-61, 1000). Rome, on the other hand, was founded during the heroic age, amidst the vulgar Latins. Therefore it is their heroic fables and institutions that are best preserved, and since cities were founded during the heroic era, Rome is not only the heroic archetype, but the archetype for cities and city-founding (*NS*, §114, 158-61, 553, 662, and 1003).

62. These plates are erroneously reproduced in Borsi as plates 34 and 39 (headplates) and 19 and 47 (tailplates). The original plates for these numbers, as well as for plate 27, do not appear in Borsi. The error is likely due to the cataloguing represented by the Arabic numbers etched onto the plates when they came into the possession of the French printers Firmin-Didot.

63. In this it is not unlike the *Carceri* where the erasure of the horizon creates a sense of confinement within vast spatial volumes. This view gives one the sense of being trapped in a maze. The role of the horizon in articulating the relations between realms is a common theme in Piranesi's work. Horizon-deprivation is a necessary corollary of this. This type of view, however, is extremely rare in Piranesi's oeuvre.

64. Frontispiece: from the Latin *frons*: forehead and *specere*: to look at; therefore "to look at the forehead" as a body metaphor for the front or principle façade of a building, which is its other meaning.

65. Thus a poetic description of the landscape becomes hard evidence for the history of the site. This suggests that there might be some relation between the nature of the landscape and man's original - and actual - poetic response to it. In other words, in recognizing

certain characteristics in the landscape and responding intuitively to these in terms of their needs and uses, the first inhabitants actually conferred these qualities on the site, and identified and named them. Piranesi constructs his argument from the rhetorical images of Strabo, implicitly claiming that these images (as the philological particulars of the description) are closer to the truth than arguments to the contrary. The citation (*CM*, Ch.1, §1), is from Strabo's *Geographia*, Bk.5. This detailed consideration of the poetic content of words as bearer of factual evidence suggests also that in his own use of words the etymological content was always present.

66. *Scenographia Campi Martii veterum aedificatorum reliquias ostendeas e ruderibus nostrique aevi aedificijs exemptas cum ejusdem Campi celebriorum monumentor congerie*

67. In a modern version of this, Heidegger's discussion of "The Thing" considers the "clearing" as the openness which allows a thing to emerge from concealment and pursue the nature of its own becoming. See Martin Heidegger, "The Thing", in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Albert Hofstadter trans., San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1975, pp.165-82.

68. Vico does a similar thing, disposing of the conceits of nations and scholars (*NS*, §125-28).

69. *Ornamentum* refers to ornament and decoration, but also to equipment, trappings, apparatus, costume: things with which we outfit ourselves. Trophies were originally the spoils of war, an opponent's "outfit" set up on the battlefield as symbolic evidence of the enemy's having been defeated or "turned", as in the original sense of the word trophy. Ornament as such was in essence a metaphoric symbol, not an aesthetic decoration. As such it demonstrated in a very real and substantial way what it intended to say.

70. The productive value of fragments and ruins lies not in the clues they provide to their departed wholes, but in their capacity to generate new and relevant wholes. The ungrounded fragment, separated from its original context and horizon of meaning, appears alien and mysterious in its new setting. Still, it is pregnant with potential. Temporal displacement and fragmentation strip it of customary references and associations, removing it from the man-made world we understand and placing it closer to the foreign domain of the received natural world. The "returning to nature" of ruins is not simply their becoming overgrown with vegetation; it is their estrangement from human culture.

Under such circumstances the "non-figurative essence" of the artifact is free to emerge into the surrounding absence (clearing) left by its original reality, now departed. The persistence of the tangible object, together with historical change, is what makes this possible. Piranesi's precise and accurate documentation of artifacts is in no way a desire to recapture their past realities. Rather it is an effort to inscribe the totality of the artifact into present reality, to wring everything possible from the actual remains. But this re-inscription operates only on the sensible but non-figurative poetic essence of the piece.

In this way it resembles man's original encounter with the phenomenal world of nature, and re-enacts the original founding of the human world. This re-enactment, or re-founding, is an exercise which serves to augment our own present reality.

Through the agency of the imagination the essential nature of the fragment is released into the clearing, to participate in the imaginative construction of a "new" reality rather than the archaeological recovery of an "actual truth". This inductive augmentation of present reality is neither a mimetic re-production nor an original production *ex nihilo*, but a re-invention of the world, a description of a new way of being in the world which amounts to a metamorphosis.

71. Now stored in the Capitoline Museum in Rome, the fragments were published in Piranesi's time by Bellori as *Ichnographia Veteris Romae XX Tabulis comprehensa cum notis io Petri Bellori*, Romae, 1764. Bellori's work includes 26 plates, mostly single-line schematic drawings similar to plate XVI in the *Campo Marzio*.

72. This is one of several axes identified first by Fasolo, and subsequently by Tafuri and others.

73. *Aruns* is an Etruscan word regarded by the Romans as a proper name, but perhaps signifying a younger son in general. *Aruns* refers specifically to the younger brother of L.Tarquinius Superbus and the younger son of Tarquinius Superbus who slew his cousin Junius Brutus, who was considered a hero in the expulsion of the Tarquins. Brutus' efforts lead to the end of the aristocratic age and the start of the age of heroes.

74. These are the *Schola Poetarum* and an axial composition with arches and porticoes to Gratianus, Theodosus, and Valentinianus, together with temples to Jove, Juno, Minerva, Neptune, and Pluto. The Empire under Valentinius was divided into West (ruled by Gratianus) and East (Theodosius) in the last third of the 4th Century AD. This split became permanent with the death of Theodosius in AD 395. Thus weakened the Empire could not recover from sacks by the Goths in 410 and the barbarians in 476. The tripartite composition in plate VI (though part of the area of plate VII) is the prelude to the fall. The five aforementioned temples and the *Schola Poetarum* are the only structures in plate VI, aside from the *Area Martis*, not dedicated to Roman Emperors.

75. The formal resemblance of plate VI to Rossi's Modena cemetery is striking, including the entry "pavilion" (Hadrians Mausoleum / the house of the dead), the focal point (basilica / crematorium) at the head of a triangular composition (*Clitaeporticus ab Hadriano Dis Manibus Dicatae* / the crypts), the surrounding enclosure (canals / walls), and the relationship to the adjacent city / cemetery.

76. *Aelius* is part of Hadrian's proper name that refers also to *Aelia*, the name he gave to Jerusalem after he restored it.

77. The notion of "turning" is buried deep in the Latin psyche, manifesting itself in speech and language patterns, and in the concept of "trophy". The deep structure of the *New Science* is founded on tropes which are, literally, linguistic "turnings." Trophies, now generic for awards and prizes, were originally memorials to victory which consisted of the spoils of war - the captured arms of the defeated (turned) enemy - raised on the battlefield or in a public place, and turned against them. Turning is significant in the sod-turning by which the city-founder inscribes the boundaries of the city (releasing the spirits that inhabit the soil at the depth of a furrow), and in *boustrophedon*, the pattern of writing alternately left to right and right to left, mimicking the action of an ox ploughing a field. Agriculture, language, and writing are all types of turnings.

78. Although Tafuri appears to ascribe his "negative utopia" to the project as a whole, it seems evident only in this plate and the frontispiece. The double symmetry (symmetrical assembly of symmetrical forms) resembles the *Horti Salustiani* of plate VIII, but isolated from the ground by the surrounding canals. The stiff arrangement of the forms together with the geometric character imposed by the canals creates a static composition, especially in contrast to the rest of the plates. The empty duplicity of the forms is apparent, especially in the pairing of the circus of the despised Domitian with that of the respected Hadrian. This duplicity corresponds to an articulate language that has become fully ironic and self aware, where forms have no inherent meaning, and are distinguished or identified only by their literal names. For the reference to "negative utopia" see Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, Cambridge: MIT, 1987, (p.54).

79. The eagle symbolizes the auspices, the transmission of the message of Jove, while the fasces, bundled *litui* with an attached axe, were Roman signs of secular authority, deriving from the authority of the founder who initially used them to inscribe the *templum caeli*. The five symbols include a rope or cord, sword, shield with a face, a knife such as those used at sacrifices, and a pitcher, perhaps for oil used in anointing. These symbols resemble Vico's "five real words" (*NS* §99), but also relate to heroic city-founding rites or events. The cord may represent the lyre or force of Orpheus, the founder of Greece, or the knot of Hercules, the bond by which Romulus founded Rome (*NS* §558, 658-659) and the shield may be Aeneas' shield or an ancestral emblem (*NS* §559).

80. This exceeds the traditionally accepted bounds, but the case is argued by Piranesi in both the *Antichità Romane* and Chapter One of the *Campo Marzio*. The map itself is reminiscent of plate XXXVIII in volume one of the *Antichità*.

81. See the description of this compass tablet in Chapter Two.

82. *Ichnographiam* means "groundplan" but with a sense of "footprint" as the impression registered on the surface of the earth. *Architecturae Cultori* is not so much a cultivated architect as one who is sophisticated, but rather one who is dedicated and devoted to architecture.

83.   Vico tells us about *Argumentum* in *On the Most Ancient Wisdom of the Italians:*

> *Argumentum* is derived from the same root as *argutus* (clear, bright, sharp) or from *acuminatus* (sharpened). Moreover, the sharp men (*arguti*) are the ones who are able to find a likeness or ratio between things very different and far removed from one another, some way in which they are cognate, or who leap over the obvious and recall from distant places the connections appropriate for the things under discussion. This is the type of mother wit that is called acumen. Hence, wit is essential to invention because, in general, to find new things requires both the wit work and the activity of wit alone.

> Since this is the case, it is a likely conjecture that the ancient philosophers of Italy did not prove things by syllogism or sorites, but used induction by analogy in their discussions....In truth a man who uses the syllogistic argument does not so much compare diverse things as, rather, unfold from the very heart of the genus something specific, which is already contained in it, and a man who uses the sorites weaves a chain linking each cause together with the next one. Those who excel in either mode are not joining two lines in an acute angle, but are extending a single line; each, therefore, seems to be more subtle than acute. (*AWI*, pp.102-3)

84.   For example, the founding of the Italian Nation by Aeneas is at once the fulfilment of a prophecy and a new beginning.

85.   The siting of the tomb here was purely speculative or polemical for its actual remains were not located until 1780, at the time of Piranesi's death.

86.   The tailpiece thus represents the area traditionally ascribed to the Campo Marzio while the frontispiece refers to something outside, beyond. The two are related as are two sides of the river (*amnis*) which implies also a disconnection and forgetting (*amnesia*).

87.   The actual chapter titles, loosely translated, are as follows:
    1.   Of the place, and the great size in Antiquity, of the Campo Marzio.
    2.   Of the name of the Campo Marzio, of its Consecration, and the works made there up to the times of Tarquinius Superbus.
    3.   Of the Campo Marzio usurped by the Tarquins, and [later] restored to the first users by the Roman consuls; and of the works made there up to the times of Caius Flaminius.
    4.   Of the buildings made in the Campo Marzio from the times of C. Flaminius up to those of Caesar Augustus.
    5.   Of the works made in the Campo Marzio under [during] the Empire of Augustus
    6.   Of the works made in the Campo Marzio after the death of Augustus up to the

Fall [decadence] of the Roman Empire.

88. It was common practice for cities to link their individual histories to the date of their traditional founding. Thus the correspondence between this chronology and Vico's chronological table (*NS*, §43) is not unusually significant.

89. This observation I owe to Vanna Fonsato to whom I am also grateful for invaluable assistance in dealing with the original Italian text.

90. Dionysius of Halicarnassus?

91. This is the strategy often employed by Vico to reconcile apparent opposites.

92. Constantine was engaged in a contest with Maxentius for the possession of Italy, and defeated him at the village of Saxa Rubra on Oct. 27, 312. This small village in Etruria was only a few miles from Rome near the river Cremara and on the via Flaminia. It was on the night before his last and decisive battle with Maxentius that he is said to have had the vision that lead to his conversion. The defeated Maxentius attempted to escape over the Milvian Bridge into Rome, but perished in the river.

93. Words in Latin have meaning *only* in relation to their root. The form or suffix of the word modifies its meaning or role in the sentence, but similar endings do not necessarily mean similar modifications: it depends on the root word.

94. See also Vico's description of heroic games (*NS*, §278-80).

95. Fold here refers to the "re-fold" sense of "re-ply", and is a metaphorical use of a geometrical discovery of Girard Desargues. Desargues demonstrated that if the linear intersection of any two planes which also intersected the same conic form at different angles were considered a fold or hinge, and the two planes were pivoted about this axis until they fell into the same plane, then the images of their original intersections with the conic form (which pivoted with them) maintained coplanar relationships that corresponded exactly to their three dimensional analogues. Thus three-dimensional form could be subject to two-dimensional analyses which "accounted" for the missing dimension, and the "cone of vision" could be flattened into linear perspective without apparent repercussions. By restoring the fold we restore the phenomenal volumetric that the flattened images reduce.

96. *Carceri* are the tiny boxes for horses at the starting line of a racecourse. In figurative speech, *carceri* refers to starting point or beginning - as when one emerges from a womb. Metaphorically speaking, incarceration would not be a punishment for a crime, but a remedial measure in which one is returned to the origin to begin again.

97. *Dare alla luce*, literally "to bring to light", figuratively refers to giving birth, to revealing, and to publishing (also *mettere in luce*)

98. This is the *raison d'être* of *On the Study Methods of Our Time*.

99. See Chapter Two on Instruments.

100. According to Vico, Venice is one of five authentic aristocracies remaining in the eighteenth century (*NS*, §29, 1018, 1094). Tafuri describes the contradictory and heroic self-image of Venice in *Humanism, Technical Knowledge and Rhetoric*; and in "Walks Around the Horses" (*Oppositions 25*, Fall, 1982, pp.84-101) André Corboz describes Venice's claim to be Rome's sole legitimate descendent (p.89).

101. For which Rome, as the archetypal heroic nation, would be the model. The substance of Piranesi's position on the Greco-Roman debate is much like Vico's: in all matters heroic, of which cities and architecture are prime examples, Rome is the exemplar. In matters concerning divine myth (as opposed to heroic fables), or human philosophy, however, Greece may be said to excel. Thus while Greece may have produced superior artistic beauty, this is a philosophical concept proper to the art historical realm of Winckelmann *et al*; it is irrelevant, as far as Piranesi is concerned, to cities and architecture. The decadence of Greek architecture occurs when its original robust character is compromised by the prettiness of philosophical beauty.

102. The relation between two irreconcilable realms is "allegory", first conceived by Philo of Alexandria in attempting to reconcile his law-based Hebraic culture with the ideal-based philosophic culture of his Greek environment. Allegorical relations exist between past and present, human and divine, the *verum* and the *certum*, but not between a signifier and its signified when both of these occupy the same ontological realm. The dialogue articulated through allegory is the human constructed *factum* responding to the givens of the *verum* and the *certum*. By means of this *factum* free-will is exercised, and human choices inscribe the cultural *ethos* onto the landscape. This imaginatively created cultural landscape becomes the necessary ground within which reason and judgment can operate logically to define ethical action - or practice.

APPENDIX I:

Explanation, Interpretation, and Deep Structure

The terms "explanation" and "interpretation" are used here as in Ricouer's essay "What is a Text? Explanation and Understanding" (*HHS*, 145-64).

Explanation of the text seeks to describe the nature of the text itself, and to render it intelligible in its own terms. Through linguistic analyses and semiotics it reveals the text's internal structural relations at various levels from the most literal and graphic to "deep" universal structures.

George Steiner, whose notion of "cortesia" (*RP*, 148) extended towards the alien world posited by the text is essential to our interpretive attitude, nevertheless finds "deep structures" problematic. In his discussion of the possibilities of a universal grammar or language (*AB*, Ch.2) Steiner dismisses the ultimate value of this term of Chomskian generative transformational grammar:

> The contrary view [to the universalist position] can be termed 'monadist'. It holds that universal deep structures are either fathomless to logical and psychological investigation or of an order so abstract, so generalized as to be well-nigh trivial. (*AB*, 74)

> ...it is probable that the deep structures for which universality is claimed are quite distinct from the surface structure of sentences as they actually appear. The geological strata are not reflected in the local landscape. (*AB*, 100)

Chomskian 'deep structures'... are located 'far beyond the level of actual or even potential consciousness'. We may think of them as relational patterns or strings of an order of abstraction far greater than even the simplest of grammatic rules. Even this is too concrete a representation. 'Deep structures' are those innate components of the human mind that enable it to carry out 'certain formal kinds of operations on strings'. These operations have no *a priori* justification. They are of the category of essential arbitrariness inherent in the fact that the world exists... (*AB*, 100-101)

It may be that too many linguists have assumed that the 'deep structures' of all languages are identical because they have equated universal criteria of constraint and possibility with what could be in truth aspects only of the grammar of their own tongue or language group (*AB*, 104)

By placing the active modes of linguistic life so 'deep' as to defy all sensory observation and pragmatic depiction, transformational generative grammar may have put the ghost out of all reach of the machine. (*AB*, 107)

[transformational grammar failed because] it tried to study the structure of language without taking into account the fact that language is used by human beings to communicate in a social context. (*AB*, 108, quoting George Lakoff)

In place of linguistic universals Steiner advocates substantive universals whose evidence derives from semantics (i.e. the actual use of language situated in the world of the speaker and listener or reader) rather than pure syntax situated only in the context-free world of the text. In this he recognizes Vico's rejection of universal languages as falsely reductionist in favour of language worlds rooted in the concrete and specific. Vico's philology, the key to the *Scienza Nuova*, contains both universalist and monadist strains:

Vico knows, this is one of his great clairvoyances, that man enters into active possession of consciousness , into active cognizance of reality, through the ordering, shaping powers of language. All men do so, and in that sense language, and metaphor in particular, are a universal fact, and a universal mode of being. In the genesis of the human spirit, all nations traverse the same stages of linguistic usage, from the immediate and sensory to the abstract. Simultaneously, however... [Vico] was acutely perceptive of the autonomous genius and historical colouration of different languages. All primitive men sought expression through 'imaginative universals' (*generi fantastici*), but in diverse tongues these universals

rapidly acquired very different configurations. 'Almost infinite particulars' constitute both the syntactic and lexical corpus of different languages. These particulars both engender and reflect the differing world-views of races and cultures. The degree of 'infinite particularity' reaches so deep, that a universal logic of language...is falsely reductionist. It is only by means of a scrupulous, essentially poetic recreation or translation of a given language-world, such as that of Homeric Greek and of Biblical Hebrew, that the 'new science' of myth and history can hope to trace the growth of consciousness... (*AB*, 75-76)

Vico thus ventures into the realm of semantic universals based on the presence of anthropomorphic metaphors in all languages (*AB*, 102). These arise from the natural impulse of men to make themselves the measure of all things, and to judge distant and unknown things by what is familiar and at hand (*NS*, §120, 122). Although these lead to certain conceits, they also underly Vico's eternal plan of commonwealths which "is founded on the two eternal principles of this world of nations, namely the mind and the body of the men who compose it." (*NS*, §18)

The human mind is naturally inclined by the senses to see itself externally in the body, and only with great difficulty does it come to understand itself by means of reflection. This axiom gives us the principle of etymology in all languages: words are carried over from bodies and from the properties of bodies to signify the institutions of the mind and spirit. The order of ideas must follow the order of institutions. (*NS*, §236-238)

...a consequence of that infirmity of the human mind by which, immersed and buried in the body, it naturally inclines to take notice of bodily things .. (*NS*, §331)

Ricoeur supports Steiner's call for semantics as the basis for understanding. This is implicit in his very definition of a text as "interrupted discourse" embodying (in its textual structure) an "intention to say", rather than as a documentary record of an already completed discourse. His integrative and conciliatory strategy, however, recognizes that any description or analysis (no matter how formal, how abstract, or how deep), even though rooted in the de-contextualized virtual world offered by the text, already represents a point of view. Rather than a dead-end or cul-de-sac, the text itself - as such

- represents a potential starting point for interpretation already situated in the semantic domain.

Moreover the 'deep structures', for Ricoeur, even contribute to this enterprise by revealing a 'depth semantics' otherwise obscured by the 'noise' of literal meanings.

> Would not the function of structural analysis then be to impugn the surface semantics of the recounted myth in order to unveil a depth semantics which is, if I may say so, the living semantics of the myth? If that were not the function of structural analysis, then it would, in my opinion, be reduced to a sterile game, to a derisory combination of elements... (*HHS*, 161)

While 'deep structures' may indeed lie beyond the level of consciousness, it is there that the poetic nature of the text - as text - lies. In this respect Ricoeur actually accords somewhat more courtesy to the nature of the text than does Steiner. 'Depth semantics' emerge as the reader's poetic translations of these structures. The reader completes the trajectory of the text by aligning himself with its particular *sens* or "grain" and reconnecting it to the world of his experience in the final interpretive act which Ricoeur calls "appropriation":

> Initially the text had only sense, that is , internal relations or a structure; now it has a meaning, that is a realization in the discourse of the reading subject. By virtue of its sense, the text had only a semiological dimension; now it has, by virtue of its meaning, a semantic dimension. (*HHS*, 159)

> To interpret is to appropriate here and now the intention of the text....the depth semantics unveiled by the structural analysis of the text invites us to say that the intended meaning of the text is not essentially the presumed intention of the author, the lived experience of the writer, but rather what the text means for whoever complies with its injunction. The text seeks to place us in its meaning, that is - according to another acceptation of the word *sens* - in the same direction. So if the intention is that of the text, and if this intention is the direction which it opens up for thought, then depth semantics must be understood in a fundamentally dynamic way. I shall therefore say: to explain is to bring out the structure, that is, the internal relations of dependence which constitute the statics of the text; to interpret is too follow the path of thought opened up by the text, to place oneself en route towards the orient [grain?] of the text. We are invited by this remark to correct our initial concept of interpretation and to search -

beyond a subjective process of interpretation as an act on the text - for an objective process of interpretation which would be the act of the text. (*HHS*, 161)

Henceforth, for the exegete, to interpret is to place himself within the sense indicated by the relation of interpretation supported by the text. (*HHS*, 164)

...interpretation as appropriation....lies at the extremity...of the hermeneutical arc: it is...the anchorage of the arch in the ground of lived experience. But the entire theory of hermeneutics consists in mediating this interpretation-appropriation by the series of interpretants which belong to the work of the text upon itself. Appropriation loses its arbitrariness insofar as it is the recovery of that which is at work, in labour, within the text. What the interpreter says is a re-saying which reactivates what is said by the text....
...reading is the concrete act in which the destiny of the text is fulfilled. (*HHS*, 164)

With this we recall Gadamer's concept of interpretation as the "fusion of horizons" of text and reader, and we return to Steiner's position in which interpretation is the courteous reception and "performance" of a work (*RP*, passim.). (The concept of performance is important for the final chapter of this paper as it reveals the aspects of responsibility and answerability in interpretation which link it to the realm of action, ethics and practice).

Therefore, whereas structural linguistics and semiotics focus on the text, and Steiner emphasizes the reader, Ricoeur articulates their interrelationships:

I should now like to go beyond this antithetical opposition and to bring out the articulation which would render structural analysis and hermeneutics complementary. For this it is important to show how each of the two attitudes which we have juxtaposed refers back, by means of its own peculiar features, to the other. (*HHS*, 160)

If, on the contrary, we regard structural analysis as a stage - and a necessary one - between a naive and critical interpretation, then it seems possible to situate explanation and interpretation along a unique *hermeneutical arc* and to integrate the opposed atitudes of explanation and understanding within an overall conception of reading as the recovery of meaning. (*HHS*, 161)

APPENDIX II:

Review of Existing Literature

The various analyses reviewed here have been added to the body of *Campo Marzio* literature over the last forty years. They have been used here as a descriptive starting point for interpretation. The list is not exhaustive, but includes most of the readily accessible material that addresses the *Campo Marzio*. Please see the bibliography for full references.

A. Fasolo

Fasolo's central thesis is that the *Campo Marzio* provides the definitive answer to the question: "In what sense of the word can Piranesi be considered an 'architect'?" , presumably as distinguished from an antiquarian.[1] The architect, in Fasolo's terms, is realizer of ideal forms with practical ends and artistic ideals. He sees the *Campo Marzio*, more than an archaeological exercise, as a creative outlet for Piranesi's evident need to invent architectural form. Above all it demonstrates his capacity to create grand complexes within given parameters, or coordinating lines (i.e. the existing remains of antiquity and the spatial network they imply) while still respecting Roman typologies.[2]

Piranesi's reconstructions, according to Fasolo, while faithful to the spirit of Roman antiquity, have no archaeological intent. They introduce a new "organicity" suggested by the ruins, yet without classical precedent. This is also evident in the frontispiece which, even though executed by Piranesi's son,[3] was done under the direction of the master.[4] While the *Campo Marzio* may have been designed with the perceptions of an antiquarian, it was created with the well-developed knowledge of an architect.[5]

For Fasolo the creative work of the architect lies in respecting antiquity (its references, spirit, and regulating lines) while inventing new formal typologies and compositions responding to current circumstances.[6]

These analyses of formal patterns, however, remain essentially within the world of geometric signs, and thus immanent to the graphic nature of the work.[7] They constitute a first degree explanation of the work, rendering it "intelligible" or exposing its irrationality.

The major organizing axes of the *ichnographia* are identified as the *Equiria* (running from top right to bottom left, dissappearing just as it enters the circular zone centred on the mausoleum of Augustus), and, perpendicular to this, the axis beginning at the *Mons Vaticanus* (pl.V, bottom left) and extending down and to the right through the *Horti Neroniani*, the *Area Martis*, and the *Horti Domitiae*.[8] Perpendiclar to the latter, and centred on Hadrian's Mausoleum, is a secondary axis coordinating the major composition on pl.VI. Although other secondary axes are local; some, like the two primary ones, also centre on the Mausoleum of Augustus where the bottom four plates come together. In addition the two primary axes are the abscissa and ordinate axes of most compositions in pl.VII (bottom left), and almost align with the cardinal directions (M-P-L-T in pl.V).

Along with these axes, several authentic and verifiable reference points, as benchmarks, serve to fix the orientation of the plan. Piranesi's inventive compositions around these antique nuclei analogically retain the character of the antique lines, revealing antiquity through the development of his own ideas.[9] Unfortunately Fasolo abandons this potentially fruitful line of inquiry in favour of the geometric analyses that follow.[10] Compositions based on diagonals, on oblique and intersecting lines, on curves, triangles and ellipses, and on the combination and intertwining of these devices illustrate, for Fasolo, the 'inexhaustibility' of *la fantasia compositiva*. The series of architectonic elements that he extracts from the *ichnographia* to illustrate the character of this *arte piranesiana* are reproduced by both Tafuri and Borsi (see Fig.1 in the text).

Fasolo observes that the 'bipolarity' of many of the compositions (in which identical, bilaterally symmetrical forms are placed side by side) is complemented by a shallow unifying curve which connects the two together. This occurs at the Bustum Hadriani (pl.VI), the complex surrounding the Pantheon (pl.VII), and several other smaller assemblies.[11] But the unity remains local to each composition, the larger order deriving only from the aforementioned axes.[12] This gives rise to Tafuri's observation that the various compositions clustered around antique nuclei are like individual organic machines, each with their own world, operating in parallel but in isolation from one another, and thus reinforcing the fragmentary nature of the composition. (The axes, in Tafuri's view, serve more to accentuate this condition than compensate for it.)

On the one hand this collection of independent fragments resembles Vico's notion of the parallel rise of nations, each with their own internally coherent nature; on the other hand the relations between these isolated worlds vary with the region they occupy. In plates IX and X, which Fasolo designates as *"zona verde"*, the compositions float freely on a green plane, aligning themselves with natural features or regulating lines, but with little or no relation or influence on one another. Smaller single elements float also in the spaces between. In the Villa Arunti the *"zona verde"* appears to penetrate the zone of heroic compositions in plate VIII. These centric, axial, and bipolar designs meet in a titanic clash. It is this plate that gives one the literal impression of a patchwork or collage, as well as one of the most inventive and complex organisms: the Horti Luciliani as recognized by both Fasolo and Tafuri. Plate VII, as Fasolo has noted, is an organically related network oriented to the major axes of the plan, although some of the "patchwork" motif persists in the lower right corner. All of the organisms are coherently and rationally related, they do not interfere with one another, and there is little or no residual space between them: a very orderly and coordinated arrangement. Finally, in Plate VI, the orderly arrangement continues, but the geomtric lines of the canals indicate a tightly packed mosaic with virtually no space between components which are, at the same time, absolutely isolated from one another by the gap of the trench.

B.   Borsi

Fasolo's analyses, essentially descriptive and explanatory in their structural-geometric content, nevertheless remain suggestive.   Borsi, for instance, takes his "bipolarity" as both a literal **and** figurative reference (a reading not overtly suggested by the article).   "Bipolarity" becomes the theme in which geometry is an analogue for the resolution of various pairings, including: antique remains and Piranesi's Baroque world, through classically inspired yet inventive forms; reality and fantasy; image and word; caprice and documentary hypothesis; (subjective) view and (objective) urban structure. In Borsi's reading,

> ...the *Campo Marzio* proposes itself as a work whose theme is the individualization of urban structure (form) beyond historical mutation, in an almost paradoxical confrontation with "time".   (*Introduzione*, 5)

and

> The historical novelty of the *Campo Marzio* lies in its joining directly, if simplistically, "view" and "urban structure", pushing both to a certain integration" the view of only ruins - and ruins in their pure state, stripped of all circumstantial elements - and structure as graphic Ludus, alluding to architecture as rhetoric perhaps never even achieved in the Imperial age. (*ibid.*, 6)

The six-plate *ichnographia*

> constitutes a work within a work...a synthesis itself of Piranesi's efforts to propose as theme, not views of the city, single buildings, nor ruins in isolation, but of the city, its lines, its urban fabric with its variations, its diverse links, its nodes...both matrix and reason of that exultant spaciousness, which was for Piranesi an inexhaustible source of inspiration and centre of his natural consent to the late Roman world.
> (*ibid.*, 6)

With echoes of Fasolo, though more integrative, Borsi remains within the realm of descriptive-explanatory analysis Fasolo initiated.   He shares Fasolo's opinion on the importance of the axis of the *Equiria* and the Mausoleum of Augustus[13] and quotes Fasolo regarding the lines, orientations, and geometry of the plan.[14]

However Borsi opens up another line of argument in which he perceives meaningful order in what Tafuri will later claim to be confirmation of the silence resulting from the triumph of the fragment.   Still, he recognizes that the geometric

compositions are reductions of an architectural order to graphic symbols.

> If at first glance this city of Ludus, freed of time, appears as an expression of an architectural chaos, without fundamental directness nor a structural hierarchy, one notices on closer inspection that it is the product of juxtaposition of large compositional complexes which constitute its fabric. Typical and dominant are those hinging on the mausoleums of Hadrian and Augustus, containing a quantity of architectural "episodes" to the glorification of the two emperors.... Each one of these compositional enclosures/bodies, which have a sacred and privileged characteristic of the Thesaurus of classical character, presents its own axis of symmetry on which centres the play, more or less complicated, of central elements, of defining and delineating elements, at a scale characteristic of the forum or the baths. (*ibid.*, 7)

and

> Between one and the other, in the patchwork of land resulting from diverse strata and orientation of the principal groups Piranesi inserts elements which mediate or connect, according to his instinctive horror vacui and sometimes seems to satisfy himself with what appear to be almost graphic exercises, as opposed to spatial proposals, in a general sprinkling of elements in plan which accentuate the apparently chaotic character of the whole though in reality trying to find a thin line to mediate between the dominant elements. (*ibid.*, 7-8)

These graphic exercises are more representative of the ideals of Piranesi's era than classical antiquity:

> ...the Piranesian planning structure testifies in favour of the graphic taste of a formal proposal rather than to the evaluation of spaces of a proposed project. They possess and attribute to the classical world the typological meaning and geometric aesthetics which characterized a number of mannerist sources like Montano, ...from Palladio to Vitruvius, to theoreticians among whom, perhaps because of his accentuated geometries, we can underline Serlio.

> Piranesi moves along an axis drawn between Montano and Borromini, charqacterized by an attitude towards classicism which aims to find in it the sources of exception rather than the rule. From Borromini, in the Campo Marzio, Piranesi picks up the theme of concave exedras of S. Ivo, as he reproposes the geometric matrices of the linked triangle and circle. (*ibid.*, 8)

The analysis remains however strictly tied to the graphics of the plan, whether the theme is "bifocality",[15] the relations between the graphics and three dimensional architectonic form,[16] or typological observations akin to Tafuri's.[17]

C.   Tafuri

Tafuri sees in the form and structure of the *Campo Marzio* the complete and utter decay of all meaningful order.

> ...The structure of the *Campo Marzio*...is composed of a formless heap of fragments colliding one against the other. The whole area...is represented according to a method of arbitrary association...whose principles of organization exclude any organic unity. (*Sphere and Labyrinth*, 34)

It represents the unmaking of a world once sustained by linguistic and architectural order in which coherence derived from the correspondence between signifiers (language or other symbolic forms) and the signified ("reality", or the world of experience conjured up by the signifier). As primacy shifts to the language or form itself, *correspondence* (as a back-and-forth movement between the two) becomes secondary, and the forms assume supposed autonomous value, each in their own right. The result is the rise of "things" as isolated architectural objects: "things in themselves" as surrealistic *objets trouvés*, enlarged fragments with overdetermined forms and the excessive clarity of a-contextual laboratory specimens.

This "triumph of the fragment" undermines the very concept of the city, dissolving all sense of form, place, and coherence. The destruction of the organicity of space (and time) leaves the form, released from its contextual bounds, free to pursue endless (and therefore meaningless) variations in its own immanent terms. The severance of signifier and signified (or symbol and meaning) facilitates structuralist examinations of the virtual "linguistic aspects" of architecture, but leaves the signs - things, with their frozen geometric structures - hermetically mute.[18]

Tafuri observes that, in the *ichnographia*, the complex planforms grow as independent organisms, each from their own centre(s). This creates a collection of autonomous "hermetic machines" (each one self-driven and internally coherent) which inherently resist relations with each other. The collection is held together, if at all, by external artificially imposed orders rather than something emerging from the nature of the fragments themselves.[19] For all of its planimetric elaboration, the *ichnographia* cannot

escape its fragmentary nature.

> The city as antinaturalistic, manufactured article negates itself as *ordo*, as structure...Rather, we find ourselves confronted by a paroxysmic exaltation of a *principium individuatonis* brought to the limit of its own possibilities and of which Piranesi recognizes the explosive effects...in the sphere of form. (*ibid.*, 37)

Unrestrained variation becomes a technique of survival, permitted by the very condition it wishes to overcome: nihilistic fragmentation. Reduced to floating fragments of equivalent ontological status, forms become interchangeable "markers" occupying a position as digital "place-holders". In seeking to establish a surrogate context based on typology, variation instead reveals the perversity of the exercise, exalting the fragment as fragment, and adding more pieces to the pile. Typology, made possible (even necessitated) by fragmentation and variation, promotes a linguistic Babel where *tout se tient* (*ibid.*, 39), or an eclectic bricolage which is

> among the most corrosive forms of antihistoricism... [where] everything
> is now permitted and everything is recoverable (*ibid.*, 53)

Tafuri repeatedly dismisses any search for typological order as a futile attempt to discover meaning in the work;[20] an attempt which both imposes an alien order of its own and exhausts the possibilities of meaning's very existence by reducing architecture to empty geometric signs.[21] The semantic void, filled with geometric forms bereft of symbolic value, signifies only our "fallen condition": cut off from true contact with nature and "condemned to constant variation".[22]

> Thus the *Campo Marzio* constitutes:

> ...a criticism of the obsessive typological experimentalism of eighteenth century Europe...an explicit moralistic warning. (*ibid.*, 37)

"The true meaning," says Tafuri, "is entirely in the *disorganization* of the formal fragments" (*ibid.*, 40), thus suggesting that the condition *described* by the *Campo Marzio* is also its meaning.

The *Campo Marzio's* negation of the equivalence of form and content stands against the

naive dialectic of the Enlightenment [which] still sees the synthesis [between chaos and geometry] in the form of universality, and still tends toward non-contradiction. (*ibid.*, 36)

On the contrary, Piranesi recognizes the presence of contradiction as

absolute reality...the inherence of the aberrant within the real. (*ibid.*, 54)

In this critique of Enlightenment philosophy, however, Piranesi resists

the aspiration to found a new synthesis...[and] remains within the sphere of pure 'possibility'. (*ibid.*, 54)

In stripping the forms of their symbolic attributes (baggage) he lays them bare in much the same way as the *scenographia* clears the visual field to expose authentic ruins.[23] This

...dissolution of form and the void of the signifieds are thus the presentation of the negative as such. The construction of a *utopia of dissolved form*...constitutes the recuperation of this negative, the attempt to utilize it. (*ibid.*, 54)

In this way, Piranesi founds

...the ethic of the dialectical becoming of avant-garde art: of that art which...'can only destroy itself' and which 'only by destroying itself can constantly renew itself'. (*ibid.*, 54)

Tafuri's "negative utopia" is not, however, about the unmaking of utopia. Inherent in the double negative (not "no-place"), which is grammatically acceptable in Italian, is the sense of anticipation: that it is "not yet" a place. The symbolic attributes stripped by Piranesi are truly baggage - no longer a living symbolism. The clearing away creates an opening (a *lucus*, a place of light, an eye in the forest) into which things can freely emerge (be born, release/*gelassenheit*, reveal their *naissance*/nature). In this way things emerge in their original state: mute (as in *muthos*/mythos). The silence created by Piranesi is not a muzzled silence, but an attentive silence, a waiting. The mute things as fragments are not inert, but are responsible causes, starting something on its way to presencing, something that begins within the bounds of description, definition, explanation, but out of which something is produced, made, interpretted. Thus it lays open reality, reveals its deeper structure as open, ambiguous, mute (not pre-figured), but configurable. It clears the way for authentic making. There is no expression of despair, but a plea for renewed urgency in our responsiveness.

Tafuri seeks meaning in the formal qualities themselves, comes up empty, and claims this emptiness is the meaning of the work. His claims that Piranesi reduces the classical language of architecture to pure decoration is supported by Piranesi's attitude toward hieroglyphs in the *Diverse Maniere* where he describes them as stylized surface decorations. The classical language, as with hieroglyphs, is no longer born of urgent necessity, is no longer relevant in an essential meaningful way, and is thus already merely decorative: for the silent pleasure of the eye. But this return to silent, decorative barbarism, the result of a language taken to such self-conscious ironic extremes that it loses its ability to actually say anything, restores the open ground into which fresh and vital meaning can emerge.

It is noteworthy that Tafuri is inspired by Piranesi in the development of his critical position. For example in *Theories and Histories of Architecture*, the chapter entitled "Architecture as Metalanguage: the Critical Value of the Image" where he discusses the creative/critical role of architecture, he lists five different types of architectural experimentalism, most of which are evident in Piranesi's work.

A. The emphasis of a given theme, exasperated to the point of the most radical contestation of the fundamental laws governing it, or disjointed in a sort of disassembly of its single parts: this is the case of many *Late-Antique* architectures...

B. The insertion of a theme deeply rooted in a particular, totally different context: this is the case of the commixture of sacral emblems and civic functions....

C. The *assemblage* of elements from ideally and historically different and distant codes...

D. The compromising of architectural themes with figurative structures of a different nature (e.g. the Mannerist and Baroque *contaminations* of architecture, painting and sculpture...), or through their sudden insertion into a *series* (e.g. typological use of archaeological themes)

E. The exasperated articulation of a theme originally taken as absolute (e.g. typological *inventions*, critical 'restorations'...)

(*Theories and Histories*, 110-111)

D.   Conard

Boullée and Ledoux, according to Tafuri, point out Piranesi's geometric silence, and

> feel obligated to substitute foi the ancient symbolism of transcendence a symbolism man made sacred to himself. (*ibid.*, 49)

This holds true as well for current critics who, setting out to show the relationship between Piranesi and eighteenth century French architecture, attribute hieroglyphic intentions to Piranesi. In a volume of articles dedicated to this topic, Serge Conard ventures an hieroglyphic reading of the *Campo Marzio*.[24]

Conard's reading, at first glance antithetical to Tafuri's, does not substantially undermine Tafuri's thesis. In seeking to restore "meaning" to empty geometry with an "hieroglyphic" decoding, it succeeds only in positting one sign system for another. The article proposes to analyse the emblematic implications of the plan:

> ...non du discours, mais des moyens de son écriture, dont la source [est]...une réflexion critique et documentée à propos du langage à l'origine duquelle l'Egypte est posée.
> (*CNL-GBP*, 165)

Not so much what it was about, but the means as method, the "how" of the *Campo Marzio*. At the same time he resists Tafuri's conclusion that the sole signification of this pure geometry characterized by an absolute semantic void is the silence of an architecture *qui a perdu son sens*. Rather than a reduction of architectural creatioii exclusively to a problem of language, Conard sees *Campo Marzio* as a countermovement in which symbolic language moves more towards architectonic realization.[25] This is not inconsistent with Piranesi's own observations in the *Diverse Maniere* in which he argues that the stiffness of the Egyptian forms of decoration was due to their being adapted to an architectural setting: a merging of formal stylistic issues. Nor is it that far from Tafuri's reading of "language [without urgent necessity] reduced to decoration".

Conard moves quickly from an acceptance of Fasolo's graphic analyses, to putting his own "spin" on the *ichnographia* with an emblematic/hieroglyphic/symbolic reading of the geometric plan forms:

...Il a été démontré que Piranèse combine un petit nombre de formes simples, divisées où multipliées dans un infini apparent [Fasolo]. Cette pratique n'est pas aussi ingénuement répétitive qu'il n'y a paraît à un examen superficiel. Les règles de l'invention, en particulier, ne sont que partiellement régies par '"horreur vacui", ou le raisonnement associatif: à leur nombre doivent être posées celles de la figuration anthropomorphe te du hiéroglyphe. (*ibid.*, 167)

As such the shapes can be read as stylized representations (geometrically figurative reductions) of faces and animals.

La règle de composition dans le cas du visage, par exemple, est le parfaite symétrie, sur un axe verticale, d'une suite de trois temps dissemblables, destinés à signifier la bouche, le nez, et les yeux. [n.35: a possible source for this graphic method is seen in the "book-matching" techniques of marble cladding (?)] Ce cadre, un fois posé, l'invention peut varier à l'infiniti les particularités morphologiques de l'homme ou de l'animal, réduits à un dénominateur commun par la géometrie. (*ibid.*, 167-8)

In another example the *Templum Martis* (pl.VII) resembles an hieroglyphic owl (see Fig.2 in the text), as drawn in the *Hieroglyphica* of Valeriano. The significance of this is that

...la chouette était chez les Egyptiens le symbol de la mort. En donnant au temple de Mars la forme d'une chouette, Piranèse résume ainsi "à l'Egyptienne" la principale information fournie par Vitruve et écrit le plan du temple sous la forme d'un hiéroglyphe tropologique. (*ibid.*, 168)

The hieroglyphic symbol, in Conard's view, is a graphic means of communicating established information or data: a sort of associative memory image, albeit one originating in a culture from a distant place and time.

These geometric encodings of hieroglyphic/figurative references retain the fragmentary quality of independent organisms described by Tafuri. Isolated communiquées of information to be received in preformed packages by the reader with no work of interpretation - only recall based on learned associations.

Nevertheless as symbols they have the ability to simultaneously be or represent different things or aspects of things and hence "compact" the diachronic into the synchronic - the constant being the place or locus:

Toujours à la lumière de l'argumentation tropique, Piranèse evoque ailleurs un raisonnement plus complexe. Il constitue par exemple le groupe de l'*Area Martis*, sur le trame d'un schéma hermétique contemporain diffusé dans les cénacles

maçoniques. Lorsqu'il intègre une croix de Saint Pierre à l'emplacement de la basilique vaticane, Piranèse implique de même tout un contexte interprétif, en rapportant dans le "Porticus Neronianae", le site dédié au martyr. Nous ne retiendrons pas ici le "message" mais la méthode, qui consiste à proposer sous l'apparence d'un relevé archeologique synchronique, un ensemble diachronique d'informations liées entre elles par le seule concordance topographique. (*ibid.*, 168)

The possibility of symbolic double-readings, as at the *Bustum Hadriani*, is evidence for Conard that Piranesi is not engaged in the syntax of discursive language:

Le "Bustum d'Hadrien" est un double hiéroglyphe qui fait référence en premier lieu à la toponomie moderne du site. Un petit ange issu de quelque *presepe* est posé au dessus de chaînes solides...Le formalisme égyptien est toutefois présent dans le hiéroglyphe englobant la totalité du groupe pour former une tête à la barbe géométrisée. La décomposition de ce visage permet dans un troisième temps d'obtenir deux personnages gémeaux. (*ibid.*, 169)

and

La participationsimultanée d'un forme à plusieurs hiéroglyphes rend peu probable l'écriture par Piranèse d'un discours qui tirerait sa cohérence d'un confrontation spatio-temporelle identique à celle du langage. Les éventuelles relations - géometriques - entre les hiéroglyphes ne semble avoir pour but que l'apport d'un element complémentaire à la définition du lieu, et non l'ébauche d'une syntax. (*ibid.*, n.44)

Whereas the borrowings by Durand eliminate all figurative references in subjecting the images to a rectilinear grid, the work of Ledoux affirms the primacy of their hieroglyphic aspects.

Par la banalité du signe, le rapport pourrait n'être pas d'évidence si le dessin de Piranèse était un simple "ludus géometrique", et si celui de Ledoux n'affirmait que sa valeur hiéroglyphique première.
    Piranèse ménage d'autres guides de lecture. En l'occurrence, l'origine des deux phallus affrontés du "Bustum Augusti", est révélée dans l'essai de restitution du plan du "Nymphée de Néron" par Piranèse lui même. La presence de ce graphisme dans la maison de l'Esquilin, la *Domus Aurea* dédiée au Soleil par Néron, permet d'evoquer un sens hiéroglyphique plus proche de la notion de génération cosmique que de l'acte sexuel, ou tout au moins une double implication du signe. (*ibid.*, 170-71)

Without debating the legitimacy of this reading, one can still ask: "But what is it about?". This exceeds Conard's self-imposed mandate to consider only Piranesi's *moyens d'écriture*, and yet is necessary if one considers that demonstration of a means of writing

cannot be the sole purpose of the exercise. Posed within the framework of Conard's thesis, this question leads straight back to Tafuri: the autonomous geometric forms, whether read as abstractly as "hermetic machines" or figuratively as "stylized anthropomorphic or zoomorphic references", remain fragmentary and arbitrary. This is not to deny that Conard's observations contribute positively to the descriptive "colour" of the work; rather that they are an insufficient basis upon which to develop an interpretation and, perhaps inadvertently, assert the primacy of the semantic void of decorative formalism.

E.   Wilton-Ely

In another article in *Piranèse et les Français*, John Wilton-Ely takes a view in direct contrast to Tafuri's.[26] Whereas Tafuri constructs his argument directly from a reading of the documents, Wilton-Ely introduces aspects of Piranesi's social-political-cultural context in reading the work as a polemic. The supposed intent of the author thus plays a large role in Wilton-Ely's reading. Engagement with the document, however, remains largely formal. It is not the document that is interpreted but the motives, seen in the context of the Graeco-Roman controversy of the 1750's and 1760's. The issue in this debate (which must itself be placed in the larger context of the emergence of scientific archaeology in the unresolved dispute between the Ancients and the Moderns) was whether Greece or Rome should be considered as the proper authority for classical models. Accordingly,

> [the *ichnographia*] represents, along with its theoretical justification in the preface of the *Campo Marzio* [probably a reference to the dedication to R.Adam], not only an artistic *credo* but a polemical response to the now growing influence of Winckelmann....The field of debate in the Graeco-Roman controversy was beginning to shift from antiquarian issues to an aesthetic and stylistic plane where Piranesi was in a stronger position to reply. (*"Vision and Design"*, 539)

Thus reduced to the "aesthetic and stylistic plane" the debate can be further reduced to the formal literal level in which the elegant simplicity of the Greeks (championed by Winckelmann and the literal-operational functionalism of Laugier[27]) is pitted against the barbarous complexity of the Romans. Wilton-Ely sees in the *Campo*

Marzio an evolutionary argument which he ties to the Enlightenment concern with total systems of knowledge:

> As characteristic of the Enlightenment, the *Campo Marzio* is also concerned with historical change and with the evolution of architectural and urban forms. In this respect the actual sequence of plates fulfils a major function of the argument...a group of maps showing stage by stage the evolution of the site from primitive beginnings to a densely monumental townscape of the utmost complexity. (*ibid.*, 538)

He subscribes to Fasolo's analyses (*ibid.*, n.33) and remains entirely within the morphological argument of formal typologies:

> ...the morphology of Piranesi's latest exercise is remarkably close to contemporary developments in French neoclassical architecture in which plans are generated by combining distinct geometrical forms derived from antiquity into multiple patterns. To date however no other European designer had developed this process to such extremes of ingenuity, and the *ichnographia* was to provide an anthology of concepts to stimulate the imagination of designers, like Boullée and Ledoux, until the end of the century. (*ibid.*, 539)

The whole weight of the argument is thrown behind a future-oriented attitude in which Piranesi,

> while accepting the evolutionary theory of architecture, argues in the *Campo Marzio* to the contrary [i.e. against the simplicity of the Greeks]. For him, movement and complexity in architectural and urban design meant life. Indeed as he was to argue a few years later [in the *Parere*] to exclude any possibility for experiment and elaboration in design was to throw into question the achievements of all great architectural innovators, including Bernini and Borromini. (*ibid.*, 540)

The measured balance read by Tafuri in the debate in the *Parere*, and thus the role of antiquity in this creative enterprise, is not only passed over, but rejected. Protopiro, for Wilton-Ely, represents the rigorist views of Winckelmann and Laugier, while Didascalo, promoting the creative licence of the designer, is Piranesi's sole mouthpiece. The *Campo Marzio*, far from being a "conscious gesture of abnegation, even of frustrated reaction ...against the developments of Neo-Classical design" (citing Tafuri, *ibid.*, 540) is a

> gigantic fantasy reflecting Piranesi's emerging theoretical and polemical ideas...a positive affirmation of his faith in the potential capacity of modern designers to build on the achievements of Rome. (*ibid.*, 540)

The *ichnographia* is

> as a colossal fragment of a *new* Marble Plan implying that the fecundity of the Roman genius is limitless, both in space and time. Less a document for the antiquarian, this vast *capriccio* is supra-historical: a vigorous exhortation to Adam and his contemporaries. (*ibid.*, 540)

Thus a theoretical - polemical document, addressed to modern designers, concerned with innovative and evolutionary complexity that raises it above and beyond the historical realm. Rather than Tafuri's "Negative Utopia" as a warning of the dangers of structural- typological analyses, it is now a "Positive Model" for emulation by designers. As an "exemplary" model (rather than model as "representation" or "substitute") it is assigned an entirely prescriptive role, more consistent with progressive modern views.

On the contrary, one can argue that while the *Campo Marzio* employs creative design approaches (whether or not these are seen as exhortations to designers, or implicit warnings), it is **intensely** historical and situated. Wilton-Ely recognizes Piranesi's historical aspects, if only subordinated to the purely inventive aspects:

> ...*Antichità Romane* provided not only a comprehensive study of ancient Rome but a renewed challenge by Piranesi to modern architects through its innovatory methods of approach....Decrying the continued destruction of precious evidence, he also emphasized the need to recover imaginatively vanished or incomplete works... (*ibid.*, 533)

and

> According to the preface of the *Campo Marzio*, Piranesi's objective was to examine the customs and environment of a vanished society through the study of its architectural remains. Like Vico before him, he recognized the need to relate literary and archaeological evidence within an imaginative act of reconstruction. He therefore set out to correlate literary references to this monumental area of Rome and information from the surviving fragments of the Severan Marble Plan with the results of a thorough physical examination of the site. The end product of this procedure was a system of hypothetical reconstructions in plan and elevation where Piranesi's imaginative faculties were stretched to capacity. (*ibid.*, 538)

The evolutionary - morphological interpretation which reduces the work to its "literal" dimension (the formal and typological aspects of its graphics) may be consistent with the French precursors to the Beaux Arts (who later sought to compensate for the

mere literality - the semantic emptiness - of the forms with an *architecture parlante*), but Piranesi's motives were clearly less abstract. The prime concern was the ressurrection of the Roman spirit: the ricorso, through articulation of its origins - and thus a re-birth, a re-making of it in his present: almost a magical alchemical act, conjuring it up out of the ruins and bringing it back to life - not a museum piece.

But it is also a study of the nature of the origins of Rome. Not so prescriptive in its intentions, it is in fact more of a resistance to the reduction of architecture to literal production, and to the recycling of historical artifacts or ideals in contemporary packaging. It speaks of the need to understand architecture as the record of the values of a people and the realization, making and embodiment of those values through architectural making. Without this basis, without this whole, there can be no meaning, and no possibility of meaningful action: it is all merely a matter of formal composition subject to structuralist or deconstructive analysis.

F.   Agrest

Diana Agrest's article, "Piranesi and the Modern Discourse" (an excerpt from her essay "The City as the Place of Representation"), is sympathetic to Tafuri's reading of the *Campo Marzio* as a heterotopia, in the context of the city as an acumulation of conflicting orders. Yet she recognizes within this disorderliness a desire-for-order, a susceptibility to emplotment which is an invisible order.

She also develops the diachronic dimension of the city setting Piranesi's confrontation of reality with its past against Le Corbusier's confrontation of reality with its future: Piranesi's "remembering" against Le Corbusier's "forgetting". Both, she says, "flatten" time, compressing it into a homogenos present: Piranesi's based on the past, Corbusier's on the future. One might also say, however, at least in the case of Piranesi, that the remembering actually constitutes a "thickening of the present". Therefore the conclusion that Piranesi denies history and the operations of representation is unfounded. To read Piranesi's *Campo Marzio* as an accumulation of unthinkable orders - Tafuri's position - is to remain at the literal level of reading, and not to fully engage the nature of the work.

Read as a representation in the literal sense, where "this stands for that," is to remain at the ocular/retinal level. But when one engages the representation as a work, it is experienced as an intermediary that does not literally or figuratively represent what it is about. The work that initiates the experience constructed by the reader does not "look like" the experience that it enables, or the story that it tells.

G.   Bloomer

Jennifer Bloomer considers Piranesi's "mode of action" in light of her own activities and interests, and proceeds to act upon the *Campo Marzio* in ways consistent with these. This is not unlike Tafuri's approach regarding the avant-garde and architectural criticism, nor that of this thesis regarding the semantic dimension of interpretation.

Bloomer's work is among the most inventive of the approaches to Piranesi, but says little directly about the *Campo Marzio* that does not appear elsewhere. One unique observation concerns the *Terentus occulens aram Ditis et Proserpinae* in the section entitled "The Gate to the Underworld". Otherwise the *ichnographia* - she does not speak about the rest of the publication - serves as a web into which she weaves various threads of thought and related quotations. The description is based primarily on architectonic elements (walls, city, fragment, labyrinth) and patterns of movement (weaving, tibertine, swerving, collision, cycle) connected through two extended metaphors. On the one hand a text, a woven thing, which is further embroidered or ornamented with associative ideas; on the other the fact that this *fabricca* incorporates fragments which are the remnants of shattered former wholes. There is the double motion of violent destruction (shattering, clashing, colliding, fracturing) and subsequent assemblage (patchwork, weaving) throughout which a series of constructive and deconstructive operations are described and/or performed. The quotations are supplemented with "switching mechanisms"[28] which are like gateways indicating detours or alternative routes to navigate through or around the fragments as self contained elements in an archipelago. These lateral switches, shunting trains of thought, operate synchronically, in the same time and space.

All are equivalent and interchangeable in the present, resulting in the flattening of time described by Agrest, as opposed to the potential to "thicken the present".

Whichever metaphor is in play (fragment or weaving), or both at once, the constituent elements exist on the same ontological plane, immanent to the text, its intertextual references or associations, and its "mechanisms". Any "radical re-ordering" occasioned by fragmentation or interweaving is merely a matter of substituting one thing for another, or bringing distant things into juxtaposition: a lateral "shuffling" operation. The exercise does not leave the realm of description or structural explanation. However provocative the juxtapositions might prove to be, here they remain benign (as just an expanded collection of fragments), and perpetuate the typological variation and ultimate silence diagnosed by Tafuri.

At one point there is the suggestion that the "city represents something other" (*AT*, 72) and at another that "the resulting chaotic configuration of fragments suggests a new enclosure, a new labyrinth, inviting and forbidding, in which the wanderer finds another way." (*AT*, 86). Since these provocative suggestions are carried no further, they remain merely descriptive of a perceived operative dimension of the work. There has been no real engagement with it; we are left as voyeurs: outside this virtual world of these provocative, interrelated intertextual fragments, each of equal and undifferentiated value. After all of this description of mechanisms[29] of the *Campo Marzio* we are still left with the question "what is it about?", unless of course, we say that it is about itself. The coalescence of imaginative worlds posited by each of the separate fragments, and the merging of these with the circumstantial world of the reader; the sense of the anticipated whole as a collectivity of fragments, and the unfolding of each fragment in light of this whole; the internal coherence as a probability generated by the fragments themselves: only such exercises where the reader cooperates with the text rather than operates on it can begin to point beyond what the text literally says or does to what it might mean.

1.   Quanta parte delle qualità proprie di un 'architetto', nel senso intero della parola,
            nel senso cioè di realizzatore di forme ideate con finalità pratiche e idealità d'arte,
            quanta parte di queste caratteristiche sono nella figura e nella personalità di G.B.
            Piranesi?
            (Fasolo, "Il *Campomarzio* di G.B.Piranesi", 4)

            La misura del potenziale 'architettura' in Piranesi ci è data dalla grande testata del
            volume delle incisione del Campomarzio. L'opera è del 1761-62, contemporanea
            quindi alle *'Magnificenze dell'Architettura dei Romani'*, e segue lo studio delle
            'Antichità' che sono del 1756. La grande tavola (libro aperto di m.1, per m.1.5)
            si guarda con curiosità sorpresa per il complicato intreccio di singolari edifici.
            E' la ricostruzione planimetrica della zona del Campomarzio.
            (*ibid.*, 5)

            Nulla di archeologico vi è in quella pianta. Solo la curva del Tevere e qualche
            generica indicazione ci dice che il luogo è Roma.
            (*ibid.*, 5)

2.   Tutte le qualità che caratterizzano l'architetto vi si manifesto, e sopratutto
            la capacità di composizione di grande complessi entro linee coordinatrici
            fondamentali, che danno unità alla varietà degli orientamenti diversi. Nei
            complessi più legati ad uno stato di fatto e alla cognizione, sia pur limitata, di dati
            archeologici esistenti, la ricomposizione, superando il rigore e l'approssimazione
            verso la realtà storica, rivela rapporti spaziali e risorse di forme originale e nuove,
            anche rispetto alla tipologia romana.
            Queste composizione inoltre, portando indicazioni pseudo-archeologiche,
            assumono un carattere inventivo per soluzione nelle quali il riferimento alla
            romanità si assottiglia o scompare. per dar luogo ad una distinta tipologia
            architettonica.
            Le grandi linee tipiche romane si ampliano e si fanno base di complesse
            inquadrature, nelle quali si legano gruppi di ambienti di forme eccezionali,
            costituenti creazione architettonica che no ha riscontro con altre realizazzione nel
            campo attivo contemporaneo o precedente, e, che è più importante, precorono
            concezioni che avranno, più tardi, maggiore sviluppo. Appunto in queste linee
            si coglie l'affermarsi di una personalità architettonica. (*ibid.*, 6)

3.   Fasolo's comment is based on the signature 'F. Piranesi' which could also be interpretted
     as *fecit Piranesi*, that is: made by Piranesi.

4.   Si ripete per questi alzati quello che si è detto per il carattere delle
            planimetrie; l'invenzione procede per analogia di forme suggerite dall'antico che
            non hanno intenzioni archaeologicamente ricostruttive, d'altra parte impossibili in
            rapporto alla vastità dell'assunto. Anche il Muasoleo di Adriano pure ben definito

nel suo rudero, si proporziona, in questa ricostruzione, come una torre alta a ordini di arcate sovrapposte e ascendenti.

Le tavole sono firmate da Francesco; ma è da ritenere che esse siano lo sviluppo delle idee del Maestro. Esse ci danno, tanto nel carattere dell'insieme come nella particolare interpretazione architettonica, una stilistica ben diversa da quella prevalentemente decorativa per la quale Piranesi è più communemente noto: chiara ed immediata rivelazione volumetrica essenzialmente costruttiva, nelle planimetrie; negli alzati, plastica architettonica grammaticalmente derivata dal modello romano.

Insomma una determinazione di forme romane su un movimento organico nuovo. In qualche motivo appare la formula tipica suggerita dai ruderi, l'arco termale, la ricorrenza delle edicole affiancate, i paramenti rustici, il movimento dei timpani alternati. In altri si vedono ricreazioni senza corrispondenza formale con l'antico ma vive nello spirito del romano... (*ibid.*, 11-12)

5. Ci sembra di vedere in essa ['Campomarzio'] la concentrazione di quelle aspirazioni creative che le vicende, o il diverso destino, avevano deviato; una città disegnata con cultura di cognozioni archeologiche, ma creata con matura coscienza di architetto. (*ibid.*, 12)

...questi studi, questi disegni, come 'progetti' espressi in un desiderio di creazione, altro è il tono di quel generico 'classicismo' nel quale si usa inquadrare il Piranesi. (*ibid.*, 12)

...Se la base è nella romanità, le libertà organiche che abbiamo colto negli organismi del 'Campomarzio' ci riportano, osiamo dire, a impostazioni barocche, e per qualche aspetto borrominiane, considerando il gusto delle intersezioni di superfici e di volumi. C'è poi il rapporto con le concezioni urbane del futuro. (*ibid.*, 14)

6. Le ricostruzioni dei complessi monumentali affioranti tra soprastrutture secolari sono portate da Piranesi, necessariamente, ad amplificazioni, per le quali il nucleo antico visibile è solo un pretesto, un punto base per l'invenzione integratrice che, occorre dire, si mantiene con analogia di linee fedele al carattere dell'antico. (*ibid.*, 7)

...questo bisogno di rivelarsi con proprie idee, sempre riflesse della fonte antica, questa eccitazione inventiva, trae l'artista - l'architetto - a singolarità di concezioni che oltrepassano i limiti, i freni, volonterosamente e amorosamente accolti per ispirazione dell'antico. Ci sembra che in queste si riveli con maggiore evidenza la qualità del creatore di forme oltre all'interprete di cose studiate. Occorre percorrere con pazienza la città piranesiana. (*ibid.*, 8)

7.   This gives rise to Tafuri's subsequent analysis concerning the ultimate silence/muteness of the obsessive geometric variations in the plan which, precisely because of their apparently inexhaustible formal variety, serve to exhaust their capacity to bear meaning. This collapse, for Tafuri, is the message or warning of the *Campo Marzio*, whereas for Fasolo it is evidence of the architect's creative power.

8.   These axes, in Tafuri's response to Fasolo, emphasize the fragmentary nature of the work, rather than compositional order and coherence.

9.   Alcuni punti di riferimento, con qualche precisione relativa, quali il Mausoleo di Adriano, il Pantehon, il Teatro di Marcello, ci danno qualche caposaldo per orientarci in questa ideale città. (*ibid.*, 5)

          Dalla quale ci si rivela, intanto, il sapere maturato al contatto con il mondo antico e l'intuizione di quella che era la vita nella città imperiale, il suo carratere, sia pure esaltato dall'ammirazione. (*ibid.*, 5)

          ...rispetto alla realtà di quella che dovette essere la città alla fine dell'Impero. (*ibid.*, 6)

10.   Ecco l'insistenza della composizione su diagonali, su linee oblique e loro intersezioni; intersezioni lineari, e di curve; configurazioni sul triangolo, sull'ellisse e loro combinazione e intrecci....

          Questa geometria inconsueta è guida delle ricreazioni di alcune zone della composizione edilizia. (*ibid.*, 8)

          Troviamo questa ricchezza di idee nei gruppi monumentali: associazioni, accostamenti, combinazioni di aule, di sale, tanto più movimentate quanto più le condizioni di orditura delle assialità, come si sono dianzi rilevate, si sono fatte geometricamente complicate. La fantasia compositiva è inesauribile, e solo come esemplificazione ne diamo qualche saggio, isolando il motivo elementare dal complesso architettonico...."

          Raccogliamo in una tavola (*fig. 24*) una serie di elementi architettonici costitutivi dei complessi osservati, per illustrare il carattere di questa arte piranesiana. Sono una spigolatura entro il ricco frasario offerto dal vasto repertorio che abbiamo scorso: abilità di collegamenti tra vano e vano, tra spazio e spazio, che si giova delle più ardite combinazioni quasi sempre tracciate per diagonali, per irradiamente, per soma e per intersezioni. (*ibid.*, 10)

11.   E' nella composizione di questo terminale architettonico [Bustum Hadriani] che si esprime la fantasia dell'architetto innovatore. Una consecuzione di curve che si susseguono, in armonia con le rotonde che segnano i capisaldi dell'insieme.

(ibid., 7)

12.   La visione unitaria, legata, dei grandi blocchi architettonici, ricrea l'immagine di
        questa Roma come unione di zone ciascuna per sè unitaria, ma tra loro
        coordinate, talvolta con regolarità ippodamea, talaltra secondo obliquità di assi,
        eccezionalmente di zona lo giustifichi, in ordine sparso. *(ibid.,* 7)

13.   ...the importance of the direction given by the Equiria even if when it itself enters
        in the polarity of the Campo of the Mausoleum of Augustus, its route is illegible,
        almost as if the radial explosion of this nodal point of Augustan Rome had
        dissolved all traces of street networks in favour of a compositional approach
        between the dominant elements. *(ibid.,* 7)

14.   All the qualities of the architect are manifest, especially the capacity to compose
        a large complex between fundamental coordinating lines which give a certain unity
        to the truth of the various orientations. In a complex intimately tied to cognition,
        albeit limited by existing archaeological facts, the reconstruction surpassing the
        rigidity and approximation toward historical reality, reveals spatial relationships
        and reserves of original and new forms with respect to Roman typology.

        We find this richness of ideas in its monumental groupings: associations,
        approaches, combinations of great halls, of rooms more animated by a
        plotting of axialities, as previously observed, have become geometrically
        complex. *(ibid.,* 7)

15.   The resolution then of the typological proposal and of the compositional syntax
        of Piranesi's architecture in completely graphic terms allows us to define what one
        would call an orgy of coincidences and of anticipations. The frequent use of
        "bifocality" as a compositional structure of buildings, of open spaces, or of
        dominant elements, can again be tied back to Fischer von Erlach and the columns
        of the church of S. Carlo Borromeo in Vienna....Bifocality which in Piranesi's
        Campo Marzio is frequently found, but dominates most in the central element of
        Augustus. *(ibid.,* 8-9)

The bifocality in the central element of Augustus is as two eyes, each located at one of
the flanking obelisks, with stereoscopic vision aimed in the direction indicated by the
Bustum Caesaris Augusti.

16.   ....in plan we can trace a more determinant and subtle line: in the closed infill
        of buildings between the Campidoglio and the Circus Agonalis, the axial square
        which preludes or corresponds to the design which constitutes a structural grid,
        the proportional constant in the work of Ledoux which affirms that "the plans
        offer contrasting masses which assure effects for the elevations. *(ibid.,* 9)

17.   The resolution in graphic terms proposes Piranesi as father of Beaux Arts eclecticism....Piranesi explores and quickly exhausts the possibility of combinations and use of the classical language as source of fantasy, as evasion of both the determinism of the every day and of the conformity of rationalism. The vitality of the graphic message is such that it can include not only the entire gamut of eclectecism where graphic pleasure can substitute for architectural justification... (*ibid.*, 9)

18.   To analyse a language thoroughly, it must be isolated, not only from its historical foundations but also from its signifieds...Piranesi's criticism deeply touches the symbolic pretexts of architectural forms. (*ibid.*, 39)

See also the subsequent pages for development of this theme.

19.   In formal terms this might include such things as axes with which the fragments are aligned, centres from which they radiate, typologies which isolate and order their elemental forms. As Tafuri says, these external structures serve more to highlight the natural tendency to entropy and disorder than to bring it under control.

...the acknowledgment of these alignments serves only to heighten still further the 'triumph of the fragment', which dominates the formless tangle of the spurious organisms of the *Campo Marzio*...a homogenous magnetic field jammed with objects having nothing to do with one another. (*ibid.*, 35)

We shall see later that this is only partially true for the fragments do seem to suggest ways in which meaning might be made. As well, the way in which the various "organisms" interact with one another varies from plate to plate, and it is this secondary variation that is part of the key.

20.   Only with extreme effort is it possible to extract from that field well-defined typological structures. And even when we have established a casuistic complex of organisms based on triadic, polycentric, multilinear laws, or on virtuoso curvilinear layouts, we end up with a kind of *typological negation*, an 'architectural banquet of nausea', a semantic void created by the excess of visual noise...a virtual catalogue, a typological sample book of models based on an *exception* that very effectively gives lie to the *rule*. (*ibid.*, 35)

...this sample book of typological inventions excludes...the characterization of the city as a completed formal structure. The clash of the organisms, immersed in a sea of formal fragments, dissolves even the remotes memory of the city as a *place of Form*. (*ibid.*, 36)

...typological casuistry, at the very moment it finds itself fully liberated,

demonstrates its own inability to structure an urban organism. The supremacy of pure form declares its own ineffectuality when confronted by the power of space. (*ibid.*, 37)

As a disenchanted documentation of the impossibility of an unambiguous definition of language...a merciless satire of the infinite capacity of late-baroque typology to reproduce itself metamorphically....[the *Campo Marzio*] becomes a *demand for language*, a paradoxical revelation of its *absence*. (*ibid.*, 38)

The swarm of theoretically equivalent forms - theorems constructed around a single thesis - makes it clear that Piranesi's attempt in the *Campo Marzio* is to draw attention to the birth - necessary and terrifying - of an architecture bereft of the signified, split off from any symbolic system, from any 'value' other than architecture itself. (*ibid.*, 40)

21.   The clash of the geometric 'monads' is no longer regulated by any 'pre-established harmony';   and...it demonstrates that the only meaning this paradoxical casuistry can refer back to is pure geometry, in the absolute semantic void that characterizes it. (*ibid.*, 40)

In the combinatory paroxysm of the *Campo Marzio*, the reduction of architecture to geometric signs merges, not by chance, with the proliferation of variations. (*ibid.*, 46)

...the *silence of architecture*, the reduction to zero of its symbolic and communicative attributes, is the inevitable consequence of the 'constraint' to variation... (*ibid.*, 49)

[any symbolic residue] *signifies* only the announcement of the semantic void that *must* result in the desanctification of the artistic universe. (*ibid.*, 49)

22.   The condition brought about by fragmentation, geometric reduction and typological variation is not unlike that described by Heidegger as deriving from the essence of technology (*Ge-stell*, or "enframing"). Enframing is a mode of revealing the world in which, unlike *poiesis*, the totality of a freely revealed thing is reduced to an inherently consumable "standing reserve", valued only for its measurable capacity for use or performance. The organic unity of the world as a whole is transformed into a variety of unrelated commodities or resources. Similarly in the *Campo Marzio* concrete symbolic forms are reduced to abstract geometric typologies held together only by the thematic of geometry and several geometric axes. Geometry caters to syntax, but the semantic dimension is void. Even in the assembly the fragments remain as fragments: colliding, overlapping, or squeezing into a mosaic. This is the danger of which both Piranesi and Heidegger warn. To fully appreciate the *Campo Marzio*, however, we will take a cue

from Heidegger (*grace à* Hölderlin): "But where the danger is, grows / The saving power also" (*QCT*, 28).

23.   In the introductory text he also clears the literary-historical field of various descriptions and interpretations.

24.   Conard, Serge.   "De l'Architecture de Claude-Nicolas Ledoux, Considérée dans ses Rapports avec Piranèse", *Piranèse et les Français*, ed. Georges Brunel, Rome: Académie de France à Rome, 1976, pp.161-80.

25.   Il n'est aucunement question chez Piranèse, comme chez Ledoux, de réduire la création architecturale à un exclusif problème de langage, mais, dans un mouvement contraire, de codifier le langage symboloque à un point tel qu'il puisse être assimilé par les techniques propres à l'architecture.   (*ibid.*, n.22)

26.   Wilton-Ely, John.   "Vision and Design: Piranesi's *fantasia* and the Graeco-Roman Controversy", *Piranèse et les Français*, ed. Georges Brunel, Rome: Académie de France à Rome, 1976, pp.529-54.

27.   as opposed to the figurative-representational functionalism of Lodoli

28.   In this section the "switching mechanisms" are [MAPPING], [WEAVING], [PATCHWORK], [GAME], and [THE PROPER]

29.   The concepts of "switching" and "weaving", of "boustrophedon" etc. remain at the formal level of mechanisms of the text. They are at most interpretations of the operative mechanisms, seen from an authoritative point of view, without having engaged or given oneself over to the work. To interpret the mechanism is to assume that the text is only about itself, and without transcendent aspects to engage the reader as other. The text remains as an object to be sectioned, sutured, embroidered and displayed for consumption.

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