

A new governance for a new urban form¹

GIOVANNI CAUDO

Abstract: The crisis in Rome is not a local issue, it is not reduced to the problem of potholes or waste on the street, that is the things we read daily in the newspapers. What we need to understand is rather what Rome can become in the 21st century, how it can draw its role with respect to the political class, which is absent, and to the intermediate social class.

Keywords: new governance, Rome normal city, metropolitan city, the “fourth Rome”.

I will present the result of a collaborative work which was gathered in a book entitled *Roma altrimenti*.² It was an academic activity which we initiated in the Department of Architecture of Roma Tre University, and here in particular I will speak of the section *Conversazioni su Roma* (Conversation about Rome). We held some conferences on topics that regard Rome and we have seen that the single problems were enclosed in a larger framework. The crisis is not a local problem, it is not reducible to the problem of potholes or trash in the street, that is those of which we read in newspapers daily. The thesis in this work is that, in reality, there are those who drive us to complain about the potholes so as not to deal with the main problem of national import.

I agree with what De Rita said, that the city is born around a theme and I agree that certainly this city can in fact become a normal city, I believe, it is already becoming. Romans are making do, they live anyway, the normal city comes by itself.

1. Deregistered speech by Giovanni Caudo; June 28th, 2018 at the Round Table *Rome. Still Capital of Italy?*, Faculty of Architecture, Sapienza University of Rome.

2. Giovanni Caudo, *Roma altrimenti. Le ragioni nuove dell'essere Capitale*, Independently Published, 2017.

What must be understood, rather, is what Rome can become in the twenty-first century, how it can trace its role with respect to the political caste, which is absent, and to the intermediate social class. The book was a collaborative work, Walter Tocci wrote the postface. During the course of this research we asked ourselves about “the new meaning of being a Capital”: it is a projection towards the future which requires deliberation on the roots of being a Capital. Very often we forget that Rome has been a Capital for only 148 years. First there was imperial Rome and a papal town of little more than 200,000 inhabitants, which in 1870 became a capital with a referendum in which 45,000 Romans voted – the vote was by census – of which only 46 were against. London, in that same year, had 3.2 million inhabitants – even today Rome does not have 3 million – Paris 1.8 and St. Petersburg 700,000. In 1871 Rome occupied 383 hectares, Paris 6,000. The area around the Coliseum at that time was outskirts, one had to walk twenty minutes to cross Porta Pia and find one self in open countryside, at the inception of Rome capital of Italy. And this is today’s Rome, as we can discern from a photo from Google Earth: there are no administrative borders because it would be pointless to indicate them, it is not easy to understand where it begins or where it continues, it has innumerable internal discontinuities, it is an inhabited territory. “Rome territorial city” wrote Giuseppe Samonà in 1964, and it is still a valid concept. If we start with the fact that today’s Rome is this territorial city with no boundaries, of which that of 1870 was but a tiny piece, we could decide that all that is from 1870 onwards does not interest us. Or we could decide to take note that in these 148 years Rome has grown enormously in terms of population and of territory. There is no other European city, especially one that is a capital, that has grown in such a short and time and spatiotemporal acceleration. Is this perhaps good news? In part yes, in part no. Or is it bad news? In part yes, in part no, in the sense that it all that to be done over again. In 148 years one cannot create a great capital, one cannot make an organized capital. And here the theme emerges: rethink for Rome the meaning of being capital in the twenty-first century, in light of all that has happened in these 148 years, including the present territory, the historical center, the suburbs, and the external boundaries. Today there is no project of Capital city, but there is a city that having become a capital has been

built in a certain way and today must redefine its own space. Emiliani quoted the book *Contro Roma*. In 1970, Dolores Prato, a journalist for “Paese Sera”, attempted to write a book about Rome but was unable to publish it. A graduate student at the University of Macerata found the manuscript of which I quote the last sentence in which the reasons why Rome was to be the capital was explained: “Italianized Piedmont ran up against Rome. Understand her? It was easier to destroy her, and continues doing so over a century.” We do not understand Rome, we have not understood nor figured out Rome. The proposed narrative in many books, the bibliography, the reading we have proposed with this our book does not correspond, is not sufficient. We need to understand what has happened in this city by looking at the reality directly, exactly how the city presents itself. For this reason, in the course of our work, we have tried to reason on the new meaning for Rome of being the Capital in the twenty-first century.

Paris today is not what it was in 1988, the London of today is not what it was in 1988. 1988-89 was a watershed year, important for all European capitals. Even more so was 2001, especially for those city capitals in the Euro system. The fact that the Central Bank of Europe prints money renders the system different from what it was in the past, including that of the capital cities. The entire political class of the last thirty years has not reasoned on what has happened since the euro system was introduced. We have continued living as if it was still the capital of the twentieth century. I am convinced that the theme will be normality, but there will always be a gap to fill if there is no overall reasoning on how the city recreates its own soul, its own shadow. The poet said: “when man loses his shadow, he loses his soul.” When Rome loses its shadow as capital it loses its soul and so deteriorates and falls. Space is give to all which corrodes the city, as De Rita rightly said.

There are two historical “roots” to renew. The first root is that which is at the base of the development of the Prati district, the structures of the public administration: the Capital city as opposed to the papal city. The second root was given by the 1873 plan, which saw the Coliseum as the hinge: the noble neighborhood of Piazza Vittorio and the Mint, are located around the Coliseum because the Borgo Pio neighborhood was working-class. The axis around Via Venti Settembre

towards Porta Pia goes in the opposite direction to that of the city's expansion, which is towards the Vatican. Another hinge is that of the profound vertical roots of History, and so the topic of the archaeological area.

Thus it is these two “roots” that have given meaning to Capital Rome, whose history we know well and that in some way have been contradicted by the building fever and the other tensions which the city has lived through. But there is a literature which opposes the trend, already quoted by someone, for example that by Herman Friedrich Grimm who says: “I cannot appeal to the Romans to save a global city.” So he writes, turning to the world to save Rome: “the Romans are bent on the folly of erasing the world's city, to build a Capital city and a tiny state.” He therefore does not turn to the Romans, because by now, they are not capable of understanding the seriousness of the situation and so he appeals to the world at large. We have done exactly the opposite and wish to appeal to the Romans to take note of the meaning of this city, to re-ignite their pride of what has happened in these 148 years, to renew the possibility of being a Capital city. And here I come to today's question. Is Rome still capital?

We need to give some thought to the administrative capital. This city has a strong administrative connotation, and if it were decided to move the ministries and if the decentralization and federalism were to be carried out it would create a problem. Are the administrative and the Capital city separated from the historic city? Certainly until the 1962 PRG (Municipal regulatory plan). It was not an invention of Luigi Piccinato (architect and town planner), the condition was already present in the 1883 plan: the Capital city was to be separated from the papal city. The *Asse attrezzato* (note: central business district) underscores this decision, the administrative city is separate from the historical center. Of this plan only the EUR section is realized, not the rest. The 2008 plan assumes the presence of 18 centralities, the 19th being the historical center. Where is the public administration in this plan? It's not there anymore. In 2003-2008 we have abandoned the SDO (Oriental Directional System was a project to reorganize and relocate infrastructures further away from the center), but has thought ever been given again to what the form of public administration of this

city is? Today, public administration in European cities is no longer in the form of Napoleonic barracks, like our ministries at the time. Public administration today is transparent and digital: open plazas, open public spaces. In Rome we still have the heritage of the ministries of Porta Pia, every six offices two or three are empty because there are no public servants. When I was a council member we drew up this heritage in the map of the public city: we identified all the public properties of all public subjects (not many after all, 3 or 4). They cover 33,000 hectares, it is the twenty-first city in terms of area, which is supposed to be governed by three subjects just to give an overall plan to the city. Yet this is not the case. In December of 2017 minister Pinotti proposed an amendment to the finance act to sell Palazzo Caprara, the seat of the Ministry of Defense, which is a piece of the history of Quintino Sella (finance minister of the Kingdom of Italy). In my opinion the scandal is the fact that an amendment was made to sell to foreigners an important piece of our history, of our life, of our heritage, of our identity and there was no uproar, not even by journalists. We talk about potholes, but this episode is far more important, because it shows that our city is a shred which anyone may seize. The last piece of the heritage of the SDO is that of the Tiburtina area. Streets are being built but one cannot understand for what structures. In the meantime the general plan for Tiburtina Station has been greatly developed. Furthermore, we can ask ourselves in the twenty-first century if the “city of justice” is an emergency for the city of Rome or should we be resigned to the fact that Prati is the most suitable site? The Corte d’Assise (High Court), the Civil Court and the Corte di Cassazione (Supreme court) are scattered and live at same time in a neighborhood besieged by scooters and lawyers. In Turin ever since they have created a Palazzo di Giustizia (Justice Building) putting everything together even justice functions better. Is this a topic that concerns us in this perspective of the twenty-first century, or not? What does an administrative city mean today?

Let us turn back to our second root, the cultural capital, which extends beyond the archaeological area. Some colleagues from Columbia University, when they came to study here in Rome for the workshop Roma 2025, they reminded us of the fortunes of having had neo-realism which is a culture linked to the outskirts, the cinema of

the periphery, in those paces where this theme is kneaded with the urban form, with the form of the built not built, rural not rural. Another interesting perspective which gives back to us the value of a rag-tagged city, grown badly but onto which we can paradoxically help raise a cultural heritage: there is no city in Europe that has the same low density as Rome. In Rome you can live next to a park or an agricultural area; that does not happen in Paris. We are a rag-tagged city, but we are also the most advanced frontier when we see how cities today integrate the built and the not built, articulating urban cycles.

These then are the two root that need to be modernized, the administrative capital and the cultural capital. The look to the future sinks its roots into the past not to uncover them and leave them as they are but to modernize them.

In the collaborative work which I am presenting here there was even room for “The forth Rome.” Over the last twenty thirty years we have driven the middle class to live outside of the *Grande Raccordo Anulare* (the ring junction around Rome), for example in Ponte di Nona. To come into Rome the residents have to pay a toll. Between Ponte di Nona and Rome there are no spaces waiting to be built upon, they will remain just as they are. We have stretched out the city and there will never be a subway that will reach all the way out there. But we do have the possibility in Rome to build the proximity between the built and the not built as an advanced frontier of what today is a contemporary city. Another example is Monte Stallonara: we have built the houses but not the streets. This is the “fourth Rome.” We would need 100 million Euro (1/6th the cost of completing the Vela di Calatrava – note: unfinished architectural structure) to restore dignity to thousands of Roman who live under these conditions. That is what normal Rome is, the small time *abusivo* (note: unauthorized builder) who becomes a little more professional *abusivo*. We must also own up to this, because between 1969 and 1989 we built quality of life for thousands of Romans. Rome has certainly wasted resources in the last few years, but Rome has a debt because it functioned like a Capital: it has given dignity to millions of people who were not Romans, but Italians, who came from the south or from Veneto, as we were reminded in the film “Il Tetto” by De Sica, a young Abruzzese couple who build a house unlawfully once they came

to Rome. The Capital's debt, which has then restored the illegality of these neighborhoods, as you recalled earlier, is an Italian debt, not just Roman. If bringing a sewage system and infrastructures to the areas built up unlawfully cost 20 billions, it was not just to give dignity to Romans. The budget for 2018 is the following: investments 9%, general expenses 91%: 167 per capita. The 2018 budget for Florence – data is from Sole 24 Ore – foresees 1400 per capita and Milan 1600, 11 times greater. What can you do 167 Euro? This is due to the fact that we have to settle the debt which however is in part a debt of all Italians, it is not just owed by Romans.

One must make note of the fact that the city's growth was different with respect to expectations and traditional instruments, a new *governance* (note: Eng. in the original) is needed. From the Campidoglio (note: Capitoline Hill is the head of the Municipality of Rome) some things, and I speak from experience, are not distinguishable and cannot be governed. From the Municipalities, those same things are distinguishable but you do not have the authority to govern them. It may seem paradoxical, but that is the way it is: there ought to be distribution of power. Various law drafts have been proposed, Walter Tocci has drafted a proposal that is certainly advanced. But I am posing a different problem: there is no governance if there is no correspondence with the urban form. For example, if we suddenly gave powers to the seventh Municipality, which begins at San Giovanni and end in Frascati, we would not be doing our citizens a service, but would rather contribute to creating a disaster; we need to become aware that the city's form is different. The 50 x 50 km territory which today constitutes the Capital Region has to be rethought and redrawn besides taking into account these problems. A study that was undertaken when I was a council member, published by Marco Pietrolucci, identifies a sort of "central Urbe," which includes the historical center, the first part of the railway network and the consolidated city. Around the "rosary" of the *Grande Raccordo Anulare* there are 9 large cities, beginning from the north, starting with Labaro, and ending at Selva Candida. These are cities of 100 – 250 thousand residents, to which we should add Ostia with 300,000 residents. So in total 11 cities. Romanina would be the fifth and is as much a suburb of Rome as it is a suburb of Frascati. It would

become a city capable of providing services both to Frascati as well as to the city of Rome. The governance must be changed with respect to the urban form: cities of 200 to 250 thousand residents are cities, outskirts of 200,000 residents are desolate wastelands without urban life and organized forms of social relations.

And in closing, there is the problem of the Regione Capitale (Capital Region). All European cities are organizing themselves around the hypothesis of city regions. The French government intends investing 20 billion over the next ten years for the system Grand Paris, a large scale metropolitan system. The 500 meters around each station the territory is being bought by the state for building development, the rest will be governed by the municipalities. There is a plan on how a capital region is organized, and so other cities are following suit. Bratislavia and Vienna will coordinate their operations. When Rome became capital, outside the city there was malaria, there was nothing. Now there is an inhabited territory, the second productive pole after Milan, that is a reality that produces wealth, produces GDP.

In another study some time ago we observed that the Capital Region includes part of Umbria, includes part of Abruzzo and excludes certain parts of Lazio such as Frosinone and the section north of Viterbo. Overall it is a Capital Region in which whatever happens inside Rome corresponds to 60% of the whole area. Usually we talk of north, northeast, northwest, and south but the center is not a category associated to an economic engine, geopolitically relevant. And yet Rome in this territory produces wealth, if you do not look at it from the point of view of the historical center, but on a wider scale, it is the second productive pole, especially for the market: the *bretella* (note: a stretch connected to the highway), the *outlet*, starting from Soratte and going past the Porte di Roma. That is, the market organized as an intermediate space between the capital and the area *behind* it. The sites of consumers is a pool of 4 to 5 million users. Why was this created? Why this nebula, this moving outwards which is no longer destined just for residential purposes? Places are created in which spaces become destination points, the weekend *entertainment* fires, the new social centralities, where people see surrogates of the historical center, with the cobblestones, rather than the real ones at Fori Imperiali. There is

no need to change the constitution to see from this perspective, what is needed is an institutional alliance. I agree with De Rita: Rome does not exist if there is no institutional presence. What are needed are the State, the Region, the city and Vatican city in a normal manner. To reason in order to create a project for a capital of the Mediterranean, situated in the context we know. A capital no longer subsidized, in which one no longer lives only on public transfers, but lives off the wealth that is produced. This is the ambition, the normal city, in which 4 or 5 subjects command, a negotiating table to obtain 2,6 billion from the state, do the C Subway line over, suspend the Vela of Calatrava which from initial cost of 69 million would have cost 600 million, while the city and its citizens are always poorer.