

WATERFRONT DIALECTICS

ROME AND ITS
REGION FACING
CLIMATE CHANGE
IMPACTS

Edited by:
Pedro Ressano Garcia
Claudia Mattogno
Bruno Monardo
Antonio Cappuccitti



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Part 2.
Rome and the Tiber



The Flaminio District

Historical Plans and Urban Fabric Evolution

People who do not live or frequently use the Flaminio district could at first sight consider it a hinge between the historic center of Rome and other important neighbourhoods (Prati, Parioli, Pinciano), or an urban fabric simply leaning around the Tiber or that area where nowadays citizens happen to go because of the 'Auditorium Parco della Musica' and the XXI Century Art Museum or a place labelled by sports and great events. However, looking at the history of Flaminio, it is easy to understand how, beyond its century of life as a proper neighbourhood, this part of the capital represents a crossroad of events and characters that make it a place of great charm.

It is impossible to explore the Flaminio without, obviously, highlighting the Via Flaminia. Starting from the 'Campidoglio' this road, that in ancient times connected Rome to Ariminum (Rimini) on the Adriatic coast, followed the route of the current Via del Corso, passed through Piazza del Popolo and continued along the path that we still know today, thus representing a fundamental connection to the north of the Peninsula. Today, the Via Flaminia could appear to be an artery like many other primary radial tracks, sometimes congested and chaotic. Nevertheless, it could be narrated meter by meter, because at every step the ancient consular delivers historical episodes and extraordinary memories (Fabrizi 2020).

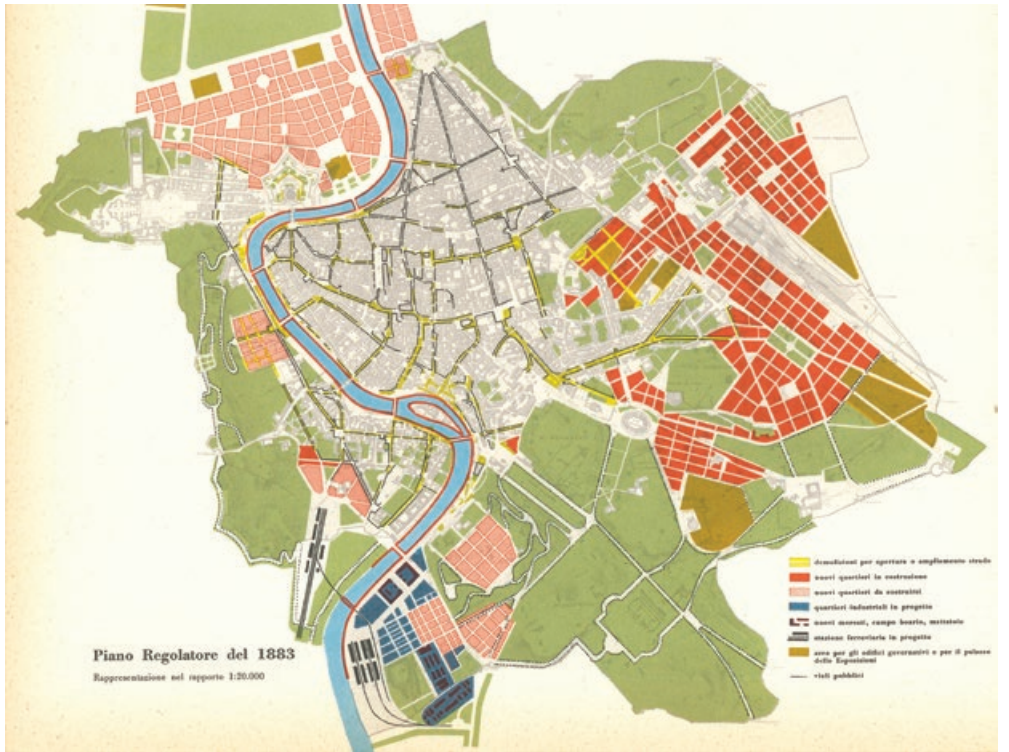
A narrative that naturally cannot overlook the river of Rome. Here the Tiber has always been a strong and conditioning presence: there was a time for fishing and trading, for swimming and for games in the water. But there was also the time of floods, because right here the river sometimes overwhelmed the city, so much that 'Porta Flaminia' was called 'Porta Flumentana' (the river gate).

The initial straight segment of the via Flaminia marks the consular axis root that arises from the historical heart of Rome (the Arx, northern height of the Capitol Hill) following the Tiber valley. It immediately establishes a strong relationship with the bend of the Tiber through the 'Ponte Milvio', the extraordinary Roman bridge that has been representing, since the third century B.C., the compulsory passage to connect Rome to the northern territories both towards the Adriatic up to Rimini crossing the Apennines (via Flaminia) and the Tuscany (via Cassia).

Historical maps drawn by the French military authority before Rome became the Capital of the Italian Kingdom, show quite clearly the orographic condition of the area on the east side of the Tiber river, with the Flaminio floodplain between the almost semi-circular river bight and the gentle tuff hills of Villa Glori, the

Figure 1. Map of the Flaminio plain published by the French Military Engineering Corps in 1856 and updated in 1868 (CC 4.0. source: Rossi P. O. 2020, p. 40).

Figure 2. Rome General Master Plan 1883 by Alessandro Viviani (CC 4.0. source Aa.Vv. 1958, p. 117).



Parioli neighbourhood and the park of Villa Strohl Fern (part of *Villa Borghese*).

The hills and mostly the river are in this area the principal geographic items defining the neighbourhood morphology and conditioning all the potential urbanisation.

Before 'Rome Capital', the thin urban strip parallel to the river coming out of Porta del Popolo and the northern flooding plain appeared as a non-urbanized land, with vineyards and hidden heritage values (such as the underground signs of the ancient consular "Via Flaminia" or the traces of Roman villas and graves) together with few well-preserved infrastructural and architectural assets (the Milvio bridge or the church of S. Andrea designed in 1553 by the architect Jacopo Barozzi, well known as "il Vignola"). As curiosity, in the Napoleonic age some projects had been proposed to transform all the plain into wonderful leisure spaces and gardens (Villa Napoleon park by Valadier), following the "Italian garden style".

After Rome became Capital of the Italian kingdom, it is interesting to reconstruct the relationship between the official general plans of the city and the real urbanisation process, asking ourselves, as usual for planners, if the city followed its plans or vice-versa. In the proposal of the very first general expansion plan as new Italian Capital (1873 by Viviani), the Flaminio plain was not considered as an urbanising area, differently from the second edition of the same plan in 1883 where a limited reticular urban pattern was conceived around the Flaminia road.

The most important Master plan that changed the destiny and imprinting of the Flaminio plain dates back to 1909, an urban tool invented by the engineer Edmondo Sanjust di Teulada and pursued by the progressist administration of the Mayor Ernesto Nathan. In the context of an expanding Capital with a large development of new high and medium-density neighbourhoods, Sanjust defined a geometric trident layout with dense courtyard blocks conceived to deliver a clear design of the public and private space (Aa.Vv. 1958). The plan had the intuition of explicitly imagining the main 'decumanus' (as integrated and opposed to the historical 'cardo' of the Via Flaminia) and the new bridge that was proposed to connect the eastern part of the plain to the western side of the Tiber. Incredibly, this new connection (the 'Music bridge') would have been implemented just one hundred years later!

The year 1911 was an important step for changings in the urban context: with the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of Italian kingdom the national government promoted a great event: the Universal EXPO 1911 whose areas were located both on the

Figure 3. Rome General Master Plan 1909 by Edmondo Sanjust di Teulada (CC 4.0. source: Aa.Vv. 1958, p. 127).

Figure 4. Excerpt from Rome General Master Plan 1931 of the Commission composed by F. Boncompagni-Ludovisi, A. Brasini, C. Bazzani, M. Piacentini, R. Paribeni, G. Giovannoni, A. Calza Bini, E. Del Bufalo, P. Salatino, A. Munoz, A. Maccari, A. Bianchi, C. Palazzo (CC 4.0. source: Aa.Vv. 1958, p. 143).

right and left side of the river, connected through the new elegant 'Risorgimento bridge'. The western area was conceived to host the Italian regional pavilions whose location was guided by an imaginative layout; the eastern area, called 'Vigna Cartoni' (today well known as 'Valle Giulia') was planned to host the international fine arts pavilions, which later would have been redeveloped as extraordinary Academia buildings of several countries (Great Britain, Austria, Belgium, The Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Rumania...) within the context of the finest historical park in Rome.

In the same year it was completed the new National Stadium (designed by Marcello Piacentini) whose location in the flat plain would have highlighted and enhanced the sport and leisure vocation of the Flaminio district.

Within 1909 and 1937 the urban fabric designed by the Sanjust Plan (and partly the following Rome Masterplan in 1931) was developed with relevant qualitative residential episodes mostly about public affordable or bourgeoisie housing, as the so called "Little London" block, 'Flaminio II', or 'Villa Riccio'.

On the contrary, the original imprinting planned by Sanjust for the Flaminio district was partly betrayed by the decision (during the First World War) to settle a huge military area in the heart of the bight, locating barracks and warehouses for the production of weapons, and later of automobiles and precision tools (Vittorini 2004).

The lack of integration of the impenetrable enclosures with the rest of the urban fabric still remains today. This fragmentation began to decrease only quite recently with the construction of the MAXXI (Museum of Modern Art of the 21st century, designed by Zaha Hadid) and with the potential of the public-private partnership project in the southern section of via Guido Reni ('Città della Scienza').

On the right bank of the Tiber, we cannot forget the relationship with the monumental complex of the 'Foro Italico' (originally called 'Foro Mussolini', conceived to celebrate the fascist regime and to support Rome's candidacy for the Olympic Games in 1944. Within a high quality environmental and landscape context, it is an extraordinary concentration of remarkable architectures, mostly urban sport equipment, completed over time by other primary activities and services.

However, the Olympic games were in the destiny of Rome and the Flaminio in particular: they were assigned to the Eternal city for the 17th edition in 1960. The Master plan identified two main areas: the 'Foro Italico' and the Flaminio neighbourhood in the northern part of the city, and the EUR district in the southern part, connected by a western urban ring road.

The most important projects for the event in Flaminio were the amazing sport facilities, the Flaminio stadium and the 'Palazzetto dello sport' signed by an extraordinary personality: Pier Luigi Nervi. It is amazing to recognize the physical configuration of the flat plain between the hills and the river that inspired the urbanization choices of the poetic pieces of architecture, "pure volumes" under the light following the vision codified in the Modern Movement by Le Corbusier.

The Swiss Master, who visited Rome at that time, greatly appreciated in Flaminio the planning and design approach not only of the great sport facilities but also of the Olympic Village settlement. In the scientific literature the Olympic Village plan is considered one of the best residential neighbourhoods of public initiative in Rome following the Modern Movement rationalist principles. At the base of the district there is the desire to respect the natural environment, transforming the open green space into the emerging framework of the urban project.

The recent urbanization process has been characterized by an incremental approach based more on large architectural projects than organic urban transformations.

In the nineties the great complex of the 'Music citadel' by Renzo Piano with the three volumes and the cavea (enriched by the discovery of the archaeological traces of a Roman villa), the 'Music bridge' as real connection imagined one century before by Edmondo Sanjust, the MAXXI Museum by Zaha Hadid (and its new planned expansion), the recent competition for a new "Museo della Scienza" are all projects able to add values and centrality to a part of the city whose keywords over time are with no doubt culture, arts, sport and leisure (Rossi 2020).

However, some unsolved issues remain, as it was already indicated more than 15 years ago for the Flaminio area by the Tiber 'Strategic Planning Zone' and the specific Urban Project ('Progetto Urbano Flaminio') within the general Master Plan of Rome 2008. These include the cardo-decumanic system to be enhanced, the relationship of the urban fabric with the Tiber to be rethought and some specific parts which, due to unfortunate choices, are still critical areas. Particularly intriguing are the 'Mancini' and the 'Maresciallo Giardino' squares, distopic spaces which could be defined sort of "non-places" following the successful definition by Marc Augé. They represent remarkable potentials for increasing the urbanity of the urban fabric and their relationship with the riverfront.

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Waterfront Dialectics.
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One of the most complex discussions concerning climate emergency is the sustainable water management. How to deal with the risks generated by climate change where the presence of cultural and environmental assets is highly stratified over time?

How to manage large densely populated areas rich in environmental and human resources, ensuring their protection and development? It's now time to integrate the connections between the different territorial scales and to ensure the balance between public and private interests in a framework of sustainable strategies.

SOS Climate Waterfront is an interdisciplinary project that aims to explore waterfronts in Europe that are facing climate change. The volume presents the results of the workshop held in Rome in spring 2022.

