

From the Conference

“A New Constitutional law for Rome Capital of Italy”¹

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Abstract: The present study deals with an essential issue for the city of Rome, but a very difficult objective to achieve: a constitutional law for Roma Capitale. The text traces some events in the urban history of the capital, in continuity with the themes dealt with in the issue n. 14 of L'ADC: *Rome, still Capital of Italy?*

Keywords: Roma Capitale, Constitutional law, Governatorato, Official Borgate

Rome; still the capital of Italy?

In June 2018, shortly after the last political elections, together with a group of colleagues from the University of Sapienza and Roma Tre, I organized a public conference in Piazza Borghese, at the headquarters of our Faculty of Architecture, entitled with a question: “Rome, still the capital of Italy?”. It seemed to us that the outcome of those elections had highlighted how far the intolerance for the capital city had now come. The relative winners of that political competition were on the one hand the heirs of the inventors of the motto “Rome, the great thief” and on the other the followers of the idea that Rome was only the seat of an ignoble parliament to be opened with the can opener of angry rhetoric. Both positions are very far from Cavour’s conviction of Rome as the necessary moral capital of the united nation.

1. 21 April 2021. Conference “Natale di Roma. Una legge costituzionale per Roma capitale”. <https://www.radioradicale.it/soggetti/40542/lucio-barbera#!slide>. I warmly thank the organizers of this unexpected, but welcome for me, session of political discussion - which I would also like to be historical - on the future of Rome, the capital of Italy. I thank them not only for inviting me, but above all for taking the initiative to clarify and strengthen the role of Rome - undoubtedly declining - in convergence of intent with other political forces, equally sensitive to the problem of our special city. This essay is the translation of the essay published in Italian on L'ADC 18, 2021.

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Moreover, Giuseppe De Rita also participated in that conference of ours, who gave us his testimony – as a great liberal Catholic – on the substantial disinterest of the Church of Rome for the fate of the city which was necessary for the affirmation of its universalism. [the texts of that conference are collected in no. 14/ 2019 of “L’architettura delle città – The Journal of the Scientific Society Ludovico Quaroni”].

Hostility to Rome as the Italian capital

Capital town was admittedly a temporary stage – was immediately present: Stefano Jacini, from the conservative side, in 1870 declared in the Senate: **«the idea of Rome seat of the Government is not an essentially liberal and patriotic idea; it is an idea of antiquarians adopted by patriots and liberals in good faith, but without realizing what it means; it does not respond to the needs of the new Italy; it is the rouge of a decrepit Italy that has outlived its time and not the ornament of that Italy that we long for and that must walk the paths of freedom and progress if it wants to sit as an equal among to the most civilized nations of the world»**. He did not represent only himself, Lombard and Catholic, but certainly a group of liberals who did not feel represented by Cavour’s words on Rome as the necessary capital of a united Italy; but Cavour, unfortunately, was no longer able to reply. But even the people of Turin who died in the uprisings of 1861 against the first translation of the capital, unknowingly did not represent only themselves, but a not inconsiderable part of the classes of the largest Italian cities that seemed too hastily defrauded – first in favor of Turin, then of Florence and finally of Rome – of their own sovereignties, therefore of the value of their own admirable histories, of of their own identitary cultures. And this regret was passionately shared by Carlo Cattaneo who, like all the republicans of the Risorgimento, wanted Rome to be the capital, but of a truly federal Italy – certainly not regional – according to the articulation of the ancient states of the peninsula, each with its own capital: the United States of Italy, he liked to say. A contrary sentiment, therefore, has always accompanied the realization of the capital in Rome; a feeling that has always expressed itself in an inversely proportional way to the credit of the governments that have inhabited our city and to the well-being of the country unified in the myth of the eternal city. Today, in a moment of general – not

only economic – crisis, I believe that sentiment contrary to Rome as the capital of Italy is already in the batterfield ready to oppose, with stentorian or soft, but undoubtedly determined ways, the first operational step of your welcome initiative.

I apologize for this reminder; in fact, I am sure that the promoters of an institutional project like this, adequate to the functions and rank of Rome as a European capital, are much more aware than I am of the political and historical difficulties that they will have to overcome so that their commitment be realized and not only remembered as a flag waved in view of the upcoming elections of the Mayor and the City Council of the Capital.

Excess of identification

Here in the computer screen and in the list of interventions provided for in the brochure, I see a clear prevalence of us Romans: Romans by birth or by adoption – for reasons of politics, university education, ministerial career – more or less recent. And it seemed to me that from time to time I heard about Rome, its values, its universal charm as well as things naturally and deeply connected with our personal history, better with our citizenship. Even I – born in Rome many years ago to bourgeois immigrants from the farthest South – I had to learn, as a child, to curb the pride that came from identifying my tiny personal history with those values, with that charm; and in those days it wasn't easy. I believe that in order to cope well with the task that you have set yourselves, which I sincerely adhere to, it is necessary to start by separating the universal values of Rome from our history as citizens of the capital. They, the values of Rome, are independent of the presence of the Italian capital on its soil; even more so they are independent of the presence of our lives next to its monuments, just like the unattainable charm of the solemn Egyptian pyramids and the values contained in the Egyptian museum in Cairo are independent of the presence, in that very ancient soil, of the capital city of modern Egypt, independent of its quality and that of the government that lives there. In this, Rome, as European capital, is radically different from other European capitals, rightly referred to here by the Honorable Stefania Craxi as institutional models to strive for or, at least, to deal with.

Diversity of Rome

Rome is different from other European capitals and – almost paradoxically – it is by its nature weaker than all of them in claiming the special institutional identity it deserves and which they naturally achieved. Paris, Madrid, Vienna, Berlin – to name the main ones – owe their special and universally recognized status to the fact that their history coincides with the history of the dynasties and the ruling class who have achieved – slowly, dramatically, even violently – in a more or less wide span of centuries, the unity of the nation of which they are capital cities. The beauty of these wonderful European cities, their charm, therefore depends directly and exclusively on the political fortunes, the artistic taste and the cultural imprint of the monarchs, princes, valiant generals and politicians who, while they were winning their battles of arms and diplomacy, they embellished their cities as a mirror of their own power, magnified ideal images of their figure as fathers of the fatherland. Thus the victory of the unifiers of the major European countries was, of course, the victory of their city over all the others, while the adhesion of the national multitudes to the unity and glory of the nation, naturally included the recognition of a very special institutional identity to the city which was from the beginning the capital of the victors. Of course, even Paris was founded by the Romans as an entrenched camp on the island of the Seine. But who ever remembers, thinking of present-day Paris, the young Julian the Apostate looking at the reflection of the water that flows around the island and writing about it almost poetically while he and his small comital army await, well defended, the next Alemannic attack? Paris is the capital not for its too ancient glory, but because it has been, in continuity, the city of the Kings of France, of the Revolution and of the great Napoleon. Vienna, in turn, has represented for centuries the dominant identity of the Germans in the Habsburg Empire so perfectly, that we dare to consider present-day Austria as a nation sustained by the heirs of those Germans in order to continue – living in Vienna – to feel their very identity still alive. Finally, in Germany, Aachen boasts the extraordinary Palatine Chapel of Charlemagne, in which he sat as Roman Emperor. But the Prussian dynasty was certainly not tempted

to move its capital from Berlin to Aachen – as some Romantics would have preferred – to draw their right to the German Empire from that ancient soil. The Hoenzollerns’ was a politically strong dynasty, proud of Berlin, the city made great by its own monarchs.

Rome, the capital without a project

Did the choice of Rome as the capital of Italy and Cavour’s political shrewdness cover up a relative weakness of the Savoy dynasty? I am not really able to state this. But certainly the ways in which the functions of the capital of the new state were transferred to Rome have left in the built and social body of the city the obvious signs of a haste undeserved by that historical enterprise and by the city; a haste as of those who want to put safe, eagerly, a periclitant achievement. The signs and consequences of the carelessness and, at times, of the brutality with which the construction of one of the most important European capitals was faced, still lives in the reality of Rome, the capital of Italy. A capital for which – despite the passions it aroused and which accompanied the Risorgimento in all its phases and despite Cavour’s lucid program – no one bothered to debate and design an innovative idea of an urban character on the basis of the prestigious models offered by modern Western capitals. And between 1861 and 1870, that is, between Cavour’s speech and Porta Pia [the event that marked the Italian conquest of Rome], there was time. But Cavour was no longer leading the history of Italy and planning its future.

The many reasons of Cavour

The Count of Cavour, in his famous speech of April 1861, just after the declaration of the unity of Italy, as we all know, immediately raised the problem of the liberation of Rome to transform it into the capital of the new state. I do not quote his words, well known, literally. Rome, he basically said, is the necessary moral fulfillment of the unity of the nation. But two years earlier he had organized another and different project for Italy, we know it well: a Kingdom of Italy in the North, heir in fact to the one established by Napoleon the first, to be entrusted to the Savoy dynasty. In Central Italy, a Kingdom or Grand Duchy that was – Tuscany, Marche and Umbria – the capital in

Florence, ruled by a family member of Napoleon the Third. The South would remain to the Bourbons – of ancient French lineage. Rome with a share of Lazio would have ensured the continuity of the temporal power of the Pope, appointed President – honorary, I think – of the new Confederation of Italian states. A pro-French project, certainly. Villafranca and the spontaneous annexations of Tuscany and the minor duchies to the dawning kingdom, threw the pro-French project to the ground. The obligatory sale of Nice and Savoy to Napoleon the Third made it irrecoverable; we learned this in middle school just as we understood that England entered the fracture caused by the Franco-Piedmontese quarrel because of the armistice of Villafranca and that King Vittorio Emanuele II understood that he could overturn the Italian project of Cavour – now unrealizable – in a new and larger program. The pro-French project became pro-English, and envisaged a united Italy as an obstacle, in the Mediterranean, to the power of Napoleon the Third. Cavour silently followed the events and monitored them; and Garibaldi the republican, defender of the Roman republic in 1849, left for the South. The English fleet protected Garibaldi in Marsala.

Things went well. After Teano [the event that marks the unity of North and South Italy], Italy from North to South was already united. Veneto and Rome were missing. But the anti-French Italian republicans, those who had sided with and fought for the Roman Republic of Mazzini and Garibaldi, were now lined up alongside the Savoyard unitary policy after their slogan “Rome, the moral fulfillment of the unification of Italy” it was also proclaimed by the Count of Cavour, monarchist and winner. The idea of Rome as Italian Capital town, taken as a banner to gather the greatest political consensus around a still fragile monarchy, was a success. Only Carlo Cattaneo actually refused the agreement. But overall it was really a great success; Rome as the capital meant the substantial unity of the Risorgimento policy around the Savoy house.

Cavour's speech on Rome as a necessary moral fulfillment of the unity of Italy dates back to April 1861. In June of the same year Cavour died. Only his tenure in government could have brought out the full extent of his project for “Roma Capitale”. But from the geographical and historical reality of the peninsula we can deduce the main lines: Cavour was a designer of history with a great geopolitical sense, one would say today.

I do not think, therefore, that I am far from the truth if I think that the choice of Rome as capital, in Cavour's mind, was a simple and strong answer to many other problems – in addition to the moral and symbolic ones. Some of which were absolutely vital for the functioning of the new national whole. Cavour, who had learned about the importance of territorial structures on the economy and politics in his experience as an entrepreneur and minister of agriculture, of which he was a great reformer, could not fail to note the need for an efficient and direct infrastructural relationship between the North and the South of the Country. Vittorio Emanuele II in order to go to Campania to meet Garibaldi without passing through Rome, he had had to travel the Adriatic road. Even after the war, going from Florence to Naples skipping Rome would still have involved a journey along secondary roads that were often inaccessible. All the Italian roads of the peninsula converged on Rome. Today we would say: Rome was an indispensable hub for the functioning of the unitary state. Furthermore, the distance between Florence and Naples, combined with the difficulties of connection – including military ones – could have turned out to be too great a weakness for a still fragile state. Moving the capital to the center of the peninsula, to Rome, would therefore have meant many things together: in addition to being a factor of attraction in the Savoy camp of republicans and radicals – we have already seen – it would have been a decisive element in rationalizing the road connections between North and South and balancing the centuries-old pre-eminence of Naples over the South, which the new state intended to approach decisively; Naples was still the most European of the great Italian cities, the most populous and one of the most industrialized. And then, let us not forget, the young Italian army was engaged, right in the South, in a long and hard war against pro-Bourbon [the Neapolitan Dynasty] banditry.

Italy's debts towards its Capital town; first part

Sometimes I wonder if the Italian state really remembers how much its strengthening, I could say its very existence, owes to the symbolic value of the “eternal city” whose moral charm – emanating from its places, its Roman and Christian monuments, its history – was used as the powerful tool to drag public opinion to consolidate the

new kingdom in the national territory thus affirming itself also in the “concert of nations”.

That of the Italian state towards the ancient, Renaissance and Baroque city, custodian and expression of myths and sacredness fundamental for the Western world, is therefore already in itself an immense debt. The new state, unilaterally – and unanimously – becoming an obvious political usufructuary of those myths and that sacredness, morally obliged itself to be their responsible guardian before all cultures, for future centuries. Today in many ways it is really like this; the care of the ancient, huge and complex historical and artistic heritage of the Eternal City is undoubtedly at the center of attention of the central institutions as well as all Italian cultural heritage. Indeed, the fact that the protection and enhancement of this heritage has remained, even after the establishment of the Regions, substantially in the full responsibility of the State, which exercises it through a system of great competence and experience articulated throughout the territory, is a great merit. of the Italian State, which today is able, certainly more than it was in the first hundred years of Rome as the capital, to oppose any shameless use of that patrimony for the purpose of symbolic and propagandistic affirmation of politics. But the debt of the State to the Eternal City – that is, to the historic city of Rome – was not to be honored only with the construction of a system of scholarly and active protection and enhancement of its historical assets; it was also necessary that the new city, the capital city, was a worthy setting for the “eternal” one, that is, conceived and designed also and above all “in its function”. Was it? History and – if history were not enough – our own experience of the continuous, latent or evident conflict in which the relations between the Eternal City and the modern one live, give a negative answer to this decisive question. A question that is still very open; a question made more complex by the consideration that the Eternal City is not limited by the Aurelian walls, but is a vast territorial organism, spread over the vital territory for the realization of the size and territorial functions of the capital town. A question, therefore, that cannot be resolved – the facts have shown – in the current stratification and division of institutional responsibilities with respect to the design of the city, the planning of its territory and the enhancement of Rome’s cultural heritage. But even if the relationship between the functional needs of the modern city and the

needs of enhancement and defense of the Eternal City were to be simplified and made more organic, the exceptional costs of the necessary rehabilitation – I would almost say the pacification of the current city with its history – and the permanent costs of a very special urban regime of the capital, could not be sustained by the normal budget of a municipality, even if it were not burdened by the current debts of Rome. Doesn't all this deserve a special statute that recognizes Rome as the capital, an institutional identity, second only to that of the national state, but supported by it in all senses?

But the debts from our State towards Rome do not stop at those contracted with the testimonies of its history, let's say with the “Eternal Rome”. A very large debt adds to it; that towards the population of the new capital.

Without any project other than to replace the insignia of the Pope King with those of the Savoy dynasty – the King at the Quirinale! –, the construction and organization of the new city, in 1870, was left completely to the management of the old papal ruling class, the one formed by the Princes and the Country Merchants – the oldest ancient name of the Generone, a social group formed by the rich administrators of the property of the Church and of the Princes, who themselves became private financiers and owners of desirable land. Almost paradoxically, only a man of the Church, Cardinal De Merode, had for some years put in place a project, albeit purely speculative, however large-scale: the current Via Nazionale, the modern straight line that, starting from the Baths of Diocletian, headed towards the historic center – without, however, having yet established how to reach it (!) facing, downhill, the slopes of the Viminale hill. The skilled man of the Church had long foreseen the inevitable arrival of the Savoy in Rome. The new government, on the other hand, having arrived in the Eternal City, expressed only an urgent need for offices for its ministries and homes for employees and officials, understood – both – as real estate to be quickly obtain in the pre-existing city or with quick construction, certainly not as an “urban material” to realize the innovative idea of a capital competing for prestige and functionality with other modern European capitals. The ministries were almost all – except for Finance and Defense which immediately had their own headquarters – temporarily placed in the convents of the city, while for the new residences, that is for the new city – it really was a

new city – the noholds – barred competition began. among the great owners of agricultural land and splendid villas within and outside the walls, lent without regret to the most avid form of allotment. The new settlements arose as the encampments of the besiegers arise around a besieged city: without any project, without an overall idea other than to use the orthogonal grid of roads – traced on the land gradually available – with the peremptory nature with which ancient military castra were planted wherever it was necessary and opportune. How can we forget, after having learned with amazement from the documents of history, the assembly jumble that around the “big deal” took place in the city council of the seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century, in which two financial and speculative groups faced each other, one headed by Prince Ruspoli ally of De Merode and representing an international coalition of bankers, the other by Prince Massimo at the head of another group of other foreign banks including the Austrian ones? The first aimed to stake the land east of the historic center, on the Esquiline hills – it was the group of “monticiani” – the other – the “prataioli” – who broke the military and customs bond established by the ancient walls by demolishing them a short stretch to the west, under the walls of the Vatican, to build what was urgently needed by the new government in the large “meadows” that stretched around Castel Sant’Angelo. Which, in those years, really behaved with the fury of an occupying army demanding an accommodation, as long as it was, for its officials and offices for the ministries. Rome? The capital of Italy? The new city that should have competed with the splendid and authoritative capitals of Europe? For that, the material and immaterial values of the ancient city were enough; the consular roads were sufficient to connect it to the rest of Italy, while railways were being built along the Italian coasts. For the rest, in Rome, the government made a single major commitment: to build the **Entrenched camp**.

The Entrenched camp of Rome; unbeknownst to him, the state designs its capital town.

Since 1870 the Italian government seemed obsessed with the possibility that France could recover from its war and social drama – the defeat in the face of the German army, the revolution of the Paris Commune, the end of every monarchy – and take revenge on the

treacherous conquest of Rome by the Savoy. It was feared that the French would land in Civitavecchia – as in 1849 – to return Rome to the Pope. The city needed to be fortified. How? With what effective techniques? From 1866 Italy was already in alliance with Prussia. Will it be, then, the Prussians, anti-French, with their siege technology – and their funding? – to set up a model and support for the venture. Fourteen forts and five Prussian-type batteries were built around Rome in two phases, but quickly, between the mid-seventies and the eighties of the nineteenth century. A huge investment, the only truly national one poured into the Roman territory. Garibaldi laughed at it. He, who had had to bow a few years earlier in Mentana in the face of the effectiveness of the French breech-loading rifles, the famous Chassepot rifles, scornfully suggested equipping the Italian army with modern rifles rather than fortifications outdated by the times. However, the only unitary project for Rome, the capital of Italy, the only consistent commitment of the new government for its new capital town, was to build that territorial defense structure which was proudly called the Rome Entrenched Camp. All of us Romans have come across, in our lives, these mysterious territorial cornerstones of our city. If we were born in the neighborhoods of the first great belt of the modern suburbs, we have learned from childhood on the existence of the neighborhood Fort; the Trionfale Fort, the Antenne Fort, the Bravetta, the Portuense, and on and on. And together with their name we have learned that of at least one of the five Batteries that in the most delicate stretches of the entrenched field, ballistically supported the forts. For all: the Nomentana Battery. We bourgeois boys of the Mazzini district also had our beautiful fort hanging up there, invisible, on Monte Mario, just behind the Observatory.

And we smiled with pride when we read that in his anathema against the Prussian-type Forts Garibaldi only saved Fort Monte Mario, which he considered the only one necessary. Today they, the Roman Forts, are still powerful individuals, many still in use by the State, secluded as military structures must be – in the historical cartography of the IGM they are accurately not reported – half sunk into the ground, not easy to reuse if decommissioned, but appetited by spontaneous groups in search of spaces for their own activities and occasions that engage them in their specialty: the creative reuse of obsolete things. But this is not the primary importance of that system of forts; I linger on the entrenched

Campo of Rome for an urbanistic reason: the only real large project of territorial scope for the new Rome Capital – a project probably born useless – it however implanted in the space outside the Aurelian walls a real belt which it established for fifty years and perhaps more, the most extreme limit of the expansion of the capital of Italy; the connections of the city with those forts and of the forts between them, strengthened the system of extra-urban roads, transforming them, in the section between the forts and the city, into peri-urban roads, naturally predisposed to future expansions of the city. Which punctually, illegally, spontaneously or officially took place. Thus a monumental great defensive project, decided with a surplus of political anxiety and born already old, became the only territorial reality to which, more than is believed, the twentieth-century city was forced or urged to conform. It was not what the capital of Italy expected and deserved from an urban planning point of view. The debt that the Italian state was contracting with its capital was already great. The effects and constraints of that large military investment made it, in my opinion, more serious. They last, on closer inspection, until today.

Italy's debts towards its Capital town; second part

In the history of Italy, I believe, there is no “verismo” literary epic – yet it was the time of Verga and Capuana – which highlights the value and the hardships, the sufferings – I think – or at least the great hardships that an entire generation of civil servants and their families had to face for the realization in Rome the capital town of Italy. It is the generation of those who continued to make the state function in the exalted, but certainly very difficult phase of great expansion of its territorial and social dimension. A generation of civil and military employees and officials who in the space of six years was transferred as a nomadic mass from Turin to Florence, from Florence to Rome. At the beginning they were almost all from Piedmont and Lombardy, then, in numbers still not very high, Neapolitans and Sicilians, finally coming from the offices of all regions of Italy. Nobody describes the fatigue of families, the moral trauma of the double uprooting, the political uncertainties that, especially at the beginning, weighed on their future, nor the discomfort of finally arriving in an unknown city absolutely unprepared to receive them, welcomed by the ancient residents with the

noun “buzzurri” (a derogatory title in Roman dialect: chestnut sellers), because they spoke an incomprehensible northern language. And with them, who were moving towards Rome together with the institutions for which they worked, another nomadic mass swelled the size of what was truly an Italic and unrecognized Volkwanderung. It was the crowd of suppliers, traders, modern artisans, who, above all from the center and the South, followed the movement of the institutions and families on which their economic life depended, multiplying with their presence the dimension of that epochal movement, accompanying themselves to it as, of course, the caravan of suppliers of consumer goods and civil works accompanied the movement of an ancient army. We who in various ways are or feel “from Rome”, must recognize in that obedient nomadic mass – I cannot imagine what would happen today if one dared out of the blue to transport all the ministries and central offices to a new city – we must recognize, therefore, in the protagonists of that migration I do not mean our direct ancestors, but at least the pioneers who paved the way for all of us and made our bourgeois Roman citizenship possible and who, above all, made it possible for our country, Italy, to make Rome – the morally necessary capital – a functioning capital town. How many were they? Many, a whole city, a whole new big city for those times. If the population of Rome – which was just over 200,000 in 1871 – grew in the first ten years only (!) By 35%, (i.e. 75,000 inhabitants), between 1881 and 1900, it reached almost five hundred thousand inhabitants.

The social city had more than doubled. Taking into account natural growth, one can roughly think that two hundred thousand people have moved in twenty years, almost three hundred thousand in thirty years. It is the main part of the social base on which the city has continued to grow to this day. In 1998 the *Corriere della Sera* reported the result of a demographic study: of the 2 million and 800 thousand inhabitants that the capital already counted at the end of the last century, one million and five hundred thousand were descendants of that first, convulsive, migration.

Convulsive, sure. According to the central government, represented in the first days in Rome by the generals who had freed it, the transfer of all the ministries was to take place in six months. In the Town Council – we have seen it – the strenuous dispute between the

“prataioli” and “monticiani” had already started; the big deal was now on the field. And while there was a dispute, without any program or project, on which of the Roman areas the gift of speculative enrichment without measure should fall, there were those who, on behalf of the central government, given the malaparata, even thought of hosting the first thousands of ministerial families in a military-type camp, tents and wooden barracks. What did the government do for those who continued to operate the state machinery despite the inconvenience of transfers? What for its great bourgeois and liberal capital town which wanted to be the centre of a united Italy? Nothing or very little. A normal land use plan, at least? Not even. Despite the good will of a progressive mayor, Pianciani, who managed for a few months to interrupt the municipal dominance of the Roman princes, the master plan that he managed to draw up and get approved was nothing more than the notarial document of agreements made elsewhere. Not only.

Immediately after approval, it was downgraded with an agenda of the municipal council to a “preliminary plan” because “the council reserves the right to” all freedom of further choice. Only ten years later, that plan, just revised, taken up again by Pianciani, became law. But in the meantime almost everything that the Plan represented had been either realized or betrayed or in turn surpassed by huge new residential systems built outside the limits of the Plan itself and made “legal” anyway with the famous “agreements” between the Municipality and private individuals.

In defense of the new bourgeois city

Today it seems to me that it has become almost a viral refrain to speak with the raised eyebrow of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois mass that populated Rome after the Unification. Certain; together with the crowd of state servants of all ranks and even more numerous, large and small suppliers of services and goods, perhaps an equally large, but much less commendable mass of “gold diggers” moved to Rome as to a local Eldorado, taking lasting advantage of the substantial lack of interest of the State for the functional and social organization of the city. But I can’t help but wonder how much the moralistic – and political – “antiurban” position of which not a few are – I should say we are – often

unaware heirs still affects today's negative opinion regarding the Roman bourgeoisie: in the left as in the right political wing. In the Report of the Central Office of the Chamber of Deputies that accompanied the bill approved in 1929 against urbanism we read: «In the cities, assistance of all kinds, it seems that everything can be had as long as high men want it. The continuous spectacle of golden immorality, the most showy, easiest, most unpunished vice, often a source of income, even lavish, more numerous, more attractive diffusion cells, night shows and entertainments that tend to destroy every generative faculty. And in the cities, the most unhealthy jobs, misery the most sordid, and lives sometimes so stunted that in the countryside the equivalents are not known.» (Parliamentary Acts, Senate of the Kingdom, Legislature XXVII, 1st Session 1924-28, Documents, Bills and Reports, n.1804, Bill communicated to the Presidency on December 8, 1928, Year VII, approved by the Chamber of Deputies December 6, 1928. A, Central Office Report on the Bill Granting the Prefect of the faculty to issue mandatory ordinances in order to limit the excessive increase in the resident population). The anti-urban controversy of those lines is, above all, anti-bourgeois controversy. The same one you see represented in *Gli Indifferenti* that Alberto Moravia, very young, wrote exactly in those years, participating, even as a great writer and artist, in the contempt that hovered in that avant-garde era towards the bourgeoisie.

A contempt for the urban classes which, like many of Mussolini's ideas, had its roots in the nineteenth century. Carducci in 1895 – that is, in the midst of the formation of Rome as the capital – wrote, speaking of Rome: «... a society that above and below, in the sacred and in the profane, in the temple and in the court, in the family and in the school, she lives [...] as the most shamelessly skeptical, the most exquisitely immoral, the most serenely incredulous and insensitive to everything that the sublime, the noble, the virtuous, the human might believe, yearn for, adore or dream other peoples». So for Mussolini it was enough to add "The creed of the fascist is heroism, of the bourgeois selfishness". Is an echo of this still ringing, out forty years later – all imperial dream now completely dissolved – in Pasolini's famous article against the bourgeois students who animated the Roman '68? Perhaps; but certainly all this illustrates well the complex debt that the State has contracted

towards the social structure of Rome; a complex debt because in the first place it, the State never assumed the responsibility of authoritatively and culturally governing the social and functional formation of its capital town, nor did it care to keep it away from the cynical and invasive dance of speculators and – secondly and in a second time – because, after the First World War, it allowed the Italian urban bourgeoisie, but especially that of the Capital, to be accused of all laxity – scarce patriotism, moral selfishness, social indifference – as if it were the main culprit for the crisis in the country. Yet it is from that bourgeoisie that the intellectual class that illustrated the capital town, its academic structures, the world of literature and the visual arts, also of cinema therefore – of which Rome was at long one fully-fledged capital town – not only was born but is still born, with honour. Indeed, even a critic without hesitation like Alberto Moravia – himself a great Roman intellectual and bourgeois writer – in the famous long interview granted to Enzo Siciliano for television, affirmed that the redemption of that “indifferent” bourgeoisie lies in the intellectuals, who in it, only in it can they be formed. However, today I believe that Rome, the capital city, still suffers in its physical and social body the consequences of that first and lasting detachment of the State from its fate, while the popular anathemas against the entire capital – Rome, the great thief – are strong for the anti-Roman spite that has accumulated for a century with regard to the ruling, middle and petty bourgeois classes of the capital and which now, with careless automatism, extends to anyone in the city holding positions of responsibility, public or private.

Italy's debts towards its Capital town; third part

But a second and almost disinherited social structure headed for Rome in those decades of great public anxieties and private greed; it was the shapeless and unofficial mass at the center of which the workers of the construction industry stood, as always the most backward of the industries, therefore the most open to the less able arms, but the most indispensable to the construction of the city, formed by the weakest and precarious, however indispensable, against which the 1929 law I mentioned had been drafted and approved, after years of spontaneous immigration. These were people and individuals to whom, of course,

direct or indirect assistance from the state would never reach, nor the regulatory and credit facilities that allowed bourgeois immigrants to find, at the end of the first three decades from Unity, individually or through cooperative initiatives – which were very important in those years of urgency – the appropriate accommodations for civilian living in a city that wanted to be modern and large, if not great. Indeed, it can be said that, absent an overall large-scale urban project or at least a project of normal reason, the current fabric of the modern city of Rome, created in a hurry, sometimes dramatically – who does not remember the bankruptcy of the Banca Romana? – between 1870 and 1930, it owes its first formal dignity precisely to the individual proofs of private, cooperative and public architecture for the bourgeois, petty bourgeois and significant portions of the permanently working class. Design assignments not rarely were transformed into free and creative linguistic trials by professionals – engineers and architects – well aware of the directions of the main international currents, but driven to an original research by the ferments of Italian modernity – futurism, the “Novecento” – and by inspiration deriving from the comparison with the great history of architecture present in the territory of the Eternal City – ancient, Renaissance and Baroque – to the point of giving life to a special style, a language of the city, articulated and varied, known, unfortunately with a name that sounds ironic and diminutive to me, the “Barocchetto romano” i.e. the “Roman petty baroque”.

But let’s go back to the topic, that is, the convergence of a second demographic component on Rome as the capital, made up of precarious construction workers with their families and the social following that, as always, goes hand in hand with the great migrations. After the period of widespread and rapid building expansion, that mass of workers, instead of being rejected, could have provided the working basis on which to found the modern industrialization of the city. It did not happen. The tacit agreement between the central government and the ruling groups of the other main Italian cities, especially in the North, was also based on the fact that the Eternal City – as Alberto Caracciolo writes in his beautiful book of 1956 *Roma Capitale, dal Risorgimento alla crisi dello stato liberale* (Roma Capital City, from the Risorgimento to the crisis of the liberal state) – it lent itself perfectly to being everyone’s capital

because it was a “neutral” urban identity with respect to the functions and fortunes of the other, minor, Italian capitals.

And it should have maintained this “harmless” character over time. This meant: never an industry worthy of the “modern” dimension, nor a port activity capable of competing with the great historic Italian ports. Quintino Sella, representative of the Right, Minister of Finance in the very early years of Rome as the Italian Capital, presented in parliament the guidelines according to which it was necessary to lay the foundations for the future of the new capital town and carry out its main works. “It is not just to bring pen-pushers” he admonished, “that we have come to Rome”. But he added: “an overwhelming agglomeration of workers” is to be considered “dangerous and inconvenient”. In those words, the cornerstone of the permanent economic, social and political weakness of modern Rome, of the capital of Italy, was laid, most of the humblest were condemned to eternal precariousness and, in fact, they were expelled from the city. From the bourgeois city, I mean. But it was difficult to prevent them from settling in its interstices, from encamping in its vicinity. The urban hamlets were immediately a thorn of the Roman administration and the government, not only in Rome, but above all in Rome, so much so that in 1939 a more severe law against Urbanism was passed, completely prohibiting the movement from the countryside and from small centers to cities. However, despite all the efforts of an “anti-urban” government – deportation to their places of origin, tighter control of immigration – on the soil of the Italian capital town they continued to live side by side, but independently of each other. on the other, three cities: Eternal Rome, bourgeois Rome and, finally, the Rome of those excluded from the official life of the capital, yet indispensable to it.

Weights and wounds of the inadequacy of Rome as the Italian capital town

Today, we citizens of the Eternal City are proud to learn the modern or very modern and innovative quality of the new and very new Roman industries; even from time to time we seem worried that the districts east of the Center, where industries develop with greater success, may fall into the meshes of organized crime that knows well how to recognize and occupy the most fertile lands of economic

development. But the stakes placed by Quintino Sella are still firmly in place. It is enough to take a look at the precious data collections that the Province of Rome – the Metropolitan Area of Rome Capital – publishes annually – data for 2019 – to understand that the share of “industrial enterprises per inhabitant” puts our province at the last rank between the other Italian metropolitan areas – as defined by the Del Rio law. Last after Reggio Calabria and Naples.

Of course, it will be said, it is a calculation that does not take into account either the size or the quality of the companies. But I believe it is in any case an indicator of the “social” weakness of our city: the current pandemic has shown how much commercial and service activities or in any case those not purely industrial – including the construction industry – are exposed to the winds of large crisis. In the emergency, Rome relied almost exclusively on the large number of public workers; whose prerogatives, protecting them from the economic crisis, have somehow made the crisis of the capital less hard and, above all, less evident than the spectacular defeat of the other great historical and art cities of our country. But I fear that this particular condition of unequal privilege has traced, in our city, a furrow between the protected population and that which is not protected, an “accessory” social suffering almost invisible, like an internal wound, for now silent, open on the old scars of a city founded on social separation; a wound that will be difficult to heal and for this reason, it is necessary to start healing immediately with a bold program of interventions in support of modern companies, both industrial and of advanced research. And of education and training. Education and training. One can argue: Rome is by statute a city of services, not of industry; of services to the whole Country. Sure, I would answer. But, beware, from a statistical point of view it is no more so than Milan and Turin; in that quick comparative reading of the provincial data, the Metropolitan Area of Rome, our city extended to the province, is only a good third – after the two large cities of the Po Valley – in terms of the incidence of the service sector compared to the population. And the services include universities and research. “Science for us in Rome is a supreme duty”, affirmed Minister Sella again in the early seventies of the nineteenth century. Rome was to be “the supreme brain of the nation”. Has it become? Partially, only partially, fortunately for all of us

Italians. Failure to achieve the peremptory claims of Quintino Sella has favored the Country. Research and training for research is distributed in large Italian cities and in the ancient provincial universities; it could not have been otherwise. The creation of a large network of public and private universities and research institutes – apart from some recent distortions – is an absolute added value of the unity of Italy. Rome does not participate as an absolute protagonist, but certainly as a protagonist and probably increasingly, also by virtue of the central institutions of research and university training. However, as far as I was able to know directly through participation in the management of the national network of engineering-architecture faculties, the large training and research centers in the North, including those in Veneto and Emilia-Romagna, have a relationship with the territory that has no equal in Rome. And that relationship is substance, at the same time, of innovation and realism, of integration between science and practice, of mutual support between public and private. All this is still lacking in Rome: an oxygen that is lacking in its function as capital town. And it is lacking above all because its territory is a privileged field of activity that with innovation and research, therefore with advanced industry, have little to do, while remaining vital and indispensable protagonists of the economic life of the city and its territory.

What is the size of the Italian Capital town?

“His territory”, I realize I am saying. This is an essential point of the debate: what should be the metropolitan territory of Rome as the Italian Capital town? the Honorable Riccardo Magi, before me, mentioned the studies on Rome by Senator Walter Tocci. I also take this opportunity to cite those same studies, especially in the description that Senator Tocci makes of the dynamics of the territory of the Metropolitan Area of Rome which, in its central municipality, loses population significantly, but decreasing, from the center to the periphery – with few exceptions along the main consular roads directed to the East and South East – while the first belt of municipalities around the municipality of Rome in ten years has grown rapidly; from 38% of Riano Flaminio, to 24% of Mentana to 11% of Frascati. The functional area in which the capital city lives and on which it continuously redistributes its influence, has for some time now

had a wider dimension than the vast municipal area. Isn't Ciampino Rome, perhaps? Isn't Fiumicino Rome? And isn't the National Institute of Nuclear Physics in Frascati Rome? And isn't the Guidonia fruit and vegetable market Rome? And the ENEA Research Center at Casaccia, on the Via Anguillarese, isn't it Rome? We all know it well: they are essential parts of the functional heritage of the capital city, the city, the metropolis I should say, for which we are here to ask ourselves – and to ask – if the time has not come to resolve the now more than secular and bankruptcy relationship with the State and the inadequate relationship with the Lazio Region. On closer inspection, in the studies already cited – but I do not want to bore you with the numbers – even the municipalities in the first strip outside the province of Rome are subject to significant demographic growth.

The capital city, the Roman metropolis, although still lacking, after a century and a half, of an institutional, social, political – therefore urban planning – project that is shared and adequate to its roles and commitments, naturally expands its territorial scope and seems to wait that we understand its dimension and identity. Is it late? With relief, I shared the words, dictated by experience, of the honorable Pietro Giubilo, former mayor of Rome, who mentioned with precision the studies for the inter-municipal master plan which in the 1960s accompanied as a natural and necessary complement, the drafting of the city development plan of 1965. A reminder of the need to take a look at the natural horizon of Rome. Symbolically, the most representative institution of the capital town Rome is still on the Capitoline Hill, from which one can see, now as in ancient times, the profile of the Alban hills. It is the same horizon in front of which Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the great poet, to signify his becoming a Roman in front of the world, wanted to be portrayed, as if to remind us moderns too of the real size of the body of the eternal city.

Modern Rome on an Ancient Map; the three cities of Rome

Out of rhetoric, Roma Capitale is a still unfinished project. Perhaps a project that has never started. At the beginning, three cities were co-present in one: 1) the city of historical and religious values, 2) the variously bourgeois city – which also includes the more stable working classes, 3) the vast city of the “unrecognized”.

They have been treated for seventy years, from 1871 to 1942, each with a different register, and without many differences between the

Umbertine and Mussolini periods. The consequences last until today. To clarify my ideas, I took as a reference a map of 1866 – Rome was still Papal – in which the Roman territory is represented shortly before the passage to the Italian state. On it I have projected, sketching it very briefly, the main phases of development of the capital town up to the threshold of the Second World War. At its center stands the ancient core, almost the same as that represented by Nolli in the famous map of 1748, one hundred and twenty years earlier, at the beginning of a century of dormancy. It is the part of Rome where, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, was focused the attention of the Italian central government – Umbertine or Mussolinian as it was. It is the eternal Rome where, for those seventy years, the register was in force which envisaged to strongly engrave the signs of the new power alongside the ancient presences, both to leave an indelible imprint on the body of the city, signifying its definitive conquest (the minister Sella would have liked to erect the statue of Camillus declaring *Hic manebimus optime* in the courtyard of the new finance ministry) and so that the new monuments would draw the attribute of “eternity” from the ancient ones. I wonder: what harder sign of possession – some would say: barbaric – than the demolition of the north side of the Capitol, including the monumental Tower of Paul III, to install the Monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, built in the white marble of Brescia – the Botticino – insensitive to the color of the Roman sun – as is travertine instead? – and what to say when you know that the marble from Brescia was chosen while Zanardelli, also from Brescia, important Italian Ministry, was the greatest supporter of the need for that monument?

Modern Rome on an Ancient Map; docks and Garden Cities

On that map I highlighted the Aurelian walls in red. There was no need, they are very evident in the original map. But I did it to signify the military function (the Piedmontese also called it the Fortified City) and the function of customs boundary that they had in the papal regime and continued to have for almost two decades after the declaration of Rome as the Italian capital. Within the Aurelian walls I traced the fabric of the streets of the speculative subdivisions built in the early Italian decades, more or less corresponding to the Pianciani Regulatory Plans (1873-

1883). Outside the walls I just mentioned the building fabrics implanted without any respect for the very weak first two Regulatory Plans and completed, instead, by implementing the best of the Plans designed before the World War, that of Mayor Ernesto Nathan of 1909 whose territorial scope of validity is indicated in the map by a dashed line in orange color, which establishes the boundary of the social delimitation (here the decent people live) and regulatory rules of the second city, the bourgeois city. Outside that official limit I wanted to indicate the latest of the projects for the port of Rome, not a river port, but a real seawater dock, directly connected to the Tyrrhenian Sea, designed by engineer Paolo Orlando; a project which was much discussed and seemed so close to implementation that one of the lords of modern architecture in Rome, Gustavo Giovannoni, with Marcello Piacentini, designed around the dock – thought to be in the Prati di San Paolo fuori le mura – a large area for industrial and a workers’ settlement, that was built with the name of Garbatella, a beloved Roman neighborhood where only the names of the streets – almost all dedicated to historical seamen – recall the dream of the port of Rome; a project, we know well, that did not come true. The industrial and port interdict on which the consent to transform Rome into the capital was based still worked then. The project of the dock and the canal towards the sea was canceled, the industrial area was reduced to technical services for the city and the Garbatella district became the design experimentation field dedicated to an attempt to support the truly popular classes and – after 1922 – even of the “not recognized” citizens. Side by side, in that popular neighborhood, low-cost residences of all types coexisted with the famous – and architecturally beautiful – Suburban Hotels, destined for the forced temporary transfer of the most neglected among the last, of the very poor, of those to be forcibly excluded from the bourgeois city and to be temporarily housed – awaiting even more “poor” accommodation – in small apartments where, at the beginning, there was no kitchen, so that families would not feel at home, and in which it was forbidden to arrange their own poor furniture, to be left in special warehouses. Outside the limits of the bourgeois city, the Garbatella district, while witnessing the defeat of the industrial project of the capital, remains however among the most evident examples of how long architectural research has tried to act as the only palliative to

the absolute insufficiency of the urban vision and above all, of the social project conceived for the capital city. At the opposite extreme, beyond the Aniene river, once again outside the limits of the Master Plan, Gustavo Giovannoni himself wanted to experiment, in the so-called Garden City, a variant of the principles of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City, applying them, however, to a decidedly bourgeois, stripping that innovative project of its original social purposes: the English Garden City, in facts, was conceived for a large community of working-class families and for a close integration of industrial work and agricultural, family and community production. Here, through the conception and the story of these two admirable "urban" projects, the limits of the refined Roman architectural research of those times become clearer; the substantial social insensitivity of public administrations and the inability of the bourgeois elites to understand the functional and social problems of a large city like Rome the capital, were able to produce at times admirable examples of residential, public, semi-public or private architecture, never a real alternative to the rigid structure of urban society divided into classes that are foreign to each other, to be kept well apart from each other.

Modern Rome on an Ancient Map; Townships, Governoral townships

On the map I try to describe, the so-called Governoral Townships do not appear (we are now at the end of the Twenties and the early Thirties), that is the large series of very poor agglomerations of houses built in haste and fury, unhealthy, in perennial and expensive renovation given the their poor construction quality, also a field of opaque relations between the builders and the governoral administration, despite the paucity – I believe – of the financial quantities involved. All located well outside the "official" city, the Governoral Townships – of which it is enough to recall a few names: Prenestina, Teano, Gordiani, Appio, settechiese ... – were part of a wider phenomenon of precarious and "spontaneous construction". Of which they also became coagulating agents; a dust of precarious construction that was the scene of the nomadism of thousands of families from city to hamlet, from hamlet to hamlet, from spontaneous shack to governoral shack and vice versa according to the cases of a desperate search for accommodation that would not distance

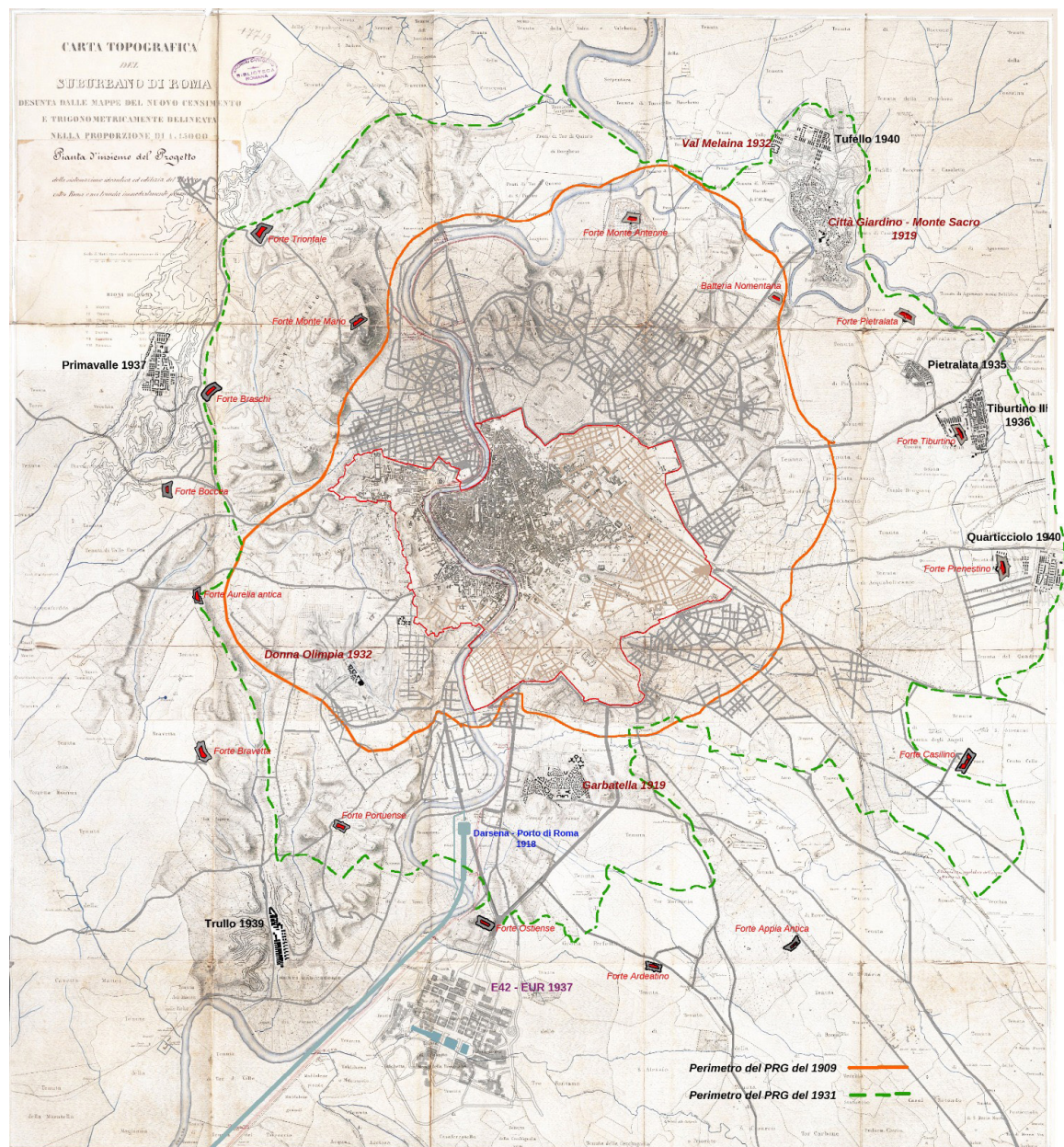
the scrambled families too far from possible job opportunities, albeit precarious, or that would bring them closer to less disastrous living conditions. Who were the Governoral townships inhabited, who were they intended for?

Anne-Marie Seronde Babonaux reminds us of this in her study *Rome, from the city to the metropolis*, citing a 1930 recommendation from the Assistance office of the Governorate of Rome: «Agricultural workers, generics and the unemployed on the one hand, families of irregular composition and bad moral precedents on the other hand, could be transferred to land owned by the Governorate, located in the open countryside and not visible from the major roads, where they would be allowed to build houses with the materials of the demolished artifacts»; artifacts demolished in the historic center, it is understood, because to those categories of dispossessed it was then added, in fact, that of those evicted from the historic center due to demolitions.

But those evicted, however, very often managed to escape deportation to the Governoral Townships by demonstrating that they were able to pay a modest rent, but sufficient to settle in civilian housing complexes or in the private rental market. However, the period of the Governoral Townships was a dark period for the multiform, mobile, but increasingly numerous social stratum of the precarious and unassisted of the capital town. And for the city. To aggravate the situation, until 1935 the Autonomous Institute of Popular Homes – led by Alberto Calza Bini and engineer Costantino Costantini – was prevented from any intervention in the arrangement of the vast world of the “last” in the extreme periphery; its extraordinary architects who had trained in the experience of designing residential complexes for the upper classes and for the bourgeois cooperatives – both in the new districts of the “official” city, and in those of Garbatella and Città Giardino – and that they had explored the possible architectural quality in very low-cost settlements in the public housing complexes of Donna Olimpia and Val Melaina – were excluded altogether. It was a period of heated struggle between the Governorate and the Institute, which led the latter almost to bankruptcy despite being run by Calzabini, an anti-Marcia fascist from Calvi in Umbria, who spoke directly to Mussolini and was National Secretary of the Fascist Syndicate architects.

A parenthesis: a new Governorate of Rome?

And here I take the liberty of returning to the reference made to the Governorate of Rome, in this conference, by Mario Ajello. Caution. I am not convinced that the gubernatorial model can be considered as suitable for the future of Roma Capitale. It placed the capital too directly under the head of the government, from whom it received funding and political strength only if its urban policies were implemented. And in that period, what mattered for the government was first and foremost the continuation of the use of “Eternal Rome” as a field in which to gather glory and millennial visibility on the example of the Umbertino period – and on the cultural thrust of classicist “Novecento”. Secondly, the government was contradictorily interested in the growth of the population of bourgeois, petit bourgeois and “popular superior” Rome in order to contend for the supremacy of the other European capitals by number of inhabitants. A strange goal indeed, the latter, for a government that had declared its “anti-urbanism” in the famous Mussolini’s 1928 *Ascension speech*. In fact, for the mass of precarious workers, the adventitious, the unsecured – underclass Rome, we would say today – strict laws against urbanism were drawn up – the first in 1929, the last in 1939 – and forced displacement practiced; did this mean creating shack camps in the territory around the city? Well, the head of the government replied, “to get rid of it you have to go to the hut” as Paola Salvadori reminds us in her beautiful book on *The Governorate of Rome The administration of the capital during fascism*. It will be said: it was a period of authoritarian, hierarchical and centralizing government; today would be different. I believe that even today too close proximity to the government would mean the risk that the Metropolitan Area of Roma Capitale becomes something similar to an entity like Rai [Radio and Television national agency] subject to the variable compromises of undulating Italian politics and agreements between parties or, in the case best, between parliamentary groups. It is true that the mayor of Beijing and Shanghai sit in the role of minister – if I am not mistaken – in the government of the People’s Republic of China. But to what extent does the central power really take into account the special needs of the two very special Chinese cities and not only exercise their political control? It was no coincidence that the Governorate of Rome, from its



Roma Topografia 1870-1940. Original Map elaborated by Lucio Valerio Barbera (2021).

establishment in 1925, until 1943, was ruled by a host of harmless, flashy and sometimes scabrous Roman nobles – Ludovico Spada Veralli Potenziani, Francesco Boncompagni Ludovisi (the governor of the government villages), Piero Colonna, Giangiacomo Borghese – and only for a short period – from January 1935 to November 1936 – by a politician of rank in the framework of the fascist party: Pietro Bottai. However, after less than two years he was hastily “promoted” to lead the Minister of National Education.

Two years during which, however, a politician of considerable strength such as Bottai, presented a solid program for Rome capital town based on administrative decentralization – autonomy to the “delegations” – on the rational and timely planning of building and urban interventions and on a series of indispensable and innovative investments in infrastructures and services. The brevity of his office and the financial constraints that the capital town suffered even then, due to its backward economic structure, first mortified and nullified that program. However, the candidacy of Rome as the seat of the Universal Exposition of 1942, strongly desired by Bottai himself, remained standing. This decision remains to its merit – I believe – above all for having imposed for the first time the overcoming – in one leap – of the traditionally “city” vision of Roman town planning – which also followed the much praised Master Plan of 1931 – replacing to it a vision of great territorial breadth – Rome by the Sea – which, even if today it is not shared by all in that form, in fact attempted to change the pace of the city by summarizing and relaunching the ambitions, the proposals, the alternative projects that from 1871 until 1919, they were proposed in vain by technicians and politicians of high rank and many political illusions, from Garibaldi to Paolo Orlando. A second and less contestable merit must be given to Bottai as governor of Rome; that of having promoted Virgilio Testa to General Secretary of the Municipality, breaking the “prefectural” bond (until then the general secretaries of the municipalities were prefects or emanations of the prefectural power) giving the possibility to a very special servant of the State, Virgilio Testa, to begin to prepare his project for the re-foundation of Italian urban planning through a new national law, which finally imposed a modern conception of the government and of the development and

redevelopment actions of Italian cities and territories. Why did I linger on the figure of Bottai? Because I believe that the recognition of a special statute in the capital of Italy is not enough to ensure better management of its territory. Its leaders must have political weight, and that this is lasting – which in democracy means basing consensus on efficient institutional and electoral forms – and that they are able to express clear programs, better I would say: real recovery and resilience projects, as we like to say today, that that programmatically and reciprocally commit the State and the administration of the Metropolitan Capital.

Modern Rome on an Ancient Map; Townships, Official Townships ...

The map we are discussing, in essence brings us very briefly – perhaps too much I would say, and I apologize – to the situation of the city in the Thirties with a particular focus on the years from 1935 to 1940. The only tear from the reality of those times, that I have already said, it is the representation, on the map, of the unrealized port dock that justifies the layout of the Garbatella district. In 1935, when the Governorate of Rome passed from the hands of Boncompagni Ludovisi to those of Bottai, finally the Autonomous Institute of Popular Homes (actually at that time it was called the Autonomous Fascist Institute of Popular Homes) had been given the task of trying to give some quality to the Rome of the precarious, the very poor, the “families of irregular composition and bad moral precedents”; in a word to the city of the expelled from the bourgeois city. Thus began the period of the great Official Borgate (Townships), designed, finally, by groups of very valid architects who in general knew how to make a good or decent or at least acceptable use of the very poor finances destined for those works. Only the main Official Townships, the closest to Rome, are represented on the map; going around the Eternal City from the North West to the North East you can see Prima Porta, the Trullo, the Quarticciolo, Tiburtino III, Pietralata, and up there, beyond Città Giardino, next to the already built popular district of Val Melaina, the Tufello, all invariably launched on the line or beyond the line of the Entrenched Camp, often planted right next to one of the Forts which were already historical relics of no defensive usefulness, but which nevertheless marked the extreme territorial boundary of the capital city. And it is certainly no

coincidence that the E42, designed at the end of the 1930s – therefore present in the map – is located next to a fort, Forte Ostiense, just outside the entrenched camp, as if to signal that a program of great breadth – that of launching the city, along the Tiberius axis, into a truly larger territory, up to the sea – had a single way of declaring its territorial ambition: to begin to develop, towards the outside, from one of the its fortified strongholds.

In fact, even the 1931 Master Plan – the last one before the war and the last one still aimed at regulating only the “official city” – had pushed its territorial limit almost exactly up to the perimeter of the Entrenched Camp of Rome and no further, as if that old defensive system were a natural morphological constraint, the only territorial reference to identify the maximum extension and shape of the capital city. Naturally, the 1931 Master Plan, skirting the borders of the Entrenched Camp, approached or even included some of the great Official Villages. Sign of a new attention for the Roma of the last ones? Perhaps; but the war and the constructive turmoil of the post-war period which – as Anne-Marie Seronde Babonaux writes – generated the “chaotic occupation of the land” of the capital until the 1980s – did not lead to any redevelopment of the villages and the myriad of Spontaneous Borghetti (small Townships). But it gave rise to an irrepressible phenomenon of deep and widespread hybridization between the two different urban species, the bourgeois and the underclass, which exploded after the failure of the containment and expulsion policies of the antiurban era. A hybridization that even today, it seems to me, powerfully characterizes the immense, living organism of the capital city of Italy.

Modern Rome on an Ancient Map; two Tales and a Saturnal

But before leaving the map that for a while guided me, looking at it for a moment, I cannot avoid reflecting that in the 1930s the characters of our city were already all implanted in its territory as seeds thrown adventurously to reproduce in one same culture bed without taking into account the unpredictable, but inevitable hybridization effects. And I am tempted to read that map through two literary works twenty-five years apart one from the other and separated by World War II. Two tales of the city which, however, read together, well represent the original double social essence that generated our present city and

which represents its history with the stingy and expressive symbolic simplification of a medieval fresco that intends to demonstrate the weakness of the human community and the fragile, indifferent lightness of its hopes. On the one hand there is the literary masterpiece already mentioned: *Gli Indifferenti*, written by Moravia in 1929; on the other is Pasolini's first picaresque and poetic novel, *Ragazzi di vita*, from 1954. On the one hand, therefore, the story of a bourgeois family that I, of course, imagine takes place in the houses and streets inside the perimeter of modern Rome, the city that I represented in the map with the textures of the road fabrics inside and outside the Aurelian walls. Outside the limit of that city – physical, legal and social limit – the Pasolini story of Riccetto and his peers takes place along the belt of the borgate (townships), from Donna Olimpia to Pietralata, to Ponte Mammolo to Tiburtino to the Aniene river; a stray grazing that at Portonaccio can touch a “customs” of the bourgeois Rome, but without going beyond it. Today, of course, that double and divided Rome no longer exists; or at least it is not as clearly observable as those two books show us.

Vincenzo Cerami comments in the preface to *Ragazzi di vita*: today well-being has grown “around those scoundrels”, it has been transformed into “new needs that were unknown until then”. It is true: the townships have mixed their precariousness – spontaneous and official – with the ways of building the bourgeois and petty bourgeois city; and the two souls of the city have become contaminated, blending into each other, each taking, in the embrace, the cultural hints and behavioral accents of the other as in the dance of a large urban Saturnal. So, if you live in Rome, you are not surprised that from the shapeless multitude of settlements now here emerges the unexpected quality of a residential complex of modern value, now there the silence of the battered and wild streets of abusive subdivisions never completed, leaning, as often happens, to monumental shopping centers parachuted from that elsewhere that has conquered us all, where consumption is a high ritual to be officiated, on the prescribed days, individually or in one's family group, confused in the mass, but each in his own solitude. A *memento*, therefore: even without a project, the city finds its streets and relentlessly spreads there wherever the persuasive slope

of administrative and political opportunism offers it field; and some support infrastructure.

What a great Urban Planning Law could not do

The new National Urban Planning Law of 1942, commissioned and drafted with great intelligence and legal wisdom by Virgilio Testa – which I was lucky enough to have as my professor of Urban Planning Law at the University – revolutionized the country's urban planning regime. From that date, throughout Italy, the entire municipal area of any town, small, big or very vast, would have been the object and subject of the General Regulatory Plans. No part of the territory, therefore no class, peasant, worker or precarious would have been left out of the urban planning of the Municipality. But in 1942 it was already at war. Difficult and frantic years had begun. At the end of the war, from 1946, Rome once again became the magnet of a new migratory wave. Around the villages, in the hamlets, in the neighborhoods of the extreme periphery of the capital, a further people on the move encamped precariously. There was still a ban on migration to cities with more than 25,000 inhabitants, canceled only in 1961 (!). But between 1946 and 1971 the city grew by more than a million inhabitants. And the already existing popular and very poor settlements, the consular roads and soils – even within the city – in which the regular urban development had been left in the way, all this, more than before, provided the natural basis for the rooting and strengthening of the spontaneous construction of the city – let's even say of illegal construction: a self-sufficient economic system of city construction. The new urban planning law of 1942 had, yes, extended the town planning and building government of the municipality to the entire municipal area, but it certainly could not shut down with a stroke of the pen the economic system, increasingly structured, which made the tiny and diffused organization for the development of the unofficial city live widespread; an organization that had become less and less blurred, but remained in any case illegal or semi-legal, increasingly entrusted to consolidated small local entrepreneurs.

Was it – is it still? – of a system with its strong efficiency with respect to the objectives of many of the new immigrants and old “better dressed” residents. A system that, after the war, due to the relative lesser

poverty of the classes considered precarious, was strengthened and continued to live and prosper for decades, acquiring breath and field, attracting even more affluent social groups to itself; to the point that, when in the eighties of the last century the municipal administration finally attempted to undertake the redevelopment of the areas spontaneously built – with the plan of the so-called Zones O – there could already be counted almost eight hundred thousand rooms illegally built in the city in a range of building quality very large, which not infrequently included – and does include – even the homes of classes considered to be wealthy. The settlements of Infernetto and Dragona, for example, famous champions of illegal construction, may they really seem to those who do not professionally and historically deal with Roman urban planning, genetically and legally so different from their neighboring neighborhood of Casal Palocco? that was long an admired new official residential model of the new affluent bourgeoisie? It can be said that Pasolini’s Riccetto seduced the Roman bourgeoisie of Moravia by inducing it to test in itself the corrective, lax and rascal ways of its cheerful and cruel brigade. I repeat: without a project, in any institutional form – the city finds its streets and spreads there unstoppably. But today does the capital city of Italy still include only eight hundred thousand unauthorized rooms, built for all social conditions, outside, but also inside the Grande Raccordo Anulare?

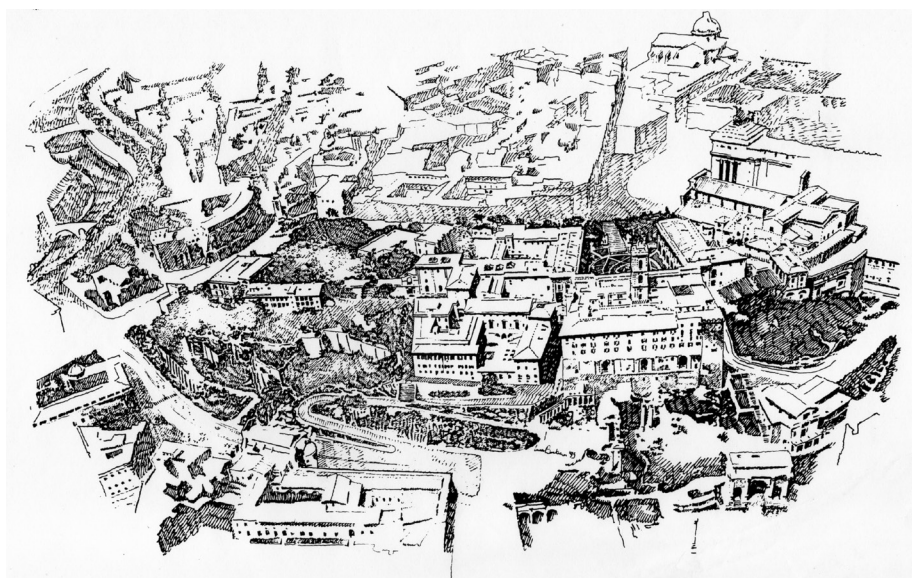
The Grande Raccordo Anulare (GRA): again, unbeknownst to him, the state designs its Capital Town

The Grande Raccordo Anulare; every Roman, in spite of everything, is obliged to give thanks – and to curse – several times a week that motorway ring that runs around the city in an almost perfect circle and quickly connects distant districts and allows one to penetrate, from the outside, into urban sectors difficult to reach through the internal streets of the city, apart from the evening rush hours, when it is fatally clogged for everyone. Here, then, is another strategic infrastructure that has affected and affects the functioning of the city and gives it shape without ever having been part of a program of the city, because it was built, as was the entrenched camp, by a state body external to it, this time Anas (Agency for State National Roads), to achieve an objective

of national interest which, of course, has to do with the existence of the capital, but which does not intend to deal with the future of it. The goal of the Anas was to prevent inter-regional routes from being forced to cross the Roman territory due to the ancient and permanent convergence of state roads towards the city center. But in the absence of infrastructural alternatives planned at the same scale as the GRA, the city has willingly adapted to that “suburban” motorway junction, indeed it has adopted it as its own and uses it heavily to feed and support the scattered nebula of its settlements in which – also for the connections ensured by that motorway junction – continues to dissolve every urbanistic idea that makes sense, which derives, therefore, from some organic idea of the city. Sergio Lenci, an unforgettable colleague and friend, at the end of the 1980s published a revealing study of the effect of the GRA as an attractor of functions of all kinds, as the backbone of a widespread and unstoppable – and again spontaneous – growth of workplaces, commercial and industrial, but also residential settlements, which have given shape to a new urban reality, especially in the eastern quadrants of the city. To the point that today the GRA itself has reached and exceeded the limit of its practicability along large sectors of its circumference, causing significant inconvenience both to the city – which usurps its functions in some way – and to Anas, which has been looking for a long time to unload the weight of inter-regional traffic – now slowed down by the unsustainable density of urban traffic – onto other wider motorway branches. Again the memento; without a clear project that takes into account the real needs of the city in its metropolitan dimension, whatever the institutional form of Roma Capitale, its rebirth will remain a chimera. But before approaching such a complex project it is necessary to develop a realistic vision of the city. Rome is no longer the city of 1870, nor that of 1930, nor that of the first post-war years, both from an economic and social point of view. One can regret that in those distant years a unitary project with a strong representative and functional character on the model of one of the great European cities was not started. One can regret that the suggestions given by the great Hausmann, the planner of nineteenth-century Paris, were not kept in mind by the first managers of Roma Capitale. One can even sadly compare the famous Master Plan of Mayor Nathan of 1909, designed by the great urban planner Saint Just of Teulada, with

the Master Plan of another great capital planned and built in those same years; New Delhi, the capital town of a country that the British Empire was already leading towards independence.

I say sadly, because the breath and audacity of the Delhi Plan, designed by a truly great architect, Edwin Lutyens – but wanted by the great government of a great country – succeeded, in a soil almost as old as that of Rome, to design the future of the new capital and to create its permanent structures with a vision that still today defines the living identity of that “new and ancient” capital city and ensures its functioning. As, however, the talented Mayor Nathan and his urban planner did not succeed. But today is no longer the time for urban projects of great formal eloquence. Rome is now a completely different organism from a traditional, large twentieth-century capital city. Sometimes I wonder if in order to plan its future we should not turn to the methods with which the great American cities are regulated and made to grow, cities spread around variable acropolises, limited concentrations of high symbolic and architectural value; city whose design, whose functions are controlled in a now natural comparison between free private proposal and public responsibility of the administrations. Or perhaps it is enough to direct our gaze to the urban planning of the city-regions closest to us;



Disegno di Lucio Valerio Barbera, Roma, il Campidoglio, 1991.

to the big cityregions of Germany, for example. Or to the very special city-territory that we call Greater London, in which you recognize, with pleasant surprise, the semi-autonomous parts that form the large functional body as real large villages or minor cities. Villages and urban cities each with its own center – old as in Camden Town, in the North, or more modern like in Wimbledon, in the South – however gathered around an important railway public transport station and a cluster of streets, small commercial squares and green spaces, where you can really live, as in the center of your “Township”, a beloved integral part of the metropolis of which you are proud citizens. And, also to answer Professor Enrico Michetti, who does not see favorably the transformation of the semi-Municipalities of Rome into Municipalities, I believe that Piero Samperi was right who, instead, imagined an evolution of the semi-Municipalities into recognizable urban entities, each with a center, a heart of aggregation and some essential central functions. Perhaps it would be necessary to start again from that study that Samperi called the Margherita (Daisy) Plan: the territory of Rome divided into seven, large “urban villages” – the diction is mine. An indispensable, important institutional “project within the project”.

An answer, a proposal, a question

Here I stop. And I apologize for the length.

An answer: of course, it is absolutely essential to give an institutionally efficient solution to the capital city of Italy. I do not know if the “Capital city as a Region” is enough to solve the problem of the special relationship that the state must have with its capital town, which has the very special role of representing, symbolically and functionally, the unity of the country. A role that is independent of the duration and the events of the governments that alternate at the helm of the country. An institutional project, which must begin immediately, not only because too long has been expected, but also because it is a complex project. But I am sure that the dimensions of the Capital Metropolis must be sought in the territorial reality of its urban organism, rather than in the current and old administrative structure of the territory. I was struck by Professor Enrico Michetti’s counter-proposal: Rome Metropolis with the prerogatives of the Special Province of Trento. Maybe even

strengthened, I add. Region or Province or Special District, Rome needs to be a Metropolitan area with a special statute. Of this I am convinced.

***Asine qua non* proposal:** whatever the form of institutional innovation, its approval should be accompanied by an adequate and coherent initial funding for an articulated project, feasible over a defined number of years, controlled by the Government or better still by an organ of the Presidency of the Republic, underpenalty of commissioning of the capital whatever its size and institutional form. The Presidency of the Republic; here is perhaps the most appropriate reference institution in Rome, the Italian Capital Metropolis.

Finally, a question: is it possible that the proposal, whatever it is, can only be a parliamentary proposal without clear support from the Government? And above all of the Presidency of the Republic?