

MAKING SENSE OF THE ROME WE SEE TODAY

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LECTURE 1: Pilgrimage and tourism; Topography and growth

Introduction

- I am going to try to introduce you to and explain the Rome that we see today, and I am going to try to make some sense of the chaos of three millennia of its making, un-making, and re-making: but, while we are going to look at what's there and will try to imagine who built what and when, we must remember also that Rome has been sacked many times [popularly available is Matthew Kneale's 2011 *Rome, A History in Seven Sackings*]

So, **today**, I'm going to talk a little about why we are thinking and talking about Rome; and I'm going to try to describe its topography and its growth, its waxing and waning over these three millennia.

Tomorrow, I will talk about **Classical Rome**, that is, of Republican Rome (500-44 BCE) but primarily of the emperors (27 BCE-500 CE), Rome being described variously as *Caput Mundi* and/or as *The Eternal City*; and, in particular, of the relics that still exist, where they are, and why they still exist.

On **Wednesday**, we'll explore **the Rome of the popes**, its collapse and decline into the **Middle Ages** and its rebirth and the beginning of its re-making in the **Renaissance**, that is, from, let's say, 500 to a little after 1500 CE.

On **Thursday**, we continue still in the Rome ruled by the Popes, to the Baroque and to its decline after about 1700.

And on **Friday**, I must explain the making of **the Rome of the modern state**, from the unification of Italy and the making of Rome as the capital of the new Italian state in 1871, the Fascist enthusiasm for classicism and its re-makings, and, by implication, to the urbanisation of Italy after WWII as a great modern city.

- I am going to presume that we are seeing Rome as visitors, as quite serious visitors, even as pilgrims of sorts, recognising that Rome has always been a city of pilgrimage: from the 3rd or 4th C BCE as the centre of the growing Roman Empire; of Christian pilgrimage from the 2nd C CE (St Peter being crucified there in 65 CE); of the early Renaissance; the Grand Tour (art pilgrimage and the establishing of our aesthetic tastes from the early 17th C) which had Rome as its primary focus; and, ultimately, the various forms of the mass tourism we know today...
- So, without being too introspective, I want to start with a little about this pilgrim-tourist spectrum... which is, in effect, to raise some questions about the focus of our 'gaze'... which in this series of talks is about what we see, the architecture, the townscape... and we are looking at buildings and complexes and at Rome as a place... and as a place that is a site, historically, of a series of 'gazes': as a religious-pilgrimage site (for Christians for nearly two

thousand years); as the site of the origins of certain architectural forms, the classical Roman architecture of arches, and of concrete vaults and domes; of a nostalgic and romantic 'gaze' of the Grand Tour (Rome being the place where this 'gaze' was first institutionalised); and of the collective mass-tourist 'gaze' of today (which takes all of these other 'gazes' into account, if relatively trivially)... and all of this is both historical and modern...

- Given the time we have, I can't talk about the history of taste but I do recognise that this history and its constructions, in particular, during the 18th and 19th Cs of the idea of Rome as a significant primary source of our ideas about art, architecture, archaeology... even if much of this is sublimated in our cultural backgrounds today... though it's worth pointing out, for example, that the very word "Romantic" has, as its root, the word "Rome"....
- Given the importances of these 'gazes' and the necessary presumptions that the place and its component parts are 'authentic' and given the obvious (but inevitably unexplained) more recent history of recovery and overbuilding (the last two hundred years in particular), what we see is often difficult to understand and continually troubles us ... and this, often unconscious, questioning, interferes with our experiencing of the place... so my 'gaze' is aimed at trying to answer the unconscious questions about the material and visual **authenticity** of things... and how the changes of use or function and the appropriation of the things that we look at affects, even enhances, that sense of authenticity...
- Also, as to explain my stance and why I talk in the way I do, I must say a little about myself:
 - I am an architect, trained in Cape Town and in Delft, in the Netherlands
 - as a young architect of 35, we, my first wife, also an architect, and our two small children went to Rome in 1982 and lived there for three years where I completed a Masters degree in the study and conservation of architecture and urban townscapes... which meant getting a very detailed grasp of the making of Rome...
 - this was life-changing for me, personally and professionally...
 - and it made me very careful about what architects do unconsciously and so easily: that is, we interpret the environs, the built form... and we presume that, because of our training, we are expert in this... and, because we can come up with ready rational explanations, we often do not look far enough ... so now I try not to presume anything that isn't confirmed or supported by some form of documentary or material evidence and explanation...
 - and so I try to visit Rome as often as possible: its depth and richness, Italian life and food, friends, and now having my daughter living there, together mean that I can't see the reason for going anywhere else
- So, there are three impulses that underpin my description and explanation to you and all three presuppose that you might want to visit Rome, to make your own pilgrimage:
 - first, that I love Rome and want to share that with whoever will listen

- second, that Rome is a tough complicated rough modern city and is difficult to get about and to understand
 - and, third, that through its making, remaking, layering, its transformations, it has always been a palimpsest, being enriched even when being damaged and, as an architect, I am interested in how liveable good urban places get made, how public and private makings can be made to enrich rather than reduce... so it is an ideal laboratory for an exploration of the notions of authenticity... and for developing an understanding of the never-ceasing changing and transformation of the environs...
- That said, Rome is too rich, too big, too complex, to describe in five hours... it is a hopeless task... and I know that I will talk about too many things, too many aspects... but I hope that I will introduce you to something about this place that will arrest your attention...

So my strategy is to talk generally and loosely about the period of each day and to have illustrations which are much closely described... as illustrations... I will certainly disappoint you all by leaving out your favourite site or those that you are most curious about... but I hope that you'll be engaged enough to be driven to make your own explorations... on the internet, in published work, old and new, and by going there... when you can...

And I'm delighted that the Summer School organisation has given you some links to some You-Tube ... Rick Steves' video-photography is wonderful and gives a much better view of what I can.. and they are a wonderful background to what I want to explore with you....

But first, who are we???... and, as I said a moment ago, Rome has always drawn pilgrims of various sorts... so let's see what they looked like...

Illustrations 1-5: Pilgrims of sorts

- **pilgrims visiting the seven great churches of Rome in 1575**... tho St Peters is very much under reconstruction... tho with the medieval facades [Bacon, p136, Lafrery, 1575]... S Peters, S Lorenzo, S Maria Maggiore, S Croce in Jerusalem, S Giovannin Laterano, S Sebastiano, S Paulo
- members of **the Dilettanti in London in 1735** [Redford, p4, painting by Hamilton]... 'dilettante' = a lover of music or painting... derived from 'dilettare' = to delight [Kelly, p11]... virtuosi, taking themselves and their knowledge very importantly
- **a Grand Tourist... 1766**... a wealthy one in an expensive selfie ... by Batoni... [Redford, p23]... note the Colosseum
- **tourists picnicking at an acqueduct in the Campagna... 1880s** [Berenson, p17]
- **tourists in the Forum Romanum, 2017** [SST, 2017, #0368]... note the Colosseum in the background...

So, all that said, let us turn now to Rome and to its topography and its growth

- It is a very ancient city
 - earliest remains of human presence going back 14000 years
 - settlement from about 12th century BCE
 - the legend of Romulus and Remus sets its establishment at 753 BCE (interestingly a similar time as the legendary establishment of Athens)... but it was obviously settled much earlier... perhaps as much as a thousand years earlier...

Illustration 6: Topography before settlement [Lugli drawing p23]

- see the Tiber and the island which is where the river ceases to be navigable all the way from the sea 25 kms away: this is possibly the single most significant topographical reason for the siting of Rome... the navigability of the Tiber up to the island
- the wetlands which would have been 5 or 6m lower and even lower nearer to the river course itself, and it was malaria-infested: the Campus Martius was not for living in, but initially for burials, monuments, etc
- so too were the other parts of the floodplain... what was to become Trastevere and the Vatican City
- the seven hills of the early inhabited settlement of Rome: the Capitoline, the Palatine, the Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline, Coelian, and the Aventine with the courses of some streams in between them
- note also the Janiculum hills across the River
- see the **city wall of circa 378 BCE**... giving an idea of the future growth of the city
- see the **city wall of circa 280 CE**

Illustration 7: Republican Rome 300 BCE [Benevolo p141]

- Republican is 509 to 27 BCE
- see the Servian wall circa 378 BCE after the first of its great sackings by the Gauls [which destroyed the historical records of the kings; last king 509 BCE
- see the Forum Romanum

Illustration 8: Imperial Rome 300 CE [100-300 CE; Baths of Diocletian incl] [Benevolo p150]

- probably as many as 2 million inhabitants around 100 CE... gradual decline down to 500 000 by 300 CE...
- see the Aurelian wall circa 280 CE... much of this remains today...
- and much of this was pretty well filled with buildings, mostly multi-storey multi-dwelling

Illustration 9: Imperial Rome 310 CE- detail [Benevolo p151]

- see Forum Romanum, the Forums of Caesar (died 44 BCE), Augustus (14 CE), Vespasian (Foro della Pace) (69-79 CE), Nerva (98 CE), Trajan (98-117 CE
- **310 CE** because it includes the Basilica di Maxentius/Constantine

Illustration 10: Central archaeological area today (GoogleEarth)

- And here we are today... which we'll look at more carefully tomorrow...

Illustration 11: in the Middle Ages: V – XV centuries [Lugli p85]

- sacking by the Goths in 410 CE and iteratively in the sixth century... by which time only 50 000 inhabitants
- the popes to Avignon from 1303 to 1377... ultimate return to Rome in 1414
- see the Aurelian wall is still the outline of the city...
- now the occupied parts of Rome have shrunk considerably... **only 20 000 residents in 1400 CE**
- see the axis (and route) between the **Lateran** and St Peters/**the Vatican**
- the Vatican City has now appeared; though St Peters is the legendary place of his burial

Illustration 12: Renaissance Rome 1575 [Mario Cartaro, internet]

- the new dome of St Peters is visible as is some of Michelangelo's work at the Capitoline
- but the city is still much the same size as at the end of the middle ages; though there are now about 100 000 inhabitants
- and we can see here the effects of the 16th and 17th C axial streets created, in particular, by Sixtus V (1585-90)...

Illustration 13: Baroque Rome, the Nolli plan of 1748

- this most famous of plans... a proper orthogonal projection... and for what it shows...
- the Aurelian Wall still encloses the entire city... with an outgrowths... for the Vatican...
- and the Vatican's Borgo has expanded, as has Trastevere and the area up to S Maria Maggiore; several of the more important streets are now lined
- but the built-upon area is still compact

Illustration 14: Pre-Capital City, 1830 [Branch, p68]

- no great changes since the Nolli plan of 1748

Illustration 15: Piano Regolatore, 1882-3, Capital City [Kostof, 1973, p45]

- unification of Italy in 1870... and Rome became the capital of Italy in 1871
- the city is still within the Aurelian wall!!!!
- in 1870 only 200 000 inhabitants
- but this is not only what is there in 1882 but shows planning for the future
- many proposed new streets and street-widenings.. not all realised though..
- those realised, some of which I will describe in a little detail in later lectures, include:
Corso Vittorio Emanuele
the Lungoteveres
Via Nazionale
the railway station is there now... with the bulk of new developed land
- many areas already under construction and many proposed
- the Vatican's Borgo has expanded, as has Trastevere and the area up to S Maria Maggiore, and several of the axial streets are now lined

Illustration 16: Piano Regolatore, 1931, Fascist Rome [Kostof, 1973, p49]

- the city has now expanded beyond the Aurelian Wall
- about 1 000 000 inhabitants
- the idea of 'thinning out' for sanitary and transport reasons is apparent
- and the archaeological areas or even parks are expanding... having received and to get even more attention from Mussolini...

Illustration 17: Modern Rome, 1960 [Insolera, 2001, appendix]

- about 1 200 000 inhabitants
- but the Vatican's Borgo has expanded, as has Trastevere and the area up to S Maria Maggiore, and several of the axial streets are now lined

Illustration 18: Rome today, 2020 [Google Earth]

- about 1 200 000 inhabitants

Illustration 19: Rome today, 2020 [Google Earth]

- detail of the area that we're going to explore... for the most part anyway...

Illustration 20: Campo dei Fiori, Vasi, circa 1740

Illustration 21: Campo dei Fiori, 1860 [RIBA, Anderson, p152]

Illustration 22: Campo dei Fiori, 1889 [Storia Fotografica 1900-1918, p39]

Illustration 23: Campo dei Fiori, Today [SST, 2015]

Illustration 24: Campo dei Fiori, Knife-sharper in 1982 [SST, Oct 1982]

Illustration 25: Via Giubbonari near the Campo, embedded columns [SST, 2014]

Illustration 26: Palazzo Farnese, Vedute Varie, pre-1745 [Piranesi, p87]

Illustration 27: Palazzo Farnese, Vedute di Rome, c. 1760 [Piranesi, p744]

Illustration 28-29: Palazzo Farnese, Letarrouilly, c. 1830 [Letarrouilly,]

- Perspective (reliant on Piranesi's) and interior perspective of one of the grandest rooms in Rome

Illustrations 30-34, Photographs [SST, misc]

In closing I must say a little more about my 'gaze', the position I take in this series, and about the images that I have chosen to show you over the next few days...

First, the images I have chosen are an interesting set in themselves

- the maps included (and some will be iteratively referred to) are mostly produced by people trying to record or explain or describe the city... though

some of them have historical reasons for their production which may be a little different

- some of the maps had very practical reasons for their production... like planning future growth..
- many of the illustrations (drawings, paintings, engravings) were produced for sale to tourists, to people like us... before the invention of and then the development of photography ...
- many early photographs were intended as records, and simply so...
- my own photographs were taken as illustrations of my thoughts about Rome... and I have taken them iteratively in the hope of taking an image more artfully or capturing something not noticed previously...

Every image has its reasons for being... and often the reading of the image may require careful analysis... and reference to others... to ensure that the author's selections and omissions do not mislead us...

So, that said, I'm going to stop there... and tomorrow we'll look at the Imperial Rome in a little more detail... at some of what remains, at what can be seen...