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**ROME AFTER THE GREAT JUBILEE, URBAN POLICIES FOR TOURISM**  
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**Short Lead**

Pulsar effects and politic strategies: increasing tourism in reply of the importance that an “event” can assume in the process of urban transformation and the possibility that this represents for the permanent growth, of both tourist demand and supply.

The new Urban Plan of Rome facing the theme of tourist planning as an integrate part of urban strategies.

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The importance of tourism for the economic development of the Roman economy is evident: it represents a highly consistent portion of the “richness” of the cities historical-cultural and religious attraction.

In Rome the issues connected with the development of tourism have always remained at the margins of political debate, due in part to the substantial stability of this sector, as well as the lack of a culture of interrelation between different functions and urban systems. The Municipal Government’s intention to favour tourism, in accordance with the demand coinciding with the Jubilee, and diversify the range of attractions being offered, (directly or indirectly belonging to the realm of tourism), has led to a reflection in urbanistic terms on the natural interconnections, whether existing or potential, between the city that belongs to its inhabitants and the city of tourists. In this respect, during the course of the development of the new Urban Master Plan, the theme of **Tourist Activity Planning** was dealt with for the first time, as an integral part of the urban planning strategy<sup>1</sup>. This research opportunity allowed for a connection between tourism policies and planning decisions, in a vision which, beginning with an analysis of what the city currently offers, allows for the delineation of “scenarios” of reference for the role that tourism could play in the medium and long term period and its foreseeable repercussions on the range of the city’s urban activities and on the life of its citizens.

**The Development of the Research: The Characteristics of the Tourist System**

The Great Jubilee of 2000 represented a true Pulsar effect for the city of Rome: there were numerous infrastructural interventions, many projects for the urban restyling of the city’s historical-monumental heritage and a considerable broadening of the receptive nature of the city itself. Nonetheless, the actual evaluation of the permanent effects of these transformations has been considerably scarce.

The major portion of investments realised, other than interventions in the public realm, was concentrated in the tourist sector (the hotel division), with over 200 projected interventions. On the other hand, Rome, the capital of two states (The Italian State and the of the Vatican), has always contained numerous elements of attraction, both

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<sup>1</sup> *The City of Rome, Office for the New Urban Master Plan, “The quantitative and qualitative characteristics of tourist offerings to be inserted in the new Urban Master Plan for Rome”. The project team is composed of prof. G. Imbesi (coordinator), arch. M.L. Pilloton, prof. W. Fabietti, dott. G. Faggiani, arch. S. Ferretti, arch. P. Imbesi, arch. P. Ricci.*

endogenous and exogenous: the better part of these are connected with religious and historical tourism. There still exists, however, the difficulty of accepting an openness towards other forms of tourism (trade, health and well being, commerce, study, research, etc.), which represent, in their complexity, the attraction of the modern metropolis.

In this way two crucial requirements were made evident for the elaboration of a strategy for the development of tourism: above all the necessity for the politics of Roman tourism to articulate itself on different scales, assuming a vision of integration between municipal governments and metropolitan areas; secondly the necessity of defining “scenarios” of reference for the medium and long term on which to develop the consensus and convergence of the differing and various entities operating in this sector.

It was possible to undertake, at differing scales (metropolitan, municipal and local district government) a reading of the articulations of the available systems, which became elements of reference for the formulation of a strategic proposal.

At the **metropolitan scale**, large areas of tourist interest were highlighted: the coastal areas, the “Castelli” network (the small towns in the Alban Hills surrounding Rome), the consolidated city, the lower Tiber Valley, the lake system, etc. A network system was configured, characterized by the simultaneous presence of points of excellence and points offering a variety of differing qualifications.

The reading at the **municipal scale** highlighted systems of interest articulated in the municipal territories (guidelines, specialised concentrations, complementariness and complexity etc.) and therefore, the possibility to emphasise new centres, in the process of formation, as well as areas of conflict and critical areas (for want of specific attractions or a lack of supporting infrastructures, etc.). It is at this scale that useful indications for the delineation of the perimeter of the metropolitan environments emerged.

Two distributive tendencies were outlined:

- potential strategic areas of attraction for a traditional type of tourism (existing structured contexts); in the specific case that this has to do with the areas adjacent to the city centre and the primary part of peripheral ring (Portuense, Ostiense, Salaria).
- areas with an elevated lack of tourist attractions and at the same time participants in numerous projects for requalification and transformation; peripheral areas which act as “respite from the metropolis”, capable of providing specialised tourism with large areas and an institutional and interventionist liberty impossible to find in the consolidated city.

The investigations at the local district level offered results more adaptable to the development of an analytical experiment. The presence was noted of an elevated number of “symbolic” meanings, of proposals for intervention and of a strong mixture of conditions of decay together with a potential for tourism.

The analytical phase of the research allowed for the identification of certain elements useful for a “strategic” evaluation of tourist resources; an evaluation which, moreover, could significantly intersect with certain basic planning choices: the requalification of peripheral areas, the reinforcing of certain axes which “structure” the metropolitan city, the identification of polarities and the systems they construct via infrastructures of mobility, etc. This extension of offerings must be, naturally, placed under an acute evaluation of its urban repercussions (impact on transportation systems above all, but also social impact, collective costs, etc.).

### **The New Demands of Potential Tourism**

The current model of tourist demand continues, (though at a distinctly slow pace), to modify and articulate itself. Group tourism continues to decline, (though it continues to represent a significant portion of those who visit the traditional destinations of the religious and historical city), in favour individual travel, which generates new types of demand, often connected with the “general” quality of services being offered: hotels, restaurants, monuments, but also transportation, urban and archaeological parks, commercial areas, etc.

The Jubilee, that extraordinary event capable of generating an impulse in the life of the city, led to a greater articulation of the tourist attractions in the capital and an opening towards new client targets (youth and families, those attending musical and sporting events, eco-tourism, etc.), which up until now in Rome had represented an absolutely marginal portion, but which could represent the keys to future implementation of ulterior development of the tourist sector (above all by seeking to extend the average length of stay and encourage frequent return trips to the city). These new “transitory populations” place demands not only on tourist and commercial services but as well on civil and communication services, entertainment activities, and the accessibility to urban functions and represent unpredictable ways of exploiting territories<sup>2</sup>. It is, therefore, necessary to deal with the question of the role that tourism could play in urban transformations, both during the strategic evaluation phase as well as at the level of local and planning decisions.

### **Towards a Hypothesis for the Strategic Development of the Tourist System**

The interventions undertaken for the Jubilee have generated a “pulsar effect” on the city which has contributed to the modification of what the city has to offer, which for many years remained static and obsolete: the importance that an “event” can assume in the process of urban transformation and the possibility that this represents for the permanent growth, of both tourist demand and supply, emerged with great strength. The city has in fact today a possibility of responding to the tourist market that is comparable with that of other major European cities, even if it continues to experiment with adaptable policies and strategies capable of rendering the effects connected with these new fluxes permanent factors for both the Roman economy and society.

It is however necessary to take into account the double sided nature of the tourist industry and its impact on the city: on the one hand it is characterised by being a closed system with fixed rules of behaviour, reference values and conveniences; on the other by the configuration of a system open to the city and its territories which requires an evaluation, in real time, of the conditions of what is being, thus protecting both the values and controlling the consumption of the resources of which it is composed. This necessity of subjecting the results to an attentive evaluation of the effects of the differing interventions does not involve only the productive economic implications of the sector, but perhaps more importantly, the everyday life of the city’s inhabitants.

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<sup>2</sup>*There exist today new opportunities for both short term and extended term stays: the urban green spaces and the archaeological parks – within which it is possible to imagine pedestrian pathways to be used for free time activities, for fitness exercises, bicycle paths and light infrastructures-, the coastline, shopping, new spaces designed to host grand events could determine a new equilibrium of polarity of attraction if accompanied by interventions aimed at improving accessibility and the informational network concerned with transportation, including traditional street signs, which in Rome are particularly inadequate, not only for the needs of tourists, but also for its very citizens.*

The research did however permit the clear recognition of certain themes present in the organisation of the tourist sector which should be connected to the urban policies upon which the new Urban Master Plan is being constructed.

A secondary order of themes involves the relationships between *what is actually being offered and what could potentially be offered to tourists* which is highlighted both by the design as well as the indications of the new Urban Master Plan. We are not dealing with the consideration of functional districts dedicated to activities of tourism which have nothing to do with the city. The richness of the urban suggestions offered by a city such as Rome is constructed specifically from the mix offered by its properties, each diverse in nature, and not by a rigid functional separation between urban activities. On the other hand, the importance assumed by these properties for tourism and use of free time is evident in the formation of new urban centres (both as consolidations of pre-existences and as new interventions) for uses that are complementary to other activities (the commercial system) as well as for the support of historical and environmental resources (museums, conference spaces, etc.). We are however dealing with a tendency to define, in intervention projects, the possible intersections between different characteristics and requirements, often not directly connected with tourism, but accessible through proper marketing, in this way contributing to the realisation of new centres as alternatives to the traditional ones offered by Roman tourism.

A third aspect deals with the redefinition of localised criteria and interventions in the planning policies of the realisation: on the one hand favouring the introduction of a less restrictive law with respect to traditional intended uses (and therefore of functional restrictions *a-priori* which presume, in an all too inflexible manner, the needs of the city as well as those running it); on the other, by introducing aspects of territorial compatibility connected with localised opportunities/conveniences (specialised axes, specific installations, etc.). There exist different time frames for the maturation of a relationship between economic strategies and urban and territorial policies: in this way the definition allows for the realisation of a policy for intervention in the short term which is coherent and in harmony with the long term strategic actions envisioned by the plan.

The final, and no less important aspect, is that of stimulating the growth of a culture of tourism in this city. A culture which understands how to overcome the spontaneous adaptations which have always characterised this sector, by focusing on strategic design, and therefore research, from which both political decisions and “good practices” can descend. These good practices cannot remain only a technical fact, but can be realised if they are backed by a diffuse culture which consents change to be ‘primed’ within a shared strategy for international development of both the city and its metropolitan areas.