

LC. #07 RECHERCHES



Charles-Edouard Jeanneret
dans son appartement,
20 rue Jacob, ca. 1920.
5,2x 8cm. FLC L4(1)10.

Le Corbusier's first journey to Venice: an emotional revelation / Gabriele Gardini - Les horizons de Le Corbusier. Vers un dépassement de la modernité / Julie Cattant - Las boîtes à miracles construidas por Le Corbusier. Hacia una materialización de l'espace indicible / Carlos Labarta y Alejandro Vírveda - The Luminous Horizon of Le Corbusier's Last Project / Richard Klein - L'Art décoratif d'aujourd'hui de Le Corbusier. Structure et genèse de l'aile gauche de Vers une architecture / Françoise Ducros.

FIG. 1
Venezia - Riva degli Schia-
voni. Postcard: *Ricordo di*
Venezia: 32 vedute, s.n.,
[1899], Scrocchi, Milan.
Fonds: Gabriele Gardini.



LE CORBUSIER'S FIRST JOURNEY TO VENICE: AN EMOTIONAL REVELATION

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Abstract: The essay explores Charles-Édouard Jeanneret's first Journey to Venice, in 1907, through original documents, which highlight new aspects of his education. The article is part of a complete research dedicated to Le Corbusier's Venice. The journey, dedicated to medieval art, led him to discover in Venice an architecture derived from Byzantine influences and connected to the East. Jeanneret's vision conditioned by the Ruskinian lesson, investigates the past and the poetics of nature, as well as the emotional value of art, appropriates the fragments of architecture. In the lagoon city, he encounters an irregular urban structure, which reflects the labyrinth: the particular asymmetries between the lagoon horizontality and the architectural verticality, where the floating water reflects the light on the surfaces, made vibrant and chromatic. Venice reveals the strong emotional component, the attention to detail and the attraction for the irregular, the pictorial passion for colors, for the light reflected, in search of the deep link between architecture and the place that will leave indelible traces in his poetics, where the lesson of the lagoon city remains profound, up to the project for the new hospital of the city: a vision that demonstrates the ability to learn from the past.

Keywords: *Voyage, Venice, Aquatic place, Ruskin, Schuré, Music*

Résumé: L'essai explore le premier voyage de Charles-Édouard Jeanneret à Venise, en 1907, à travers des documents originaux, lettres, dessins, photographies, qui mettent en lumière de nouveaux aspects de sa formation. L'extrait fait partie d'une recherche complète consacrée à la Venise de Le Corbusier. Le voyage en Italie, orienté vers l'art médiéval, le conduit à la découverte à Venise d'une architecture en relation directe avec l'Orient. La vision de Jeanneret conditionnée par la leçon ruskinienne, tout en interrogeant le passé et la poétique de la nature, ainsi que la valeur émotionnelle de l'art. Dans la ville, il rencontre une structure urbaine irrégulière issue de la nature, qui reflète le labyrinthe de canaux et de terres émergeant des lagunes et les asymétries particulières entre l'horizontalité lagunaire et la verticalité architecturale, où l'eau flottante reflète la lumière sur les surfaces, rendues vibrantes et chromatiques. Le voyage à Venise révèle la forte composante visionnaire, autour du monde des formes, le souci du détail et l'attrait pour l'irrégulier, la passion picturale pour les couleurs, pour la lumière, à la recherche du lien entre l'architecture et le lieu qui laissera des traces indélébiles dans sa poétique, où l'enseignement de la ville lagunaire reste profond : une vision qui démontre la capacité à apprendre du passé.

Mots clés: *Voyage, Venise, Lieu aquatique, Ruskin, Schuré, Musique*

Resumen: El ensayo explora el primer viaje de Charles-Édouard Jeanneret a Venecia, en 1907, a través de documentos originales, que destacan nuevos aspectos de su educación. El viaje, dedicado al arte medieval y a la pintura de “primitivos”, lo llevó a descubrir en Venecia una arquitectura derivada de las influencias bizantinas y conectada con Oriente. La visión de Jeanneret condicionada por la lección ruskiniana, investiga el pasado y la poética de la naturaleza, así como el valor emocional del arte, se apropia de los fragmentos de la arquitectura. En la ciudad laguna, se encuentra con una estructura urbana irregular, que refleja el laberinto de canales: las asimetrías particulares entre la horizontalidad lagunar y la verticalidad arquitectónica, donde el agua flotante refleja la luz sobre las superficies, tornadas vibrantes y cromáticas. El viaje a Venecia revela el fuerte componente emotivo, la atención al detalle y la atracción por lo irregular, la pasión pictórica por los colores, en busca del vínculo profundo entre la arquitectura y el lugar que dejará huellas imborrables en su poética, donde queda profunda la lección de la ciudad lagunar, hasta el proyecto del nuevo hospital de la ciudad: una visión que demuestra la capacidad de aprender del pasado.

Palabras clave: *Viaje, Venecia, Lugar acuático, Ruskin, Schuré, Música*



FIG. 2
Venice - Ex inn “All’Antica Busa”, in salizzata Sant’Antonin. Photo: Gabriele Gardini (2019).

At the La Chaux-de-Fonds School of Art in the Canton of Neuchâtel, the “Voyage en Italie” was considered the final completion of a course of study for a concrete comparison with the artistic heritage. In short, modernity, not in the sign of breaking with the past, but as an evolutionary process of the same. For Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, the journey to Italy has the value of a verification: the direct study of the works of art of the Middle Ages and the Primitives, would have served to unite history, nature and decoration¹, in a project aimed at the creation of a regional art, or *style sapin*, interpreting the Jurassic identity. An itinerary² conceived on the basis of the knowledge and travels of his master Charles L'Éplattenier³, who had already visited Italy and Venice several times. The young Le Corbusier, at the age of nineteen, leaves for his first journey: it is the beginning of a life that will be a continuous wandering, defining himself as a “voyageur impénitent”⁴. He will confess that he has always had as teachers, in addition to the study of the past, museums, the folklore, and *les voyages*⁵. It is through the experience of the journey that Jeanneret reflects on plastic emotion, which will become one of the creative principles of the future Le Corbusier. When the construction of Villa Fallet was completed, Jeanneret starts for Italy in the autumn of 1907: it is an in-depth itinerary in which he studies, draws and photographs works of art and architecture, stopping in Milan, Genoa, Pisa, Siena, Florence, Ravenna, Bologna, Ferrara, Mantua, Lake of Garda, Verona, Padua, and finally Venice which he sees, above all through Ruskin's eyes, as colour, light and music. In the *carnet* he notes the outline of a city on the horizon, the plan of a church or a building, the proportionate relief of a square: “but in front of the real stone or marble, bathed in living light, it is each time an unexpected shock that he feels⁶. With regard to this first voyage to Italy, it seems certain that Jeanneret learned more, travelling, vibrant with tension and artist's passion, whereas in his sketches the precise knowledge of architecture joins the pictorial feeling of the atmosphere, reflecting a happily free spirit and sensibility: “During these travels he discovered architecture, constantly asking himself the question: “where is the architecture?”⁷. The images that determine the relationship with architecture and landscape during the journey become an extraordinary collection of fragments, ready to fertilize new ideas. Charles-Édouard, together with his fellow student Léon Perrin, arrives in Venice on 25 October, where he will stop for two weeks, influenced by the words of John Ruskin and Charles Blanc⁸. (Fig. 1)

Ground / Water

Upon his arrival he observes the urban elements linked to water, where the name of these is already the representation of their properties: *Bacino, molo, riva, squero, arzero, paludo, rio, ponte, fondaco, fondamenta, piscina, traghetto*⁹ as persistent elements of the lagoon structure.

Before arriving, he was tormented and confused thinking about the moment of the vision of the Doge's Palace, where he awaits the definitive knockout blow. He confesses that he dreamed of his greeting, discovering an aspect, absent in the descriptions, which only the real image reveals to him, the vivid and vibrant colours. He perceives the Palace as an emotional device: architecture and nature merged in absolute harmony, placed in front of the Bacino, reflecting itself in the water, almost a suspended mass, of which he will try to understand the secret laws: “Venice the superb is simply purifying, dripping with rain that falls with violence. One could not be more successful and more worthily follow the traces of his ancestors. [...] In short, we can only wish for good weather, the Ducal Palace having already given us a good smile”¹⁰.

Considering the diversity of its architectural components, as well as the complexity of the amphibious city, while he designs the new Hospital's Venice¹¹, about sixty years later, he wrote that “Venice had been a revelation for Le Corbusier. He saw it as a city unique in the world. Sixty years later he was charged by the Venetian authorities to intervene as architect and town planner. It happens that the authorities of Venice agree with the plans of Le Corbusier. They are even enthusiastic about them. By means of the horizontal disposition of the hospital, Le Corbusier has tried to avoid any influence upon the historical skyline of Venice”¹². The meeting with the innkeeper on *Riva degli Schiavoni* is a pleasant surprise: “We arrived from the station purifying, folding under the luggage and were going to pass the famous tavern if the worthy man had not run up in the rain to ask us if we were not the two travellers who had to get off at the *Albergo de l'Antica Busa*”¹³. (Fig. 2)

The stormy climate is described through an intense trepidation, deploring the fact that there are days of continuous rain. The high water is observed with impatience: “On all sides the water flows and streams, Saturday the sea even

invaded the Piazzetta. You feel itching all over your body; are these fins piercing ... or just mosquito bites? 2 or 3 escapes of the sun still allowed us to judge Venice under its beautiful aspect, and we even attended the other evening, to a true apotheosis"¹⁴. Very embittered by the bad weather conditions, Jeanneret is afflicted by these difficulties, which contrast with the ardent desire to explore the city. The emphasis given to the colors derives from the study of Charles Blanc's text¹⁵, understanding that architecture is realized through volumes made visible by the combination of full and empty spaces in the light. Aspiration that continues until bright days, when he will express an indescribable joy: "Venice is dazzling by the sun, and the eye rejoices in its famous reflections"¹⁶. It is with great pleasure that he returns to the heat in the evening, numbed by the humidity of the lagoon, enthusiastically writing that he saw marvellous colors. One has the feeling of perceiving the happiness experienced by le Corbusier, in the face of the fluctuating effect of the venetian light, recalling the words expressed in maturity, on the voyage, as a necessity of the practice of vision when, observing with his own eyes, the things seen penetrate you inside¹⁷.

Promenades / Looks

Jeanneret stays at *All'antica Busa*, an inn in *Calle sant'Antoni [n]*¹⁸, which in the 1930s became the workshop of the artist Umberto Bellotto, of which, still today, there are creative metal works in the windows. In the feverish excitement of those cold and rainy days, with the colours of the lagoon atmospheres in his eyes, he undertakes, every morning, a wandering tour, starting from the inn in the district Castello's sestiere, inhabited by the workers of the Arsenal, of which will observe the high defensive walls. (Fig. 3)

FIG. 3
Venice - «Piazzetta and Saint Mark's Bassin», 1907. Le Corbusier's Collection. Postcard: La Chaux-de-Fonds, Bibliothèque de la Ville, BV/LC/105/1107, 28.

Just in August 1963, Le Corbusier accompanied by Giuseppe Mazzariol, will stop for a long time in front of this mighty wall asking if this was the work of the builders of the Kremlin, considering it admirable¹⁹. An inner impulse accompanies him, with an uncompromising conduct of bodily and spiritual discipline: Jeanneret's *modus operandi* demonstrates the rigor deriving from family education and ancestors belonging to the heretical Cathar's



movement, of pure and rigorous orientation, as he liked to remember²⁰. When it rains, indeed, Jeanneret remains secluded to write letters and notes: this passion will become an uninterrupted custom, so much so that in his identity card he will ask to be considered *Homme de lettres*²¹. During the stay he reads in addition to Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice*²², Hippolyte Taine's *Voyage en Italie* and Édouard Schuré's *Les Grands Initiés*²³, which is sent to him by L'Éplatténier. An essay which shows what function the cosmic laws have, the "sublime role of the artist", the superiority of geometry and that will inspire him, allowing him to understand the conflict between reason and immaterial principle: "Schuré has revealed to me horizons that have filled me with happiness. more precisely, my struggles between rationalism, [...] and on the other hand the innate, intuitive idea of a supreme Creator, which the contemplation of Nature revealed to me at every step"²⁴. The initiatory journey — which will inspire Le Corbusier — is made up of tests for the purification of spirit and body, obtained with severe discipline, overcoming passions²⁵. In Schuré he is attracted to abstract thinking with the idealization of the numbers and seems particularly interested to the chapter on Pythagoras, since here his annotations are concentrated²⁶. The numbers there are considered not as an abstract quantity, but as the intrinsic and active virtue of the one supreme, source of universal harmony. It should also be noted the influence that may have had the path of initiation, connected to Hermes - God of logos and geometry, who had the task of bringing order to the disorder - where is described with various esoteric symbols, in an original promenade composed of very difficult trials to pass: symbols that the images of *Le poème de l'angle droit* will reveal²⁷. He also asked his parents, the books *Cordue et Granade*²⁸ and *Le Caire*²⁹: confirming that the passion for Venice³⁰, jointly with the East, but an idealized East, that began in the lagoon city³¹. (Fig. 3.1)

He understands that the spirit and the history of the place are present in the architecture and in the artistic forms, as well as in the Venetian space, fragile and open-minded, with an unrepeatable identity, where coexist the contradiction of languages, based on a chromatic continuity. Jeanneret's intellectual discipline is complemented by physical exercise, which in his family is fundamental together with the cult of nature³². In fact, during his stay, he practices the *Système Müller*³³, a program of movements for body extension³⁴. He will continue this training,

FIG. 3.1.
Venice - St. Mark's Square.
Photo: Gabriele Gardini
(2020).



FIG. 4
 «Venice seen from the St. Mark's Bell Tower», 1900
 ca. Postcard: Le Corbusier's Collection. (BdV), BV/
 LC/105/1107.



regularly, as evidenced by the drawings of the workouts in the *Album La Roche*³⁵. When he goes to his brother Albert, in Hellerau³⁶, he is fascinated by the Jaques-Dalcroze³⁷ method and seeing the application of Adolphe Appia in the stage space; he writes that the coordinated body rhythm revealed to him: “a novel unity, creating of energy and of positive action, in new associations always dominated by a prodigious breath of harmony”³⁸. In the relationship between harmony and body, he discovers eurhythm – the Greek myth of the living work of art – developing his own concept of health, as a prerequisite for creating an architecture in which “Living, working, cultivating body and mind, circulating, are events parallel to the blood, nervous and respiratory systems. From the inside to the outside”³⁹. Jeanneret embarks on several tours in search of that Venetian stones studied: in his encounters to discover the architecture he mentions the moment that from the salizada Sant' Antonin: “we⁴⁰ were going, either along the Schiavoni quay's, either through the narrow and tortuous *calli* to taste the charm of the faded sounds, the noble and proud harmony of the ample surfaces of the Doge's Palace or the warm cadence of the arches and pinnacles of San Marco basilica”⁴¹. In the letters he experiences the narrated description of his feelings and the environments he sees, with almost lyrical sentences, when at sunset, on the magnificent promenade of Riva of the Schiavoni, he tells that: “with the violent rustle that seemed to us a death knell, we saw the domes of St Mark Basilica slowly grow faint and disappear in the night, already obscure, on the ideal rectangle of the Ducal Palace, and to see only the sharp diamonds of the Schiavoni gas' spouts”⁴². (Fig. 4)

The reflection turns to the Ducal Palace, in which the large asymmetrical windows are in relation with the Basin created an evidence of an imaginary, scenographic backdrop⁴³. The detailed memory of this occurs when Le Corbusier will recall, in a letter to Ionel Schein, that the Piazzetta of Venice has two columns between the Ducal Palace and the Marciana Library, “and between these, two columns one sees the Campanile and the pediment of

the island St George Major, and that in Venice the horizon is much lower than you indicate. Moreover, the gondolas are never docked in parallel but transversely, and I would point out again that the Ducal Palace has a pink marble and white diamond façade design and that the capitals of the colonnade of this Palace are at the birth of the arches⁴⁴. In 1907, Jeanneret from Venice expresses emotions, suspending the judgment⁴⁵, in front of the multiple languages that characterize the city, not attributable to a clear and explicit order. Furthermore, he experiences the first evidence of the relationship between architecture and writing, through the description constant and detailed of colours – reminiscent the rules of the integrations of these of Blanc's teaching⁴⁶ – writing: "We had many rainy or foggy days, a few sunny ones too. Venice then comes back to life and for those who have known a week in the mist, the blue sky is a miracle. Everything then sings. I have seen the most extraordinary colours in the canals. The complementary colours' theory put into practice by a high-flying magician"⁴⁷.

Spleen / Disorientation

In his restlessness, Jeanneret wonders what sense it is to draw and does not fail to underline the grotesque emanating from travellers who make watercolours for the city: an ambivalent tourist experience that he refuses to make his own⁴⁸. This is a conflicting statement, after having created many watercolors of effective expressive quality: this thought seems to be the result of a momentary reflection, of one's own inner contrasts, but of a tendency to the constant play of opposites that will pervade the reflections of his theoretical texts. In the previous days he had expressed the discomfort of not being able to sketch because of his stiff and hard hand: "I work a lot, but I can't make any sketches that look like a way. My hand is stiff and hard, always tired"⁴⁹. Probably the close vision and too much attention to detail detach him from a synthesis, which will mature later. He will write that at the beginning "I was not used to recording the exact dimensions of objects"⁵⁰, but now he begins to understand the need to relate the particular to the complex and the work to the environmental context. Due to the persistent rain, he writes that he is not prepared for a long stay in Venice for the reason, that he writes: "I would not like to have a prolonged visit in this city. Too many moments of forced laziness, those eternal boats, which sap your will. The pencils are no longer used, and the paper remains white"⁵¹. The contrast between reason and emotion emerges with a certain interruption of actions and spleen.

The city, a labyrinthine aggregate surrounded by water, where the ground subject to the tides - changing and precarious - alters the perception, making them experience insecurity, in the oscillation of the unstable surface. This disorientation intensifies the feeling of anxiety that emerges from the lack of direction and from the dispersion, giving a different rhythm to the paths. *A priori*, the Venetian condition is that of slowness and uncertainty that gives Jeanneret the spleen: the different atmosphere compared to the mainland brings out prostration and increased sensitivity. He writes that he is blocked by the rain and by the "eternal boats": he expresses the exhausting expectations, being accustomed to the fastest land vehicles. Jeanneret understands the singularity given by the environments and by the forms "with a chiaroscuro and rhythmic value"⁵², the separation of the distinct terrestrial and aquatic paths, where the double and alternating practicability evokes bewilderment.

Venice is built right out into the waters with brightly, see-through palaces perforated by windows and loggias, and instead of underlining weight, alludes to the movement⁵³. Compared to the clear and distant horizon of the mountains, he experiences the condition of instability of the undefined lagoon spaces of the opaque shores of sea salt, molluscs and mosses, the particular smell of the lagoon and the uncertain boundaries that escape the gaze. Canals, quaysides, small squares, hidden gardens, spaces where "all returned to silence, in the silence of canals with trembling reflections, enclosed and deserted gardens, ancient palaces fractured on their patinated facades"⁵⁴. Concept that refers to Ruskin, when he observes that the crevices given by age assimilate architecture to a work of nature, arguing that the "sublimity of architecture has just this of nobler function in it than that of any other object whatsoever, that it is an exponent of time, of that in which, as has been said, the greatest glory of the building consists in the external signs of this glory"⁵⁵. His impressions are of a revelation of a singular urban space, connected to the nature and to the landscape. But above all, carefully observing the city in its itineraries, he identifies the relationship of architecture with the site, writing that "the popular instinct can no longer guide the harmonious development of beauty, it is necessary here again, in the relations of buildings with the place, to listen to the lessons of the past"⁵⁶. (Fig. 5)

FIG. 5
 Le Corbusier's photography.
 Venice, «Palace Contarini-Fasan on the Grand Canal», 1907. (BdV), Fond
 Le Corbusier, LC/108/782.



It should be noted that in Venice, Jeanneret experiments, extensively, the camera for the reading of architectural works, observing and taking eight photos in various itineraries: the School of Saint Mark (façade and atrium of the Hospital of Venice), the Palace Contarini-Fasan, the Ca' Marcello, the Ca' d'Oro, the San Marco Basilica, the Ducal Palace and two of its capitals⁵⁷. Furthermore, he visits the Academia, where he takes a fantastic lesson through Bellini, Tintoret et Titian, the Civic Museum – at that time in the *Fondaco dei Turchi* – where the testimonies of the Venetian civilization are exhibited, the Dalmatian School of saints George and Tryphon where he is entranced by “très beaux Carpaccio”²⁸. On a stormy day he goes to the Lido, where on the walls of *Murazzi*, he tastes the flavour of the sea perceived thanks to a huge salt wave, going towards Chioggia⁵⁹. He gets excited about *La Salute* at sunset, where the white marble glows faintly in the twilight sky, observed from the Accademia bridge, with a sublime effect of great impact due to the arrival of a storm. The buildings reduced to grey silhouettes are seen through an oppressive dark hood, while between the yellow colour of the fog the buildings take on, a flaming red shade against the sky: “Two or three patches of sunshine allowed us to judge Venice at its finest, and the other evening we even observed a real apotheosis, a dramatic sky entirely covered with black clouds drowned in the yellow mist, and the brilliant sun next to the lantern of Santa Maria della Salute; sea, sky, and houses making a single enormous torch seen through tears”⁶⁰. Lastly, he enters the Basilica of saints John and Paul that he will see again, during the meetings with Giuseppe Mazzariol and Carlo Ottolenghi for the project of the new hospital. Related to this visit in *art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, he will quote a Ruskinian passage relating to the funeral monument of doge Andrea Vendramin, present in the Basilica, to affirm that beauty in art is only possible in honesty and integrity⁶¹. (Fig. 6)

Furthermore, he comments this citation brings us back to the influence of Ruskin's thought: “He gave a demonstration of honesty to a population gorged with the first fruits of the nascent machine age: go to San Giovanni e Paolo in Venice and take a very long ladder with you; lean it against the grandest tomb – that of Vendramin; climb to the top of the ladder and look at the head of Vendramin, seen in profile as it lies on the catafalque. Lean over and look at the other side of the head, behind the profile. *This other side is not carved*. Disaster! Cheating! Falsehood! Treason! Everything is false in this sumptuous, enormous tomb. This tomb is the work of the devil. Hasten to the archives of Venice and you will find that the sculptor who was so royally paid to raise this magnificent tomb was a forger and was expelled from Venice for forging documents! That was how Ruskin shook our young minds profoundly with his exhortation”⁶².



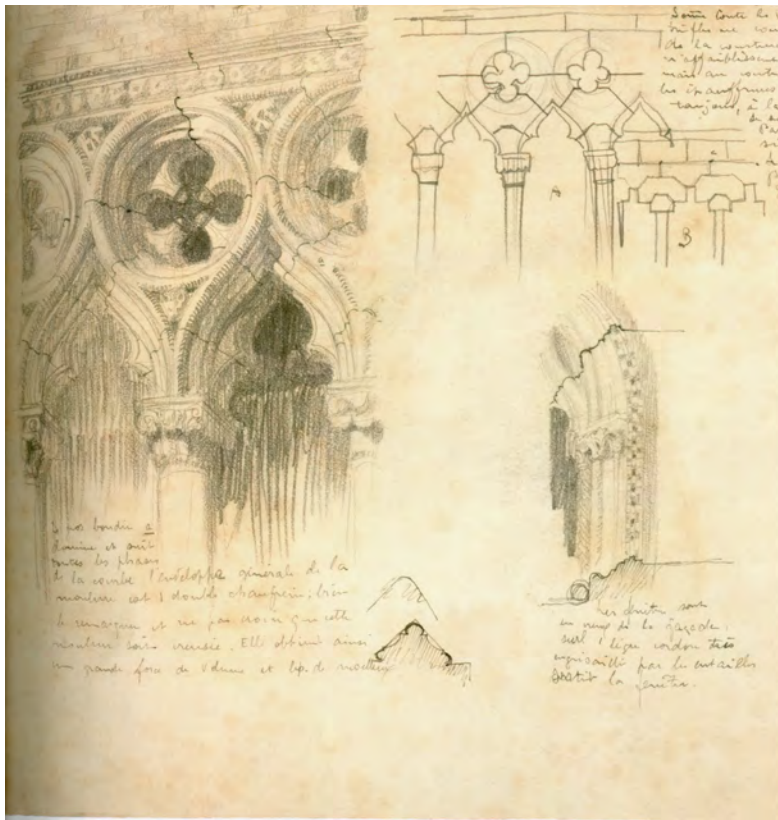
FIG. 6
 Venice - St. John and Paul
 Basilica, «Doge's monument
 Andrea Vendramin». Photo
 Didier Descouens, (2015).
 [This file is licensed under
 the Creative Commons Attri-
 bution-Share Alike 4.0.]

Landscapes / Languages

Jeanneret, in those days, spends many moments in the Piazzetta where, *calepin* in hand – just from Venice he writes that he would send to L'Éplatténier his *petit Journal*⁶³. He sketches details of the Marcian squares, writing that: "Venice sulks us and only gives us rain but what does it matter to me, I have the Ducal Palace and St Mark's, and certainly I could never have imagined more beautiful"⁶⁴. With the excitement of the *voyageur passionnée*, Jeanneret in Venice appears as a *flâneur* troubled by emotions, without the need for guides, walking along it guided only by charm, in the most hidden corners. (Fig. 7, Fig 7.1)

The journey becomes an experience that favours the relationship with the environment, getting lost in the city to grasp its character, so much so that "we have carefully enjoyed ourselves like blessed angels, leaving Baedeker behind and imagining that there was only Saint Mark's Square and the *Piazzetta* in Venice. Here we didn't work: in all I made two drawings⁶⁵. But at San Marco we have heard marvellous masses, extraordinary sensations of beatitude, almost of ecstasy, emotions quiet and intense. Sitting in a corner of the apse (it was a big party that lasted three days⁶⁶). I understood what perfect harmony was"⁶⁷. Troubled he will write after a few years that: "the Campanile suddenly points to the sky its thick needle, rogue, plain and red, giving the measure of the extreme life, flexibility and splendour of St Mark, and provoking, because of the small loggia of chiselled white marble that nestles at its foot, the complete confusion of the real measures! Miracle of the mind dominating the inert matter: by a just weighing of the causes and their effects"⁶⁸. The only drawings⁶⁹ are one of a Saint Mark's Portal and of a plate of Ducal Palace's upper lodge⁷⁰, this last full of notes and interpreted, as an artistic entity and as a structure constructive. Jeanneret dreamed of the supreme blow⁷¹, from the admirable vision of the Doges' Palace: the impatient waiting was based on Ruskin's definition of the Palace as the Parthenon in Venice. (Fig. 8, Fig. 8.1, Fig. 8.2)

The Palace, which appears seen from the basin as suspended on pilotis, expresses the archetype of venetian civil architecture, at the centre of reflections on symbolic value, not only as an emblem of a community, but as a universal cultural masterpiece. Composed of Byzantine, Gothic and Renaissance elements, it is an accord of different times, where the double arcade supports the compact bulk of the upper wall with the static paradox of



the fullness that dominates the empty space. Jeanneret senses that the fusion of contrasting elements can be interpreted as an extraordinary synthesis of opposites. The volume and the shape - not only the plastic decoration - direct him towards new reflections, making him understand the difference between beauty and usefulness. The surfaces decorated in colour with their pathos will then be left behind, but part of the artistic dimension, like the emotion of the visual experience, survives transformed in the work and theory of future Le Corbusier. He identifies in the Marcian squares, the space of the fundamental social events of the city, open-air stays, made up of a stratification of times and languages. There is an awareness - and the lagoon city plays a leading role in this — that architecture is made up of a complex set that is much larger than just decorative elements. In Venice, the atmosphere, light and colour enchant him emotionally, and mainly in his drawing of the loggia of the Palace, he shows attention to the static structure, giving an own interpretation. Overcoming the painter's tendency towards the surface and the particular, to replace it with a three-dimensional and structural approach, will be one of the reasons that subsequently separated him from L'Éplattenier and the École des Arts⁷². Even though he photographed two capitals of the Ducal Palace, in maturity Le Corbusier criticized Ruskin⁷³ for having examined the its decorations too meticulously, as an exercise in useless erudition⁷⁴. The city originated from models inherited from late antique architecture, reveals the transformation over time of artistic forms, as he will write in the *Carnet A2*⁷⁵. (Fig. 9)

FIG. 7
Le Corbusier. «Upper loggia of Doge's Palace» particular. Encre sur papier, 1907. FLC 2176.

FIG. 7.1
Venice - «Corner of the Doge's Palace», 1910 ca.. Postcard: Compagnia Rotografica. Fonds: Gabriele Gardini.

Jeanneret transforming the suggestion, begins to experiment an essential grammar made of simply contours, linear and pure forms and volumes, behind some illustrated postcards purchased in Venice where he draws images of essential shapes on the back, identifying them with a continuous line outline: these are gothic structures, or the arch of a bridge with the bend of a canal, or the lines of two domes⁷⁶. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the emotional idea of art persists in him, but there is the perception that the architecture is wholesome composed of geometric structures: “If the essentials of architecture lie in spheres, cones and cylinders, the generating and accusing lines of these forms are on a basis of pure geometry”⁷⁷.

Architecture / Music

At dusk, when the day ends, Jeanneret goes to contemplate San Marco: "My most beautiful impressions are those of the evening until the dark night, when St Mark emerges as a wondrous and supernatural spectre. The domes that overload the day somewhat, no longer see themselves at night"⁷⁸. Already Ruskin, had written an unforgettable page, when he entered the Baptistery presenting it as a dark cavern, admiring the polychromy of the marbles: described as an archaic ruin where the water of the lagoon enters between the cracks of the marbles and the brown algae beaten by the sun. While the interior of the Basilica is perceived as a huge cross-shaped

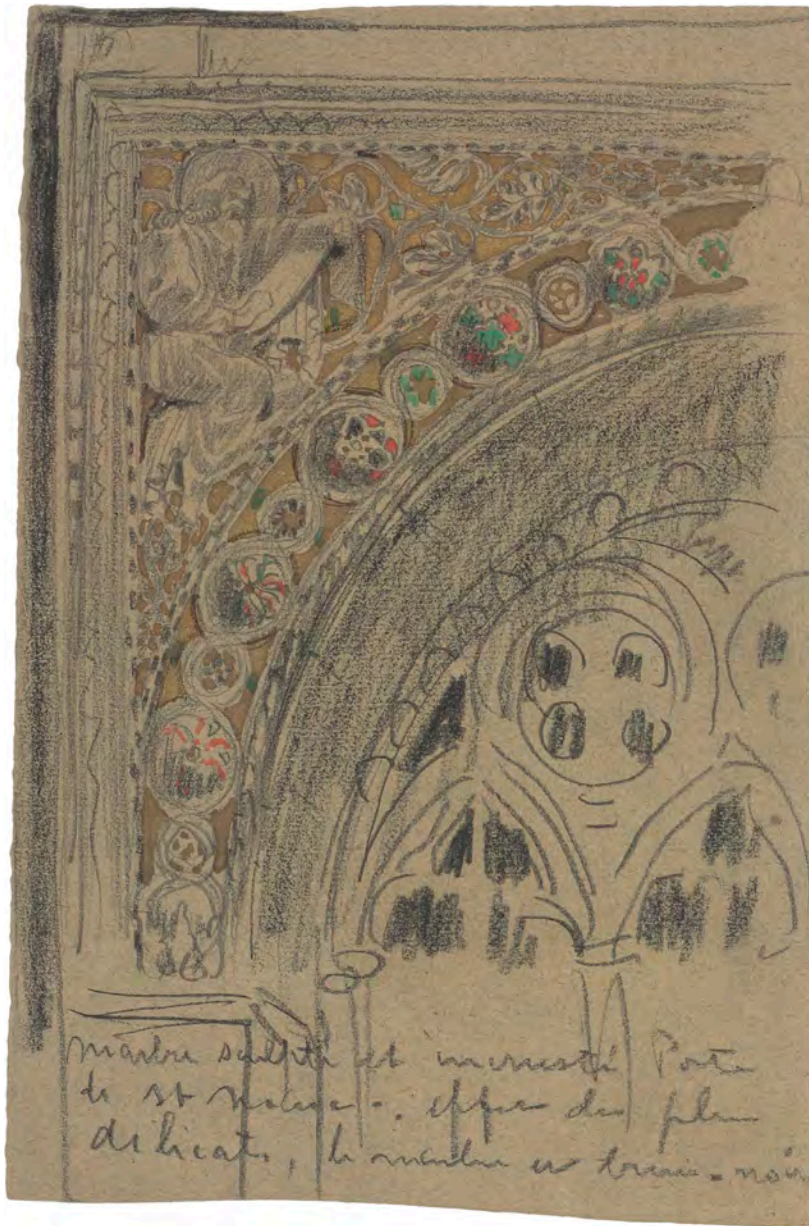


FIG. 8
Le Corbusier. «St. Mark Basilica, detail of the "Portale di San Pietro"», 1907. Aquarelle sur papier gris. FLC 2112.

FIG. 8.1.
John Ruskin. «The vine free and in Service» particular, 1852. Photogravure. *The Stones of Venice II, The Library Edition X.* 15, tav. 6.

FIG. 8.2.
Léon Perrin. «Venise – Colonne St. Marc au lion ailé», 1907. Fondation Léon Perrin: Fonds L. Perrin, n.1480.



FIG. 9

Le Corbusier. Sketches of gothic structure, 1907. In Le Corbusier's postcard St. Mark Basilica, verso. (BdV), BV/LC 105/1112.

FIG. 10

Venice – «St. Mark Basilica: indoor», 1907. Postcard : Le Corbusier's Collection : (BdV), BV/ LC/105/1107, 22.





FIG. 11
Charles-Édouard Jeanneret.
Postal card to parents from
Venice, 2 november 1907.
(BdV), BV/LC 102-1028, 123.

cave, divided into mysterious compartments, with rays of light that rain in the darkness, over the marble carpets of the floor, breaking into a thousand colors. In the first biography, Le Corbusier testifies that “whose mission was to reintroduce in the minds of his contemporaries the notion, lost, that architecture is above all poetry, the music of the world of bodies”⁷⁹. Then Le Corbusier will write that “Poetry has neither a theorem, nor an attitude, nor a fixed aspect. With circumstances always variable, with always different premises, it is, every time, a new word, unpredictable. This is the intangible motive of our emotions”⁸⁰. Several aspects of Gothic architecture will be particularly important for him, never disappearing completely: the emotional and collective character that he perceived in medieval art continued to attract him. A concept that will influence his thought of him, when he states that “Architecture is a thing of art, a phenomenon of the emotions, lying outside questions of construction and beyond them. [...] Architectural emotion exists when the work rings within us in tune with a universe whose laws we obey, recognize and respect. When certain harmonies have been attained, the work captures us. Architecture is a matter of harmonies, it is a pure creation of the spirit”⁸¹. In Venice he feels the analogy between music and architecture, which arises from the projection in space and time⁸². Later he will describe architecture as a sequence of moments in space, comparing them to a symphony of coordinated elements and that counterpoint and fugue can be in the architectonic space. (Fig. 10)

Inside San Marco, where he goes to listen to polyphonic choirs for three consecutive days, a music composed according to geometric mathematical rigor, he receives some unusual epiphanic perceptions. Friedrich Nietzsche had already understood the city as the essence musical, when he wrote: “If I look for another word to say music, I always and only find the word Venice”⁸³. Jeanneret appears troubled when he listens to polychoral music, where he experiences extraordinary sensations of bliss, almost of ecstasy: “Eyes up, eyes charmed, interested, dazzled by the magical effect of the golden domes, mind busy deciphering the superb symbols of the mosaics, ears full of harmony, heart, swollen with disturbing sonorities, to the point of making you cry, it is the complete, divine art, sacrificing to God, worthy only of the lofty thought of men. This is for me the religious feeling felt in the middle, the revelation of the existence of religious feeling”⁸⁴. From these reflections emerges a personality struck not only by architecture, but also by the divine and by the rites that he describes as a sublime demonstration, a personal conception of the sacred as a cosmos connected to space and to the mystery of music. A grandiose setting,

which recalls the ancient ceremonies, narrated in Schuré's book. It is the first intuition of the relationship between architecture and music that he will then develop in the idea of *acoustique visuelle*, he tested in the theatrical performance, in Campo San Trovaso⁸⁵. This approach reveals a knowledge that will initiate him in the search for proportions connected to musical eurythmy, when Le Corbusier recalls the Venetian experience by stating that there are mathematical points of sound that can be called "visual acoustic sites", where the events are fundamental: "there are mathematical consonant positions that I will call places of visual acoustics, places where things are decisive"⁸⁶. (Fig. 11)

Furthermore, in the course of his stay in Vienna, going to hear Strauss, he recalls Marcian polychoral music, because the spirit was "still touched by the masses of St-Marc"⁸⁷, I was painfully surprised (physically) by this modern music"⁸⁸. The polychoral music "whose spirit was so serenely fed"⁸⁹ is described by Jeanneret as an initiatory experience, where architecture is the scene of an aesthetic and spiritual phenomenon of ecstasy. As Giuliano Gresleri wrote: "A particular state of mind, attentive to the time, season and place in which the young intellectual finds himself immersed. Inside San Marco, he observes, describes the arrangement of the parts and

FIG. 12
Venice, Doge's Palace seen
from the Basin. Photo:
Gabriele Gardini (2018).



the use of the mosaic which loses its decorative function to transform itself into an atmosphere of light. It is not the covering that Jeanneret sees but something that intervenes to emphasize the architectural space, transforming it into something that can neither be told nor painted"⁹⁰.

Departure / Dream's End

Those coloured and inlaid marbles – like a fluctuating kaleidoscope that changes continuously – seem to unite the past with the present in an indefinable aura. Jeanneret leaves Venice⁹¹ with much regret, like a close emotional bond that must suddenly be broken, to interrupt the spell and leave, writing that: "Venice is dazzling by the sun, and the eye rejoices in its famous reflections. I feel the departure terribly: it's good to finish it, once"⁹². He starts from Riva Schiavoni, on 7 November 1907: "We start and take the boat in an hour – we saw it drop anchor in front of the Ducal palace earlier – not without some different emotions"⁹³. With a melancholy spirit, amidst the raucous sounds of the ship's siren, while the lights in the mirror of water of the Basin there is a play of references from the reverberation of light on the front of the buildings that overlook it: "So left Venice, one Thursday evening at eight o'clock, with a heartache, three raucous cries from the boat and slowly the propeller is screwed into the water, slowly also fleeing the lights of the Schiavoni quay and the white phantasmal profile of the Doge's Palace. At the end of an hour, it is the full sea, to the right and to the left we see the lights of the lighthouses. The sea is very calm, and the melancholy takes you"⁹⁴. He has assimilated in the memory, emblematic images of Venice, that reveals the attraction for the irregular, the passion for colors, the interest in the Venetian space of the *campi* (little squares), nodal spaces of the urban structure – which he will then study at the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. Furthermore, he bought "a large picture of the Ducal Palace of forty centimetres by sixty (still follies)"⁹⁵, that will leave indelible traces in his poetics, where the lesson of the lagoon city remains deep, up to the project for the new hospital of the city. (Fig. 12)

In her first Venetian journey Jeanneret discovers a new space in comparison to the Swiss mountains: in the lagoon city where the continuous confrontation between land and water has contributed to the rise, the urban structure, reflects the original labyrinth of the lagoons shaping the balanced relationship between the lagoon horizontality and the architectural verticality. A key that has influenced the projects of Le Corbusier through its particular asymmetries: from reflections on the characters of its forms, where water becomes the fundamental element. The water that, with the changing and floating horizontal plane reflects the light on the vertical walls, gives a certain vibrating character to reliefs, mosaics, polychromatic encrustations that make them different and variable. In which the harmonious rationality of the urban fabric is given by a great expressive freedom as a concrete response to the nature and to real problems solved by the flexible mentality of Venetian community. For Jeanneret Venice becomes an exceptional repertoire – for this reason arises the urgent need to buy a lot of postcards and taking many photos – of architectural elements and urban spaces, where volumes are in harmony with nature, in a dialogue out of time and styles⁹⁶. Surely the first journey is a revelation, which will give him a sort of a first archive of fragments to be reassembled through future project syntheses. The young Le Corbusier, when he left La Chaux-de-Fonds undecided whether to be a painter, sculptor or architect, when he leaves Venice, he is aware that architecture includes absolutely everything and is the first among the arts.

Acknowledgements

The essay is dedicated to Giuliano Gresleri, whose research was invaluable in framing my own analyses. I would like to express gratitude to those who helped make this article possible particularly: special thanks go to the Le Corbusier Foundation for the archives and images that made this article, Brigitte Bouvier, Arnaud Dercelles and Isabelle Goudineau. I would also like to thank Carlos Lopez and Antoine Monnier, Responsable du Secteur Recherche de la Bibliothèque at the La Chaux-de-Fonds for documents, photographs and postcards; Anouk Hellmann, Conservateur des archives de la Fondation Léon Perrin; Anna Tonicello, Direttrice della Biblioteca IUAV; Debora Rossi, Responsabile dell'Archivio Storico della Biennale di Venezia-ASAC; Mario Po', Direttore del Polo Culturale e Museale della Scuola Grande di San Marco; Cristina Celegon, Responsabile Biblioteca della Fondazione Querini-Stampalia di Venezia.

The essay is dedicated to the memory of Giuliano Gresleri, with whose precious advice it was written.

[Giuliano exercised the gift of modesty, with respect to his extraordinary wealth of knowledge: the importance of his teaching is to be found in his excellence as an explorer inside the archives, in the incessant passion for describing and interpreting architecture. Resorting to the studies he has drawn up will be inevitable.]

L'essai est dédié à la mémoire de Giuliano Gresleri, avec les précieux conseils duquel il a été écrit.

[Giuliano a exercé le don de la modestie, à l'égard de son extraordinaire richesse de connaissances : l'importance de son enseignement se trouve dans son excellence d'explorateur des archives, dans la passion incessante pour décrire et interpréter l'architecture. Le recours aux études qu'il a rédigées sera inévitable.]

El ensayo está dedicado a la memoria de Giuliano Gresleri, con cuyos valiosos consejos fue escrito.

[Giuliano ejerció el don de la modestia, con respecto a su extraordinaria riqueza de conocimientos: la importancia de su enseñanza se encuentra en su excelencia como explorador dentro de los archivos, en la pasión incesante por describir e interpretar la arquitectura. Recurrir a los estudios que ha elaborado será inevitable.]

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- Žaknić, Ivan. *Klip and Corb on the Road: The Dual Diaries and Legacies of August Klipstein and Le Corbusier on Their Eastern Journey, 1911*. Zurich: Scheidegger und Spiess, 2019.

Notes

- 1 Petit, Jean. *Le Corbusier lui-même*. Genève: Edition Rousseau, 1970, p. 28: "C'est là son premier bain d'art. Il concentre ses effusions sur l'art byzantin et le moyen âge, les paysages, la musique des églises".
- 2 In 1987 *Il Viaggio in Toscana* was released, catalog of the homonymous exhibition in Florence, in which Giuliano Gresleri presented for the first time Jeanneret the itinerary of his 1907's journey, through letters and sketches.
- 3 At La Chaux-de-Fonds, L'Éplattenier does not teach students a set of universal norms or an academic aesthetic canon, but rather stimulates the creativity of his students by developing in them the ability to observe.
- 4 Le Corbusier. Letter to Mayor of Venice, Giovanni Favaretto Fisca. 3 ottobre 1962. Archivio Ospedali Venezia, Atti nuovo ospedale, busta 4/12.
- 5 Le Corbusier. *Précisions sur un état présent de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme*. Paris: Vincent, Freal & Cie, 1930, p. 34.
- 6 Gauthier, Maximilien. *Le Corbusier ou L'architecture au service de l'homme*. Paris: Denoël, 1944, p. 22.
- 7 Le Corbusier. *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, (Nouvelle édition augmentée). Paris: Vincent Freal, 1959, p. XV: "les dessins de voyage d'un jeune homme de vingt à vingt-trois ans quêtant à travers les campagnes et les villes, les témoins du temps passé et présent, et prenant sa leçon tout autant dans l'œuvre des simples hommes que dans celle des grands créateurs. C'est dans ces rencontres qu'il découvre l'architecture: Où est l'architecture? Telle fut la question inlassablement posée".
- 8 C.E. Jeanneret writes to parent 21 July 1908 that spends "des heures de bonheur avec un homme tel que Schuré, tel que Ruskin, tel que Blanc". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV LC102-1029-22.
- 9 *Bacino*: basin; *molo*: pier; *riva*: quay; *squero*: boatyard in which gondolas are built or repaired; *arzero*: embankment; *paludo*: marsh; *rio*: small canal; *ponte*: bridge; *fondaco*: storeroom and living quarters; *fondamenta*: quay along a canal; *piscina*: an area of filled-in ground where there used to be water, *traghetto*: a gondola-ferry across the Grand Canal.
- 10 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 17 november 1907. He writes: "Venise la superbe est tout simplement dépurante, ruisselante de pluie qui tombe avec violence. On ne pouvait mieux réussir et suivre plus dignement les traces de ses ancêtres. [...] Bref on ne peut que souhaiter le beau temps, le Palais Ducal nous ayant déjà fait un bon sourire". La Chaux-de-Fonds-Bibliothèque de la Ville, (BdV), BV LC/102-1029-17.
- 11 See Reichlin, Bruno. "«L'atelier era un vaso di Pandora». Cinquant'anni di progetti rivisitati da Le Corbusier & Co. L'Ospedale di Venezia, 1960-1965", in Id. *Dalla soluzione elegante all'edificio aperto: scritti attorno ad alcune opere di Le Corbusier* (ed.). Viati Navone, Annalisa. Mendrisio: Mendrisio Academy Press; Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2013, pp. 389-414.
- 12 He will write that: "Venise avait été un grand événement pour Le Corbusier. Il avait pensé que c'était une ville unique au monde... Soixante ans après, le voici chargé par les autorités vénitienes d'intervenir comme architecte-urbaniste. En disposant horizontalement les volumes de l'hôpital, Le Corbusier a cherché à éviter que la silhouette de Venise ne soit altérée". Boesiger, W. (ed.). *Le Corbusier et son atelier rue de Sèvres 35. Œuvre complète 1957-1965*. Vol. 7. Zurich: Les Éditions d'Architecture, 1965, (6e ed., 1995), p. 140.
- 13 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 17 november 1907. He writes: "Nous arrivions de la gare, dépurants, pliant sous les bagages et allions dépasser la fameuse taverne si le digne homme n'était accouru sous la pluie nous demander si nous n'étions pas les deux voyageurs devant descendre à l'Antica Busa". (BdV), Fond Le Corbusier, BV LC102-1029-17.
- 14 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to L'Éplattenier, 1 november 1907: "De tous côtés l'eau afflue et ruisselle, samedi la mer envahissait même la Piazzetta. On se sent des démangeaisons par tout le corps; sont-ce des nageoires qui percent ... ou simplement les piqûres des moustiques ? 2 ou 3 échappées de soleil nous ont tout de même permis de juger Venise permis de juger Venise sous son bel aspect, et nous avons même assisté l'autre soir, à une véritable apothéose", (translated by Fox Weber, Nicholas. *Le Corbusier: a life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008, p.50). In: Dumont, Jean-Marie (ed.). *Le Corbusier. Lettres à Charles L'Éplattenier*. Paris: Éditions du Linteau, 2006, p. 90.
- 15 Blanc, Charles. *Grammaire des arts du dessin*. Paris: Laurens, 1880, pp. 62-68. See also: Blanc, Charles. *De Paris à Venise : notes au crayon*. Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1857.
- 16 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 5 november 1907: "Ici depuis hier temps magnifique, mais un froid! Je suis glace comme à nos plus grands froids. Venise est épatante par le soleil, et l'œil se réjouit à ses fameuses reflets". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV LC102-1028-13.
- 17 Le Corbusier, *L'atelier de la recherche patiente*. Paris: Vincent Fréal & Cie, 1960, p. 37. The original quotation reads: "Quand on voyage et qu'on est praticien des choses visuelles: architecture, peinture ou sculpture, on regarde avec ses yeux et on dessine afin de pousser à l'intérieur, dans sa propre histoire, les choses vues".
- 18 Examining the original letter of Jeanneret, it was noted that the address was not *Calle Sant'Antonio*, but "*Calle St-Antoni [n]*" and in Venice there is only one street with the designation: *salizada sant'Antonin*. C. E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 17 november 1907. (BdV), BV LC102-1029-17.
- 19 Mazzariol, Giuseppe. «Le Corbusier a Venezia: il progetto del nuovo Ospedale», *Zodiac*, 16, 1966, p. 92.
- 20 Petit, Jean. *Le Corbusier: lui-même*. Genève: Edition Rousseau, 1970, 22- 24.
- 21 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 1 november 1907. BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV LC/102-1028-12.
- 22 Brooks, Harold Allen. *Le Corbusier's formative years: Charles-Édouard Jeanneret at La Chaux-de-Fonds*. Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press, 1997, 68. Allen Brooks writes that other books must be added, in addition to those indicated in the letters: Pierre Gusman. *Venise*. Paris, 1904; Ruskin, John. *Sesame and Lilies* (trad. Marcel Proust). 1906 and *The Stones of Venice* (French edition), 1906.
- 23 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 8 october 1907. BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV LC/102-1028-7.
- 24 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents. 31 January 1908: "Ce Schuré m'a révélé des horizons qui m'ont comblé de bonheur. Plus justement, mes luttes entre le rationalisme, que la vie réelle active, que les petits bouts de science emmagasinés au Gymnase, avaient établi fortement en moi, et d'autre part l'idée innée, intuitive d'un Être suprême, que la contemplation de la Nature me révélait à chaque pas, cette lutte avait préparé le terrain à recevoir cette noble semence dont ce bouquin de six cents pages est rempli". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV LC/102-1028-7.

25 Schuré, Édouard. *Les grands initiés: esquisse de l'histoire secrète des religions*. Paris: Perrin, 1889, pp. 219-224.

26 Turner, Paul Venable. *The education of Le Corbusier*. New York-London: Garland, 1977, pp. 47-50.

27 See: Calatrava, Juan. "Le Corbusier e Le poème de l'angle droit, Un poema abitabile e una casa poetica", in *Le Corbusier. Le poème de l'angle droit*. (Ed. or. Paris: Tériade, 1955). Ed. it. (eds) Antonini D, Giuliani S., Crespi G. Milano: Mondadori Electa, 2007, pp. 173-209. Potié Philippe. *Le Corbusier. Le poème de l'angle droit*. In Id: *Le voyage de l'architecte*, Marseille: Parenthèses, 2018, pp. 140-160.

28 Schmidt, Karl E. *Cordoue et Grenade*. Paris: Laurens, 1902.

29 Migeon, Gaston. *Le Caire. Le Nil et Memphis*. Paris Laurens, 1906.

30 In Le Corbusier's personal bibliothèque there is a book of the year of the voyage in Italy, with 142 photographic gravures of Venice: *L'architecture en Italie: Venise Monumental*. Paris: Armand Guérinet éditeur, 1907. FLC V 663.

31 Jeanneret writes, in *La Construction des villes*, cit., p. 110: "Venise a ébloui le monde entier par la rutilance de sa basilique [San Marco] que l'immense parvis fait apparaître comme un fabuleux joyau d'Orient".

32 Petit Jean. *Le Corbusier: lui-même*, op.cit., p. 24.

33 Müller, Jörgen Peter. *Mon système. 15 minutes de travail par jour pour la santé*. Paris: Gamber, 1905.

34 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 1 november 1907. BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1028-12.

35 Jeanneret-Le Corbusier. *Album La Roche*, Stanislaus von Moos (ed.). Milan: Electa, 1996, f. 45 verso.

36 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to brother Albert, 23 october 1910. In Baudouï, Rémi-Dercelles, Arnaud (eds.). op. cit., pp. 325-326.

37 Émile Jaques-Dalcroze musician and pedagogue founded the institute dedicated to his rhythmic method in Hellerau.

38 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to William Ritter, 14 January 1911: "Une unité nouvelle, créatrice de puissance et bienfaisante, en des assonances neuves toujours dominées d'un gros souffle d'harmonie". In *Le Corbusier-William Ritter, Correspondance croisée, 1910-1955*. Dumont, Marie-Jeanne (ed.), op. cit., p.7.

39 Le Corbusier. *L'atelier de la recherche patiente*. Paris: Vincent Fréal & Cie, 1960, p. 200. The original quotation reads: "Habiter, travailler, cultiver le corps et esprit, circuler, sont des événements parallèles aux systèmes sanguin, nerveux, respiratoire. Du dedans au dehors".

40 Together the fellow Leon Perrin.

41 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to brother Albert, 2 February 1908 : "Nous allons, soit par le quai des Schiavoni, soit par les étroites et tortueuses calli goûter dans le charme des bruits éteint, la noble, et fière harmonie des amples surfaces du palais des Doges, ou la chaude cadence des voules et des clochetons de Saint-Marc". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1029-35. Translated by Talamona, Marida. "Venice: A Lesson on the Human Scale" In: Cohen, Jean-Louis. (ed.), *Le Corbusier: An Atlas of Modern Landscapes*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2013, pp. 129-135.

42 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to brother Albert. 2 February 1908: "le vent se faisait aigu de tôt il fallait rentrer. Prémices déjà du froid pays teuton, premier avertissement de la cruelle réalité. Un soir à huit heures, au violent bruissement qui nous semblait un glas, nous avons vu s'estomper dans la nuit les coupoles de Saint-Marc, déjà obscures, le rectangle idéal su palais ducale, pour ne plus voir que

les diamants aigus des becs de gaz des Schiavoni". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1029-35.

43 Tafuri Manfredo. "L'éphémère est éternel: Aldo Rossi a Venezia", in *Domus* n. 602 (January 1980), p. 7: "On the horizon, like dreams too closed in themselves, the bodies of the Redentore "and of Saint George Major stand out, opposing at the impressionism of the urban *imagerie*, their calculated games of interrelation". Sulla linea dell'orizzonte, come sogni troppo conclusi in sé, gli organismi del Redentore e di San Giorgio Maggiore si stagliano opponendo all'impressionismo della *imagerie* urbana i loro calcolati giochi di compenetrazioni".

44 Le Corbusier. Letter to Ionel Schein, 2 december 1963. The full quotation reads: "la Piazzetta de Venise possède deux colonnes entre le Palais Ducal et l'autre Palais et qu'entre ces deux colonnes on aperçoit le Campanile et le fronton de l'île St Georges Majeur et qu'à Venise l'horizon est beaucoup plus bas que vous ne l'indiquez. Par ailleurs, les gondoles ne sont jamais mises à quai parallèlement mais transversalement et je vous signale, encore, que le Palais Ducal a un dessin de façade en marbré rosé et blanc en losange et que les chapiteaux de la colonnade de ce Palais sont à la naissance des arcs". In *Le Corbusier: Choix de Lettres. Sélection introduction et notes par Jean Jenger*. Basel-Boston-Berlin: Birkhauser, 2002, p.313. See also Berselli, Silvia. *Ionel Schein: dall'habitat evolutivo all'architecture populaire*. Mendrisio: Mendrisio Academy Press; Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana, 2015.

45 John Ruskin in *The Stones of Venice*, deals the confrontation between styles as a war, especially against the Renaissance, while Jeanneret does not express negative criticism of any period in the letters of 1907.

46 See: Blanc, Charles. *Grammaire des arts du dessin*. Paris: Laurens, 1880.

47 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 17 november 1907: "Nous avons eu bien des jours de pluie ou de brouillard, quelques-uns de beau soleil aussi. Venise alors ressuscite et pour qui a connue une semaine dans la brume, le ciel bleu est un miracle Tout alors chante. J'ai vu les plus extraordinaires couleurs dans les canaux. La théorie des complémentaires mise en pratique par un magicien de haute volée". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1029-17.

48 Le Corbusier will return to Venice in 1922, precisely to paint the watercolors witnessed by the *La Roche album*. See: Von Moos, Stanislaus. "La leçon de Venise", in: *Le Corbusier. Album La Roche* (Von Moos, ed.). Milan: Electa; Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 1996. Von Moos, Stanislaus. "À propos de Venise" in Talamona, Marida (ed.) *L'Italie de Le Corbusier*. Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier-Éditions de la Villette, 2010, pp. 76-87.

49 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 8 october 1907. "Je travaille beaucoup, mais n'arrive pas à faire le moindre croquis ayant une apparence de façon. Ma main est raide et dure, toujours fatiguée". (BdV), Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1028-7.

50 Le Corbusier. *Voyage d'Orient 1910-1911*. Paris: Éditions de la Villette, 2011, p.102.

51 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to L'Éplattenier, 1 november 1907. The full quotation reads: "Cette ville ne me plairait pas pour un séjour prolonge. Trop de moments d'oisiveté forcée, ces éternels bateaux, qui vous donnent le goût de la grande flemme. Les crayons ne s'usent plus et le papier reste bien blanc". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1028-12.

52 Bettini, Sergio. *Venezia nascita di una città*. Milano: Electa, 1978; Cavalletti, Andrea (ed.), *Sergio Bettini, Tempo e forma. Scritti 1935-1977*. Macerata: Quodlibet, 1996.

- 53 See Rasmussen, Steen Eller. *Experiencing architecture*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1964.
- 54 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to Albert, 2 February 1908: "tout retournait au silence, dans le silence de canaux aux reflets tremblants, des jardins enclos et désertés, des vieux palais se fissurant et qui en portent long sur leurs façades patinées". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/LC/102-1029-35.
- 55 Ruskin, John. *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*. London: George Allen, 1889; [sixth edition], p. 193.
- 56 Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Le Corbusier. *La Construction des villes. Genèse et devenir d'un ouvrage écrit de 1910 à 1915 et laissé inachevé*. Emery, Marc Albert (ed.). Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1992, p.110. Le Corbusier writes, looking at Venice: "Aujourd'hui que l'instinct populaire faussé ne sait plus guider le développement harmonieux de la beauté, il faut ici de nouveau, dans les rapports de l'édifice avec la place, écouter les leçons du passé."
- 57 Benton, Tim. *Le Corbusier. Secret Photographer*. Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2013, p. 39. Tim Benton writes that in a Letter to the Éplattenier, Le Corbusier says that the photographer Moser, who according to him had lost more than 80 shots of his photographs, including a part taken in Italy. FLC E2(12)4. Some of 1907 photos' Le Corbusier (Florence, Ferrara, Venice) are currently at the BV of La Chaux-de-Fonds.
- 58 The passion for Vittore Carpaccio's canvases will return during the journey of 1963.
- 59 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 17 november 1907. BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/LC/102-1029-17.
- 60 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to L'Éplattenier, 1 november 1907: "2 ou 3 échappées de soleil nous ont tout de même permis de juger Venise sous son bel aspect, et nous avons même assisté l'autre soir, à une véritable apothéose, un ciel dramatique tout couvert de nuages noirs noyés dans la brume jaune, et le soleil éclatant à côté de la lanterne de Santa M. della Salute ; la mer, le ciel, les maisons ne faisant qu'un immense flambeau vu à travers des pleurs". In: Dumont, Jean-Marie (ed.), op. cit., p. 90.
- 61 Le Corbusier. *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*. cit., p. 134.
- 62 Le Corbusier. Id., p.134: "A cette masse toute bouffie des saturations premières d'un machinisme naissant, il leur faisait la démonstration de l'honnêteté : allez à San Giovanni et Paolo à Venise, prenez une très longue échelle, appuyez-la contre le plus magnifique tombeau, celui de Vendramin ; montez tout en haut de votre échelle, regardez le visage qui se présente de profil du Vendramin couché sur son catafalque ; et regardez, en vous penchant, derrière le profil l'autre face de la tête. Cette autre face n'est pas sculptée. Malheur mensonge! fausseté, trahison. Tout est faux dans ce somptueux et immense tombeau. Ce tombeau est une œuvre du diable. Allez vite aux archives de Venise; vous découvrirez que le sculpteur qui fut si royalement payé pour élever ce tombeau magnifique était un faussaire, qu'il fut banni de Venise pour avoir commis des faux en écritures! Voilà comment Ruskin secoua de profondes exhortations notre entendement de jeunes". [translated by James I. Dunnett in: Le Corbusier, *The Decorative Art of Today*. London: The Architectural Press, 1987, p.132].
- 63 Jeanneret. Letter to L'Éplattenier, from Venice, 1st november 1907. cit. p. 92. Perhaps it can be assumed that the *calepin* of the Italian sketches has been lost.
- 64 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to L'Éplattenier, 28 october 1907: "Venise nous boude et ne nous donne que pluie mais que m'importe cela, j'ai le Palais Ducal et St Marc, et certes jamais je n'aurais pu imaginer plus beau". In Dumont (ed.), op. cit., p. 89.
- 65 Jeanneret uses the plural, but in reality, while he was photographing and discovering the city, his friend Léon Perrin performed nine drawings: 1304 *Étude de chapiteau du Palais des Doges (Venise, Italie)*, 1337 *Chapiteau des douze mois (Palais des Doges, Venise)*, 1311 *Chapiteau (St Marc, Venise)*, 1326 *Chapiteau (St Marc, Venise)*, 1490 *Haut-relief historié (St Marc, Venise)*, 3619 *St Georges terrassant le dragon (Venise)*, 1479 *Colonne St Marc au lion ailé (Venise)*, 1480 *Colonne St Marc au lion ailé (Venise)*, 3618 *Colonne St Marc au lion ailé (Venise)*.
- 66 The feasts that last three days, in the year 1907, correspond to All Saints' Day on November 1st and to the commemoration of all the deceased (*Commemoratio Omnium Defunctorum*) to November 2nd; while November 3rd to Sunday.
- 67 C.E. Jeanneret, Letter to parents, 17 november 1907. The full quotation reads: "Nous avons joui comme des béats, laissant soigneusement Baedeker sur la commode, et nous figurâmes qu'il n'y avait à Venise que St-Marc et la *Piazzetta*. Nous n'y avons pas travaillé, j'ai fait deux dessins en tout, mais nous avons entendu à St Marc des messes merveilleuses, sensations extraordinaires, de béatitude, presque d'extase, d'émotion tranquille et profonde. Assis dans un coin de l'abside (c'était une grande fête qui dura trois jours), j'ai compris ce qu'était l'harmonie parfaite." BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/LC/102-1029-17.
- 68 Charles-Édouard Jeanneret - *Le Corbusier. La Construction des villes. Genèse et devenir d'un ouvrage écrit de 1910 à 1915 et laissé inachevé*. Emery, Marc Albert (ed.). Lausanne: L'Age d'Homme, 1992, p.111 : "Le Campanile pointe brusquement vers le ciel son aiguille épaisse, roque, unie et rouge, donnant la mesure de l'extrême vie, de la souplesse et de la splendeur de St Marc, et provoquant, à cause de la petite loggia de marbre blanc ciselé qui se niche à son pied, le complet embrouillement des mesures réelles! Miracle de l'esprit dominant la matière inerte: par une juste pesée des causes et de leurs effets".
- 69 Le Corbusier writes in Letter 17 november 1907 to parents, that he lost "toutes mes couleurs" in the chapel of the Spaniards and the bowl of watercolors "sur la divine colline de Fiesole". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/LC/102-1029-17.
- 70 CE. Jeanneret. Drawings of Venice, 1907: FLC 2112 and FLC 2176.
- 71 CE. Jeanneret. Letter to L'Éplattenier, 19 September 1907. In: Dumont, Jean-Marie (ed.), cit., p. 77.
- 72 Pauly, Danièle. *Le Corbusier et le dessin: "Ce labeur secret"*. Lyon: Fage; Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 2015.
- 73 Ruskin, John. *The Stones of Venice. Volume Third. The Fall*. London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1853, p. 59.
- 74 Ruskin questionnait les chapiteaux fleuris du Palais Ducal et parcourait dans ses portiques et ses stalles". Le Corbusier. *L'art décoratif d'aujourd'hui*, op. cit., 135.
- 75 Le Corbusier. *Carnets, volume 1, 1914-1948*. Milano: Electa, 1981, A2, (1915), f. 55.
- 76 Cartes postales illustrées de Venise, avec notes et croquis de Le Corbusier 1907 à 1910, nn.34-36, Postcard St Mark Basilica, verso. (BdV) BV/LC/105/1112.
- 77 Le Corbusier, *Vers une architecture*, cit., p. 27: "Si l'essentiel de l'architecture est sphères, cônes et cylindres, les génératrices et les accusatrices de ces formes sont à base de pure géométrie"; originally translated, in 1931, from the french by Frederick Etchells, Le Corbusier. *Towards a new architecture*. London: The Architectural Press; New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1963, p. 40.

78 C.E. Jeanneret, Letter to parents, 17 november 1907: "Mes plus belles impressions sont celles du soir à la nuit noire, alors que St Marc surgit comme un spectre merveilleux et surnaturel. Les coupoles qui surchargent quelque peu le jour, ne se voient plus la nuit". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1029-17.

79 Gauthier, Maximilien. *Le Corbusier, ou L'architecture*, cit., p. 8, "dont la mission allait être notamment de réintroduire dans l'esprit de ses contemporains la notion, perdue, que l'architecture est avant tout la poésie, la musique du monde des corps".

80 Le Corbusier. *Œuvre Plastique - Peintures et Dessins - Architecture*. Paris: Éditions Albert Morancé, [1938], s.p.: "Le cycle est parcouru. Fragment cosmique — l'homme a son intelligence des choses (limitée, ou subtile, ou sublime). Avec ses outillages méticuleux, le peintre détecte le moment d'infini. Poésie. La poésie n'a pas de formule, pas d'attitude, ni d'aspect fixes. A circonstances toujours variables, à prémisses toujours diverses, elle n'est, à chaque fois, qu'une parole neuve, imprévisible. Tel est l'insaisissable mobile de nos émotions".

81 Le Corbusier. *Vers une architecture*. cit., p. 9. "Architecture est un fait d'art, un phénomène d'émotion, en dehors des questions de construction, au-delà. [...] L'émotion architecturale, c'est quand l'œuvre sonne en vous au diapason d'un univers dont nous subissons, reconnaissons et admirons les lois" [quote translated from the french by Frederick Etchells, op. cit., p.19].

82 Le Corbusier. "Unité", in *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, special issue Le Corbusier, 1948, p. 44.

83 Friedrich Nietzsche. *Ecce Homo*, (Leipzig; Insel, 1908), p. 48: "Wenn ich ein anderes Wort für Musik suche, so finde ich immer nur das Wort Venedig".

84 C.E. Jeanneret, Letter to parents, 17 november 1907. The full quotation reads: "Les yeux en haut, le regard charmé, intéressé, ébloui par l'effet féérique des coupoles d'or, esprit occupé à déchiffrer les superbes symboles des mosaïques, les oreilles pleines d'harmonie, le cœur, gonflé de sonorités troublantes, au point de vous faire pleurer, c'est l'Art complet, divin, sacrifiant à Dieu, au seul digne de la haute pensée des hommes. Voilà pour moi la sensation religieuse ressentie en plein, la révélation de l'existence du sentiment religieux. Il n'y a pas à douter; ce n'est pas une affaire de cœur; une affaire des sens, une affaire de l'esprit, cela englobe tout, est humide et chaud, presque douloureux, mais bon et beau. Quand donc notre époque si cahotée se ressaisira-t-elle et pourrait-elle arriver à une telle sérénité. Les hommes qui ont composé ces messes, tant la musique que la grandiose mise en scène, sont des génies". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1029-17.

85 Le Corbusier had experimented the *acoustique visuelle* in 1934, at Campo San Trovaso, in Venice, attending *Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice*, directed by Max Reinhardt.

86 Le Corbusier. "Le théâtre spontané", in Barsacq, André et Villiers, André (eds.). *Architecture et dramaturgie*. Paris: Flammarion, 1950, pp. 154-155: Le Corbusier writes: "Il existe des lieux mathématiques de consonance que j'appellerai des lieux d'acoustique visuelle, des lieux où les choses sont décisives".

87 Le Corbusier remembers this music again, nel 1914: "Grand rite de San Marco". Le Corbusier letter to William Ritter, 22 december 1914. In Dumont Marie-Jeanne (éd.). *Le Corbusier - William Ritter*. Correspondance croisée 1910-1955. Paris: Éditions du Linteau, 2014, p. 337.

88 C.E. Jeanneret, Letter to father, 4 december 1907. "Encore frappé par les messes de St-Marc, j'ai été douloureusement

surpris (physiquement) de cette musique moderne". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1029-22.

89 C.E. Jeanneret, Letter to parents, 5 december. BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1029-23.

90 Gresleri, Giuliano. "Per amore degli uomini", in Gresleri, Giuliano; Gresleri, Glauco (eds.). *Le Corbusier: il programma liturgico*. Bologna: Compositori, 2001, pp. 18-19.

91 Various essays have analyzed the relationship between Le Corbusier and Venice: Moos Von, Stanislaus, "La leçon de Venise", in *Le Corbusier. Album La Roche* (Von Moos, ed), Milan: Electa -Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier, 1996. Brooks, Allen Harold. *Le Corbusier's formative years*. Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1997; Moos Von, Stanislaus and Ruegg, Arthur (eds.). *Le Corbusier before Le Corbusier*. London: Yale University Press, 2002. Christoph Schnoor (Hrsg.). *La Construction des villes: Le Corbusiers erstes städtebauliches Traktat von 1910-11*. Zürich: gta-Verlag, 2008. Duboy, Philippe. *Le Corbusier, Croquis de voyages et études*. Paris: *La Quinzaine littéraire*, 2009. Von Moos, Stanislaus. "À propos de Venise", in Talamona, Marida. *L'Italie de Le Corbusier*. Paris: Fondation Le Corbusier - Éditions de la Villette, 2010, pp. 76-87; pp. 24-40. Gargiani, Roberto, Rosellini, Anna. *Le Corbusier: béton brut and ineffable space, 1940-1965: surface materials and psychophysiology of vision*; Lausanne: Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne; Oxford: Routledge, 2011. Schnoor Christoph. "L'Italia come modello di spazio urbano: i riferimenti a Venezia, Firenze e Roma in "La Construction des villes". In *L'Italia di Le Corbusier*. (ed.) Marida Talamona [Roma]: MAXXI; Milano: Electa, 2012, pp. 175-187. Foscari, Giulia. *Elements of Venice* [foreword by Rem Koolhaas]. Zurich: Lars Muller, 2014.

92 C.E. Jeanneret, Letter to parents, 6 november 1907. "Venise est épatante par le soleil, et l'œil se réjouit à ses fameux reflets. Ça sent terriblement le départ: il est bon d'en finir une fois" BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1023-13.

93 C.E. Jeanneret. Letter to parents, 7 november 1907. "Nous prenons le bateau dans une heure — nous l'avons vu jeter l'ancre devant le palais Ducal tout à l'heure — non sans une certaine émotion". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1028-14.

94 C.E. Jeanneret, Letter to parents, 17 november 1907. "Donc quitté avec serrement de cœur Venise, un jeudi soir à huit heures; trois cris rauques du bateau et lentement l'hélice se visse dans l'eau, lentement aussi fuient les lumières du quai des Schiavoni et le spectre blanc du Palais des Doges. Au bout d'une heure, c'est la pleine mer, à droite et à gauche on voit les feux des phares. La mer est des plus calmes, et la mélancolie vous prend". BdV, Fond Le Corbusier. BV/ LC/102-1029-17.

95 C.E. Jeanneret, Letter to parents, 17 november 1907: "une grande photo du Palais Ducal de quarante centimètres par soixante (toujours des folies)". Id.

96 See Botta Mario, "*L'ultimo progetto di Le Corbusier*". In Pagnamenta Sergio, Reichlin Bruno (eds.). *Le Corbusier - La ricerca paziente*, Rassegna internazionale delle arti e della cultura. Anlässlich der gleichnamigen Ausstellung in der Villa Malpensata, hg. v. d. Federazione architetti svizzeri, FAS, Gruppo Ticino. Beiträge v. Bruno Reichlin, Tim Benton, Christian Sumi, Mario Botta, Arthur Rüegg, Lugano: Fed. Architetti Svizzeri, 1980, pp. 141-150.