PLANNING PERSPECTIVES
2025, VOL. 40, NO. 5, 1099–1132
https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2025.2529302

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Baroque Rome was not planned in a day: forms of immunity in Alexander VII's and Louis XIV's urban strategies (1656–68)

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ABSTRACT

In the seventeenth century, Rome's urban territory was legally contested, particularly during the 1660s when the Popes sought to assert power over the foreign states' territorial claims. The papacy's influence on the urban landscape was traditionally marked by extensive building activities that bolstered its financial resources, despite a decline in temporal power evidenced by diplomatic failures in the mid-1600s. Ecclesiastical immunities and privileges were employed as legal tools to generate income and reclaim urban territory, while European powers pursued ambassadorial extraterritoriality. Two crises, the 1656–1657 plague and the expansion of Louis XIV's diplomatic immunities, exposed papal authority, prompting Pope Alexander VII to use architecture to reformulate his political aims. This paper argues that the concept of 'immunity' is key to understanding the significant urban and architectural forces that shaped Rome's Baroque city.

KEYWORDS

Urban studies; early modern Rome; Alexander VII; Louis XIV; immunity; extraterritoriality; diplomacy; medicalization; plague

Introduction: Roma moderna[1]

In the 1963 fourth edition of *Space, Time and Architecture*, Swiss architectural historian Sigfried Giedion added a fundamental chapter on the hitherto neglected Baroque urban venture.[2] Comparing Rome to London and Paris, Giedion describes the former as the first modern city of the western civilization. Although his narrative adopts a Western European-centred perspective supported by arguments condensed into dogmatic syllogisms that recent historical studies are helping to overcome, some of his concise statements nevertheless give pause for thought. What is Giedion referring to when he defines Rome as a 'modern city'?

The author describes the urban turning point that would distinguish Baroque Rome from the Medieval city as being determined by two aspects. The first is Sixtus V's (p. 1585–90) plan to provide the city with new road infrastructure and to restore the functioning of the ancient aqueducts. The second is the consideration that Renaissance Rome was developed by the intellectual and material work of a heterogeneous group of artists, bankers, merchants and artisans who were mainly foreigners. The combination of these two factors would remain a phenomenon also peculiar to the Rome of Alexander VII Chigi (p. 1655–67). However, the aims and results achieved by the

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[1]This work was supported by the Carlsberg Foundation under Grant CF23-1239.

[2]Giedion, "Sixtus V (1585–1590) and the Planning of Baroque Rome".

confrontation with the foreign socio-political element, and a similar passion for the architecture of the two Popes, must be understood within a European political and religious context that had completely changed within 60 years.

The Chigi Pope in fact, due to the changed political balance in Europe caused by the overcoming of religious conflicts and the effects of the Peace of Westphalia (1648), had to adapt and develop his urban policies in relation to a different kind of foreign element, namely the presence of foreign diplomatic communities on the Roman urban territory. The increasing complexity of the European political situation reflected on Rome does not allow the development of a linear and causal historical narrative, such as the one proposed by Giedion. By the mid of the seventeenth century, Rome was in fact a legally disputed city.

Indeed, on one hand, the ecclesiastical immunities and privileges promoted by the Popes served as legal instruments, directly generating income for the Apostolic Chamber, and indirectly aiding in the reclaiming of Roman urban territory. On the other hand, European powers put into practice a well-established diplomatic tradition grounded in the privileges of princes and their representatives. This tradition, dating back to the sixteenth century, crystallised into the pursuit of the *franchises* which extended the ambassadorial extraterritoriality.

In this context, two social and political crises emerged. Both exposed the Pontiff's power, which reacted by employing architecture on the urban scale to reformulate his political aims. The first crisis was the plague epidemic that struck Rome from 1656 to 1657, whose effects threaten the credibility of the newly elected Pope Alexander. The second one was determined by the uncontrolled expansion of diplomatic immunities claimed by the European states and the subsequent suspension of papal jurisdiction over extensive areas of the city, by the Spanish, Venetians, and, above all, Louis XIV's France. These epidemic and legal threats acted within the city of Rome and risked subverting a social, economic, and legal stability already afflicted by adverse circumstances on a European scale.

It was in this context that Alexander VII employed policies on an urban scale, often considered latent or contingent, but which, I argue, were the prelude to the great urban and architectural renovations recognized as the pinnacle of Baroque production. These policies were *immune* in character, that is, they implied the presence of an external threat – be it economic, political, or biological, – and the need for protection from it. Therefore, this paper contends that 'immunity' provides a crucial theoretical framework for recognizing the often underestimated urban and architectural forces that played a pivotal role in shaping Rome's urban landscape in the Seicento.[3] Ultimately, the text seeks for those determinants of urban re-claiming that do not necessarily originate in, and for the purpose of increasing the real estate value. Rather, they are the expression of a cultural tradition that crystallises in socio-political practices and diplomatic theories tested at the urban scale. Nonetheless, these factors had profound consequences on the availability of real estate in Rome, both in the short and long term.

Beyond Westphalia

The European urban tradition of the seventeenth century, and that of Rome even more so, cannot be fully understood without contrasting it with that of the previous century. The watershed between the two centuries was the Peace of Westphalia, which helped put an end to the bloody wars of

[3]A first-hand description of the urban condition of the Roman *rioni* is in Franzini, *Descrittione di Roma antica e moderna*; Alveri, *Roma in ogni stato alla santità di N.S. Alessandro settimo*; Martinelli, *Roma ricercata nel suo sito & nella scuola di tutti gli antiquarij*.

religions that triggered the Thirty Years' War. Since the end of nineteenth century, 1648 has been historically considered as the year marking the birth of the modern State in Europe. Nonetheless, recent scholarship has demonstrated how this assumption was the result of a twentieth century need to define a historical origin for the supposed legal symbiosis between the concept of sovereignty and territory on a European scale.[4] From the historical and International Relations perspectives, thus, this interpretation has largely been disputed.[5] This article is not about the Peace of Westphalia, nor strictly about its consequences in political theory. However, the reasons adopted to question the 'myth of Westphalia'[6] are important to read some of its side effects, remotely perceived at the urban scale in Rome.

The concept of sovereignty did not suddenly emerge from Westphalia,[7] nor did the concept of territory,[8] and ultimately the Treatise did not initiate the perfect overlap of the two. What is at stake here are the consequences of the legal practice in international law emerged after 1648 on the Roman urban practices due to the specific interpretation of these concepts – sovereignty, territory, and their relation – that was assigned by the France of Richelieu, Mazarin, and finally Louis XIV.

Westphalia, or the two separate treatises of Osnabrück and Münster, concerned primarily the authority and prerogatives of the Holy Roman Empire after the Thirty Years' War. Previously, the Emperor's authority was claimed to descend directly from God, like that of the Pope. The Treaties helped undermine the idea not so much that these rulers embodied God's natural sovereignty, but that they were the only ones who benefit this claim.[9] To suffer this loss was not only the Emperor, but also the Pontiff, who in the person of Innocent X (p. 1644–55) contested the results of Westphalia by means of the apostolic brief *Zelo domus Dei* (November 26, 1648).

The Early Modern notion of sovereignty is conveyed using the juridical terminology adopted. Sovereignty, in fact, is not part of the Early Modern vocabulary, but it defines the modern translation of the Roman concept of *imperium*.[10] The language with which the Pope indicated, in negative, his sovereignty refers to the 'serious prejudices that have been inflicted on the Catholic religion, divine worship, the apostolic and Roman See, as well as the inferior churches and the ecclesiastical order, jurisdictions, authorities, immunities, liberties, exemptions, privileges, goods and rights thereof.'[11] The Pontiff's attempt to prevent the transfer of *potestas* over some legal and economic privileges is mirrored by the French achievements obtained with the Treaty of Münster: the transfer of sovereignty of Pinerolo, Breisach, and parts of Lorraine and Alsace was acknowledged through a detailed list of rights over people, objects, and institutions.[12] This is the prelude to a conception of sovereignty asserted over a *territory* and not, like in the Middle ages, only over the people.[13]

But the long list of things and people to be subjugated also defines a qualitative leap in the status of sovereignty. According to Roberto Esposito, sovereignty and the modern State become the

[4]Osiander, "Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth".
[5]Croxton, "The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the Origins of Sovereignty".
[6]Osiander, "Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth".
[7]Krasner, "Sovereignty"
[8]Elden, *The Birth of Territory*.
[9]Croxton, "The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the Origins of Sovereignty".
[10]Onuf, "Sovereignty: Outline of a Conceptual History".
[11]"[…] ex altera, partibus, respective initarum transactionum Articulos gravissima Religioni Catholicae, Divino Cultui, Sedi Apostolicae et Romana, ac inferioribus Ecclesiis Ordinique Ecclesiastico, ac Jurisdictionibus, Autoritatibus, Immunitatibus, Libertatibus, Exemtionibus, Privilegiis, Rebus, Bonis ac Juribus illorum illata fuerunt Praejudicia." Innocentius X, "Zelo Domus Dei".
[12]In the case of Alsace, the French transfer of sovereignty implied the authority over "Vassals, subjects, people, towns, boroughs, castles, houses, fortresses, woods, copses, gold or silver mines, minerals, rivers, brooks, (and) pastures." Quote from Croxton, "The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the Origins of Sovereignty," 577.
[13]Croxton, "The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the Origins of Sovereignty".

primary 'immunitarian devices […] that oppose the semantics of the common in the different but complementary forms of appropriation and privatisation.'[14] After all, the seventeenth was the century in which the combination of feudal and proto-capitalist modes of production gave rise to the types of absolutist sovereignty. As Perry Anderson shows, the strengthening of private property as a legal form of territorial dominion in the hands of the nobility went hand in hand with the consolidation of absolutist authority of which Louis XIV embodied the model in the European context.[15]

However, this condition does not yet define an exact overlap between authority and territory capable of initiating the concept of the modern state. It is in this gap between practice and theory that some extreme situations emerge, such as the one in which Louis XIV would have exercised his sovereignty over the alliance of the cities of Décapole, Strasbourg and Basel 'in that liberty and possession of immediacy in regard to the Holy Roman Empire.'[16] Especially Alsace therefore, although subject to the authority of the French monarch, would continue to retain the privilege of sending its own representatives to the Imperial Diet as well as paying taxes to the Empire.

This is an example that shows, on the one hand, that Westphalia was not the clear demarcation from medieval sovereignty to the modern state. On the other hand, however, it demonstrates how some kingdoms, certainly including the France of Louis XIV, exploited the juridical possibility to transfer their sovereign authority over territories in a latent form, exercising indirect military and political control over them, often interfering in the forms of social and economic organization. In other words, although Westphalia is not yet fully recognized as the event that marks the birth of the modern territorial state, it was certainly the event that introduced extraterritoriality as a diplomatic claim to the use of another's territory for diplomatic purposes. In short, Louis XIV projected his political influence through 'immunitary' tactics, and Rome was the privileged place of his action.

Immunity

Throughout history, immunity has played crucial roles in politics, economics, biology, and medicine.[17] The concept of immunity origins from the Greek *ateleia* (ἀτέλεια) which implied a specific exemption from duties to an individual or group of people from a recognized public authority.[18] *Ateleia* was, therefore, a privilege granted to suspend taxation on the import or export of goods in order to encourage trade, especially on the sea, or to avoid liturgies for distinguished individuals or public benefactors. The exceptional nature of the *ateleia* in classical Greek culture must be commensurate with the economic burden and prestige that the liturgies entailed for the individual.[19]

In ancient Rome, immunity – or *immunitas* – was a legal concept that signified suspension of duty or service. According to Festus, immunity derived from *munem* which 'means definitely duty, whence, on the contrary, he is said to be immune, who is not bound by any office.'[20] Immunity concerned also cities or territories that would eventually benefit from the privilege of being 'a

[14]Esposito, *Termini della politica* (my translation).
[15]Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*.
[16]Croxton, "The Peace of Westphalia of 1648 and the Origins of Sovereignty," 581.
[17]For the recent interest in the concept of immunity from the philosophical perspective: Tauber, *The Immune Self. Theory or Metaphor?*; Cohen, "Figuring Immunity: Towards the Genealogy of a Metaphor"; Esposito, *Immunitas. Protezione e negazione della vita*; Esposito, *Bíos. Biopolitica e filosofia*; Cohen, *A Body Worth Defending*; Haraway, "The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies"; Neocleus, *The Politics of Immunity*.
[18]Murray, "ATELEIA (Ἀτέλεια)".
[19]Liturgy derives from the Greek *Leioturgia* (*Laos* = people, and *èrgon* = work). Pianigiani, *Vocabolario etimologico della lingua italiana*. For a philosophical archaeology of the concept of liturgy, see Agamben, *Opus Dei*.
[20]"Munem significare certum est officiosum, unde e contrario immunis dicitur qui nullo fungitur officio." Festus, *De verborum significatione*, 143.

free and immune city'[21] whose status allowed them to avoid the tax burden while maintaining a political and economic dependence on Rome. Moreover, the Roman jurisdiction granted immunity from offices and onerous public liturgies to sophists and doctors on the condition that they had practised their profession while residing in their native city.[22] The cultural intermingling between imperial Rome and Christianity in the 4th century led to a jurisdiction whereby clerics were exempted from public liturgies (*munera*) so that they would not be prevented from performing divine services.[23]

The concept of immunity, incorporated in the Greek *ateleia* or Roman *immunitas*, thus conveyed an economic value as a privilege that removed individuals or specific categories from the obligation to hold public office.[24] But above all, it was a privilege cast from a central jurisdictional authority onto another, detached territory outside of which its activation was null and void.

During the Early Modern era, immunity emerged as the privilege granted to the prince's envoys who embodied the transfer of authority when abroad. Culturally rooted in the traditional code of hospitality,[25] the envoys' immunity became the implicit subject that contributed to the international law's development. Consisting in the recognition of the envoy as the bearer of the authority of his prince, it presupposed the inviolability of his person. Since the fifteenth century, diplomatic treatises have regarded real property and residence as extensions of the political valence of the ambassador's body. Indeed, during the Renaissance, the territorial component linked to specific immunities emerged when diplomatic practice entered into relation with the religious sphere. The long process that led first to the practice, and subsequently to the theorization of the inviolability of the body of the diplomatic envoy on a mission on foreign soil was enriched with a new element of complexity when religious clashes broke out in Europe after the Reformation.[26]

The theoretical spark that triggered the territorialization of diplomatic immunity granted as a privilege of the ambassador's corps was formulated in 1625, at the height of the Thirty Years' War. In a succinct yet effective passage, Hugo Grotius synthesized the conceptual shift according to which the ambassador's mission determined a new legal quality to the territory hosting him. Grotius stated that '[…] although the common custom is that anyone existing in foreign territory is subject to the territory of that place, an exception should be allowed for ambassadors, so that those who, as if by a kind of fiction, were regarded as the persons of the senders […] so also by a similar fiction should be constituted as if outside the territory. Hence, by the civil law of the people among whom they live, they are not bound.'[27] This passage has been widely debated in the field of political theory, and has been interpreted as the first conceptualization of extraterritoriality as the extension of immunity from the ambassador's body to the territory of jurisdiction.[28] Nevertheless,

[21]Cases where Rome granted the status of "Civitas libera atque immunis" are Centuripae (Sicily), Engedi (Israel), Halaisa (Sicily), Illici (Spain), Klazomenai (Turkey), Kos (Greece), Pallantion (Greece), Segesta (Sicily), and Tanagra (Greece). Stillwell et al., *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*, 213, 304, 374, 408, 458, 465, 667, 817, 877.

[22]Nutton, "Two Notes on Immunities: Digest 27, 1, 6, 10 and 11".

[23]"Qui divino cultui ministeria religionis impendunt, id est hi, qui clerici appellantur, ab omnibus omnino muneribus excusentur, ne sacrilego livore quorundam a divinis obsequiis avocentur." Imperatori Theodosiani Codex, Liber Decimus Sextus, Cth.16.2.2. The passage is discussed in Crifò, "Costantino, una metafora tradotta in realtà, alla prova della storia".

[24]The juridical difference between *prerogative*, *privilege*, and *immunity* is explained in Curti Gialdino, "Sulla prerogativa dell'esercizio del culto nella sede della missione diplomatica".

[25]See the next section of the present article.

[26]Mattingly, *Renaissance Diplomacy*.

[27]"Quare omnino ita censeo, placuisse gentibus ut communis mos qui quemvis in alieno territorio existentem eius loci territorio subiicit, exceptionem pateretur in legatis, ut qui sicut fictione quadam habentur pro personis mittentium […] ita etiam fictione simili constituerentur quasi extra territorium. Unde & civili iure populi apud quem vivunt non tenentur." Grotii, *De jure belli ac pacis,* 321.

[28]Adair, *The Extraterritoriality of Ambassadors in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. See also Frey and Frey. "Diplomatic Immunity" for a historical overview of the concept of extraterritoriality.

what is of interest here is the linguistic subtlety of the 'fiction' with which Grotius transfers authority from a political body to a political space. What Grotius did was to discuss the immunity implications of a diplomatic body and from these he derived the need for an exceptional extra-territory on which to apply them.

It was only by the end of the nineteenth century that immunity found scientific application in the field of medicine. In modern times, it has been associated with the medicalization of the human body to neutralize foreign agents' infections. The modern medical knowledge has conceptualized and put into practice the defence of the physical body by introjecting the enemy through the inoculation of its foreign bodies. Modern immunization practices, therefore, shifted action from the social-political to the biological body.[29] Moreover, if diplomatic immunity imagined the ambassador's body as a conduit for the transfer of royal authority onto the extra-territory, so modern immunology re-semantised the immunological system starting from the environment (broadly intended as nature, following the humoral conception of disease) to the body of the sick person. In eighteenth century medical theories, the body in medicine took on the significance that territory had for seventeenth century sovereignty in claiming its authority, and immunity became the concept through which to assert its right to control and defence.

Hospitality

As mentioned above, Rome was a place where the foreign social component traditionally played a fundamental role in defining the city's material production. On the one hand, during the apostolic reign, urban development received an impetus thanks to direct revenues from the enormous influx of pilgrims during the Jubilees.[30] On the other hand, from the sixteenth century onwards, foreign stakeholders (i.e. Florentines and Genoese) owned the majority of the public debt established in 1526 when Clement VII (p. 1523–34) found ('erected') the first *monte* (bond),[31] the *Monte della Fede*.[32]

Beyond the strictly economic perspective, in the Early Modern age, the city saw a steady increase in population that contributed to the complexity of its social structure. The presence of the curia and its progressive political and social relevance also contributed greatly to the development of diplomatic conduct,[33] that was based on a 'well-established social phenomenon,'[34] namely that of hospitality.

The political importance of the concept of hospitality is demonstrated by Kant's use of it in his attempt to found an international community on it that recognizes 'the right of a stranger not to be treated in a hostile manner by another upon his arrival on the other's territory.'[35] Such a result – the recognition of a cosmopolitan community producing a shared right that protects the foreigner – would, according to Kant, lead humanity to perpetual peace.

Nonetheless, the etymological root of the lemma contains the terms of the social struggles and political opportunities that emerged in seventeenth century Rome. As Émile Benveniste shows, the

[29]Neocleus, *The Politics of Immunity*.
[30]Ago, "Strade rettilinee processioni barocche nella Roma del Settecento".
[31]The "monte" "[…] denotat omnem cumulum, sive omnem massam, vel collectionem pecuniarum, […] quae ad publicum usum […] facta sit." De Luca, *Tractatus de officiis venalibus vacabilibus Romanae Curiae*, 5.
[32]For a discussion on the origins, management, and implication of the Apostolic public debt, see Masini, *Il debito pubblico pontificio a fine Seicento*. Important contributions on the relation between debt and urban renewal: Scavizzi, "Considerazioni sull'attività edilizia a Roma nella prima metà del Seicento"; Stumpo, *Il capitale finanziario a Roma fra Cinque e Seicento*; Partner, "Papal Financial Policy in the Renaissance and Counter-Reformation"; Partner, "Finanze e urbanistica a Roma (1420–1623)".
[33]Byatt, "The Concept of Hospitality in a Cardinal's Household in Renaissance Rome".
[34]Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, 62.
[35]Kant, *Toward Perpetual Peace,* 82.

Latin root of hospitality derives from *hospes* which, in turn, is based on two separate lemmas, *hostis* and **potis*.[36] On the one hand, the latter indicates the master of the house, husband, or chief of some social community and, thus, hospitality incorporates the original power relationship that the sovereign establishes, beyond the specific contextual legal form of authority, with her subjects.

On the other hand, the prefix that introduced the word hospitality is *hostis*, namely guest. Although some historical contexts developed the opposed meaning of enemy or stranger, Benveniste offers a different interpretation. As Festus wrote, 'in ancient times they were called *hostes* because they had *the same rights* as the Roman people, and one said *hostire* for *aequare*.'[37] *Hostes*, in Benveniste thought, were therefore not originally strangers or foreigners, but people with equal rights of the Romans. Moreover their status depended on the possibility of repay or *compensate* (*aequare*) who granted them this right with a counterpart (*hostire*).

The principal meaning conveyed through hospitality was, indeed, not that of being a stranger in general (as it was indicated the *peregrinus*, i.e. who lives outside the territory in question), but the equal rights shared with the Romans. Moreover, equality and reciprocity between foreigners and Romans (the guests, who claimed authority) implied an agreement that must be enforced. And here arises what Benveniste identifies within a linguistic semantic system that has developed in parallel, namely that what is required to be exchanged to compensate for the right granted is the *mūnus*, from which 'derived several adjectives: *mūnis, immūnis, communis*.'[38] Hospitality is thus the foundation of a social condition where the acceptance of a reciprocal condition of exchange (*munus*) between authority and subjects was a prerequisite for individuals and social groups to belong to the same community.

Indeed, across various disciplines such as law, diplomacy, medicine, virology, and politics, three common themes about immunity emerge. First, immunity involves a sovereign granting *privileges* that suspend norms. Second, it addresses crises triggered by external threats through *security* measures. Third, it deals with *foreign bodies* from which protection, whether physical or biological, is required.

Examining immunity through this framework, seventeenth century Rome becomes the context where these facets intersect. The simultaneous convergence of legal privileges, external threats, and foreign agency shaped the city due to the biological crisis of the 1656–57 epidemic and foreign states' diplomatic immunity. The social and political events occurred during the pontificate of Alexander VII threw this relationship into crisis. On the one hand, the measures taken to combat the plague such as generalized quarantine and the assumption of legislative and governmental power by the Congregation of Health were functional to keeping the social body alive.[39] This generalized immunization was implemented by Alexander VII through the use on an urban scale of architectural devices capable of subjugating life to the political aims of the sovereign authority.

On the other hand, the urban strategy promoted by Alexander VII was undermined by the hypertrophic development of islands of extraterritoriality where papal sovereign power was suspended in favour of the transfer of authority of foreign sovereigns on Roman soil. Particularly the French quarter was the concretization of Louis XIV's expansive European policy. Here, the

[36]Benveniste, "Hospitality". Benveniste indicates the Indo-European root as preceded by the sign *.

[37]"eius enim generis ab antiquis hostes appellabantur, quod erant pari iure eum populo Romano, atque hostire ponebantur pro aequare." Festus, *De verborum significatione,* 314.

[38]Benveniste, "Hospitality". See also Internationale Thesaurus-Kommission. "mūnus".

[39]Sforza Pallavicino defines the Congregation's member as "un magistrato fornito di pienissima autorità, e collocato sulla vista dell'opera, sia legge viva, anzi insieme ordinatore ed esecutore della legge." ["A magistrate endowed with full authority, and placed in the sight of the work, be a living law, or rather at the same time an ordinator and executor of the law."] Pallavicino, *Descrizione del contagio*, 26.

extension of the ambassador's gaze became a juridical instrument for the extension of royal immunities and prerogatives that subtracted territory from the Chigi's sovereignty.

Outward immunity: Alexander VII and the plague

The plague reached Rome in the spring of 1656. The first victim was identified on June 6th in the Rione Trastevere.[40] Consequently, the Pope reactivated the functions of the Congregation of Health (*Congregazione della Sanità*) with the goal of planning measures of prophylaxis by reorganizing the city's territory.[41]

The Congregation was founded by Pope Urban VIII (p. 1623–44) in 1630 during the previous plague epidemic. As it was then, Alexander VII appointed Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597–1679) as prefect of the institute.[42] Doctors and surgeons were appointed for each Rione to verify the state of contagion house-by-house.[43] The containment of the plague was also organized on a geographical scale, with three commissioners assigned to control the area from Montalto to Terracina, from Terracina to Rieti, and from Rieti to Ascoli and the Adriatic Sea.

Nine of Rome's gates were closed.[44] Commissioners and soldiers were assigned to monitor the access of goods and people. Around twelve lazarets were established, some for the control of suspects and others for the treatment of plague victims through quarantine and convalescence.[45] Monsignor Gerolamo Gastaldi (1616–85), a prelate with a background in jurisprudence, oversaw the lazarets. Due to his meticulous and dedicated management of the epidemic, Alexander VII soon appointed him the commissioner general of the Congregation. Consequently, every decision regarding health matters must be considered a direct intervention and responsibility of the Pontiff.[46] Thanks to Gastaldi's prompt and resolute actions, the two-year epidemic resulted in relatively few deaths. While Naples and Genoa experienced around 150,000 and 80,000 deaths, respectively (50% and 60% of their populations), Rome had approximately 9,000 casualties (less than 8%), and this number dropped to zero in July 1657.[47]

In 1684, Gastaldi published the results of his fieldwork in the Latin *Tractatus de avertenda et profliganda peste politico-legalis* (Treatise on the prevention and eradication of the politico-legal plague), which was printed when Gorizia was hit by a new epidemic (Figure 1).[48] The central concept in the *Tractatus*, which focuses on practical field applications, is related to the idea of separation, which is primarily a political and immune concept rather than a medically validated remedy against the transmission of contagion. The concept of removing healthy individuals from the sick ones was reflected in the nomenclature of medical professionals, distinguishing between the 'ugly

[40]Sonnino, "Cronache della peste a Roma".
[41]Alexander VII. "Brevi di papa Alessandro VII, cioè Deputazione della Congregazione di Sanità".
[42]The other members of the Congregation of Health were the Cardinals Carlo de' Medici, Giulio Sacchetti, Giberto III Borromeo, Decio Azzolino, Lorenzo Imperiali, Marcello Santacroce, Federico Sforza, Pietro Ottoboni, Camillo Astalli, and Federico d'Assia-Darmstadt.
[43]"Teneasi questa congregazione ogni mattina per molte ore in palazzo, e quivi riferivansi non solo le principali occorrenze o della città, o dello Stato in quella materia, ma tutti i nuovi accidenti di Roma in ogni casa ed in ogni persona particolare." ["This congregation was held every morning for many hours in the palace, and there they reported not only on the principal occurrences of the city, or of the State in that matter, but all the new happenings in Rome in every house and in every particular person."] Pallavicino, *Descrizione del contagio*, 28 (my translation).
[44]Porta di Castello, Porta Pertusa, Porta Fabrica, Porta Latina, Porta S. Lorenzo, Porta Maggiore, Porta S. Sebastiano, Porta Salaria, Porta Pinciana were closed. Porta S. Paolo, S. Giovanni, Portese, S. Pancrazio, Cavalleggeri, Angelica, del Popolo, and Pia remained open.
[45]Sonnino, "'Di qui cominciò qualche terrore considerabile nella città di Roma'".
[46]"affinché le deliberazioni […] procedendo da una medesima sfera, concorressero ad un medesimo centro." ["so that the deliberations […] proceeding from one and the same sphere, would concur at one and the same centre."] Pallavicino, *Descrizione del contagio*, 27.
[47]Sonnino, "Cronache della peste a Roma".
[48]Gastaldi, *Tractatus de avertenda et profliganda peste politico-legalis*.

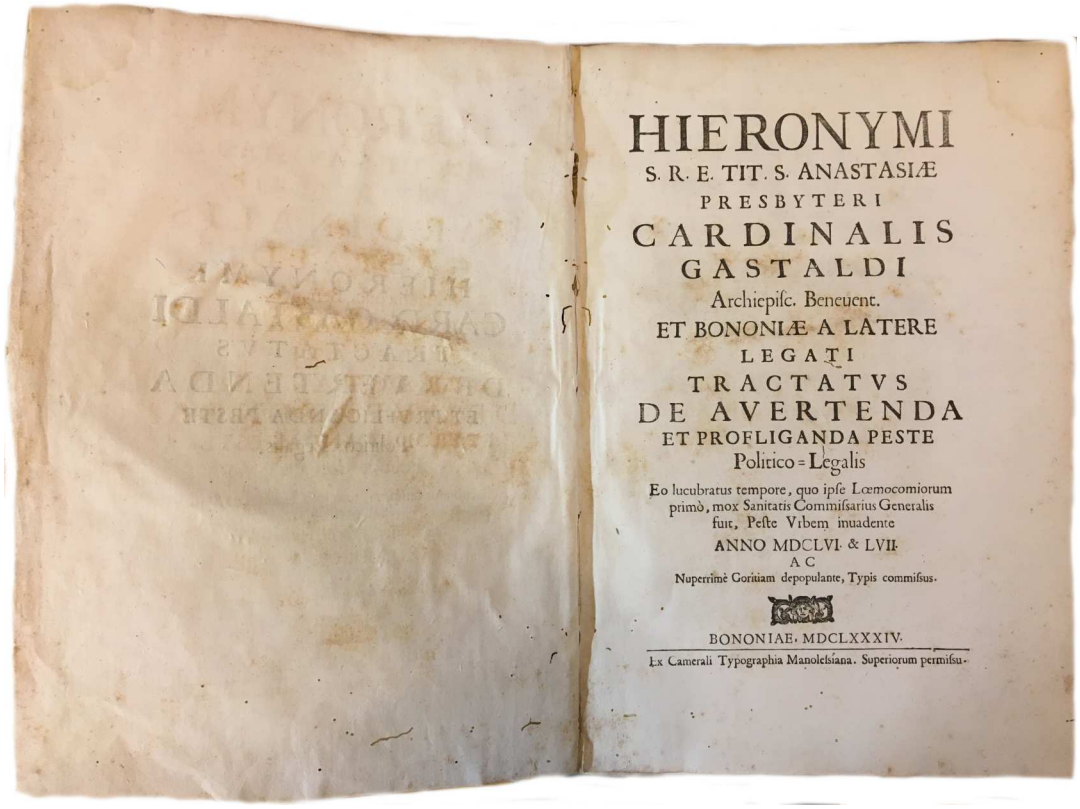
HIERONYMI
S. R. E. TIT. S. ANASTASIÆ
PRESBYTERI
CARDINALIS
GASTALDI
Archiepisc. Beneuent.
ET BONONIÆ A LATERE
LEGATI
TRACTATVS
DE AVERTENDA
ET PROFLIGANDA PESTE
Politico = Legalis
Eo lucubratus tempore, quo ipse Lœmocomiorum primò, mox Sanitatis Commissarius Generalis fuit, Peste Vrbem inuadente
ANNO MDCLVI. & LVII.
A C
Nuperrimè Goritiam depopulante, Typis commissus.
BONONIAE. MDCLXXXIV.
Ex Camerali Typographia Manolessiana. Superiorum permissu.

Figure 1. Gastaldi, Gerolamo. *Tractatus de avertenda et profliganda peste politico-legalis*. Bononiae: Camerali Typographia Manolessiana, 1684 (Frontispiece). No copyright page found.

doctors' ('brutti') and the 'clean' ones ('puliti'). However, it takes on a political dimension when implemented through tools of segregation that involve the entire population of the city, thus utilizing urban quarantine measures based solely on the suspicion of disease.

As the title of the *Tractatus* implies, the plague was not just a health issue but a political one as well. Without here trespassing on modern interpretations of bio-politics, Gastaldi's focus shifted from blaming specific places for the infection to a practice based on isolating sick individuals from the healthy ones. Alexander VII's health policy, therefore, activated a disciplinary mechanism that bolstered his own status and power. This reflects the perspective of Michel Foucault, who stated: 'The exile of the leper and the arrest of the plague do not bring with them the same political dream. The first is that of a pure community, the second that of a disciplined society. […] The leper and his separation; the plague and its segmentations. The first is marked; the second analysed and distributed.'[49] In this approach, the sick were not expelled from the city, but rather incorporated into it. This mechanism, which might seem practical, mirrors an immune-based approach: as nineteenth century virology would teach us, the inoculation of nonlethal virus quantities stimulates the formation of antibodies that can neutralize pathogenic effects at an early stage. To use Esposito's words, 'Life combats what negates it through immunitary protection, not a strategy of frontal

[49]Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 198.

opposition but of outflanking and neutralizing. Evil must be thwarted, but not by keeping it at a distance from one's borders; rather, it is included inside them.'[50]

Gastaldi and Alexander VII promoted a health policy based on immunity by implementing a city-wide general quarantine, increasing isolation in specific areas and within the homes of suspected cases. Two notable examples are Trastevere and the Ghetto. Trastevere was isolated between June 22 and June 23, 1656. Cardinals Barberini, D'Assia, and Imperiali, in secret and at night, went to the site and with the help of soldiers, erected two concentric palisades known as the 'Trastevere fence,' which remained in use until October 11 of the same year. Cardinal Pallavicino commented that the purpose was to 'amputate, according to the rules of surgery, the vitiated and ignoble part by the majority and the best of the body.'[51]

The Jewish Ghetto was segregated on July 18,[52] and a lazaret was established within it. According to Giacinto Gigli, there were initially no confirmed cases of the plague in the Ghetto, while Pallavicino emphasized that their separation from the rest of the city was a voluntary choice. However, Gastaldi's published memoirs make no mention of this voluntariness, and the deceased from the Jewish religion, which eventually constituted a higher percentage,[53] were always tallied separately from those in the rest of the city, with their corpses being transported in distinct boats and buried in different locations.[54]

One of the most intriguing aspects of Gastaldi's *Tractatus* is the inclusion of 47 full-page illustrations by Domenico Castelli. Castelli (1582–1657) was an architect originally from Melide in Ticino and had been active in Rome since 1611. He served as the Architect of the Apostolic Chamber from 1624 to 1657 and, in 1631–32, was appointed as the architect of the *Studium Urbis*. Starting in 1646, he was part of a list of architects used by the 'Presidency of the Roads' [*Maestri di Strada*], and through these assignments, he collaborated with well-known architects such as Carlo Maderno and Francesco Borromini, from the time of Urban VIII to Alexander VII.[55] Thanks to his long experience, Castelli was appointed by Gastaldi as architect of the prophylaxis system required by the Congregation of Health.

The drawings portray various urban strategies, the repurposing of buildings as checkpoint stations and lazarets, the reinforcement of eight of the city's gates, devices for controlling, separating, grouping, and sorting of individuals afflicted by the plague, and two large mass graves near the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura. The arrangement of the defence measures follows repetitive patterns and is adapted to the pre-existing conditions, as confirmed by the descriptions.

The projects devised by Castelli encompassed devices at the urban, architectural, and object-like scales. Their objectives were to filter people and cattle, disinfect foodstuff and goods, segregate infected and presumed contagious people, and remove contaminated objects and corpses.

The eight gates kept open served as primary filtering devices. Internally, these were supplemented with wooden 'casini' covered with boards, serving as shelters for the commissioner, the prelate deputy, and the soldiers. On the outer side, there were 'obices' (obstacles) erected to keep potential dangers at a distance, and the 'cancelli,' which expanded the access gate, thereby thickening the border (Figure 2).

[50]Esposito, *Immunitas: The Protection and Negation of Life*, 8.
[51]Pallavicino, *Descrizione del contagio*, 8.
[52]Gigli, *Diario di Roma*, 765.
[53]Sonnino, "Cronache della peste a Roma".
[54]Savio, "Ricerche sulla peste di Roma degli anni 1656-1657". See Pallavicino, *Descrizione del contagio*, 49.
[55]Palma, "Castelli, Domenico".

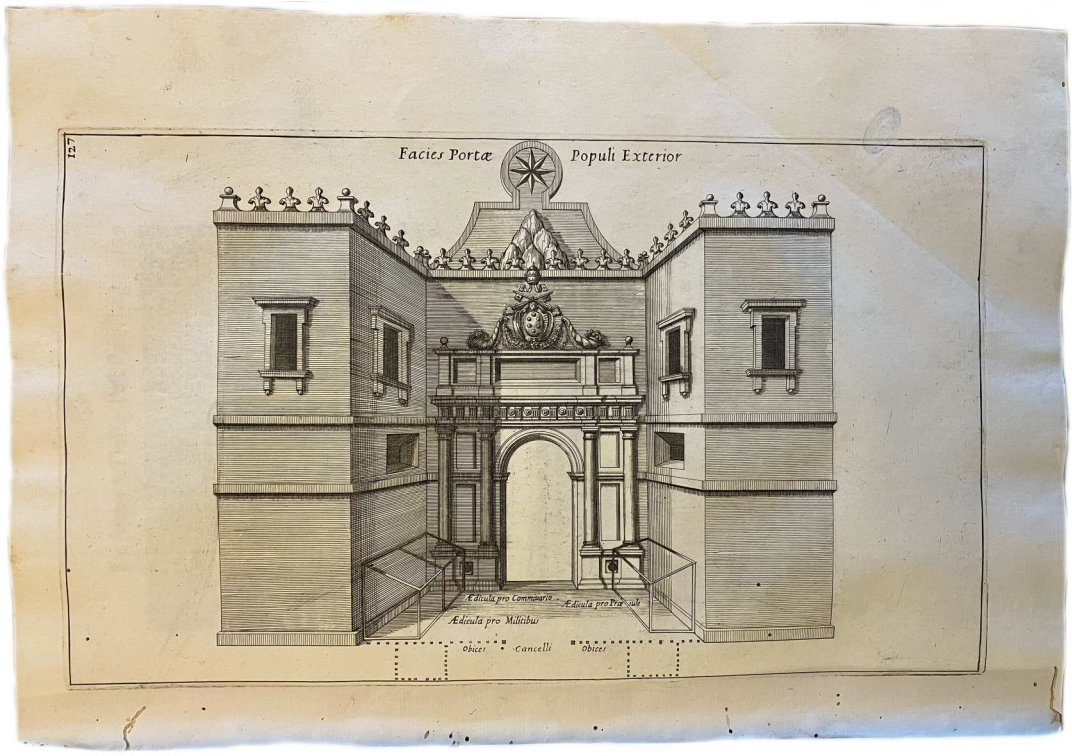

Figure 2. Castelli, Domenico. 'Facies Portæ Populi Exterior.' Published in Gastaldi, Gerolamo. *Tractatus de avertenda et profliganda peste politico-legalis*. Bononiae: Camerali Typographia Manolessiana, 1684: 127. No copyright page found.

Filtering was not limited to people; it also included the control of goods and essential supplies. An engraving by Louis Rouhier, published by Giovanni Giacomo de Rossi, and incorporated by Gastaldi as an introduction to the *Tractatus*, illustrates 'Gates outside Porta del Popolo and San Giovanni for receiving food and other merchandise from foreigners to prevent them from trading within Rome'; 'Conduits where wine is measured'; 'Canal for measuring grain and legumes'; and 'Location for dipping coins in vinegar for disinfection' (Figure 3).[56] In addition, a rope stretched across the Tiber at Porta Portese served as a filtering element for boats before they entered the port of Ripa Grande.

Disinfection was a crucial component of the action performed by Castelli's devices. Foodstuff, cattle, and goods were deposited on the Tiber banks upon arrival, while the latter were treated through steam within the 'caldare' before being released for trade (Figure 4). The same procedure was applied to correspondence, which was piled on wooden structures before being enveloped in warm vapours and perfumes to eliminate the dangers of transmitting contagion (Figure 5).

The entire population was subjected to quarantine within their homes. Women were prohibited from leaving their houses, and reporting potentially infected individuals and deaths due to the epidemic became a moral and legal duty. The segregation of the sick, the suspected sick, and convalescents was enforced through the establishment of lazarets. With the exception of two, these

[56]Wells, "Prints Commemorating the Rome, 1656 Plague Epidemic"; San Juan, *Rome: A City out of Print*.

Figure 3. Rouhier, Louis. 'Ordini diligenze e ripari fatti con universal benefitio dalla paterna pietà di N.S. PP Alesandro VII et eminentissimi cardinali della santa congregazione della sanità per liberare la città di Roma dal contagio.' February 1657. Etching, 418 × 528 mm. Published in Gastaldi, Gerolamo. *Tractatus de avertenda et profliganda peste politico-legalis*. Bononiae: Camerali Typographia Manolessiana, 1684. No copyright page found.

detention facilities were located within the city walls by adapting existing ecclesiastical structures. The first lazaret was established on the Island of San Bartolomeo, today known as Isola Tiberina (Figure 6); subsequently, the Casaletto of Pio V, San Pancrazio, Santa Maria della Consolazione, the Carcere Nuovo at Campo Vaccino, the Monasteries of San Giuliano and Eusebio, and the San Saba Complex were also converted.

Finally, the bodies of those who died from the plague, duly separated between Christians and Jews, were transported on barges along the Tiber to be buried in two mass graves at San Paolo fuori le mura.

The management of the plague epidemic became an opportunity for Alexander VII to deploy a political-administrative structure of city governance that other political forces active within the city – namely the Popolo Romano and the foreign national communities – were unable to implement (Figure 7). The activation of the Congregation of Health through its legislative action thus resulted in a shift in the ability of the Pope – who, as Antonella De Michelis reminds us, 'was predominantly a foreign presence in Rome,'[57] as was the Chigi family – to impose his sovereignty and penetrated into domestic spaces, thereby radically changing the relationship between public spaces and private interests.

[57]De Michelis, "The Maestri Di Strade: Political Strategies and Social Mobility in Farnese Rome", 748.

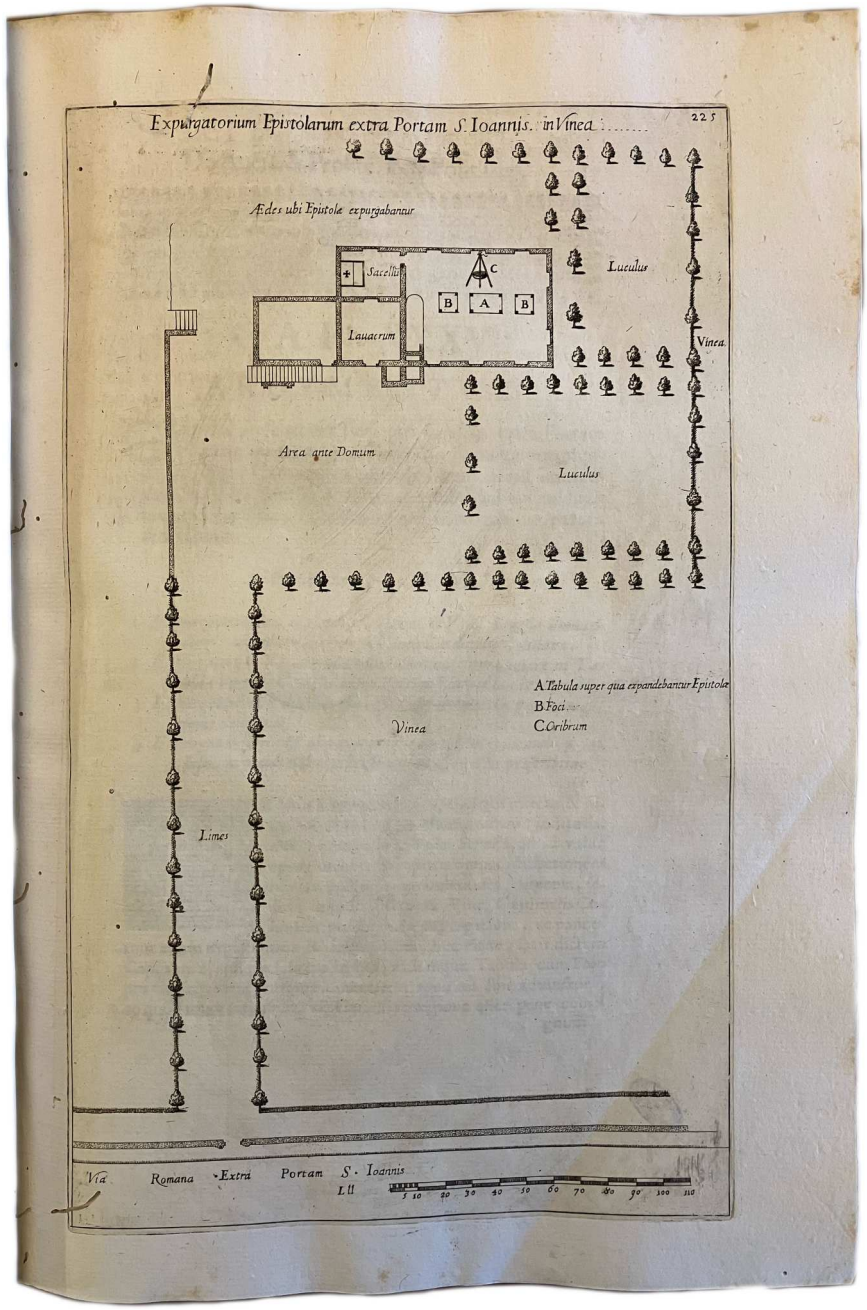

Figure 4. Castelli, Domenico. 'Expurgatorium Epistolaurm extra Portam S. Ioannis in Vinea.' Published in Gastaldi, Gerolamo. *Tractatus de avertenda et profliganda peste politico-legalis*. Bononiae: Camerali Typographia Manolessiana, 1684: 225. No copyright page found.

Forms of compensation

Alexander VII's actions within an immunitary field were not limited to the provision of health structures and socio-political prophylaxis devices. To a contemporary observer, the placement of

Figure 5. Castelli, Domenico. 'Graphides Instrumentorum in Expurgatorijs pro suffimentis.' Published in Gastaldi, Gerolamo. *Tractatus de avertenda et profliganda peste politico-legalis*. Bononiae: Camerali Typographia Manolessiana, 1684: 231. No copyright page found.

lazarets, the deployment of distancing devices, and the imposition of quarantine might seem the result of an automatism dictated by a practice – albeit unscientific from the perspective of today's medical knowledge – that was consolidated and shared. This consideration, however, would not take into account the fact that public health, understood as a State's objective towards its

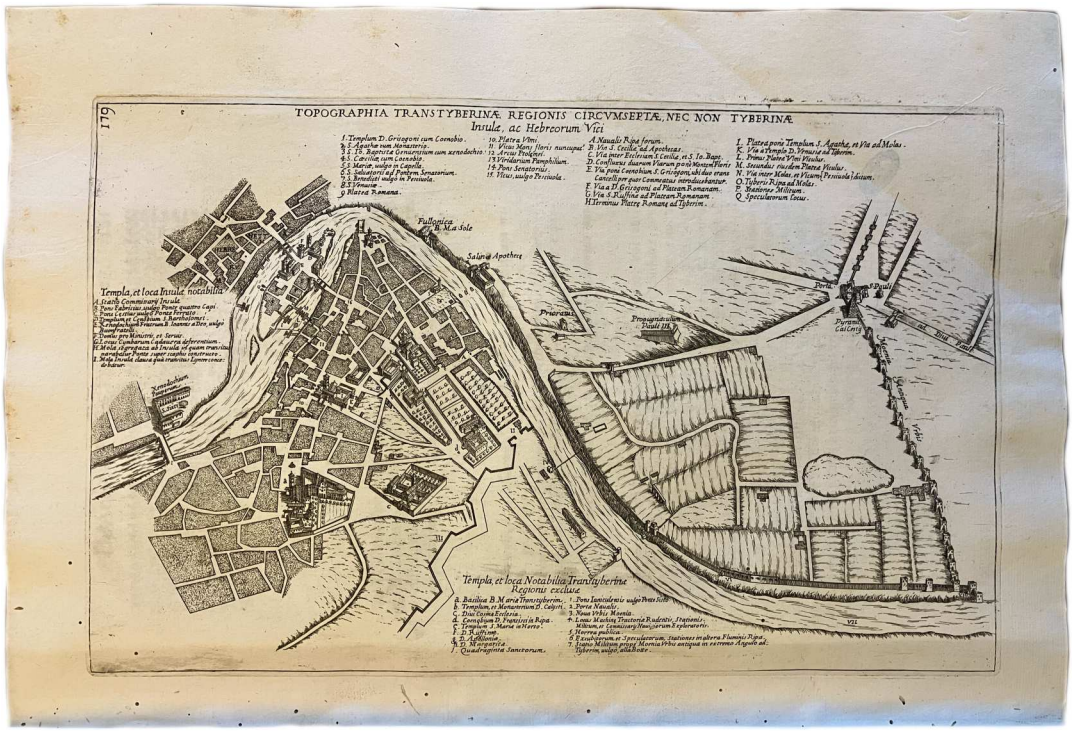

Figure 6. Castelli, Domenico. 'Topographia Transtyberinæ Regionis Circumseptæ, Nec Non Tyberinæ.' Published in Gastaldi, Gerolamo. *Tractatus de avertenda et profliganda peste politico-legalis*. Bononiae: Camerali Typographia Manolessiana, 1684: 179. No copyright page found.

population, along with the concept of 'population' itself, only became one of the goals of national States starting from the eighteenth century.[58]

More importantly, it would imply that the health of the people was considered, at the dawn of Modernity, as the foundational sense of a community idea, as if it were a beneficial attribute on which to build the sense of belonging of the Romans. More realistically, what was sought to be eradicated in the Early Modern period was rather the disintegrating factor that a phenomenon like the plague could insinuate into the city's functioning mechanisms – devoid as it was of social and economic cushioning mechanisms for times of crisis – and thus weaken the established power structures.

The gradual overlap between authority and territory – as we have seen above – became the political-legal device for the affirmation of sovereign power in the seventeenth century. However, the tools to implement it at the urban level did not consist, for the Papacy, in an immediate appropriation of land by the Roman sovereign and the Curia. Rather, the focus on the legal-territorial gap was implemented through an expansion of the priorities of public *decorum*, which only apparently asserted itself to the detriment of private sphere reasons. Urban private property in Rome – buildings and land – underwent, between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, a legal regulation that determined not so much the status quo, but the potential of its evolution mechanisms within the development plans promoted by the Pontiffs. To simplify, there was an administration of legal

[58]Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*.

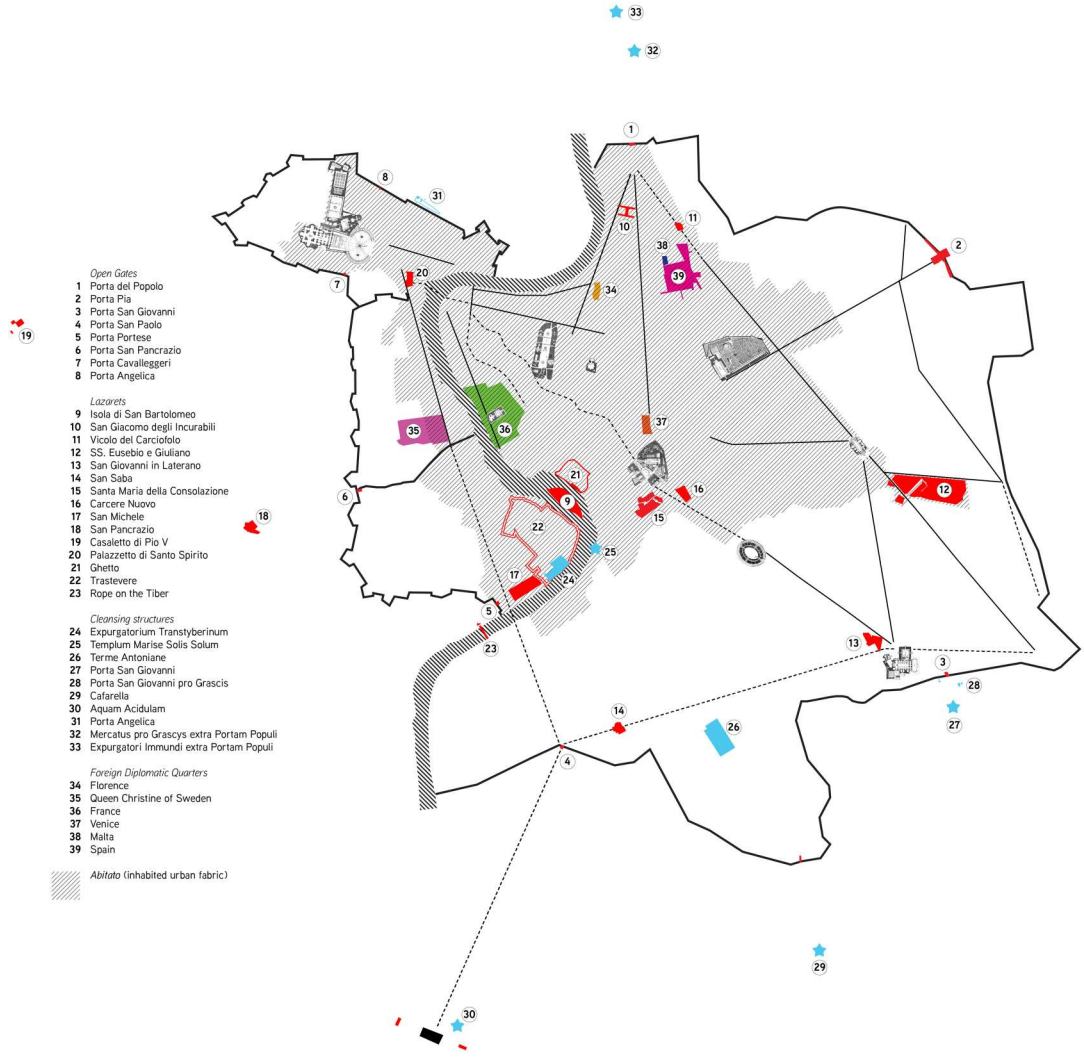

Figure 7. Author. Map of Rome showing major streets, Alexander VII's plague prophylaxis system, and Foreign Diplomatic Quarters.

potential that put part of the population in the legal conditions to appropriate neighbouring private properties at the expense of those who were damaged by the decorum action promoted by the Pope.

The urban development of Rome during the pontificate of Alexander VII was still regulated by Gregory XIII's Bull (p. 1572–85) *De aedificiis et iure congrui* of 1574,[59] whose principles referred, by repealing it, to the previous Bull issued by Sixtus IV (p. 1471–84) *Ampliatio iurisdictionis SRE* of 1480.[60] The basic principle of both was to generate building activity from a rupture in the urban balance determined by Papal action. That is, in the case of opening a street or a square for public use, if a private residential building was damaged and thus rendered unusable (*incommodo*) for the same purpose, the owner would have to sell it at a fair price (*iusto pretio*) to the neighbour who had

[59]Gregorius XIII, "De aedificiis et iure congrui".
[60]Sixtus IV, "Ampliatio iurisdictionis SRE".

a right of pre-emption on the sale (*is prae omnibus obtineat*). The Camerlengo and the two Masters of the Streets, acting in the name and on behalf of the Pope, regulated the legality of the sale, possibly decided the price, and imposed penalties on transgressors.

The Bull of Gregory XIII was soon followed by that of Sixtus V, *Privilegia, et Immunitates pro aedificantibus, vel habitantibus in Via Felici, et in Via Pia Almae Urbis*, issued on September 13, 1587.[61] Pope Peretti's action justified the need to expand the *abitato* to accommodate the 'great influx' of foreigners continually arriving in Rome. The declared intention was to allow 'inhabitants and citizens, as well as […] curials and all pilgrims [to] reside in this part of the city with complete peace and tranquility, and *to fill it with new houses*.'[62]

To this end, Sixtus V constructed a new road, the Via Felice, which connected Trinità dei Monti to the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, and levelled the existing Via Pia from the Palazzo di Monte Cavallo to the Church of Santa Susanna. As Luigi Spezzaferro recalls, it was no coincidence that the arrangement of Via Pia only concerned the section from the Quirinale to Piazza Termini, and not the entire street already built by Pius IV (p. 1563–65), which ended at Porta Pia designed by Michelangelo.[63] Next to Santa Susanna, the Mostra dell'Acqua Felice was built, the terminal infrastructure of the new Sistine aqueduct that brought water from the areas of Palestrina and Zagarolo to the vicinity of the Quirinal Hill.[64]

To foreigners and Roman citizens who intended to invest in building and residing, Sixtus V granted perpetual immunity from the confiscation of their real estate due to any crime (except for *lèse-majesté*). Furthermore, for foreigners who 'reside in the aforementioned houses or buildings located on the above-mentioned streets for two consecutive years, they may freely and lawfully enjoy the same *immunities and exemptions* enjoyed by true and original Roman citizens.'[65] Meanwhile, those who temporarily reside in these houses could not have their debts collected, even if contracted with the Apostolic Chamber itself.

This was the application of the Roman *immunitas* device, which exempted residents of a certain area from paying taxes, debts, and criminal liabilities while maintaining political-legal control over the area. But it was also the application of what Festus defined as the condition of the guest, according to which the latter had the same rights as Roman citizens.[66]

The legal device established by Gregory XIII, of which the Sistine one constituted a further variant, was the fundamental promoter of the spatial transition from the medieval city – predominantly consisting of two or three-story buildings often not connected to each other – [67] to what would more properly become the Baroque city in the seventeenth century. The mechanism devised by Sixtus IV – and implemented by Gregory XIII – based on expropriation, disruption of private property, and consequent annexation of the damaged property by the neighbour through the right of pre-emption, combined with the explicit immunity granted by Sixtus V for new constructions, favoured the realization of palaces (*aedificium insigne*)[68] arranged along the new straight arteries (*strata ac directa*)[69] that replaced the medieval row houses (Figure 8 and Figure 9).

[61]Sixtus V, "Privilegia, et Immunitates pro aedificantibus, vel habitantibus in Via Felici, et in Via Pia Almae Urbis".
[62]Ibid., §2 (my emphasis)
[63]Spezzaferro and Broise, "La Roma di Sisto V".
[64]Benedetti, "L'Acquedotto Felice da Porta Furba alla Mostra del Mosè".
[65]Sixtus V, "Privilegia, et Immunitates pro aedificantibus, vel habitantibus in Via Felici, et in Via Pia Almae Urbis", §3.
[66]See note 45
[67]Broise, "Les maisons d'habitation à Rome aux XVe et XVIe siècles : les leçons de la documentation graphique"; Broise and Vigueur, "Strutture famigliari, spazio domestico e architettura civile a Roma alla fine del Medioevo".
[68]Gregorius XIII, "De aedificiis et iure congrui", §6.
[69]Sixtus V, "Privilegia, et Immunitates pro aedificantibus, vel habitantibus in Via Felici, et in Via Pia Almae Urbis", §2.

Two consequences are fundamental to understanding how the production of urban space in Rome is determined by this legislation. The first is that there is a supreme interest, the public good, which stands above the rights of private property.[70] The second is that the former justifies itself as a promoter of building activity, which in turn constitutes the economic engine and primary industry of Rome. At the very basis of the possibility of transforming the initial state is the availability of a counter-value, a 'iusto et rationabili pretio'[71] to be paid to the expropriated or damaged owners.

The immunitary mechanism implicit in the Bulls is due to the introduction of the *compensation* device between the sovereign and private individuals. This mechanism has a negative value as it is not itself the active action of a subject, but the reaction to an action to be neutralized. As Odo Marquard reiterates, 'compensation means filling situations of lack through surrogate actions or acts of reparation.'[72] For there to be economic compensation, there must be damage whose removal will not be erased but highlighted by the compensation – in this case, economic-legal – through reparation. Roberto Esposito observes how the exposure of loss or discomfort through forms of compensatory reparation overlaps semantically with the immunitary sphere: similarly, medicalization aims to soothe or heal a wound, but not to eliminate its marks.

Thus, the entry into an immunitary sphere by individuals in Rome, implicit in the aforementioned Bulls, consists of legally and spatially determining the individual's physical and juridical position in relation to public space as soon as the former intends to promote even a small building initiative.

The mediation between private individuals and sovereign power was the responsibility of the Papacy's operational arm in the field, namely the two *Maestri di Strada*, a figure reintroduced in 1425 by Martin V (p. 1417–31)[73] but whose Magistracy existed since the thirteenth century.[74] The office of Master of the Streets was a civic position under the Municipality's purview until 1549, when under Pope Paul III (p. 1534–49), they were absorbed into the Apostolic Chamber under the title *Presidenza delle Strade*.[75] The fact that their designation changed from *Maestri aedificioum et stratarum* in the thirteenth century to *Magistri viarum et aedificiorum* or simply *viarum* in the sixteenth century is an indication of the changed order of priorities regarding the means by which the city was produced.[76] The street gradually gained importance for the development of Rome with the growth of the Curia and consequently, following the demand for urbanization of new areas of the *disabitato* and the arrangement of medieval morphology neighbourhoods. The Magistracy of the Streets was thus composed of figures with judicial power, who had jurisdiction over every building and road work within the Aurelian Walls.

Regarding the negotiation between private individuals and the Masters of the Streets, compensation operated on two levels. The first was inherent in the mechanism of issuing the '*licenza*' by the

[70]"publicam utilitatem in iis praeferri privatae commoditate". Sixtus IV, "Ampliatio iurisdictionis SRE", §2 (my emphasis).
[71]Sixtus IV, "Ampliatio iurisdictionis SRE", §1. "Et nihilominus compellendus ab eisdem camerario et magistris, vel promissi perficere, vel quae proptera emit, et etiam illis vicina, quorum occasione emit, et in quibus se aedificatorum proposuerat, loca et domos aliis aedificare volentibus, iusto pretio, sicut supradictum est, aestimando, absque ullo augmento, vendere." Gregorius XIII, "De aedificiis et iure congrui", §19.
[72]Marquard, *Estetica e anestetica*. Quoted in Esposito, *Immunitas. Protezione e negazione della vita*. For a genealogical investigation of the mechanism of compensation see Svagelski, *L'idée de compensation en France, 1750–1850*.
[73]Martinum V. "Reintegratio antiqui officii et iurisdictionis magistrorum viarum Urbis eiusque districtus".
[74]The early studies on this Magistrature are Schiaparelli, "Alcuni documenti dei «Magistri Aedificicirum Urbis»"; Re, "Maestri di strade"; Scaccia Scabafoni, "L'Antico statuto dei Magistri Stratarum e altri documenti relativi a quella magistratura". For a recent and comprehensive study, see Verdi, *Maestri di edifici e di strade a Roma nel secolo XV. Fonti e problemi*.
[75]De Michelis, "The Maestri Di Strade: Political Strategies and Social Mobility in Farnese Rome".
[76]Re, "Maestri di strade".

Figure 8. a. Tempesta, Antonio. *Recens prout hodie iacet almae urbis Romae cum omnibus viis aedificiisque prospectus accuratissime delineatus*. 1593. Etching with some engraving, 109 × 245 cm in 12 plates. National Library of Sweden, Stockholm. Public Domain. (Detail). b. Falda, Giovanni Battista. *Nuova Pianta et Alzata Della Città Di Roma Con Tutte Le Strade Piazze et Edificii de Tempii Palazzi Giardini et Altre Fabbriche Antiche e Moderne Come Si Trovano al Presente Nel Pontificato Di N.S. Papa Innocentio XI Con Le Loro Dichiarationi Nomi et Indice*. 1676. 1540 × 1530 mm. RP-P-OB-207.658. Rijksmuseum. (Detail). Public Domain.

Figure 9. a. Tempesta, Antonio. *Recens prout hodie iacet almae urbis Romae cum omnibus viis aedificiisque prospectus accuratissime delineatus*. 1593. Etching with some engraving, 109 × 245 cm in 12 plates. National Library of Sweden, Stockholm. Public Domain. (Detail). b. Falda, Giovanni Battista. *Nuova Pianta et Alzata Della Città Di Roma Con Tutte Le Strade Piazze et Edificii de Tempii Palazzi Giardini et Altre Fabbriche Antiche e Moderne Come Si Trovano al Presente Nel Pontificato Di N.S. Papa Innocentio XI Con Le Loro Dichiarationi Nomi et Indice*. 1676. 1540 × 1530 mm. RP-P-OB-207.658. Rijksmuseum. (Detail). Public Domain.

Masters of the Streets. The issuance of this license involved a cost, in the form of a *gettito* or tax required from the licensee.[77]

The second, and more interesting, form of compensation was the negotiation between public and private land. The actual license consisted of a descriptive text of the works granted to the builder or client, often accompanied by a drawing provided to the promoter of the building project.[78] The meticulousness of the description gives an idea of the stakes involved in the negotiation between private and public land. The language of the licenses is formulated through the concession

[77]Connors, "Alliance and Enmity in Roman Baroque Urbanism".
[78]Hibbard argues that this is the reason why a relatively low number of these drawings and maps are preserved in public archives today. Hibbard, "Di alcune licenze rilasciate dai Mastri di Strade per opere di edificazione a Roma (1586-'89, 1602-'34)".

(i.e. '*Concediamo licenzia al …* '), the description of the requested works, and finally the compensatory deal by the private individual, which consisted of the further concession of public space for the execution of the works,[79] or, conversely, a compensation (which most likely mitigated the pecuniary one) of the cession of private land to public space.[80]

The Masters of the Streets acted with the assistance of a notary and an assessor trained in law.[81] This also means that the licenses they issued were akin to contracts stipulated between private individuals and the Apostolic Chamber. The contract – far from being a legal instrument invented in the Early Modern period – thus becomes a form that allows the individual the possibility of promoting a building activity. At the same time, the contract constitutes a 'the juridically "privatistic" and logically "privative"'[82] institution through which individuals can 'neutralise [the *munus*] poisonous fruits,'[83] that is, free themselves from the idea of the burden of obligation that the *munus* implies.[84] In other words, the mechanism of architectural and urban production activated by the *licenza* becomes, for the individual, a form of immunization.

Inward immunity: Louis XIV and the French quarter

Another form of immunization was enjoyed by a series of foreign communities that settled in Rome from the sixteenth century, and more consistently during the second half of the seventeenth century. The cosmopolitan character of the Urbe regained prominence after the establishment of Martin V, the hypertrophic development of the Papal Curia, and the consequent weakening of municipal life forms.[85] Most of the time, these communities organized themselves socio-economically according to the interests of their own nation, such as the Florentines, Genoese, Venetians, as well as Spaniards, Portuguese, and French.

This social organization also had urban consequences, as these communities settled in specific areas of the city, thus qualitatively determining its social composition and the nature of commercial traffic.[86] Just as the Florentine nation settled in the area of Piazza di Ponte, the Spanish community concentrated in the terminal area of Via del Babuino, while the French had Trinità dei Monti on the Pincio as their reference point.

Most importantly, the *nationes* became the context within which diplomacy crystallised in what initially was a simple residence – often rented, especially in the sixteenth century – of the ambassador. However, in the seventeenth century, this evolved into a true diplomatic quarter.[87]

Indeed, the history of relations between foreign states is inseparable from historiography on diplomatic relations based on the validity or violation of ambassadorial immunity. Moreover, the

[79]" … pigliando del publico … "; " … possino pigliare del publico … "; " … tutto il sito publico già statali concesso … "; " … pigliando al cantone palmi sette, et mezzo del publico … ."; " … concedendoli tutto il sito publico … "; etc. Hibbard, "Di alcune licenze rilasciate dai Mastri di Strade per opere di edificazione a Roma (1586-'89, 1602-'34)".

[80]" … senza occupare del publico … "; "non pigliando niente del publico … "; " … purchè non pigli niente del sito publico … "; " … si è ritirato nel suo sito, et ha lasciato nel publico tutto quello, che mostra la detta pianta … "; " … nel quale cantone si lassa al publico doi palmi … "; etc. Hibbard, "Di alcune licenze rilasciate dai Mastri di Strade per opere di edificazione a Roma (1586-'89, 1602-'34)".

[81]Connors, "Alliance and Enmity in Roman Baroque Urbanism".

[82]Esposito, *Communitas. The Origin and Destiny of Community*, 13.

[83]Ibid., 14.

[84]"*Munus* is a specific type of *donum*, from which it is to be distinguished by its obligatory character, implied by its root *mei-*, which denotes 'exchange'. Once the recipient accepted the *munus* ('exchange-gift'), he was under a burden of obligation (*onus*) to make a due return, whether in kind (*donum*) or by a service (*officium*)". Zagagi, "A Note on *Munus*, *Munus Fungi* in Early Latin", 280.

[85]Berengo, *Città italiana e città europea: ricerche storiche*. See also Cabibbo and Serra, *Venire a Roma, restare a Roma: forestieri e stranieri fra Quattro e Settecento*.

[86]Calabi and Lanaro, *La città italiana e i luoghi degli stranieri. XIV-XVIII secolo*.

[87]Fletcher, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: The Rise of the Resident Ambassador*.

subject of immunity in the diplomatic sphere developed thanks to the growing literature on the subject that flourished in the early modern age, through which the privileges of legal and penal immunity of the host country, tax immunities, the personal inviolability of the ambassador and, finally, the extension of the latter to the ambassador's residence (*franchise de l'hôtel*) and the diplomatic quarter (*franchise du quartier*) were affirmed. Indeed, the concept of immunity applied to the person of an ambassador in relation to the legislation of the host country was, as perfectly summarized, 'rooted in necessity, buttressed by religion, sanctioned by custom, and fortified by reciprocity.'[88]

The first and fundamental act of asserting power has traditionally been to establish a limit and, in the case of Louis XIV in Rome, this meant defining the spatial boundaries of an area over which his ambassador's immunity was in force. The accepted practice with which this limit was claimed was based on the extension of the diplomat's gaze: his immunity extended as far as his gaze could go. One can argueIt can be argued that the gaze as a means for defining the quarter's borders in Rome originated from the mercantilist ways of conceiving extraterritoriality as an extension of consular privileges in the area of trade in the Mediterranean.[89] The *franchise du quartier* is thus established by fluid boundaries which will enforced by the deployment of patrols that will militarily and intermittently mark the border.

However, neighbourhood boundaries will remain a matter of custom: as the history of diplomacy often confirms, practice precedes theory. There will be no explicit boundaries defining the extent of the French quarter, no official maps showing its establishment. On the contrary, as on the sea, the boundaries will be mobile and the result of continuous negotiation, a symbol also, of the fragility of the papal sovereignty.

From 1662 onwards, Louis XIV governed the area surrounding the Farnese Palace, which allowed the ambassador, and consequently his King, to maintain intact their dignity and diplomatic prerogatives. This area under French jurisdiction was delimited by the Tiber, Via dei Pettinari, Vicolo delle Grotte, Via dei Giubbonari e dei Cappellari, Via di Montoro, and Via Sant'Eligio (Figure 10). It included a large part of the Rione Regola, and when added to the other foreign quarters, by the mid-seventeenth century, the suspension of papal jurisdiction corresponded to about a third of Rome's territory.[90]

The battle fought on the plane of immunity was not limited to the exercise of ceremonial but implied a weakening of papal power based on the ancient concept of *immunitas*, or the suspension of taxes guaranteed by the distribution of *lettres de familiarité*. These documents, originally intended to protect the diplomatic entourage, were granted 'to all kinds of people, especially artisans,'[91] whose lack of tax collection thus undermined the coffers of the Apostolic Chamber. French immunity thus became a fiscal shield under which an increasing number of people aspired to relocate their businesses and residences, thus altering the traditional economy of the Rione Regola.[92]

The political tension led to the clash on August 20, 1662 between the papal Corsican Guard and the diplomatic entourage of the French ambassador, Duke of Créquy (1623–87). As has been

[88]Frey and Frey, *The History of Diplomatic Immunity*, 4.

[89]"Si quelqu'un de nos Vassaux ayant chargé des vituailles dans le Païs de nostres obeïssance, est pris en Mer, les François qui se etouveroient sur son Vaisseau et à sa solde ne seront point fait Esclaves." [If any of our vessels, having loaded provisions in the territory under our obedience, is captured at sea, the Frenchmen found on his vessel and in his service shall not be made slaves.] Louis XIV. *Les capitulations entre l'empereur de France*, VII (my translation). For a discussion of the role of the French consul as a figure who, beyond the strictly diplomatic context, contributed to the spread of extraterritoriality practices, refer to Pal, "Early Modern Extraterritoriality."

[90]Marquis de Pomponne, *Mémoires du Marquis de Pomponne*, 28.

[91]Ibid., 28.

[92]Parisi, "Il rione Regola e 'la Regola' dei vaccinari".

Figure 10. De Rossi, Matteo Gregorio, and Giovanni Battista De Rossi. *Nuova Pianta di Roma Presente con i Disegni e Nomi delle Chiese, Palazzi, Edificii, Piazze, Strade, Fortificationi, et altre cose aggiunte disegnata et intagliata da Matteo Gregorio de Rossi Romano appresso Gio: Batta: Rossi Milanese in Piazza Navona con Privilegio del Som. Pont. l'anno MDCLXVIII. 1668*. Engraving on copper, cm. 169 × 129. Roma VII. 250. Biblioteca dell'Istituto di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte in Roma (Detail). No copyright found.

extensively described,[93] what seemed on that summer day to be yet another skirmish between the soldiers of the respective sides turned into a night of violent fighting and the siege of Palazzo Farnese, the seat of the French ambassador, by the Corsican soldiers. Although historians now agree in attributing the act of provocation to the French, the responsibility for falling into the trap fell entirely on the Corsicans, and moreover, on the Pope's brother, Don Mario Chigi, head of the papal militias, who was guilty of intervening to calm the situation only the following morning. No documents have been found to suggest that this military clash was part of an explicit strategy planned by Louis XIV. However, as Monsignor Cesare Rasponi (1615–75) recounts, there are numerous reasons to interpret this battle as a prelude to a subsequent territorial claim in Rome. According to Rasponi – who, in mentioning it, assumes the legal-territorial value of the 'French quarter' – the Pope tried in every way to mitigate the offence caused to Ambassador Créquy, his family, and consequently, to avoid the accusation of *lèse-majesté*. Beyond the obvious biases taken by the Monsignor in his report, it is interesting to note how 'the court of the Lord Ambassador no longer took the form of a court, but of a regiment of militia, for they had given out four

[93]Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 91–115.

Captains' licenses of two hundred men each, and declared a Colonel. They lined up in His Excellency's very courtyard in order, rehearsed their muskets, exercised and resigned their soldiers, as in a Square of Arms.'[94] But above all, in addition to threatening an invasion of Rome from within – almost an autoimmune reaction – the French party was recruiting among the population by enlisting 'people throughout the city in the service of His Excellency, and to avoid appearance, they were left at liberty with a secret agreement to reappear from time to time, and to rush to assigned places when called.'[95] Furthermore, 'all the houses in Piazza Farnese had been emptied to fill them with the people who were gathering.'[96] The political-biological immunitarian parallel continues in Rasponi's account when, almost resigned to the events, he reflects laconically that 'a necessity of defence absolves from everything, while obliging only to one's own health and safety, and that of the public.'[97]

The Corsican affaire led Alexander VII to accept the humiliating French conditions stipulated in the Treaty of Pisa on February 12, 1664. Of the 15 articles discussed and signed by Rasponi – who interestingly covered the role of secretary of the Congregation for Health in 1657 and plenipotentiary in Pisa in 1662 – and Louis de Bourlémont (1618–97), appointed plenipotentiary minister by Louis for the occasion, two were particularly relevant to the urban developments of Rome.

Article IX established the Pope's obligation to ensure the safety of the French ambassador, emphasizing that he represented Louis XIV's persona.[98] This implied that in the name of the security of the diplomatic 'body,' the urban space representing its jurisdiction had to extend well beyond the walls of the Farnese Palace. Security was thus affirmed as an implicit principle of urban generation, or as a protective buffer that extended from the inviolable core represented by the projection of Louis XIV's royal dignity in Rome through the ambassador.

Finally, Article XIII, although terse in form, simultaneously determined the materialization of Louis's authority and condemned Alexander VII for violating it.[99] Summarizing a lengthy negotiation in a few but effective words, the article established the construction of a 'pyramid' to be erected in front of the Corsican barracks, bearing an inscription denouncing the action that occurred in the infamous 'attack' (Figure 11).

As described by Dietrich Erben, Louis's pyramid had strong symbolic connotations.[100] Firstly, it was a representation of royal authority. It cannot go unnoticed that in the French edition of Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* published in Paris in 1636, the royal attributes of the personification of the Prince's Glory were accentuated (Figure 12a).[101] Compared to the Italian editions of 1611 and 1613 (Figure 12b, c), the Glory holding a pyramid with the left arm was crowned and held a laurel crown in the right hand. Ripa explains how the pyramid was the symbol of the magnificence of the sovereign who builds works for posterity. This message was received by Louis XIV, who in 1683 had René-Antoine Houasse paint the ceiling for the *salon de l'Abondance* at Versailles, where

[94]"La corte del Sig. Ambasciatore non haveva più forma di Corte, ma di un Reggimento di Militia, poiché si erano date fuori quattro patenti di Capitani di ducento huomini l'una, dichiarato un Colonnello. Si schieravano nel Cortile stesso di Sua Eccellenza in ordinanza, si provavano i moschetti, si esercitavano e rassegnavano i soldati, come in una Piazza d'Armi." Rasponi, "Barb.lat. 5355", f .25.
[95]"per tutta la città genti al servitio di Sua Eccellenza, e per fuggire l'apparenza, si lasciavano in libertà con secreto concerto di lasciarsi rivedere di tratto in tratto, e di accorrer chiamati a luoghi assegnati." Ibid.
[96]"si erano nella Piazza Farnese fatte votar svuotare tutte le case per riempirle della Gente che si andava ammassando." Ibid., f. 28.
[97]"una necessità di difesa disobbliga da tutto, mentre obbliga alla sola salute et sicurezza propria, e del pubblico". Ibid., f. 26r.
[98]"Sa Sainteté ordonnera d'une maniere precise & efficace à ses Ministres de porter à l'Ambassadeur de sa Majesté le respect qui est deu à celeuy qui represente la personne d'un si grand Roy, Fils Aisné de l'Eglise, tant aimé, & estimé de sa Sainteté". *Traité de Pise*, 11.
[99]"Il sera ellevé une Pyramide à Rome vis-à-vis l'ancien Corps-de-garde des Corses, avec une inscription dans les termes concertez, qui contiendra en substance le Decret rendu contre la Nation Corse". *Traité de Pise*, 12.
[100]Erben, "Die Pyramide Ludwigs XIV. in Rom".
[101]Baudoin and Ripa, *Iconologie*. The first Italian edition was Ripa, *Iconologia*.

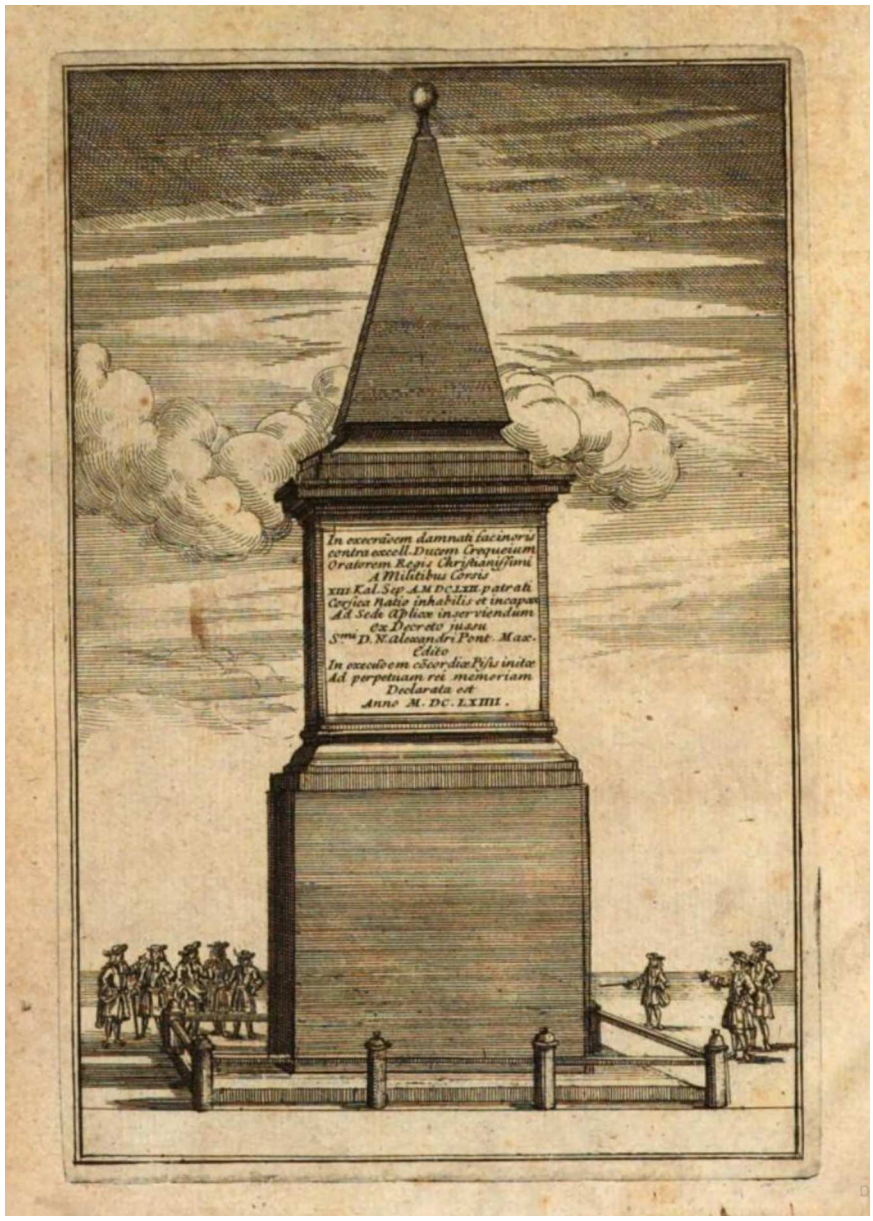

Figure 11. Régnier-Desmarais, François-Séraphin. *Histoire des Démeslez de la Cour de France avec la Cour de Rome, au sujet de l'affaire des Corses*, 1707. No copyright page found.

Magnificence holds a pyramid and is accompanied by a symbolic architectural drawing representing the sovereign's architectural achievements.

The pyramid also appeared in Antoine Coysevox's medallion from 1681–82, placed in the *salon de la Guerre* of Versailles. The room served as a hinge between the *appartement du Roi* and the *galerie des glaces*, and the bas-relief was therefore the first focal point of the ceremonial reception of foreign ambassadors at court. The pyramid was embraced by the Glory, who, behind

Figure 12 . a. De Bie, Jacques (engraver). Gloire des Princes. Published in Baudoin, Jean, and Cesare Ripa. *Iconologie, ou Explication nouvelle de plusieurs images, emblemes, et autres figures hyerogliphiques des vertus, des vices, des arts, des sciences*. A Paris: Chez le graveur, 1636. No copyright found. b. Ripa, Cesare. *Gloria de' Principi*. Published in Ripa, Cesare. *Iconologia*. Padova: Pietro Paolo Tozzi, 1611: 205. No copyright found. c. Ripa, Cesare. *Gloria de' Principi*. Published in Ripa, Cesare. *Iconologia*. Siena: Appresso gli heredi di Matteo Florimi. Ad instanza di Bartolomeo Ruoti libraio in Fiorenza, 1613: 297. No copyright found.

Louis on horseback, demanded homage with the gesture of the hand and the laurel crown to his sovereign.

Nonetheless, the pyramid also incorporated another element, whose inscription in capital letters on the plaque showed only its most didactic aspect. This inscription indeed bore the words *In Execrationem Damnati Facinoris* […], referring to Louis XIV's explicit request to banish the Corsican Guard from Rome. The pyramid can thus also be read as a totemic monument, whose 'role of *compensating* for the pain and injuries arising from events'[102] acted as an antibody within a strictly immune logic. Erben has highlighted the semantic proximity that Louis's pyramid maintained with similar monuments by function, namely that of incorporating the memory of a founding event for the community to exorcise its harmful effects. The memory of the event is considered significant even by Furetière, who in his *Dictionnaire* seems to make explicit reference to the pyramid in Rome as an archetype of a typology rooted in myth.[103] Of the same rank, and within a semantic field more familiar to us in terms of immunity, Erben recalls the 'infamous column' erected in Milan during the plague of 1630. In that case, a true column was erected 'as a perpetual memory of such a crime' [*Cvivs Rei Memoria Æterna Vt Sit*] (of plague spreading) committed by – the innocent – Gian Giacomo Mora who was sentenced to death.[104]

The iconographic dissemination of the event was not limited to the visitors of Versailles, but reached a wider audience thanks to the minting of two commemorative medals for the creation and destruction of the 'infamous' monument. The legend of the first one from 1664 refers to 'The heinous crime of the Corsicans against the French spokesman',[105] while the second one from 1668 refers to the 'Abolition of the Monument to the violation of Lèse-majesté'.[106]

[102]Esposito, *Immunitas: The Protection and Negation of Life*, 107. My emphasis.
[103]"Piramide, se dit aussi d'un bastiment élevé en pointe, pour conserver la memoire de quelque action eclatante, par plusieurs tables & inscriptions qu'on met dessus. On a élevé des *piramides* en plusieurs occasions en France & à Rome." Furetière, *Dictionnaire universel*, 135.
[104]Ripamonti and Cusani, *La peste di Milano del 1630*.
[105]"OB NEFANDUM SCELUS A CORSIS EDITUM IN ORATOREM REGIS FRANCORUM." Académie Royale des Médailles et des Inscriptiones, *Medailles sur les principaux evenements du regne de Louis le Grand* , 77.
[106]"VIOLATÆ MAJESTATIS MONUMENTUM ABOLITUM." Académie Royale des Médailles et des Inscriptiones, *Medailles sur les principaux evenements du regne de Louis le Grand* , 109.

The first representation of the French monument built in Rome was François Ragot's engraving from 1664. The drawing was produced as evidence of the construction, which, according to Bourlémont, lasted only two weeks. The image does not clarify the placement of the pyramid in its urban context, and the imposing size seems deliberately exaggerated. However, the communicative and urban implications are clear. On the one hand, the plaque is visible from a great distance. On the other hand, the monument, whose base is formed by an approximately three-meter-high undecorated cube, is further protected by a barrier of stone posts and an iron railing.

The position of the pyramid in the urban context is clearly visible on Matteo Gregorio de Rossi's map of Rome from 1668 (Figure 10). The element occupies the recess of a building near the facade of the hospice of the Trinità dei Pellegrini, facing the Corsican barracks, and near the Monte di Pietà and the Antonio Barberini's palace, cardinal protector of the French cause.

The detailed context is evident from a map published by Erben dating back to 1664 (Figure 13).[107] The most important feature is the stone posts with which the busy Strada della Regola (or Strada dei Vaccinari) and the narrow alley leading to the Church of San Salvatore in Campo were closed to traffic. Despite this drastic measure being avoided by Cesare Rasponi, the sheer size of the pyramid hindered the manoeuvres of carts that from the commercial area of the Rione Regola aimed to travel along Via dei Pettinari to Trastevere via the Ponte Sisto.

Beyond the symbolic implications useful for French propaganda and the programmatic interferences on the economic life of the neighbourhood, the pyramid placed in front of the Trinità dei Pellegrini raised a fundamental question for the diplomatic clash between Alexander VII and Louis XIV. To what extent did the territory under French jurisdiction extend? Were the boundaries of the district fixed or fluid? And finally, was the pyramid a way to define already established borders or an architectural element aimed at claiming new ones?

The answer to these questions would be essential not only to understand how a single architectural emergency was essential to the celebration of Bourbon power but also to reassess the Baroque plan of Alexander in at least partial response to foreign claims. A preliminary hypothesis has been put forward by Elena Napolitano, who interprets a drawing regarding the positioning of the pyramid also published by Erben, which dates it to 1667, three years after its construction.[108] According to the wording at the top, 'The pyramid is located on the borders of French jurisdiction and at the beginning of Ripagrande.' Napolitano argues that the pyramid was an excuse to extend the limit of the jurisdiction of the *franchise du quartier* beyond previously established boundaries. The hypothesis is certainly fascinating and, according to the author, reveals how the obelisk shape of the pyramid played a role in territorial claims based on the ambassador's gaze. The architectural element would thus be a landmark whose mere existence and visibility from the French quarter would guarantee the extension of extraterritoriality.

The present text does not intend to exclude this hypothesis. However, it should be considered that the more detailed drawing from 1664 shows how the pyramid was positioned within the roadway gap of the hospice, which does not seem entirely consistent with such a strategy of claiming based on the field of view.

Nevertheless, a third drawing published by Bruno Neveu and dated 1687, i.e. 19 years after the demolition of the pyramid and close to the abandonment of the *franchises* in 1689, maps and precisely outlines the boundaries of the French quarter. On the southeast side, the dashed line runs along Via dei Pettinari – from Ponte Sisto to the church of the Trinità dei Pellegrini – then deviates

[107]Erben, "Die Pyramide Ludwigs XIV. in Rom", 435.
[108]Napolitano, "Prospects of Statecraft: Diplomacy, Territoriality, and the Vision of French Nationhood in Rome, 1660–1700".

Figure 13. Author. Map of the French Diplomatic Quarter, showing the location of the Pyramid according to the documents published by Dietrich Erben and Bruno Neveu.

onto the current Via di Capo Ferro to enter Vicolo delle Grotte towards Campo de' Fiori. The graphical trace seems definitive and leaves no room for interpretation. However, the caption to the letter 'V' explains how the district included Piazza and Palazzo Spada, adding 'where the pyramid was.'[109] Perhaps the memory of the actual positioning of the pyramid had faded from the mind of the draftsman, confusing the gap of the hospice with Piazza Spada. Or more likely, and therefore in line with Napolitano's interpretation, that distance was a mobile and contested boundary, lasting for the temporal duration of the pyramid's existence itself, and highlighted the urban significance of the political-diplomatic clash between Louis XIV and Alexander VII.

Ultimately, the pyramid erected in front of the Corsican quarter embodied the defeat of Alexander VII in the face of Louis XIV's claims to impose French jurisdiction over part of the territory of the city of Rome. The clash between the soldiers of Ambassador Créquy and the Papal Guard was not merely the exacerbation of yet another skirmish between soldiers. It represented the French

[109]"V. Place Spada devant le palais de ce nom, ou esto(ient) la piramide." The drawing was published in Neveu, "'Regia Fortuna': Le Palais Farnèse durant la seconde moitié du XVIIe siècle", 483.

ambition for a new conception of an extraterritorial state, capable of superimposing monarchical sovereignty over territories that were not characterized by territorial contiguity. The city of Rome, which had been at the centre of European diplomatic interests for a century, and where foreign national communities had settled, influencing the economic and urban developments of a considerable part of the city's territory, bore the brunt of this ambition.

In this context, the French quarter represented the territory most capable of neutralizing and challenging the authority of the Pope. Diplomatic immunity thus became a political tool of struggle, fuelled by territory, incorporating it within its extraterritorial legal sphere, and by economy, diverting tax revenues from the Apostolic Chamber through the granting of immunities and privileges to the residents and merchants therein.

As was the case with the management of the plague, the definition and control of boundaries proved fundamental. To this end, the pyramid was erected to reinforce the custom through which the diplomatic quarter extended 'as far as the eye could see.' As a totemic element, it aimed to express in a central place for the social and economic life of the city the 'execration' towards Alexander VII for lèse-majesté. And, as has been argued, its possible aim was to extend the boundaries of the French quarter beyond the Trinità dei Pellegrini, effectively including and, therefore, neutralizing the former Corsican barracks as Papal military post.

Conclusion

In the second half of the seventeenth century, Rome experienced two major crises that directly involved the continent's leading spiritual and temporal Christian powers.

First, a devastating outbreak of plague swept through the city in May 1656. During the first year of his pontificate, Alexander VII was confronted with an unfamiliar internal enemy that claimed numerous lives and exacerbated the long-standing economic crisis of the Papal States, which had persisted since the beginning of the century. Moreover, the plague – perceived as a divine punishment – threatened to undermine the Pope's credibility as the leader of Christendom. This authority had already lost political influence on the European stage following the failures at Westphalia and the Île des Faisans.

During the same period, Rome also became an example of how the principles of natural law asserted by European diplomatic powers could manifest as a genuine territorial claim at the expense of papal jurisdiction within the urban territory. The inviolability of the ambassador's person, an expression of the dignity of the sovereign they represented, was transformed – through an expansive interpretation of Hugo Grotius's ideas – into the application of the principle of extraterritoriality, a concept that was never legally sanctioned. France, under Louis XIV, was the power that exploited this principle most aggressively, demonstrating how the resulting loss of tax revenue and jurisdiction over urban territory was part of a political strategy aimed at destabilizing papal authority.

Both crises unfolded according to a logic of immunity. In the case of the plague, the virus, a foreign body, breached the city's social body's protective barriers, which were represented by inadequate medical knowledge that often produced remedies more akin to superstition than science. In the case of the diplomatic quarters, immunity took the form of fiscal exemption for residents, just as diplomatic immunity enabled France to station a sizeable military presence in the heart of Rome.

The attempt by apostolic power to align the geometry of political authority with that of the urban territory was at stake. While the Rome of Sixtus V, according to Giedion, embodied the traits of the

first modern city thanks to its infrastructural development and social openness to foreigners between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Rome of Alexander VII might represent an equally modern character due to its use of locally scaled architecture with European resonance and significance.

The architectural and urban initiatives undertaken by Alexander VII were not solely aimed at transforming the city into a site of profit extraction, as recent interpretations of the urban developments promoted by Pope Peretti have suggested. Nor did they seek to incorporate foreign elements by granting them fiscal immunity to stimulate urban development, as occurred with Sixtus V's Via Felice.

Alexander lived in a different historical period, when foreign bodies – whether virological, diplomatic or fiscal – could pose a threat to the survival of his pontificate. His architectural endeavours aimed to neutralize this potential threat while simultaneously reviving the image of a papacy capable of engaging politically with other European powers.

The outbreak of the plague provided Pope Chigi with an opportunity to reorganize Rome's government. By granting jurisdictional and administrative powers to the Congregation of Health, he subjected the entire Roman population to its authority and, in the name of the health emergency, levelled the distinctions between public and private spaces. No part of the city escaped the Pope's gaze as he realized how the city's control amplified his authority.

Under these conditions, Alexander VII could hardly tolerate the extraterritorial claims advanced by foreign states in Rome. Subtracting territory meant subtracting jurisdiction and the vital space necessary to represent his authority. Louis XIV understood this well. Among Christian princes, he was the one who pursued expansionist ambitions most forcefully, even going so far as to erect a pyramid – a monument to the Pope's supposed *lèse-majesté*, and a totemic element capable of extending French jurisdiction into territory governed by the Pope.

Therefore, it is unsurprising that the pontificate of Alexander VII, the 'papa di grande edificazione,'[110] was marked by profound urban and architectural transformation. Unlike Sixtus V, his ambitions were distinctly anti-economic.

Alexander did not begin his design activity with grand monumental works celebrating the rediscovery of antiquity and asserting continuity with the Christian era, such as the redevelopment of the Corso or the construction of St Peter's colonnade. On the contrary, the plague emergency enabled him to centralize decision-making power and reorganize the city's governance through the Congregation of Health. As well as overseeing the construction of healthcare facilities to isolate plague victims and suspected cases, the Congregation imposed urban *decorum* citywide. As well as improving the hygiene of streets and squares – ensured by the work of the *Maestri di Strada* – this decorum involved prioritizing the public interest, and the Pope's design intentions in particular, over private interests. This was made possible through the extensive application of urban planning regulations legislated by sixteenth-century Pontiffs, which, in Alexander VII's case, included a compensation mechanism between the sovereign and private individuals.

Thus, it was the plague and diplomatic crises that catalyzed a series of architectural and urban initiatives based on an immunitarian approach, aimed at preserving life and ultimately asserting juridical agency over the contested territory of Rome, which remained politically disputed prior to the mid-seventeenth century.

[110]Besso, *Roma e il Papa nei proverbi e nei modi di dire*, 304.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Funding

This work was supported by Carlsbergfondet: [Grant Number CF23-1239].

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