

“ESQUILINO CHIAMA ROMA”: CONOSCENZA INTEGRATA, CONDIVISA E APPLICATA PER LA RIGENERAZIONE URBANA GRAZIE AD UNA *HERITAGE COMMUNITY*

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Abstract

Among the richest and most problematic districts in Rome, the Rione Esquilino is marked by very dense historical and archaeological evidence that highlights the city's grandeur. Here, the complicated overlapping of monuments and late XIXth century urban fabric intertwines with a multi-ethnic social structure. This combines old and new residents, Italians and Europeans, tourists attracted by cheap accommodation, economic operators, mostly Asian and moreover engaged in non-legal activities, and numerous homeless. Such problematic yet fascinating urban situation has stimulated the citizen's reactions since years and induces the inhabitants to fight for the redemption of the Rione.

Recently, the restoration of Bernini's statue of Santa Bibiana has focussed on the need for a scientific and operating understanding of the causes that generate such urban and social degradation. The assumption that "one cannot inhabit or govern a place without understanding it", was the trigger to establish the 'Gruppo di lavoro via Giolitti', a free working group without legal status. This team has given birth to an urban forum to involve those who believe in the urgency of a shared and applied knowledge process, intended as a collaboration platform based on the assessment of material and immaterial values of cultural heritage. Heritage, in fact, may become a meaningful field of exchange among people that may not share needs and interests, being threatened by primary needs and imminent discomfort, or by the claim of identity living spaces. Connections and gaps between Esquilino and the rest of historic centre of Rome are so evident that the name given to the forum "Esquilino chiama Roma" becomes self-significant.

In 2018 three sessions open to the citizenship allowed the team to reorganize the "research-action" into three operational directions: an urban project aiming at the requalification of the district; a program of sustainable socio-cultural cohesion; an evaluation process of the cultural heritage. Integration and interaction among the three, which still lack in the city's public policies and, also, in Unesco management plan for Rome's historic centre - encourages in this intent. Equally encouraging is the positive welcome to contracts among public and private stakeholders aiming at sustaining research, at starting-up fund-raising programs, at supporting studies and projects and at implementing knowledge systems on the web. These are actions to create a *learning community*, at the basis of a *heritage community*, as suggested by the 2005 Faro Convention.

Keywords: *Rome, Esquilino, cultural heritage, participation, learning community, heritage community, value assessment,*