

# Re-collecting Rome: Mapping the Two Romes of Vico's NEW SCIENCE

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Proposed is a new architectural-philosophical manual for a collaboration between drawing and text, theory and practice, using the section as an intersecting plane linking the history of events and the history of places to project appropriately responsive urban design. The section is the threshold between the past and future, a visual image of the particular universal of topical mathematics projected out of past through memory, imagination and ingenuity. The book records parallel investigations, in interwoven analysis of visual image and text which exposes the convergences, physical and metaphysical, between Vico's two Romes, the pagan and Christian nations. Out of this process will come a guidebook with multiple levels of reading, for novice and expert, tourist, architect and scholar, re-collecting Rome, unearthing the events of history and myth while excavating the places marked by these events. More importantly, a treatise detailing a new critical art to better know modern society in order to alleviate conflict and promote community through architectural and urban design.

**EXCAVATION:** cutting, digging and scooping to remove superimposed materials from the remains of an age or civilization earlier than the present....exposing to view by digging away...

During the four centuries following the birth of Christ, two Romes, pagan and Christian, existed simultaneously. As the pagan Rome expanded outward from the Capitoline to the Aurelian Walls, the Christian Rome began at the Aurelian Walls and converged on its center, the Capitoline. The conquest of the pagan Rome by the Christian was completed by the appearance of the Virgin and Child to the Emperor Augustus in his palace on the Capitoline, as commemorated by Sta. Maria in Aracoeli. The ultimate defeat and displacement of the pagan nation illustrates the convergences of significant places and events as one nation retakes and re-makes its place and history. At sites of significance in Rome, we will cross and link distinct nations and histories through parallel writings and drawings.

This investigation of the two Romes will reference the archeological-architectural methods employed by Giovanni

Battista Piranesi in his *Il Campo Marzio* of 1762 as an analog. In Piranesi's reconstruction of the field of Mars, he identified and mapped, through combined text and drawing, urban elements in six historical periods based on images, artifacts and texts of the past. Each plate, interweaving image and text is a network of precise urban references registering or fixing an inventive landscape of juxtaposed times and places. Using his rational conjecture (*ragionevole congettura*), a composite of reason and compound memory including reminiscence, fantasy and ingenuity, the two Romes can be recollected and reconstructed through parallel mediums of both image and text building upon Piranesi's works. Historical certainties, physical existences (past and present) and philosophical truths can ground certain and true projections in the Roman landscape.

Initial analysis of the three ages of pagan Rome and the first two ages of Christian Rome shall be studied in urban representations, plan and itinerary, as well as historical texts in order to determine areas of overlap and to discover commonplaces or topics in the Roman landscape. At these points of spatial and temporal coexistence, the most intense inter-national conflict occurred. Out of conflict and coexistence significant form must arise from the concurrent memories. These overlaps are recollections of both the pagan and Christian Rome inextricably fixed within the land and cityscape. These spatial and temporal intersections will structure the emphasis of writings and drawings for us as well as provide referential markers to guide the reader's paths through the book from beginning to end.

**DIVINATION:** unusual insight... the art of discovering hidden knowledge by the reading of signs in order to foresee or foretell future events...

The goldencities of Saturn and Janus. Evanders' Arcadian Pallenteum. The seven hills of Romulus. The tomb of Numa and the rock of Peter. Aeneas at Latium and Constantine at the Milvian Bridge. As Clotho spins and Lachesis measures the threads of life, destinies intertwine and knot significant events into space and time. As Atropos cuts, figures emerge in section, patterns fixed in place and marked in the landscape.

*Out of these sensory topics in the Roman landscape a mythic narrative of epic poetry arises. The threads that bind the destinies of heroes are exposed and linked through the text of the book to forms of the city and the land, which they have created.*

*As sections cut through a cone and define regular geometric figures, the sections, which cut through place, define figures of topical mathematics. Topical geometry, is a mathematics of memory, a projection of the imagination, which is universal and particular simultaneously. Such geometrical figures, tracing the overlaps of the pagan and Christian nations, are narrated through the particulars of poetic history, projected in their making not the empty abstractions of a prosaic discourse. Texts, artifacts and images will be recollected, recombined within the present to reconstruct events of myth and history. Epic poetry and other literary texts, histories, theological texts, treatises, travel guides will be recombined with representations in sculpture, mosaics, painting, coins and architectural ornaments in this recollections of the two Romes.*

*SECTION: the representation of what is beyond a plane passing through an object or landscape... a territorial area set apart by geographical, cultural or other distinctive characteristics...*

*The images of the proposed book, like that of Piranesi's, are not illustrative of a known condition but rather an active exploration, an analytic projection grounded by certain truths. The referential datum of the topographical drawings, both two and three dimensional, shall be the vertical section. The vertical section embodies the act of cutting/drawing through a structure by an intersecting plane. This diachronic cut spans time and space exposing a network of associative linkages, which can read forward and backward – up, down and across space, in the past, present and future. As the pagan Rome expands and the Christian Rome converges, the drawings cut and track the trajectories of the routes once traveled. The drawings cut across the Rome topography, creating new journeys, simultaneously spatial and temporal, which can be redrawn with each reading from one commonplace or marker to the next. As the book is opened, the reader follows the itineraries exploring and understanding today's Rome by recollecting artifacts of pagan and Christian histories, physical and metaphysical, and bringing them to the present through the experience of images and text.*

*PROJECTION: the act of perceiving a mental object as spatially and sensibly objective or of objectifying what is primarily subjective...the act of communicating a vivid image.*

*The reader may choose among three parallel projections through Rome:*

- 1. Visual images*
- 2. Lines/threads or narratives in brief*
- 3. Narration in depth – concerning the ideal eternal history as realized in the two nations of Rome and explication of a new form of sectional drawing that represents topical geometry, projections of events within an excavation in the map of Rome.*

*Likewise there are three parallel texts. There is a guide-book marking in depth places of significance for visitors of all types- architects, academics, tourists. Historical narrative is linked to particular places allowing the visitor to discover and intensely experience topics in the Roman landscape. There is a contemporary manual for the collaboration between drawing and text, using the section as an intersecting plane between architecture, literature and philosophy, between the analytical and the memorial, and between the visual and the written image. There is a philosophical-philological treatise on architecture, landscape and the city, an application of the New Science of the eighteenth-century Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico to urban design in the modern city.*

*The Romans are a paradigmatic nation and Rome is the paradigmatic city for Vico. According to the ideal eternal history every nation rises, matures and declines in three ages: the age of gods, the age of heroes and the age of men. Every age is distinguished by different modes of thought, forms of language, government, laws and other civil institutions. With the beginning of the Roman Empire, the pagan nation entered the age of men, the age of reason, popular law and the preeminence of the individual. Community declines, disappears and men return to the isolation of the forest. At the same time, the Christian nation entered the age of gods; men emerged from the forest through religion and established a strong and vital community, a new Rome. Parallels between the late pagan and early Christian Romes and contemporary societies in the "First and Third" Worlds are significant and undeniable. Therefore, the excavations, divinations, sections and projections of the Roman experience in the Roman landscape are relevant and may provide insight into the cities of the late twentieth century.*