

# VIA SALARIA

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# VIA SALARIA

## CIRCULATION ACROSS THE APENNINES

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- The Roman Empire
- The fall of the Roman Empire
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### EXCEPTION VIA SALARIA: A RELICT?

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- Rural street
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- Mountainous road
- Urban boulevard
- Landscaped parkway
- Mixed-use urban street
- Synthesis of stories



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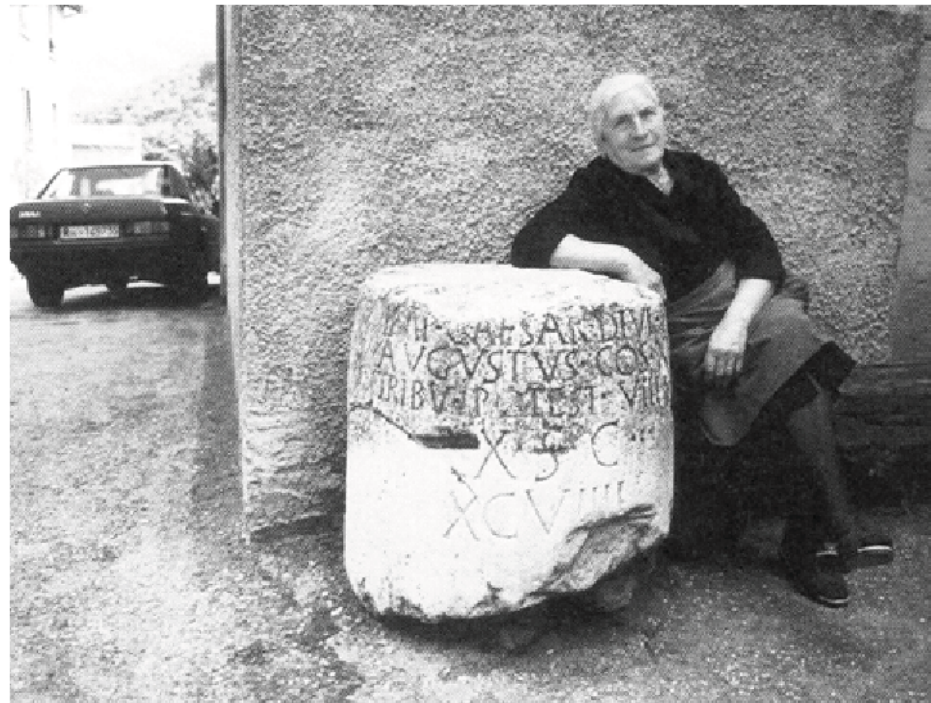
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# DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARTEFACT

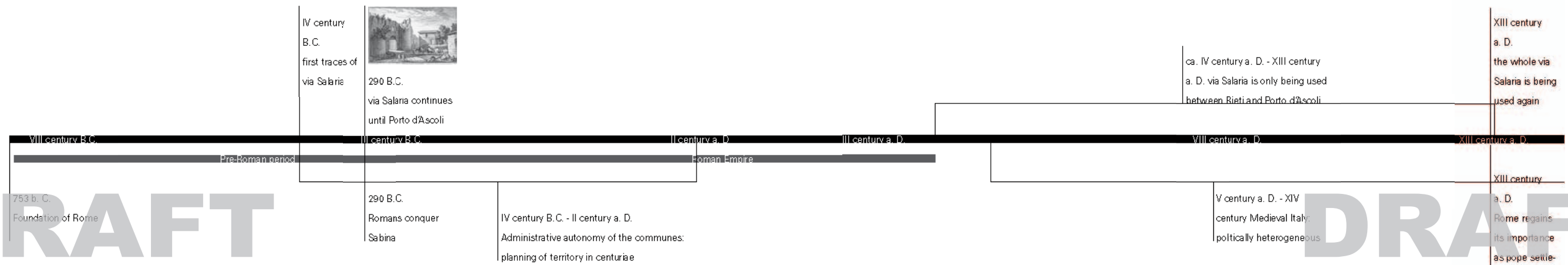
Via Salaria is one of the twelve 'consular roads', built in a radial system branching out from the center of ancient Rome and reaching the frontiers of Roman empire. Crossing the Apennines to the Adriatic sea, via Salaria is one of the oldest roads within this network. Over centuries, it was used to transport goods, like the valuable salt, that has given the street its name. Via Salaria continues to shape the territory between Rome and Ascoli until today, although its importance, use and location have been constantly changing throughout the centuries together with the political situation of Italy. Until the unification in 1861 Italy has been politically fragmented. This has determined the heterogeneous development of the infrastructure system, which is still evident today.

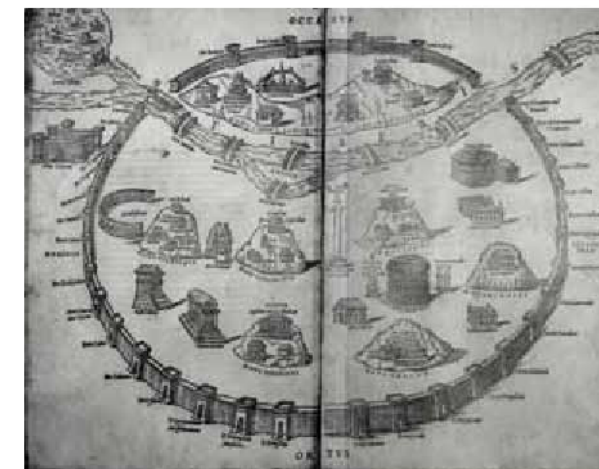


Source: "La Salaria in età tardoantica e altomedievale"

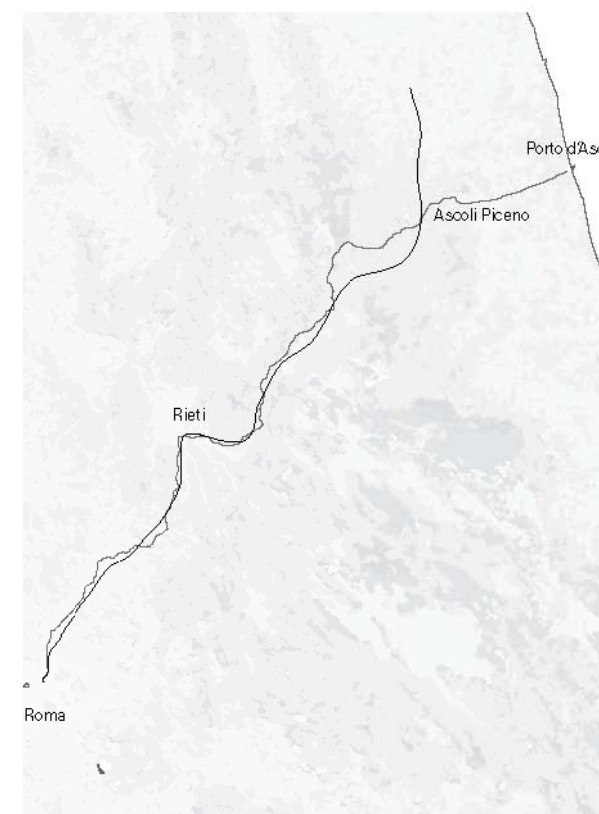


Representation of the Tabula Peutingeriana





Via Salaria: first street built outside the walls of Rome  
Source: Istituto di studi romani, "Le piante di Roma"



Via Salaria in IV century a. D.  
Via Salaria today

Via Salaria in IV century a. D.



● Rome, Rieti and Ascoli Piceno (from left to right)  
— Roman Empire  
— Empire of the East  
— Lombards  
— Arabs

Political situation in IV century a. D.

### The Roman Empire

Via Salaria was the first roman road to be built outside the walls of the capital city. Like before the birth of the Roman Empire, via Salaria continued to be used for the transport of salt.

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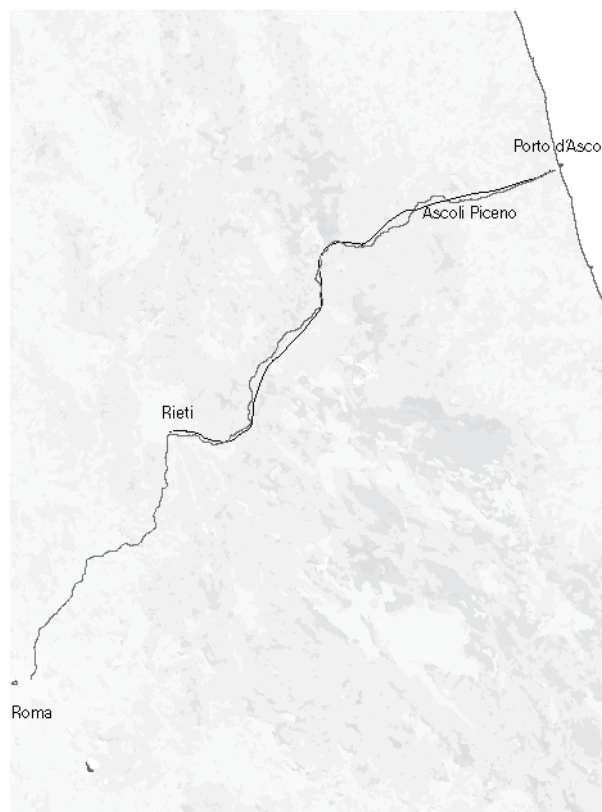


● Rome, Rieti and Ascoli Piceno (from left to right)  
— Greeks  
— Carthaginians  
— Etruscans  
— Gauls  
— Italian commons

Political situation in IV century B.C.

### The pre-Roman period

The first traces of via Salaria are dating IV century B.C. That was before the foundation of the Roman Empire. At that time via Salaria was being used by the inhabitants of the middle lands to reach the Tronto delta to get the salt from the Adriatic see (which is much saltier than the Tyrrhenian see.) Only after 290 B.C. when Romans conquered the lands of the Sabines, was via Salaria prolonged to Porta Collina in Rome.



— Via Salaria in IV century B.C.  
— Via Salaria today

Via Salaria in IV century B.C.

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Source: Berlage Institute, "Roman consular roads"

### Consular roads

The saying "all roads lead to Rome" has its origin in the consular roads. In fact, roman consular roads look like rays spreading out of the city. They were built by the Romans first only for military reasons, then also commercial. Consular roads formed the most rapid connections possible at the time. When building roads Romans didn't think of the landscape as an obstacle, they built them exactly where they needed. Roman construction techniques were already very advanced for the time.

All consular roads were named after either the consul that built the road, the population of the destination of the road, the city of destination, or the commercial function (such as via Salaria).



Source: Berlage Institute, "Roman consular roads"

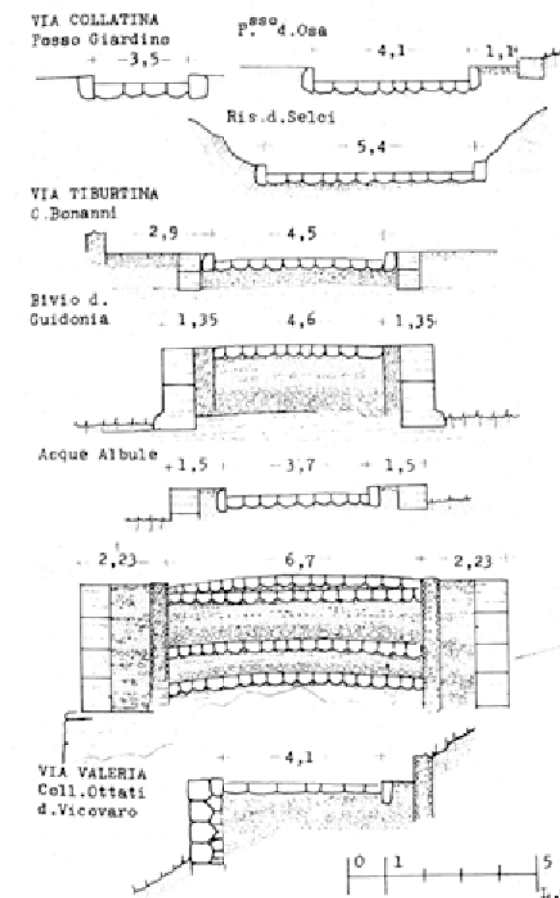


Section of basolato of via Appia  
Source: "Tecnica stradale romana"

### Construction Techniques

Consular roads had to be excellently maintained in order to maintain the power of Rome. For this reason Romans developed very sophisticated construction techniques, thanks to which some spurs of the antique roman roads have endured until today.

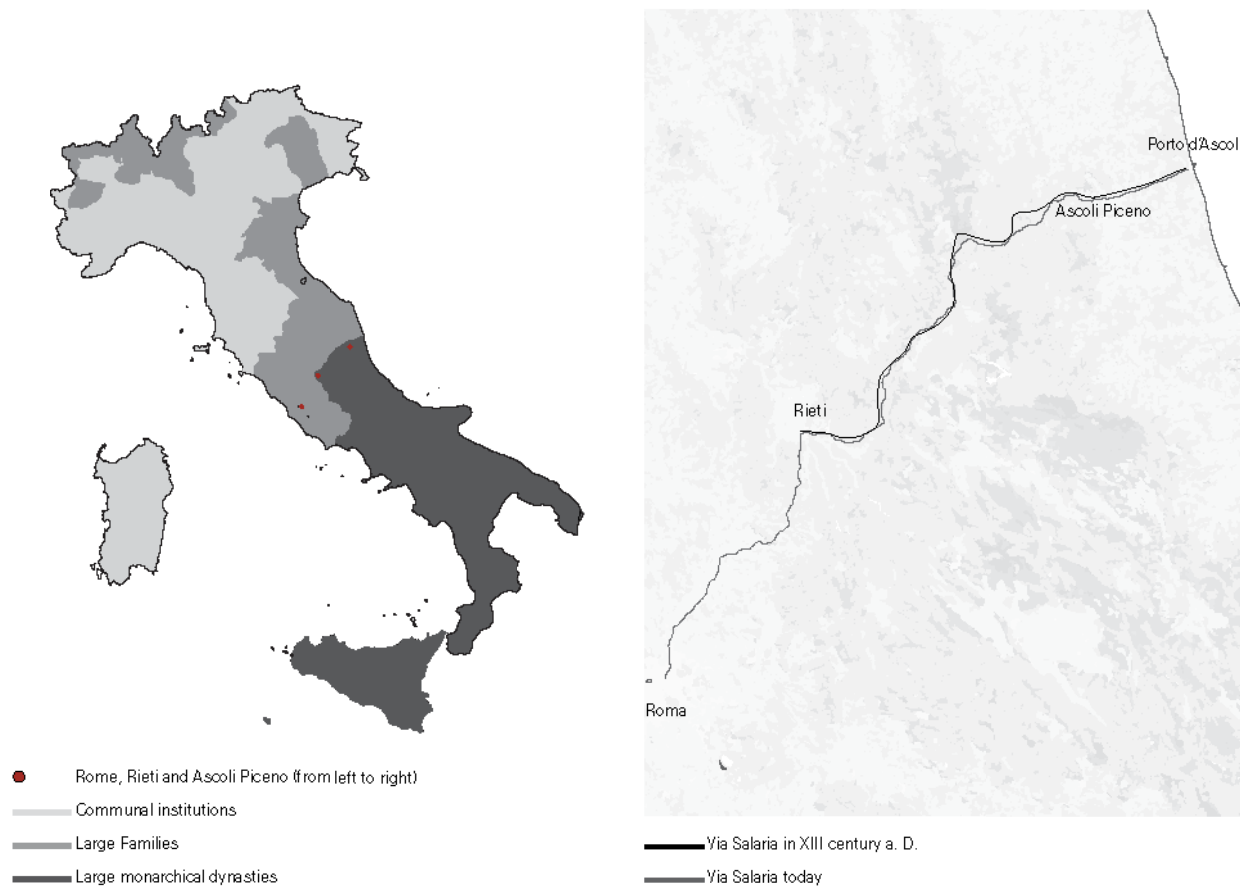
The technique consisted first of all in a detailed study of the terrain, and then in the building of the road in several layers, according to the type of landscape and soil. This is where the word "street," in Italian "strada," derives from: "strato" in Italian means layer.



Source: Carlo Villa, "Le strade consolari di Roma"

### Layers

1. Ditch
2. Big stones
3. Smaller stones
4. Mixture of sand and gravel
5. Basolato (square, very precise stones)

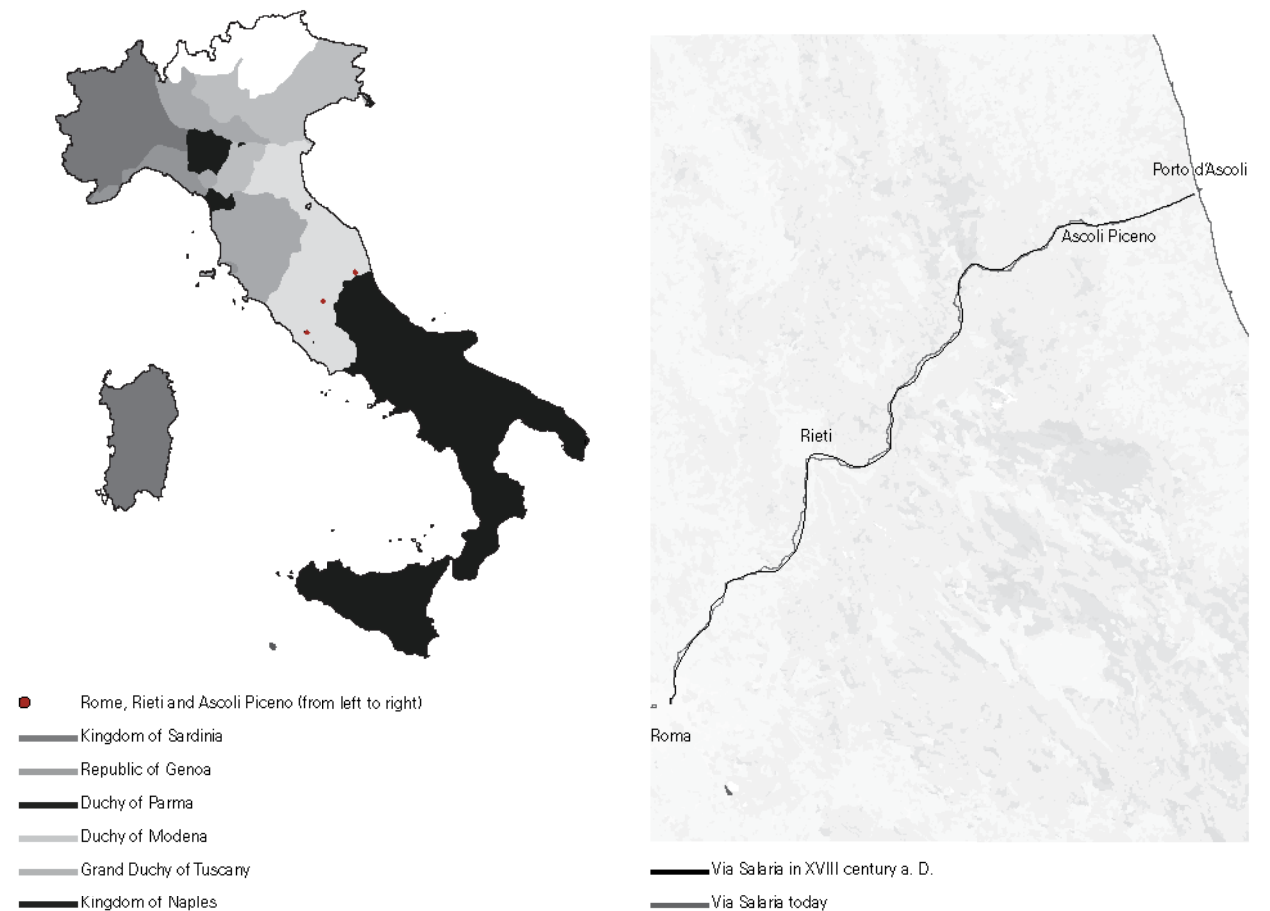


Political situation in XIII century a. D.

Via Salaria in XIII century a. D..

### The fall of the Roman Empire

After the decline of the Roman Empire, the city of Rome ceased to have its role as center of Europe. Because it ceased to be an important city, there was no reason to go to Rome, nor to have quick and direct connections to it such as were the consular roads anymore. This is why via Salaria stopped being used between Rome and Rieti. Rieti didn't need to be directly connected to Rome anymore, especially because of the political barrier between the two cities.



Political situation in XVIII century a. D.

Via Salaria in XVIII century a. D..

### The revival of via Salaria

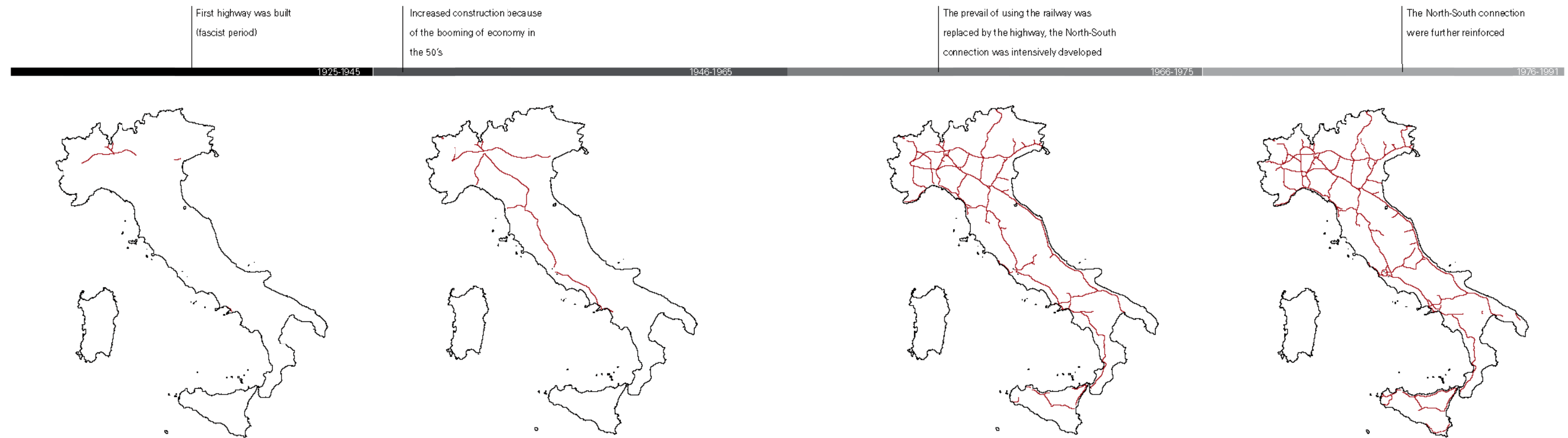
Via Salaria started being used for the entire length again only after Rome regained its power, which coincides with the XIII century, when the decision to move the papal residence to Rome again was taken. In addition, starting from the XIII century, the use of iron wheels was introduced and diffused, which also contributed to the reuse of the old consular roads (prior to that transport on water was more common as it was quicker and easier).

# EXCEPTION VIA SALARIA: A RELICT?

The role of via Salaria in the large scale context of modern highway and railway system evolution in Italy is a controversial topic. The question of whether via Salaria is losing its importance due to the parallel highway, or whether it still keeps certain exceptional quality behind it, can be raised and focus on.

The relation between hierarchical distribution, function of the settlement, political situation and roads has always been strong, hence the great differences between North and South when observing infrastructure systems in Italy.

The roads and railways in Italy, aren't complementary systems: mostly roads are simply overlapping railways, which has brought to a much higher development of the private transportation means than the public ones.



## Evolution of a double sided highway system

Strong North-South connections and weak West-East connection were always the case during the evolution of highway system in Italy, and also there is a huge imbalanced development intensity between north and south of Italy. The development of highway of different specifications and dynamics in north of Italy induced a high demand of network in north compared with south.

Before the unification of Italy, railways were only built by some private companys

Italy was unified

The railway network in northern Italy was more developed than in the southern part

1848

1865

1885

1905



The development pase of railway slowed down after the construction of the highway in 1925

The railway was largely destroyed during the WW2

The reconstruction of railways after the war

1928

1938

1945

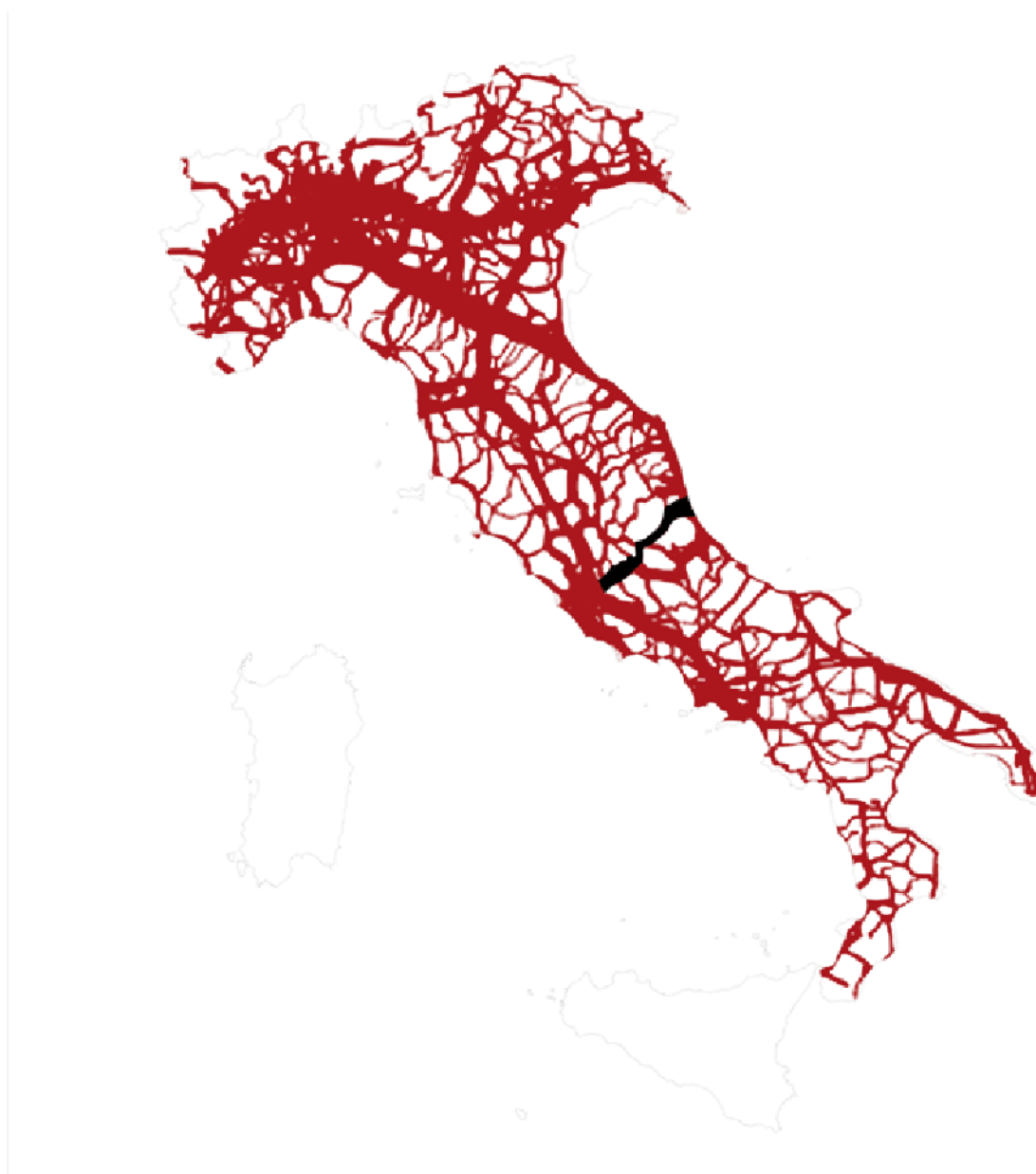
1955



### Evolution of railway system

The booming development of railway system in Italy started after the unification of the country in 1861, it's rapid development enabled Italy to be connected as a whole country. In 1905, the hierachical dstrubtion of the rail-ways already existed, the connections were almost only built to link the central cities in northern Italy, whereas the network in southern Italy was still relatively week. There is no notable development after the commence of highway construction.





### What is via Salaria today?

It is a road that enables to experience the reality of a section of Italy. Traveling on via Salaria means making a journey through different cultures, through real life. Along the street you meet different people with different stories, different uses and who live and use via Salaria in different ways.

It is hard to say what the meaning of via Salaria is today, the only thing you can say is that it certainly has different entities.

It seems that there are villages along via Salaria that have been forgotten and are being more and more abandoned. Young dwellers are moving out, and no new inhabitants are coming in. Such places are mostly located in the middle part of via Salaria. The inhabitants of these places are the ones who treasure via Salaria the most. Mostly for its historical meaning. Whereas inhabitants of bigger more prosperous cities tend not to give any importance to it, although using it.

We know via Salaria is certainly not a very frequented road, but this is actually not a reaction to the construction of the A24. Via Salaria hasn't been used much since a very long time ago. Probably this phenomenon is really due to a lack of need in connecting west and east coast, as these have been separated for such a long time. Who knows if Italy will ever reach such a balance to be again in need of "horizontal" connections. For now probably via Salaria is a road which has an importance only to those people who can appreciate its particularity, and what it offers.

### Traffic Load Today

The main traffic load comes from the link for connecting the important cities. Due to the barrier of the Apennines in the middle territory of Italy, for connecting the west and east, there is considerably stronger north-south load along the two coasts for connecting the cities in the south to the ones in the north, where a relatively intensive road network was built. In the graph above, the via Salaria, highlighted in black, is one of the only roads connecting the traffic from west to east.

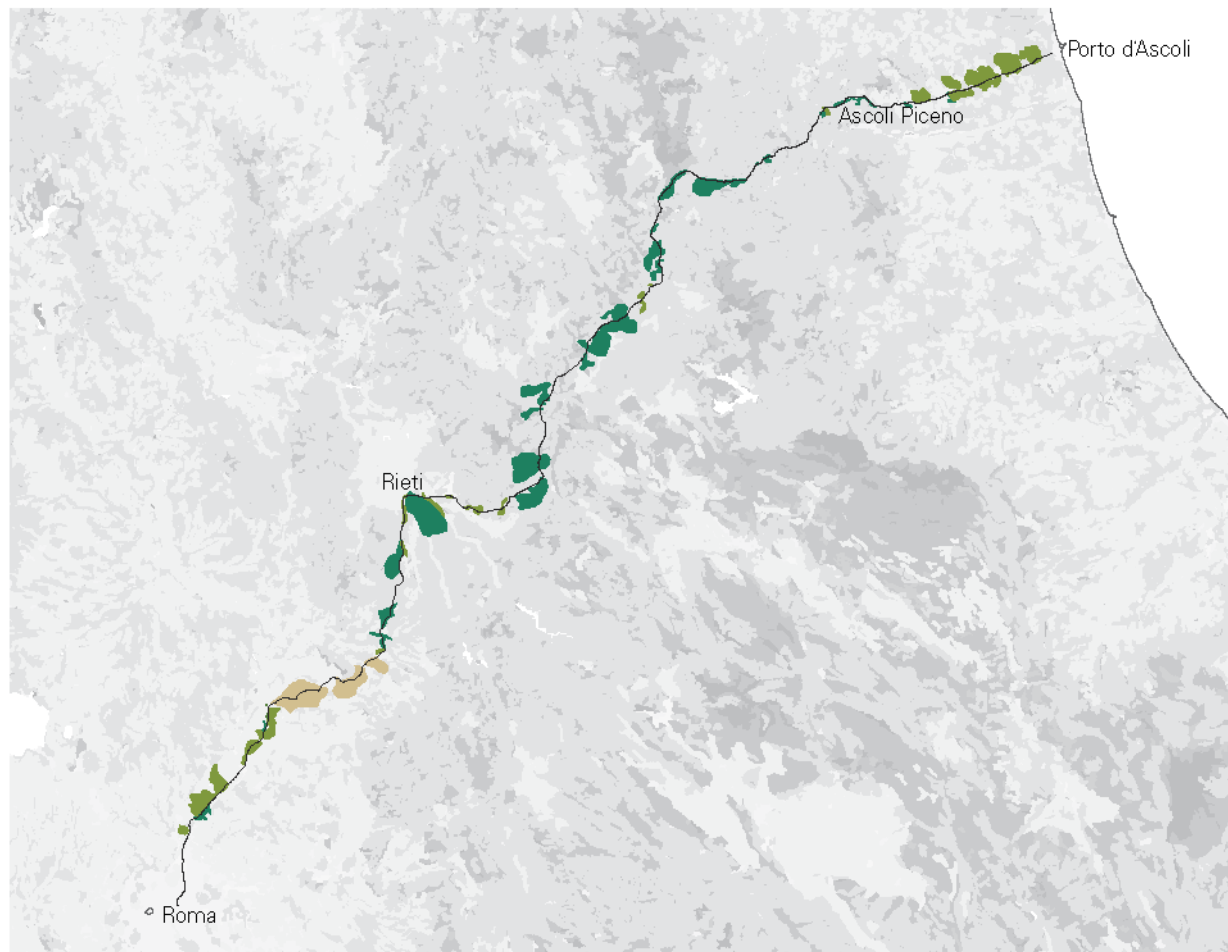
## CHARACTERS OF VIA SALARIA

Via Salaria doesn't have a constant image for its whole course.

On the contrary: driving along its path it is evident how each section looks different from all the others. In fact, via Salaria can be seen as an overlapping of different realities and characteristics.

The aim of this chapter is to identify the criteria for this extreme variety of situations along the street, and map them.





- Forests
- Agricultural fields
- Tree plantations

**Vegetation: three different types of nature**

Vegetation along the via Salaria can be approximately divided into three typologies: scattered small trees (mostly olive trees) plantations, forest, and fields used for agriculture.

As part and symbol for different cultures, but also enabling or disabling a view on the surroundings and the natural lighting of the road, vegetation has a strong influence on the experience and perception of the via Salaria.



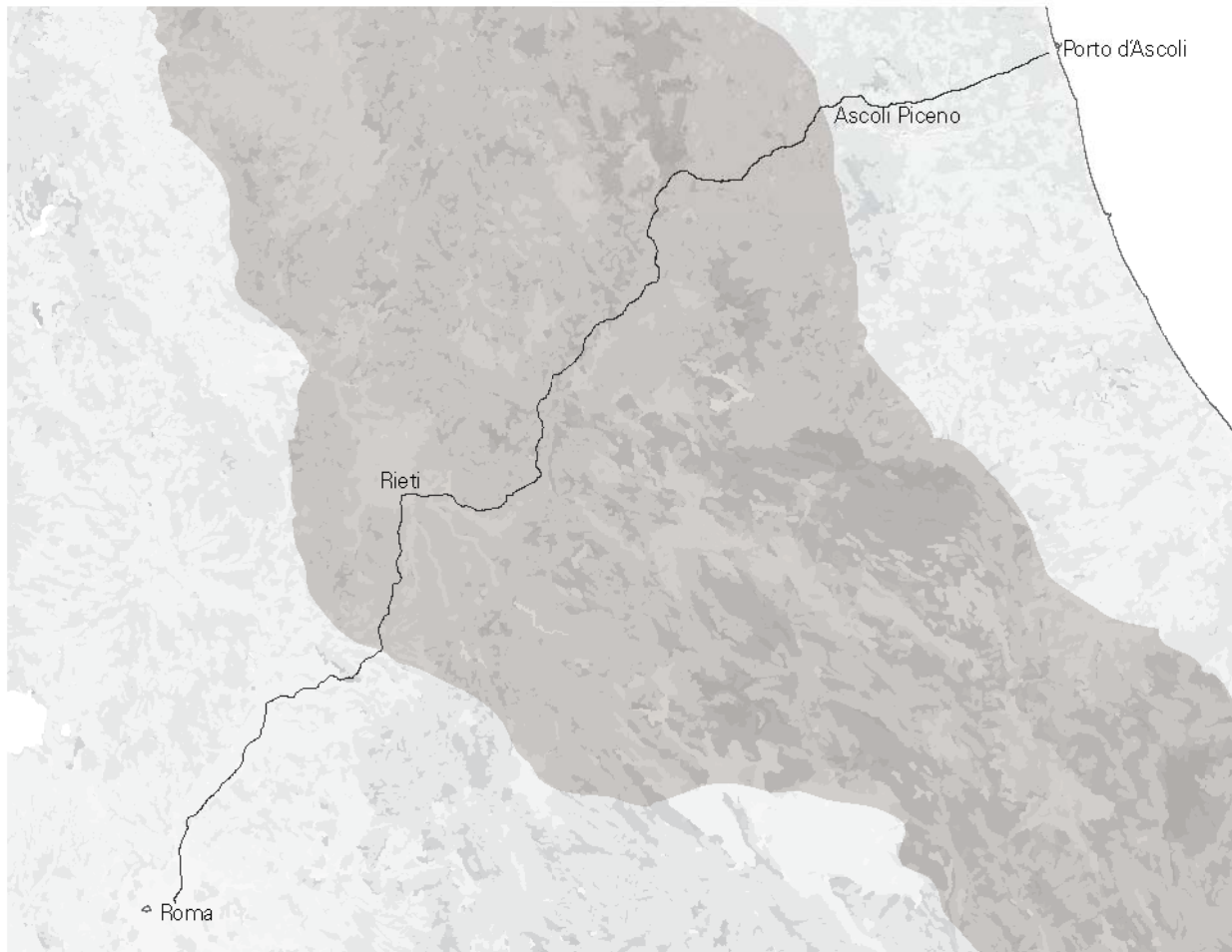
Forests



Agricultural fields



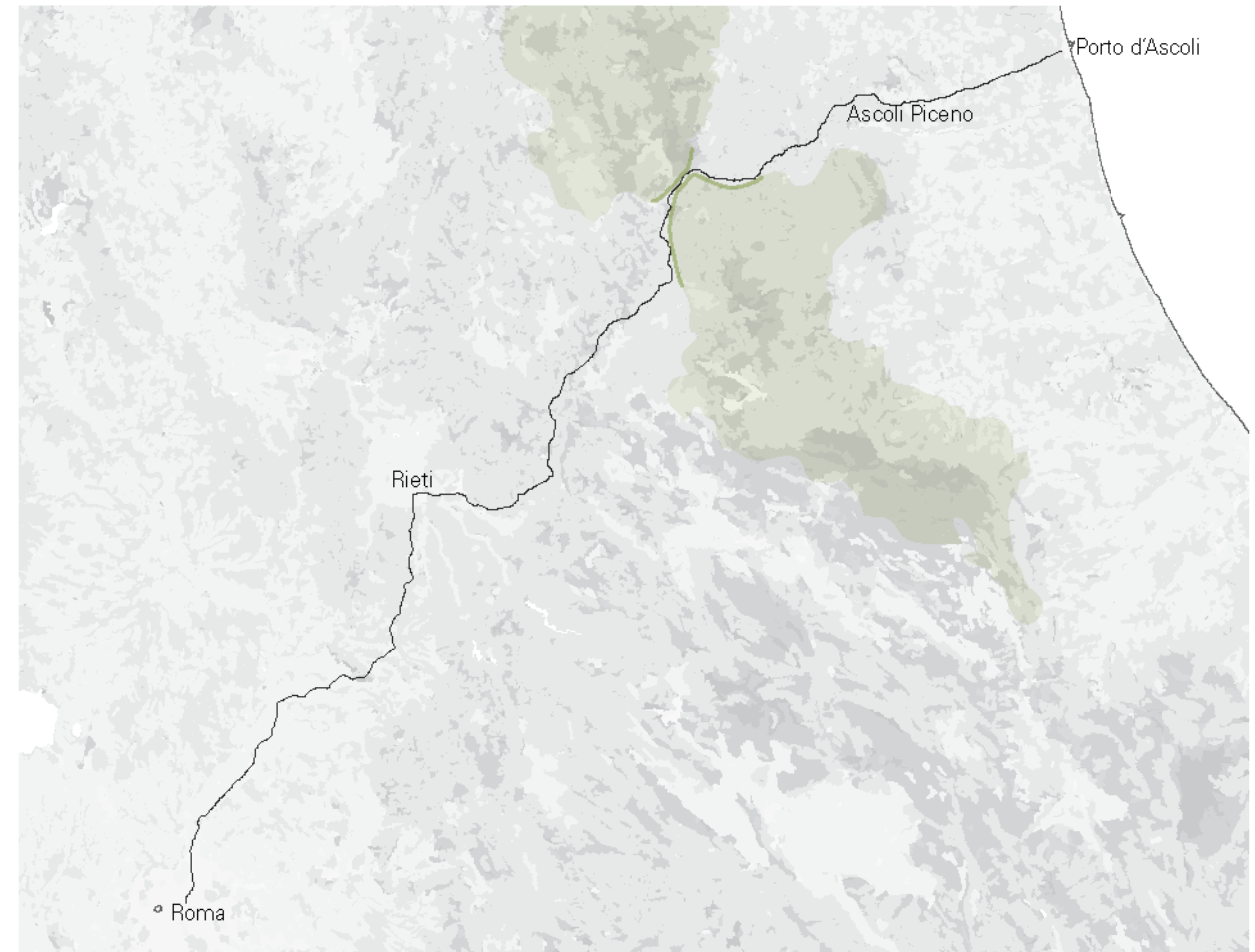
Tree plantations



— Apennines

**Apennines: the gloomy section**

From Passo Corese to Ascoli Piceno the atmosphere you experience on the via Salaria is very different from the other parts, in a way that it feels more gloomy, as if you were entering some kind of mysterious world.



— National parks  
— Interaction of via Salaria with national parks

**National Parks: pressure on via Salaria**

The Section between Trisungo and Acquasanta Terme is in a peculiar situation: both sides of the road belong to National parks. On the northern side you can find the Parco Nazionale dei Monti Sibillini, whereas on the southern part is the Parco Nazionale del Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga. For this particular reason it is hard to carry out any project involving a more modern path of the street in this area. Therefore this segment still follows a very tortuous path.

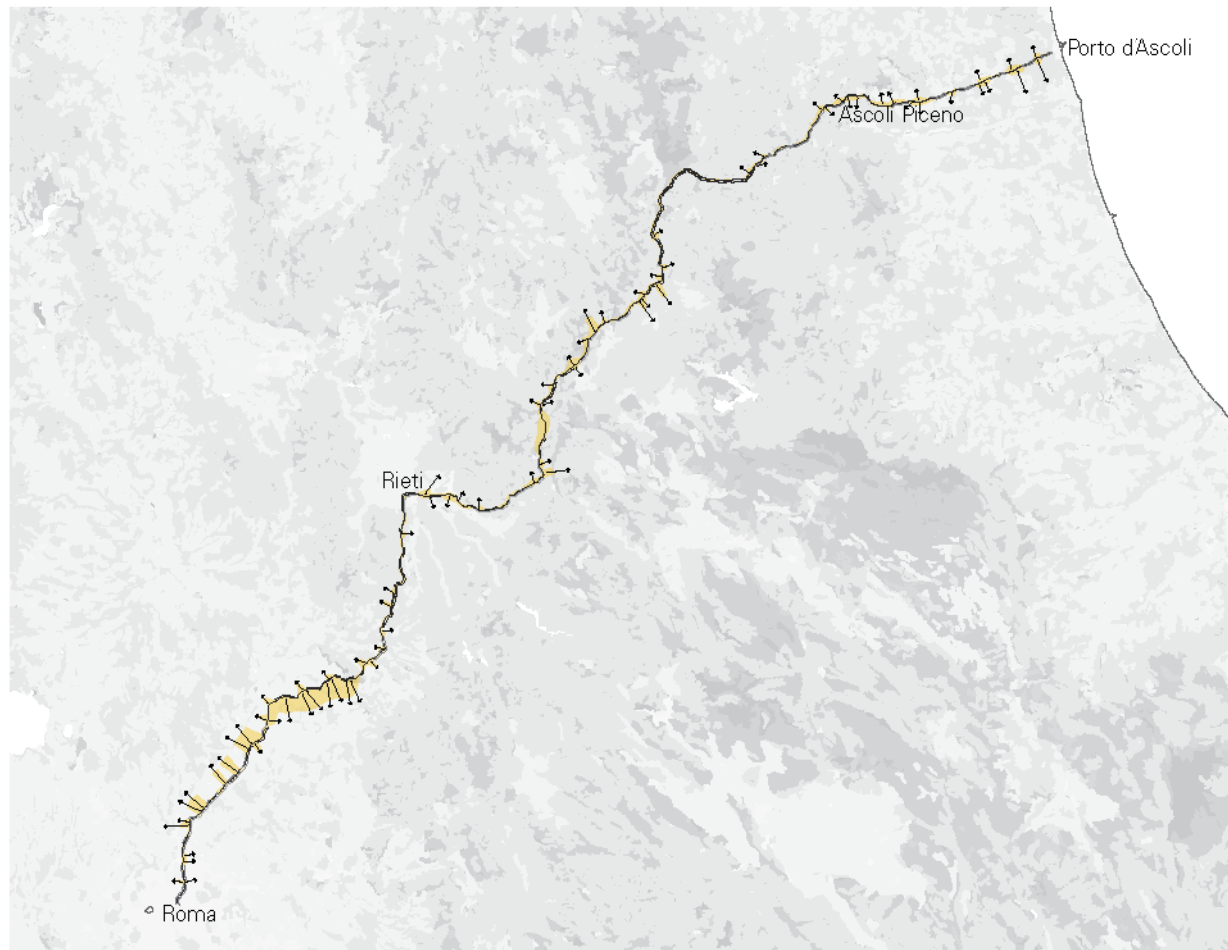


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**Architecture of via Salaria and its relation to the landscape**

The way the via Salaria interacts with its natural surroundings is determining for the perception you get of the landscapes that the street is crossing.

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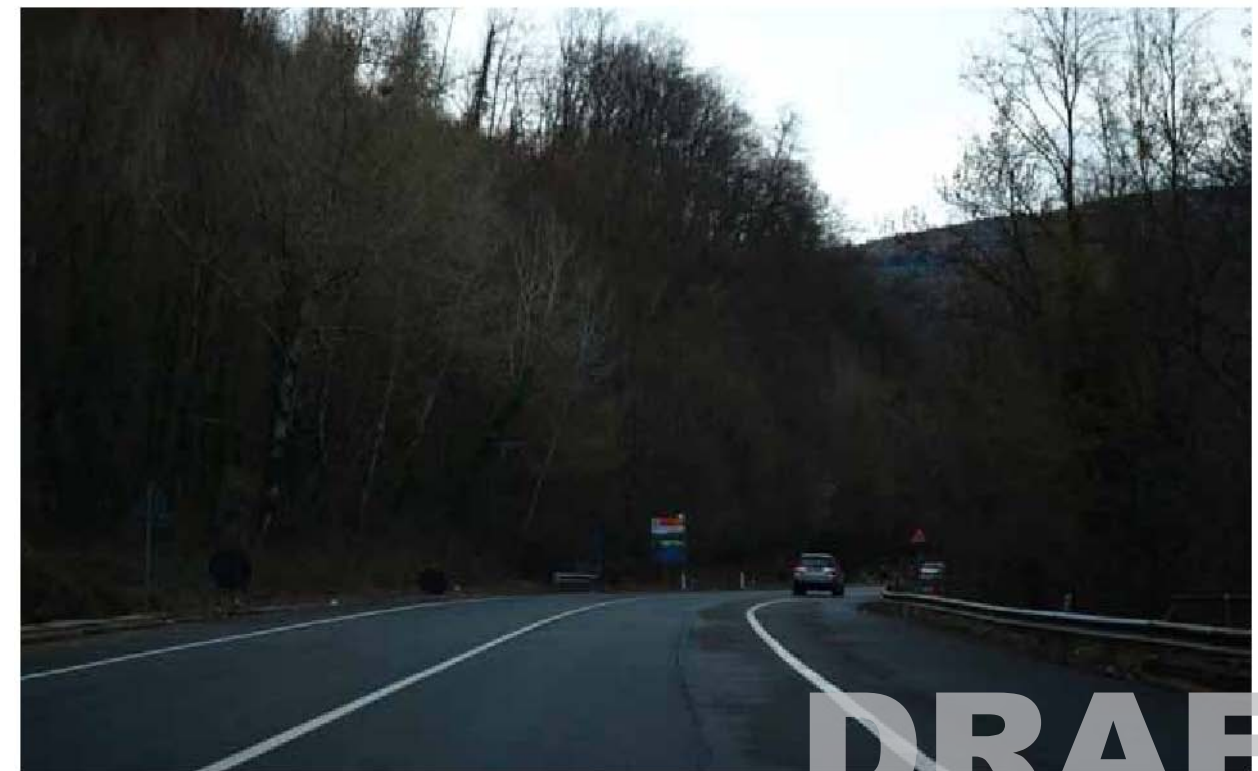
- View obstructed by vegetation
- View obstructed by buildings
- View obstructed by topography
- Open view

### Views: scenic Salaria

The view you get from the road is influenced by many aspects, in particular mountains, buildings and vegetation, that can close your view on the surroundings, as well as the topography: thinking of how elevated the road is in relation to the landscape.



Open view



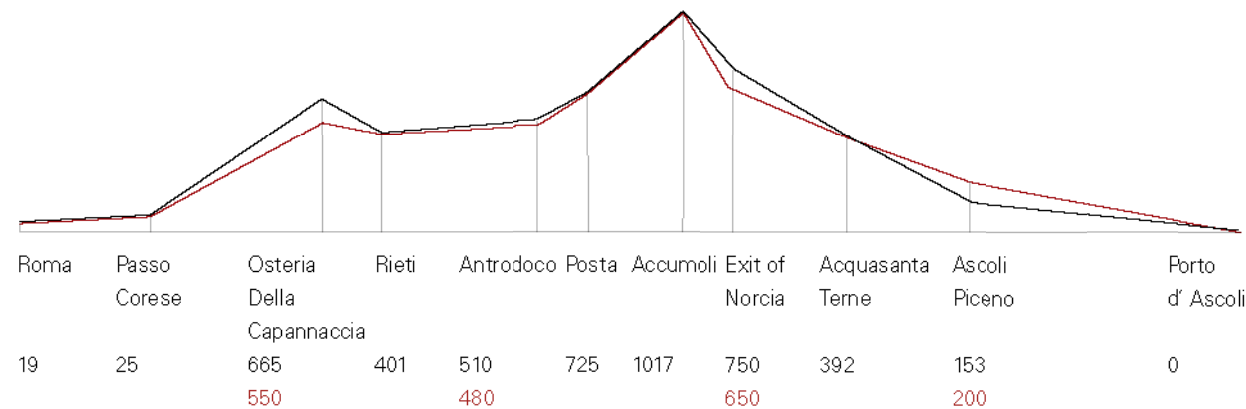
Closed view



- Six lanes
- Four lanes
- Two lanes

**Width: a matter of intersections**

Via Salaria, being a strada statale (national road) is in general a two lanes road. Only where it has intersections with other roads does it expand to four or six lanes. This often happens on segments with stronger urbanization.



**Perception of road geometry: the force of the mountains**

The shape of the road is influenced by the surrounding landscape. When driving on via Salaria you get the perception some sections have a more emphasized geometry than others. This is due to the mountains "pressing" the road.



Tunnel after Posta



Tunnel after exit for Micigliano



Bridge after exit for Micigliano



Bridge in Acquasanta Terme



Bridge in Antrodoco



**Bridges and Tunnels: different esthetics**

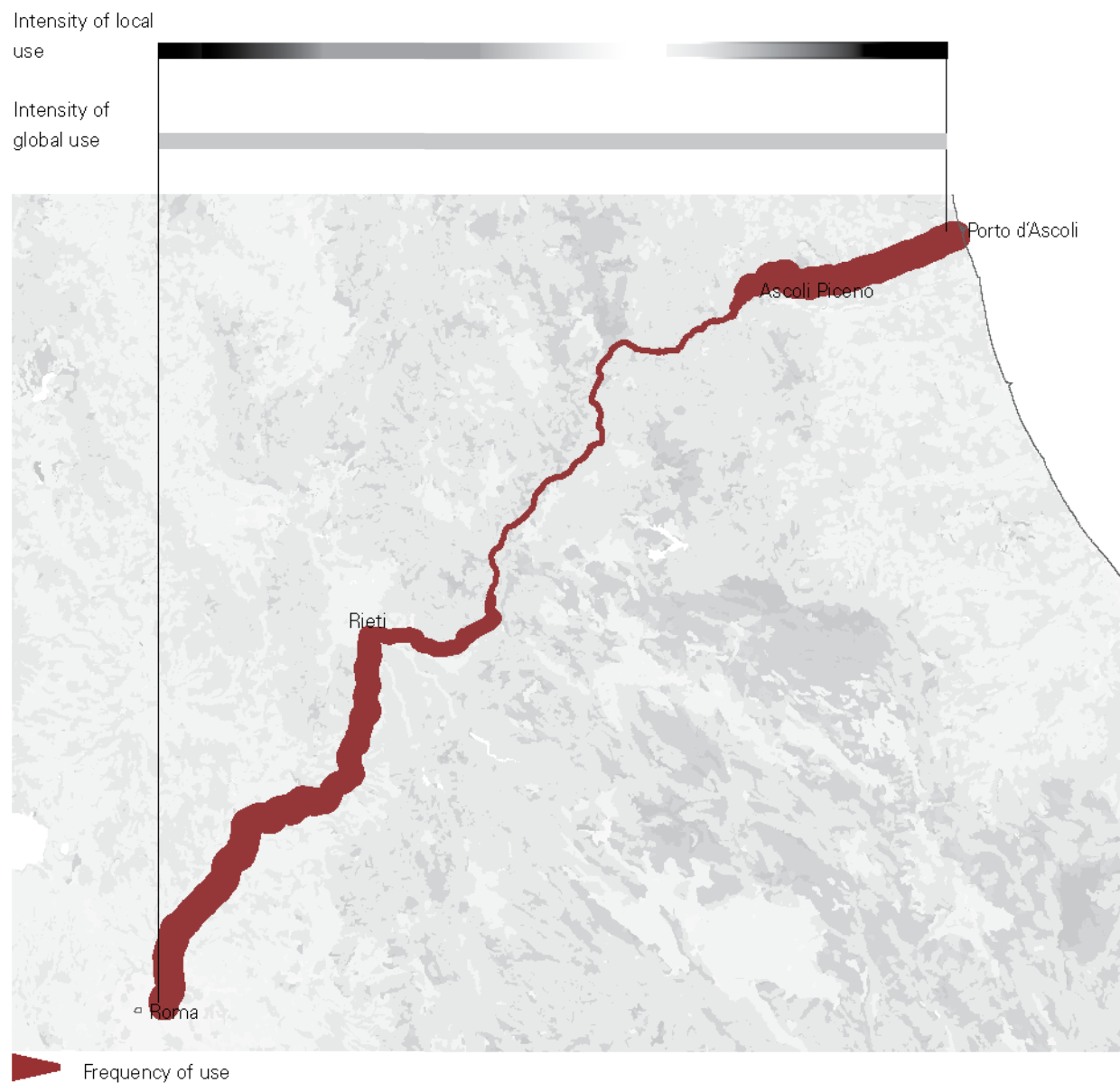
Especially the central (appenine) section of via Salaria is rich of architectural solutions for the difficult landscape. Looking at those (bridges and tunnels), because of their different forms, you can associate them to different points in time.





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Use of the road  
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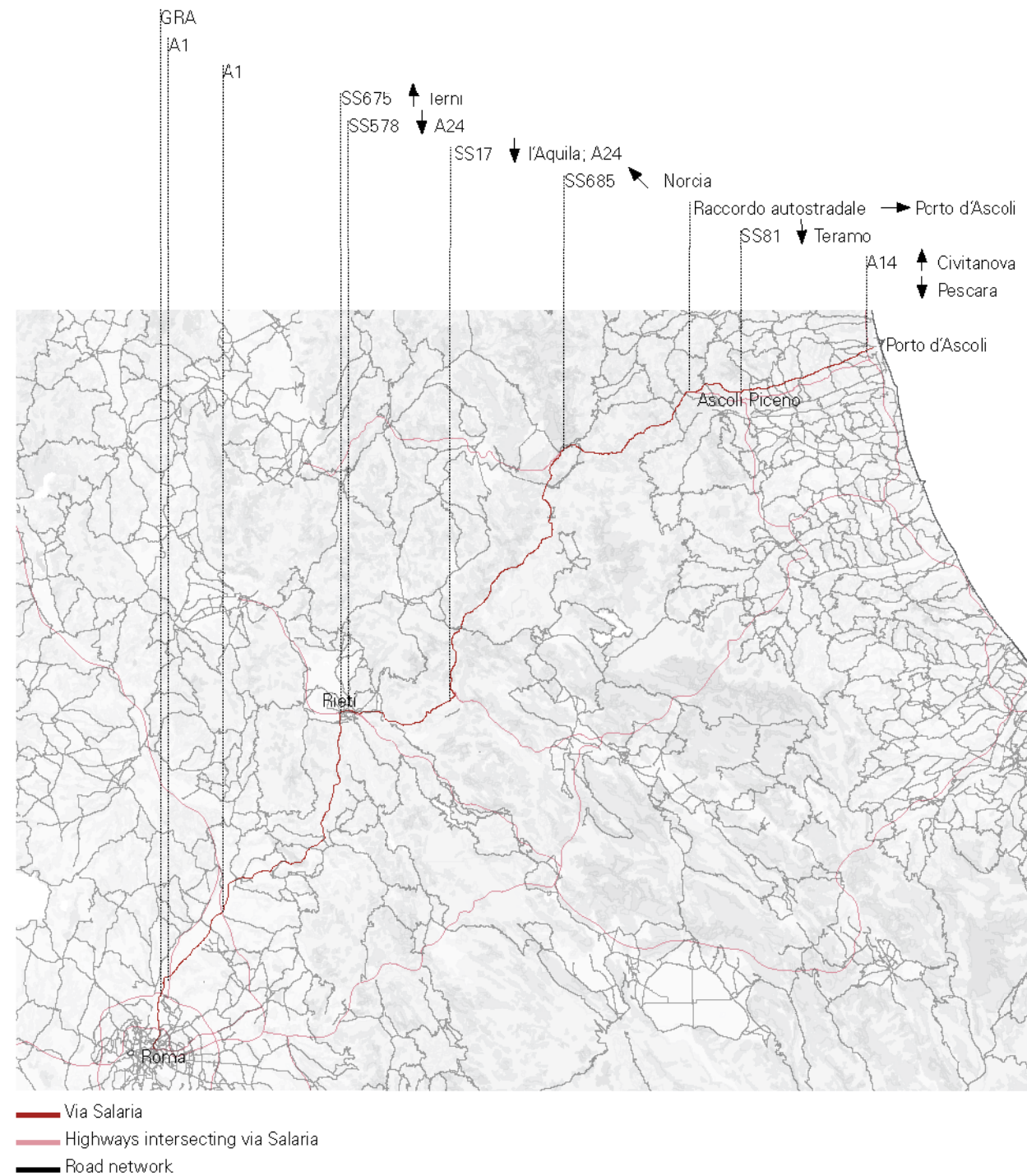
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### Frequency: three sections

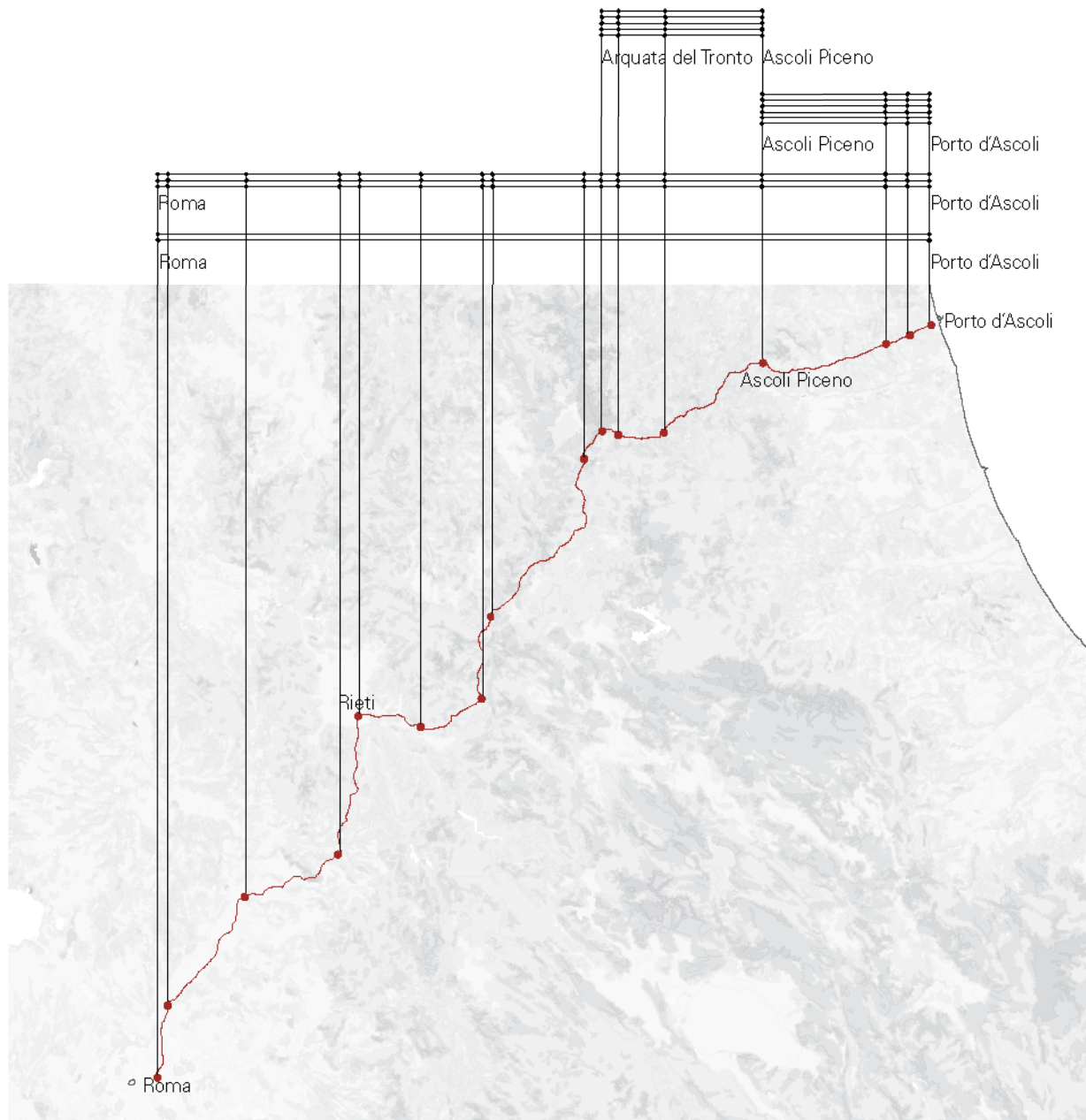
The frequency of use defines three sections of via Salaria: the two extremes, strongly related to Rome and the Tronto Valley with strong traffic and the middle section crossing the Apennines, which is hardly used.

It is important to differentiate between global and local use. Only few people are using the whole (or at least a major part) of the via Salaria: those are mostly commuters between Rome and Rieti, Rieti and Ascoli Piceno and Rome and Ascoli Piceno. Most people use the via Salaria only to move locally, from village to village or to get to an intersection, where they can change for another major road.



### Via Salaria in the road network

Intersections with other roads are crucial points of the via Salaria, as they either increase or reduce the traffic, and give a new and/or different importance to the course.



• Bus stops

### Bus lines: a service for commuters

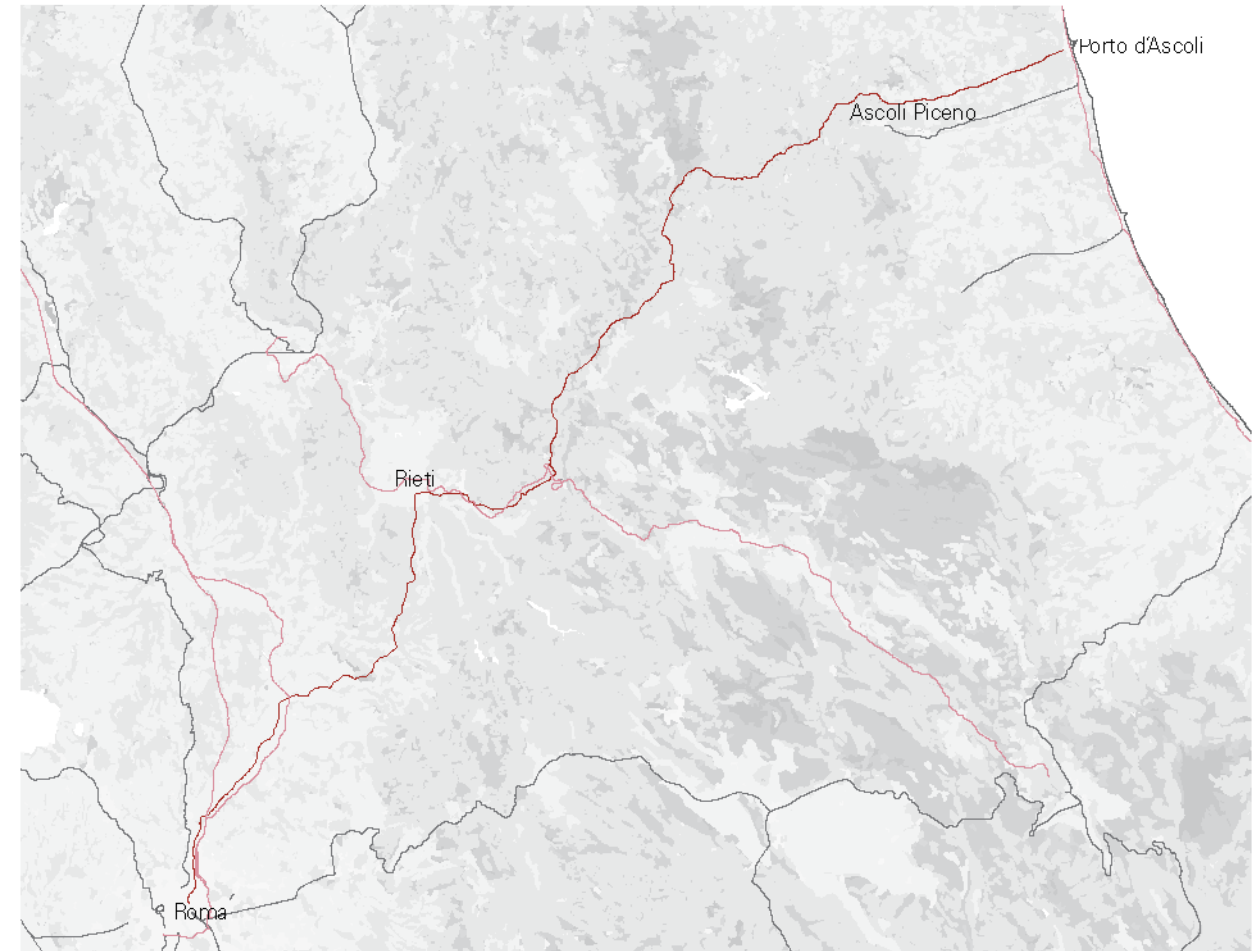
Only commuters use the bus system for longer segments. Other users are locals, moving from one village to another. The local use of buses is more developed in the section from Ascoli Piceno to Porto d'Ascoli. Most bus lines continue then from Porto d'Ascoli, following the coast, either to the North or to the South. The bus from Rome to Porto d'Ascoli, non-stop, takes 3 hours and 5 minutes.



Line parallel to via Salaria outside Rome

Line crossing via Salaria in Antrudoco

Line along adriatic coast



- Via Salaria
- Railways intersecting via Salaria
- Railway network

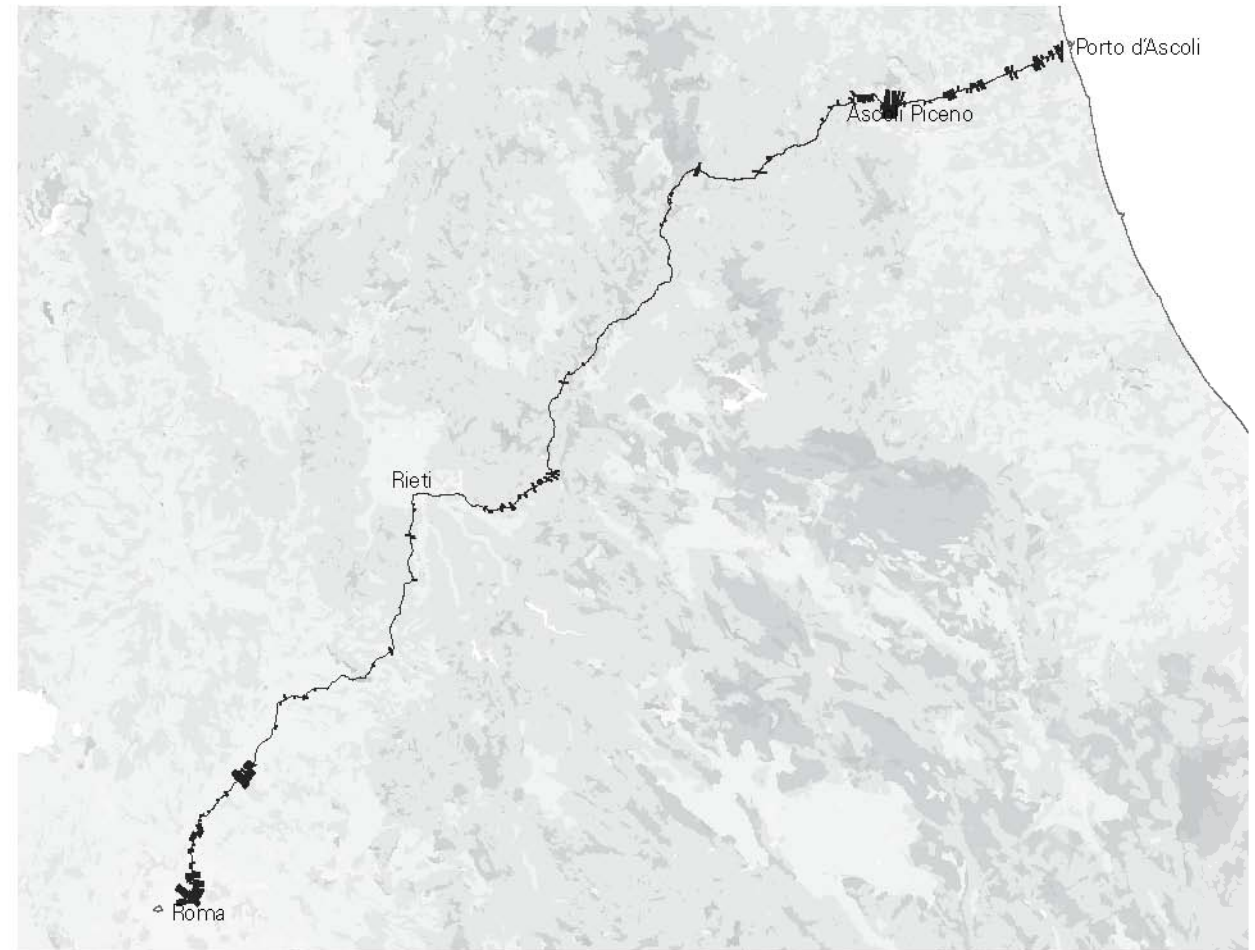
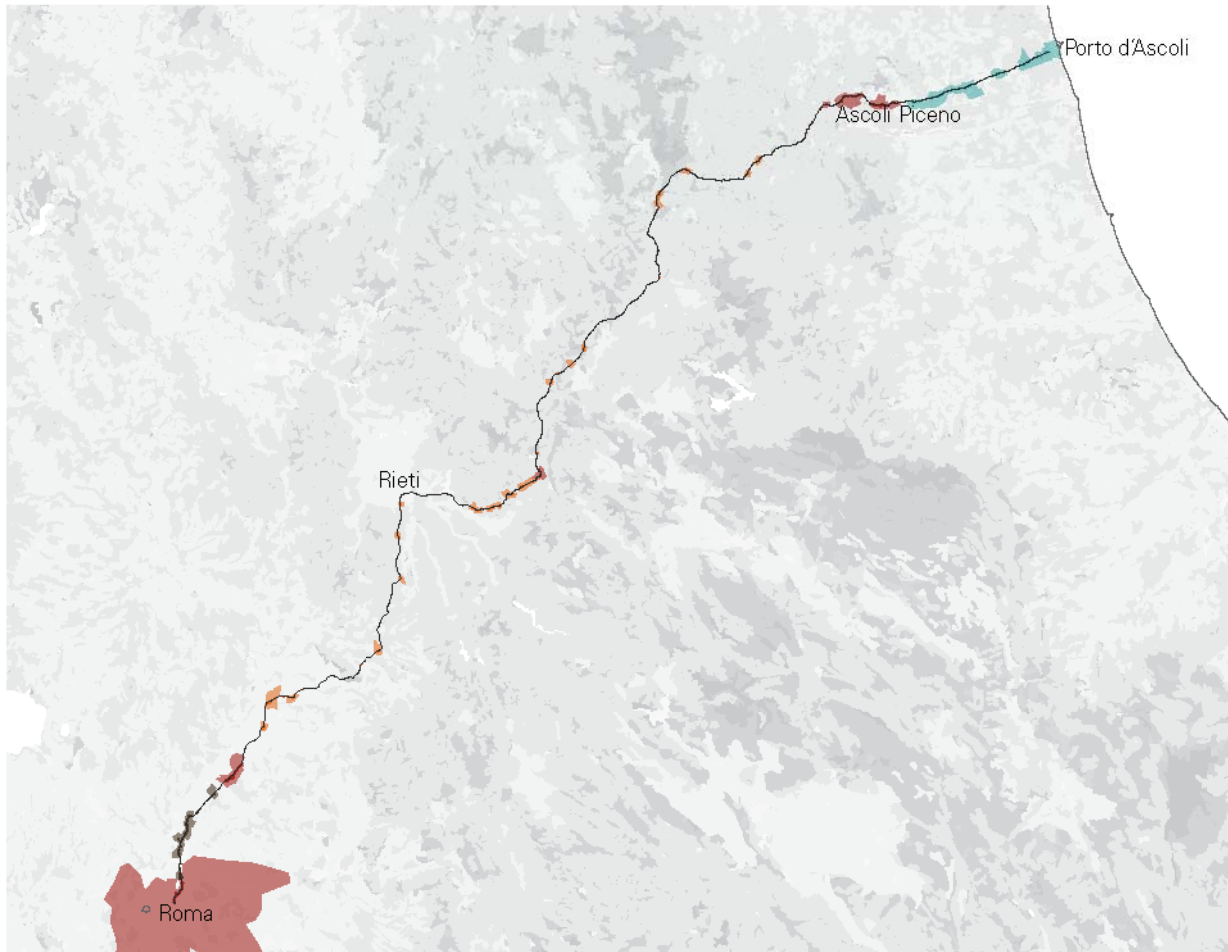
### Via Salaria in the railway network

The railway system in Italy, just as the highway system, has developed in a linear way. It shows its weakness in the mountainous area. In fact there is no railway line crossing the Appenines. Although there was a project to build a line along via Salaria, this was never realized, as the demand is not strong enough. Also trains, as buses, are only being used by commuters.



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**Urbanization along the road**  
Urbanization along via Salaria makes this road very special and different from any other. It makes its users feel particularly attached to it and brings life to the street.  
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- Dense urban settlements
- Loose urban settlements
- Linear settlements
- Industrial areas

- 5/6 storeys
- 4 storeys
- 2/3 storeys
- 1 storey

### Built areas: four typologies

There are four different typologies of urban areas along via Salaria: dense urban settlements (i.e. Rome), industrial area (i.e. periphery of Rome), loose urban settlements (i.e. Passo Corese), linear settlements (i.e. Porto d'Ascoli). These different typologies are closely linked to the different development of each area/culture, as we can see from the study of more specific topics.

### Height of buildings

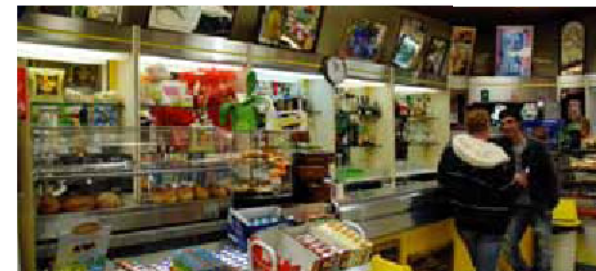
Areas with high and dense buildings make you feel more "canalized", your view is concentrated on the street and you get no sense of what's happening further away from you, whereas lower buildings allow a wider view.



Parking on via Salaria in Rome



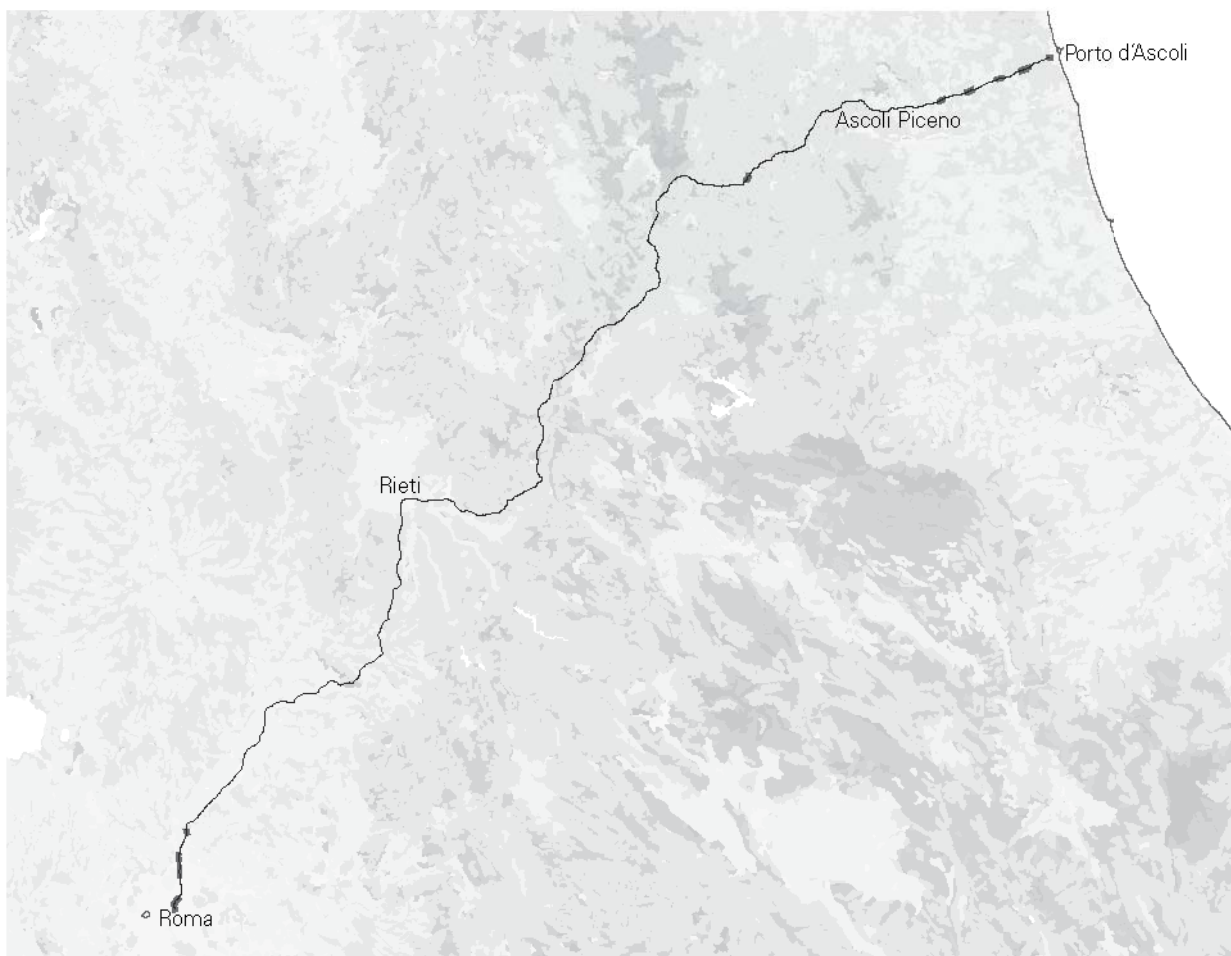
Parking on via Salaria in Porto d'Ascoli



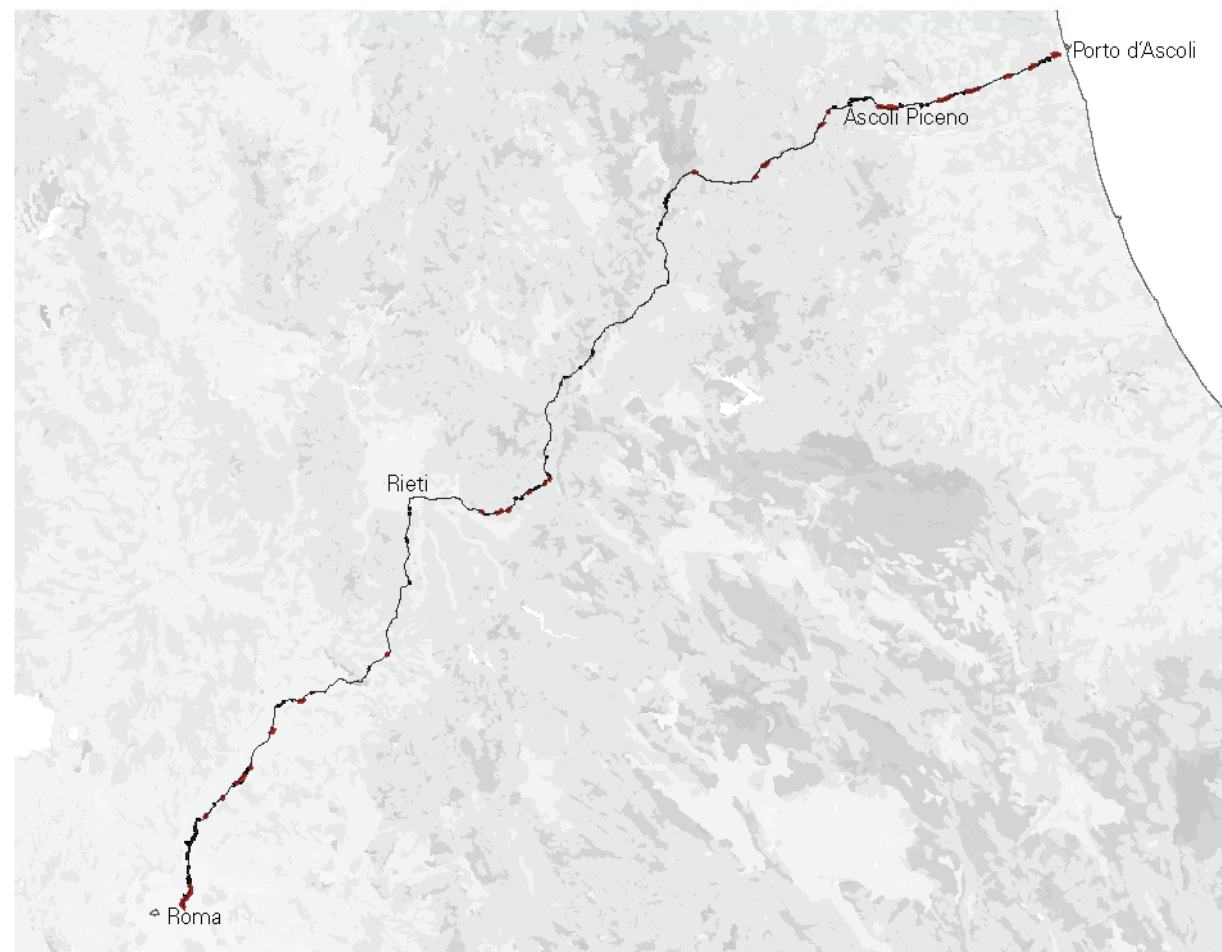
Rest area in Caporio



Rest area in Antrodoco



— Parking on and along via Salaria



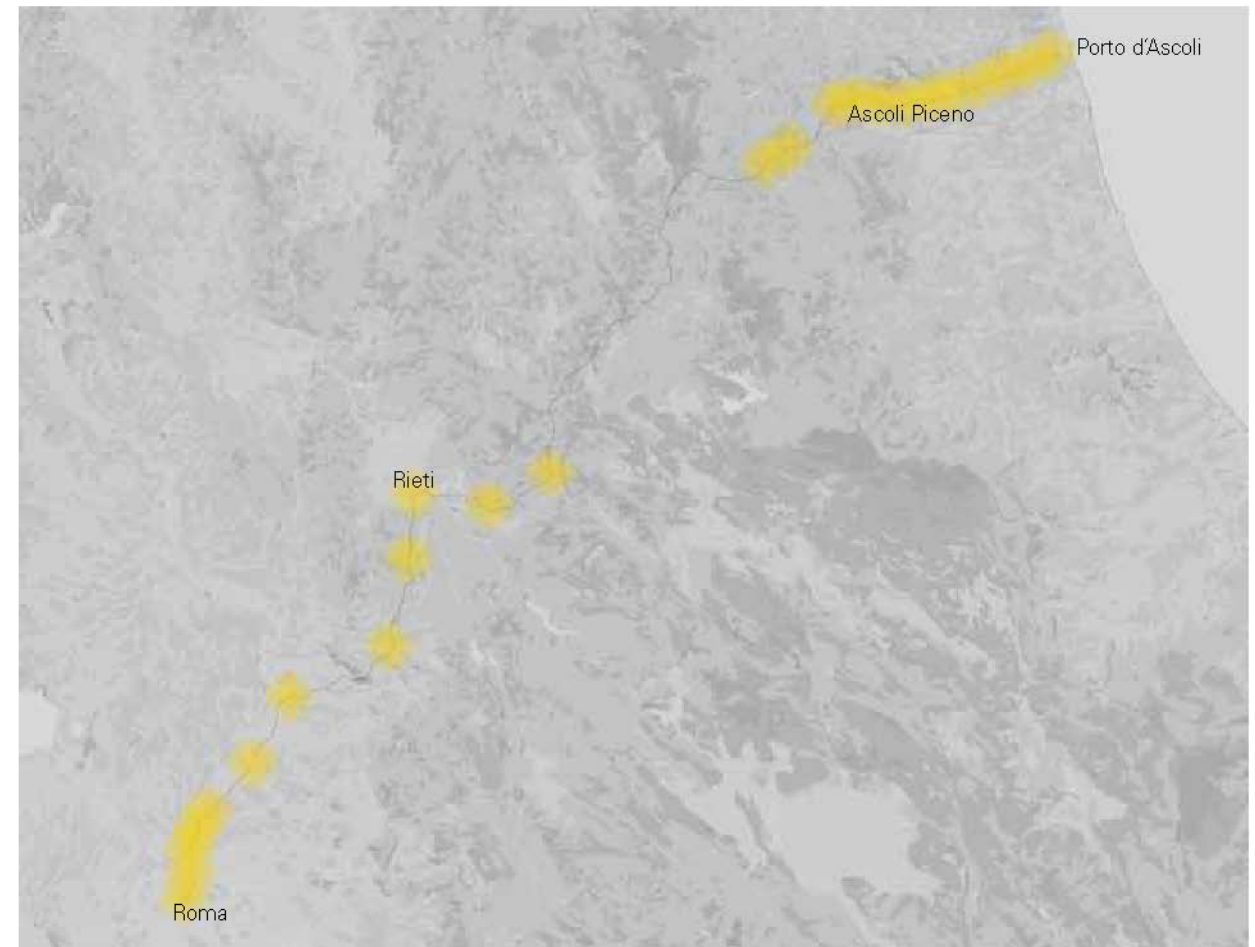
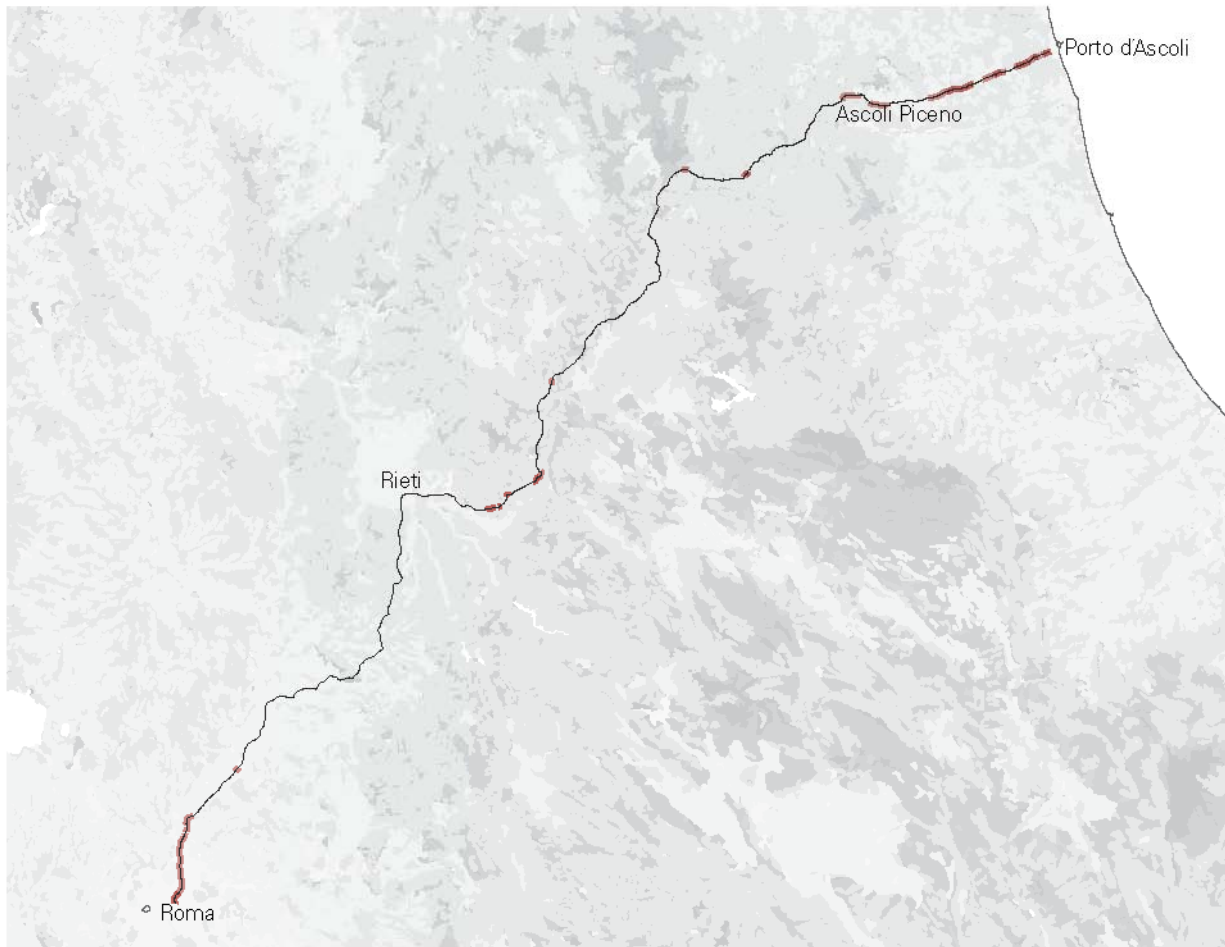
— Rest areas along via Salaria  
— Buildings along via Salaria

### Parking on street: too many cars

Especially in the section of Rome and surroundings you can see cars parked randomly on the side of the road. Public transport isn't very popular in Italy yet, so the demand for parking spaces is very high.

### Rest areas: a hallmark

Service areas along the via Salaria are very typical for this road. They are what differentiates via Salaria from the highway the most. These are the places, that reflect the cultures, uses, traditions and everyday lives of the different places you pass through when travelling along the Salaria, giving you a sense of this journey throughout a part of Italy.



- Highly used sidewalks along via Salaria
- Sidewalks along via Salaria

### Sidewalks: a rarity

Footpaths along the street are a sign for the role the street has in a certain area, and in particular in the life of the people there. Footpaths bring urban life to the street, making it part of the surrounding built area. This is the case in few sections of via Salaria.

- Road lights along via Salaria

### Road Lights

Road lights are mostly situated in sections of via Salaria crossing urbanized areas, or in areas with several intersections with other roads, such as the Tronto valley and the section between the first ring and the GRA of Rome. The mountainous section in contrast is completely dark, only tunnels are illuminated.



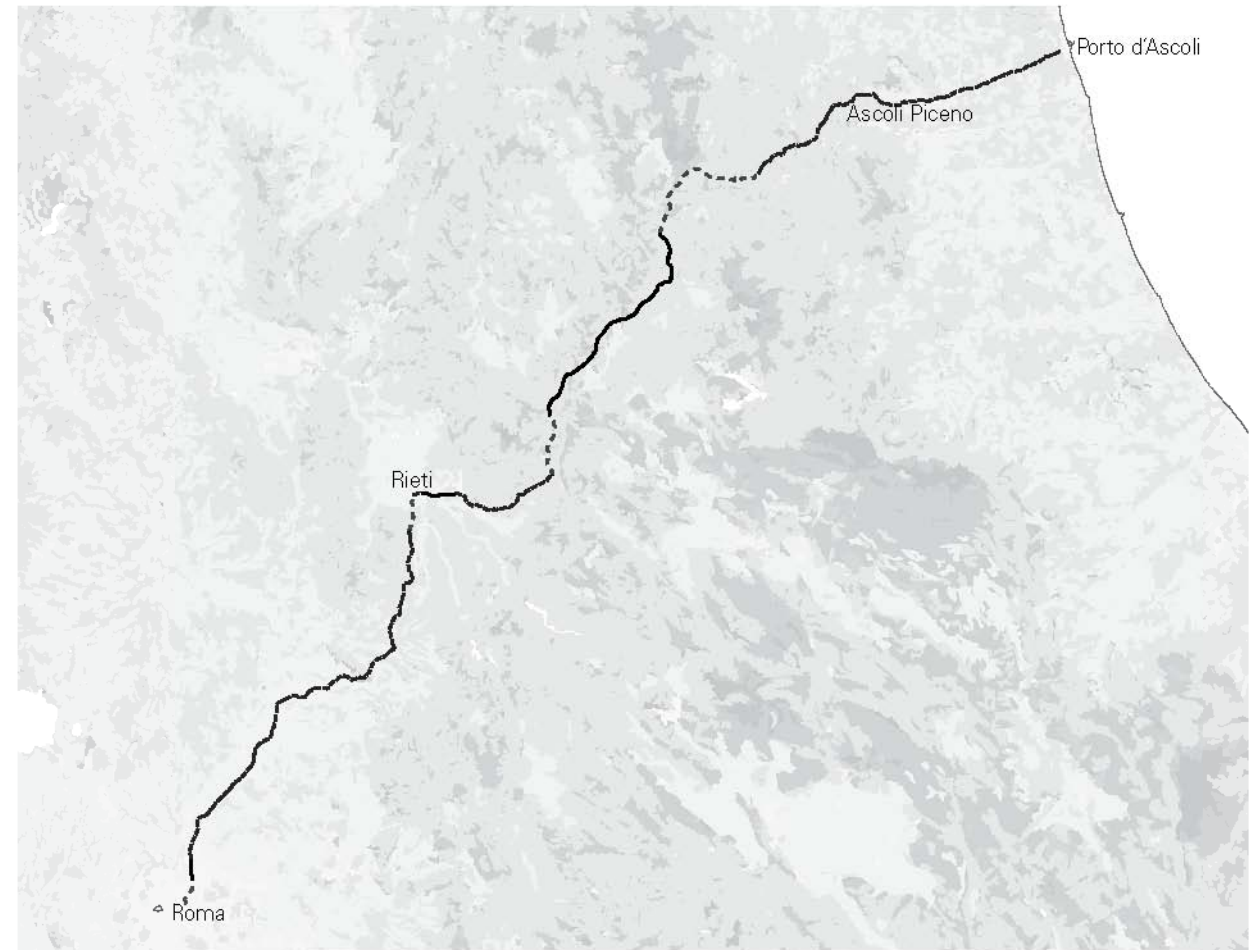
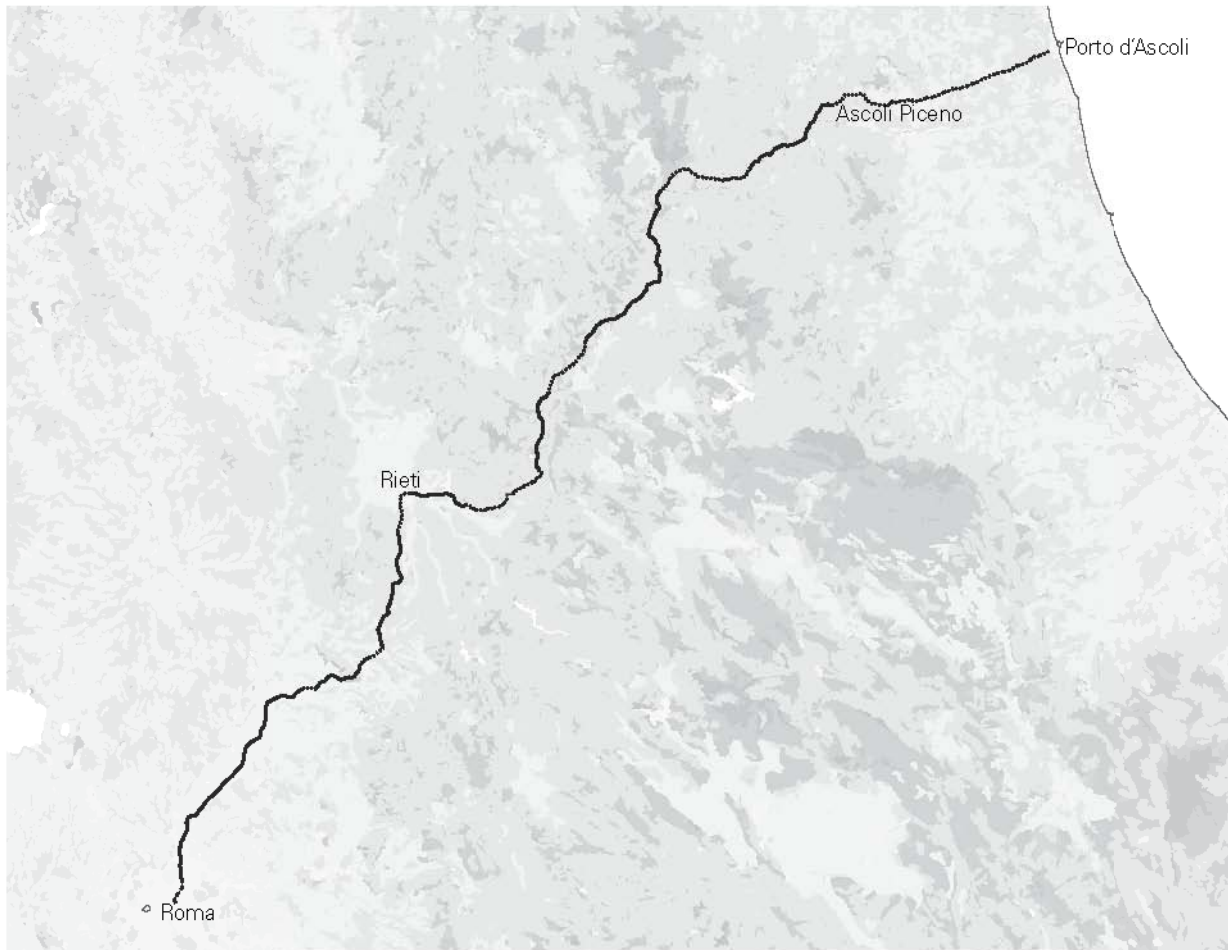
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Dark side of via Salaria  
© ETH Studio Basel

Dark side of via Salaria

An analysis of the problematic sides of via Salaria, which often raise questions and debates, especially amongst its everyday users.

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- 90 - 110 km/h
- - - 70 - 90 km/h
- - - 50 - 70 km/h

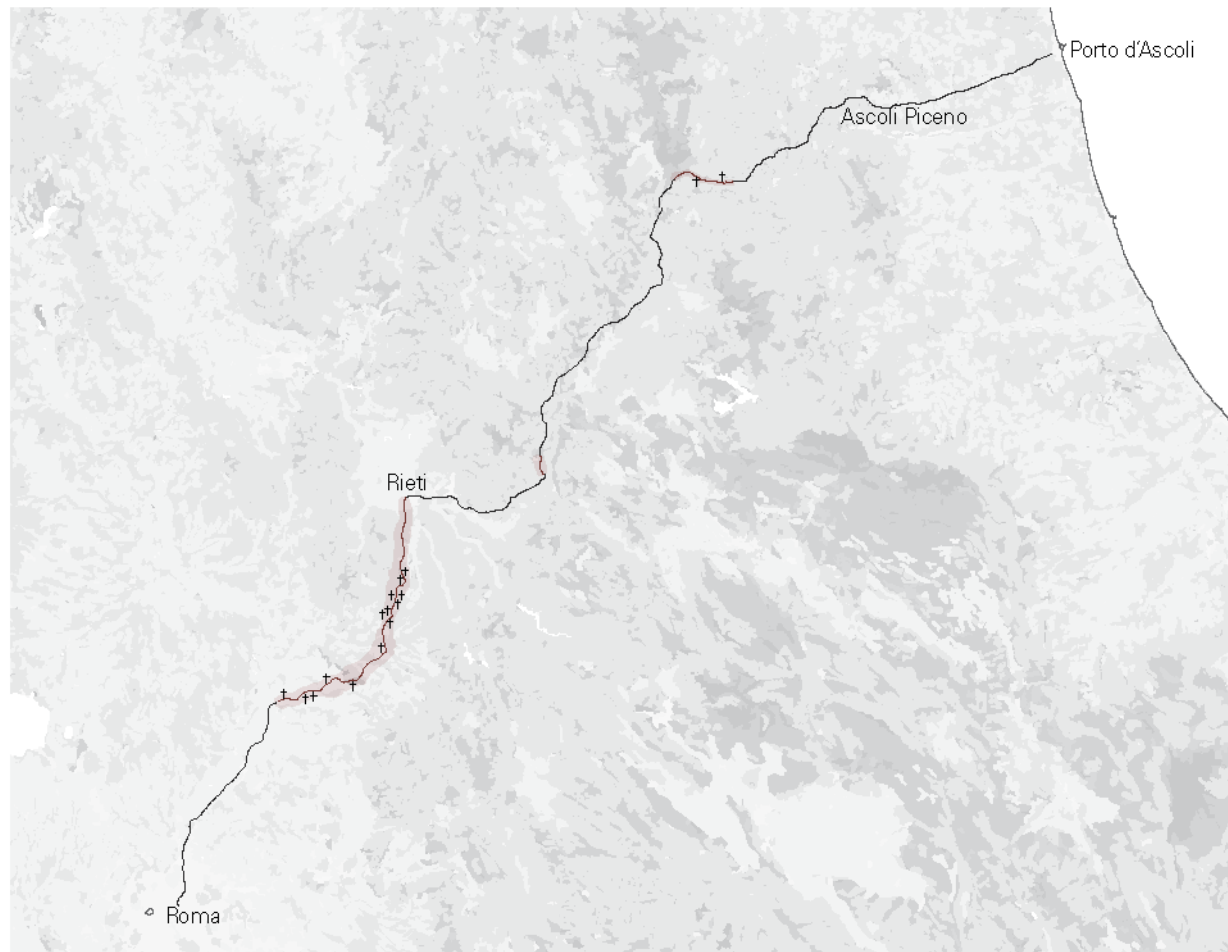
- New
- - - Average
- - - Old

### Speed

The variation of speed on the via Salaria reflects its variable nature. In fact the speed limitations change very often, because of the different urbanized areas we encounter, but also because of the topography, that influences the geometry of the street and the maintenance of itself.

### Lack of maintenance: a source of complaints

Not all sections of via Salaria are maintained in the same way. This is mostly because of a lack of funds for renewing the older parts of it, and a lack of interest in maintaining parts that are anyway still more or less functioning.



† Flowers indicating tragic accidents on via Salaria  
 — Dangerous sections of via Salaria

**Dangers: limited visibility**

Via Salaria has three sections which are particularly dangerous. This danger is caused by the curviness of the road and the limited visibility, as well as the traffic in the section between Passo Corese and Rieti.



— Prostitution on via Salaria

**Prostitution: a problematic issue**

Prostitution on via Salaria was a big issue until a couple of years ago, now the situation is getting better, although you can still see it. The most critical section are right outside Rome and in the Tronto valley, on the parallel road to via Salaria, which goes through the industrial area. In smaller amount it is also present between Sette Bagni and Passo Corese.

## A STREET WITH DIFFERENT STORIES

Via Salaria a culturally rich street that tells the stories of its surrounding territories. It's a road that evokes feelings, and to which you feel attached as soon as you get to know it better. A road which defines the lives of its users. At the same time it's the society, and the different layers of via Salaria, that have been described in the previous chapter that define via Salaria.



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Overlapping of layers  
An overlapping of the characters that most define the via Salaria.  
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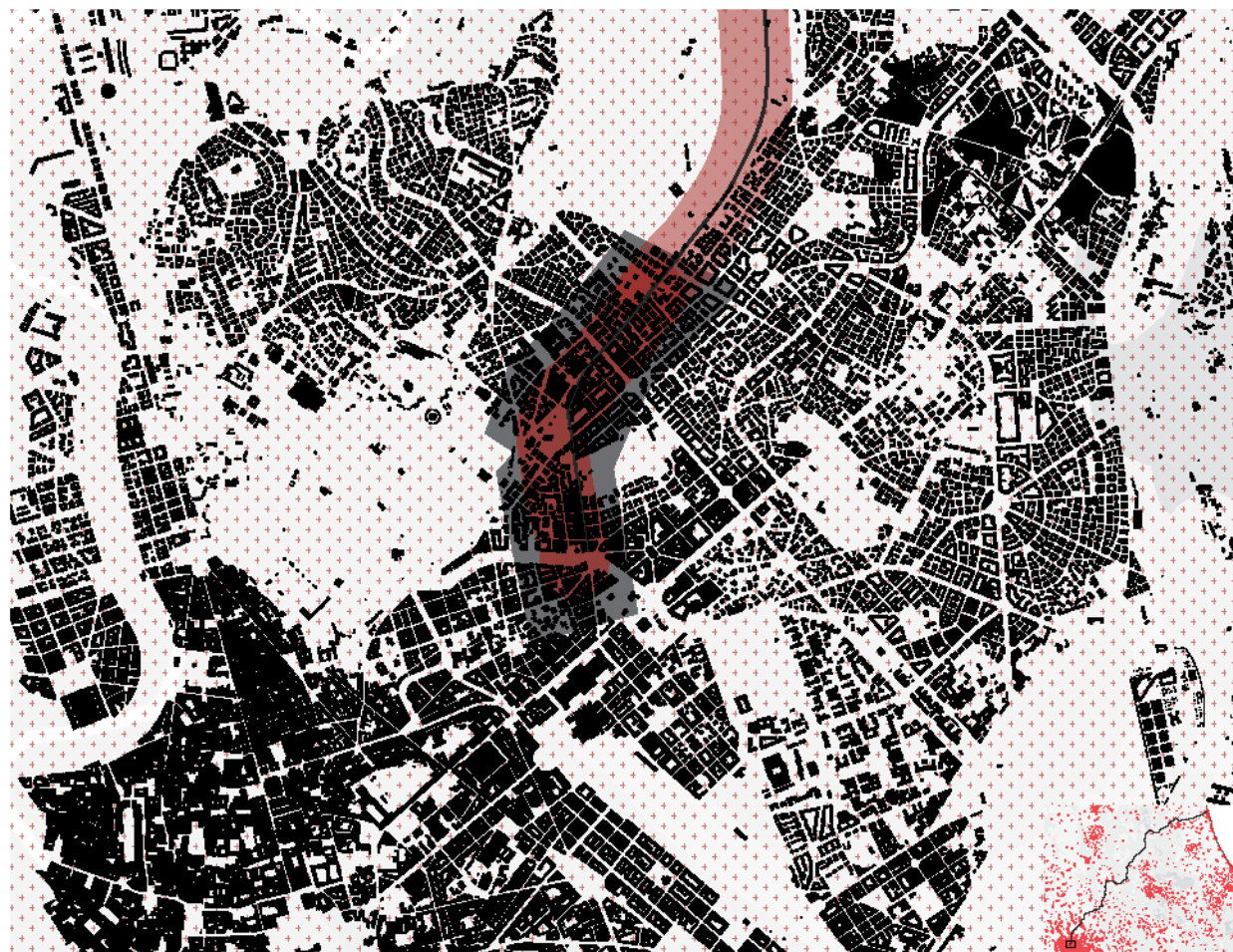
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Cross-section of via Salaria and parallel roads in Piazza Fiume



Intersection with other roads: Piazza Fiume



- Highly used sidewalks
- Sidewalks
- Parking on via Salaria

### City avenue

In the city of Rome, via Salaria looks just like any other busy city avenue. It is characterized by an extremely dense urbanization, comprised of buildings between four and six storeys high which take the whole view away. When walking in this section, the variety of services and people is great, however you don't get a chance to see what's further: your sight is canalized both by the constructions along the street and by hastiness of the users. The intersections with other roads are frequent: every couple/few blocks of buildings, and the intersecting roads are mostly of the same weight as Salaria, or slightly smaller. This section of via Salaria is definitely the most chaotic with crowded sidewalks and cars parked everywhere.



High and dense buildings along via Salaria, creating a "barrier" on the sides



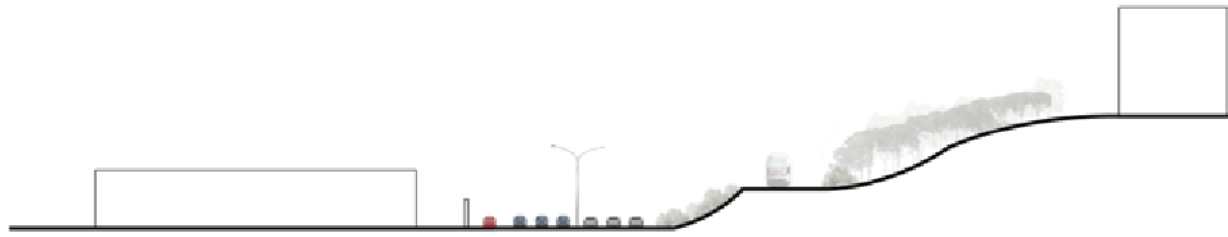
Crowded sidewalk



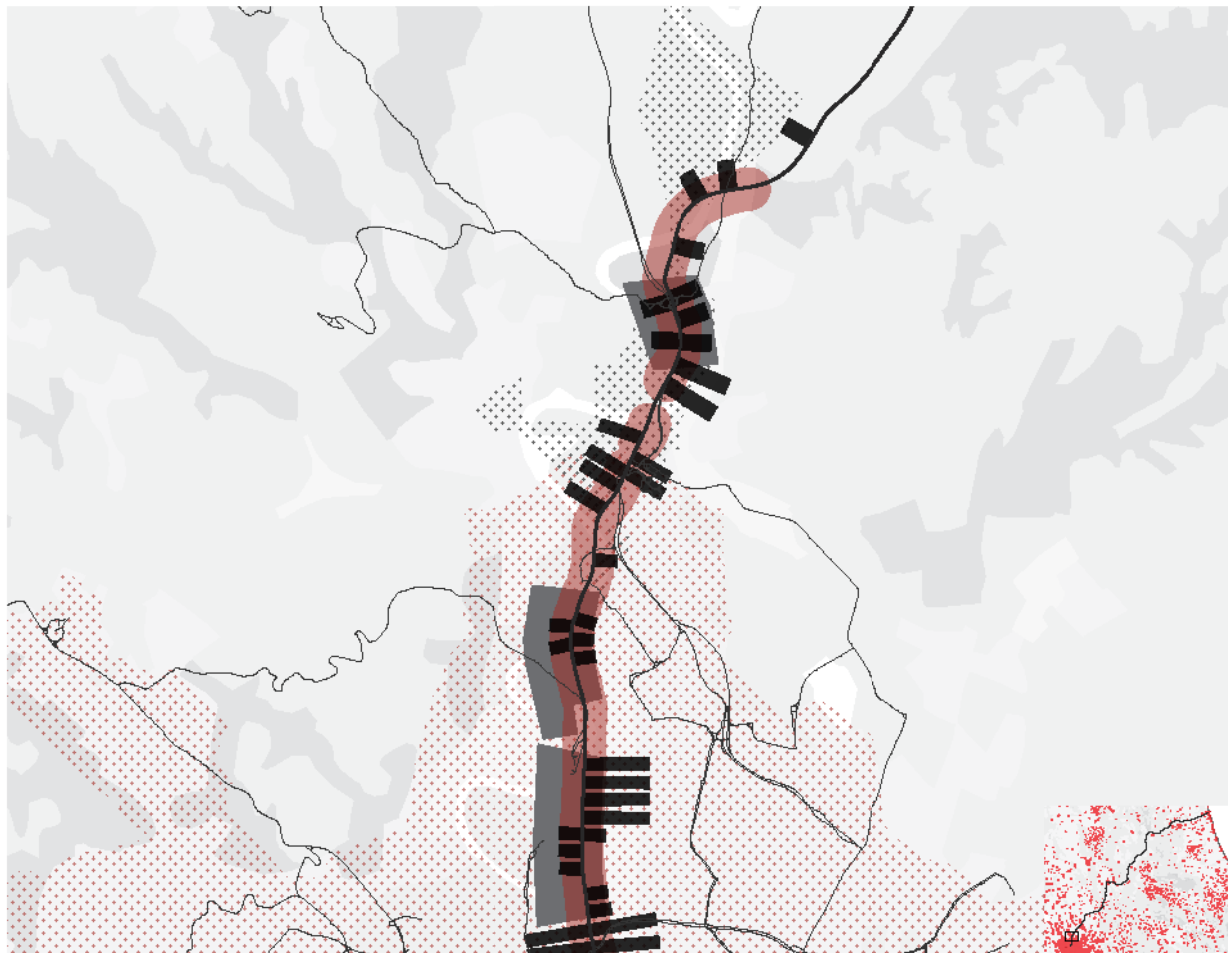
Chaotic parking on the side of the street (wherever you can find a place)



Variety of services along the street, and variety of use of the buildings



Cross-section of via Salaria with commercial buildings on one side and railway and residential area on the other



- Road network
- Sidewalks
- Parking on via Salaria

### Arterial road

Beginning right outside the first ring of Rome this section is a high capacity road that carries large volumes of traffic between city center and periphery but also between the various highways and other major roads intersecting via Salaria. Although the intersections are numerous, there is a lack of residential entrances directly onto the road. Located along it are commercial areas, shopping center and industrial areas.



Big intersections with other roads: first ring



Traffic



Commercial/industrial buildings



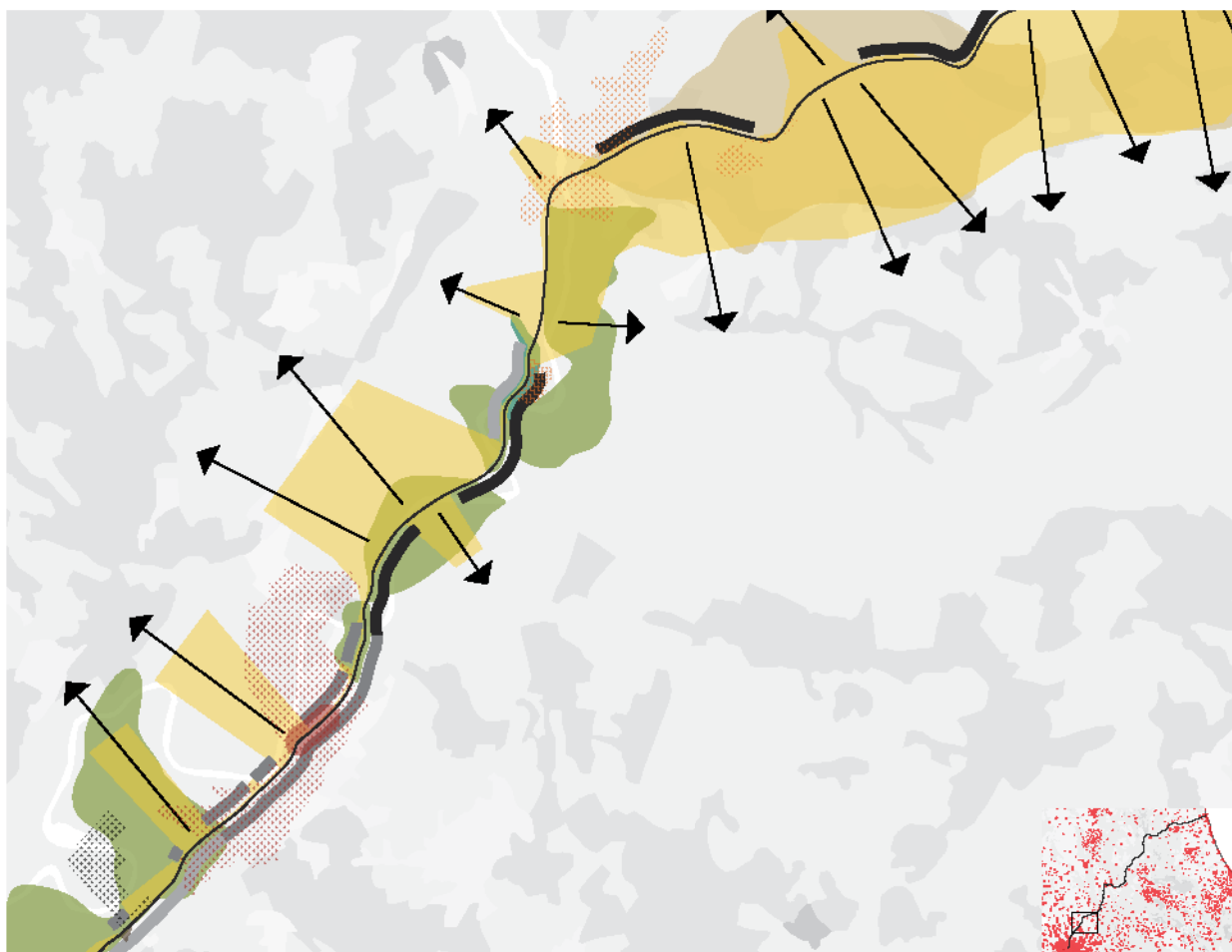
Chaotic parking at entrances of private commercial buildings, at bus stops and on sidewalks



Unusable and unused sidewalks



Cross-section of via Salaria with agricultural flat land on left hand side and soft hill on right hand side



- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Forests                       | View obstructed by topography |
| Agricultural fields           | Open view                     |
| Tree plantations              | Dense urban settlements       |
| View obstructed by vegetation | Loose urban settlements       |
| View obstructed by buildings  | Industrial areas              |

**Rural road**

In this section characterized by scenic views on flat and hilly landscapes, via Salaria becomes a secondary road (having already passed the major intersections with the highways). The vegetation consists mostly of agricultural lands and small tree plantations. The settlements are fewer and less dense. The traffic is very much reduced, what gives you the possibility to enjoy the spectacular views and the smooth curviness of the road.



Panorama view of via Salaria



Loose urbanization



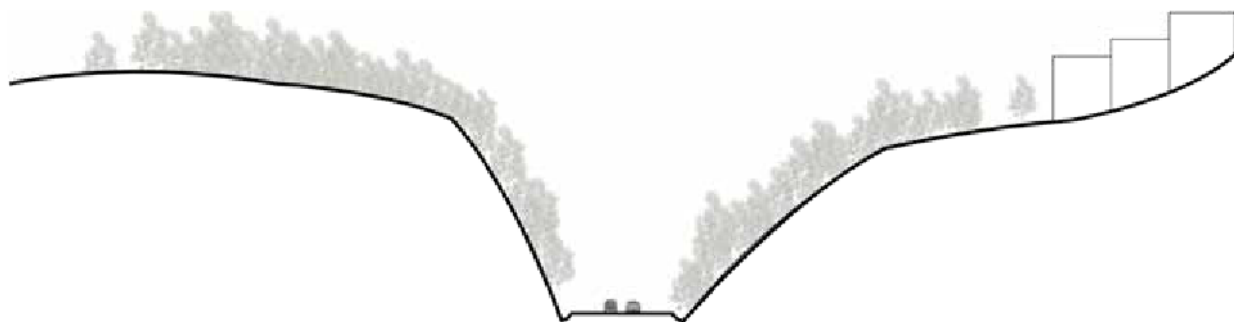
Open view



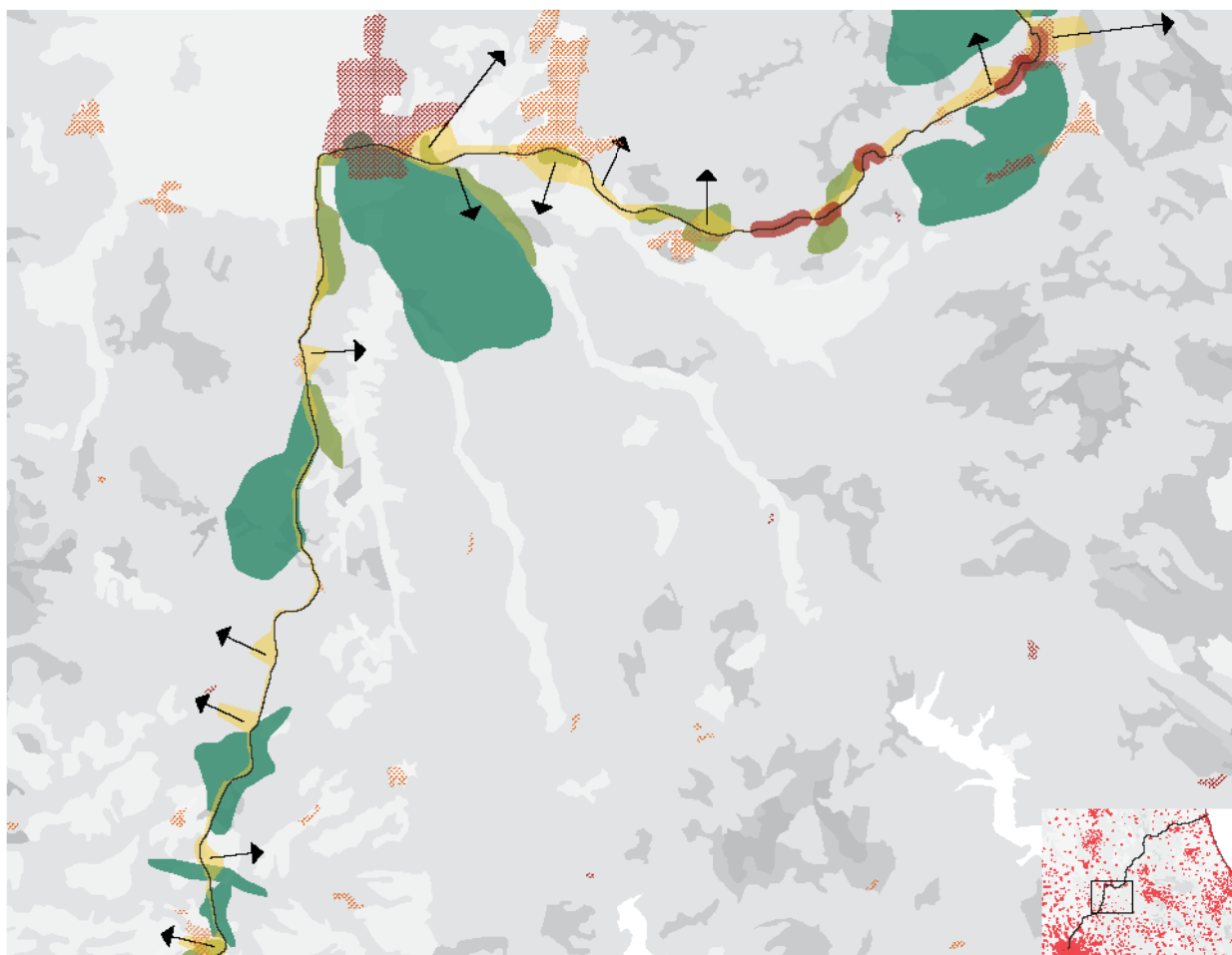
Soft hill along side of via Salaria



Soft curves



Cross-section of via Salaria with mountains on both sides



- █ Forests
- █ Agricultural fields
- █ Tree plantations
- █ Open view
- █ Dense urban settlements
- █ Loose urban settlements

### Valley road

Curvy and mysterious, this section makes its way between the Appenines. The visibility is often obstructed by the mountains. Views are mostly pointed at specific directions, such as mountains, buildings or towns. Traffic is low and urbanization loose: you can easily savor the particular appenine atmosphere which is characteristic for this part..



Panorama view of via Salaria (from Poggio Lorenzo)



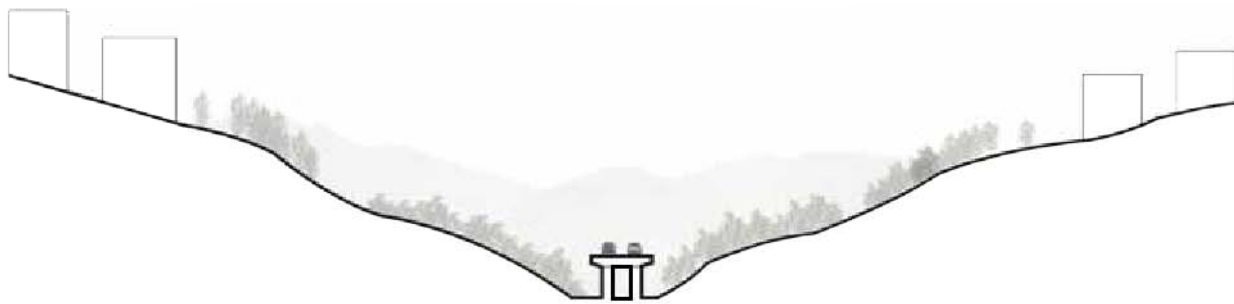
Dark, curvy via Salaria, making its way between the mountains



View on Poggio Lorenzo (village detached from the street)



View on Monte Gaggio with "DUX" writing



Cross-section of via Salaria in Posta



- Open view
- Tunnels
- Bridges
- Road lights

### Mountainous Road

The spatial quality changes dramatically in short distance, since the road is carved into a complicated topography condition, which reminds of an adventure experience.

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Panorama view on Androdoco



The road is "pressed" by the mountains



Road lights can not be found in this segment .



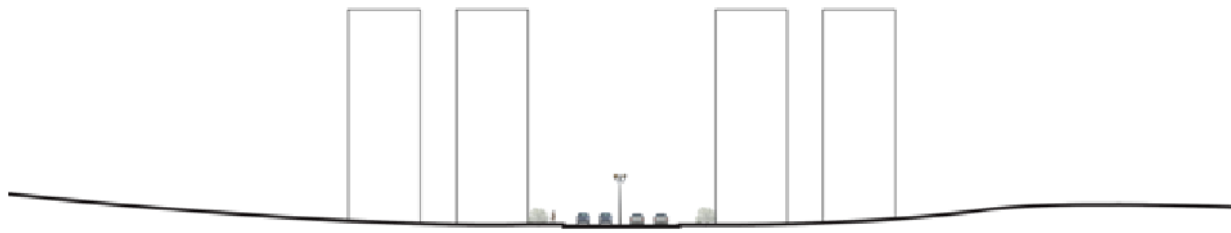
The Road mostly is elevated in a similar way of bridge, and carved into the mountains.



it either open to the wide landscape view in one side, or lead the driver into a completely closed tunnel space.

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Cross-section of via Salaria in Ascoli Piceno



- Building Height
- 6 Lanes Width
- Built area
- Sidewalk

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**Urban Boulevard**

The typical modern urban street is the main theme in this segment, the modernized building height beside the road is higher, and the road is wider than in other sections with center lines and traffic islands.

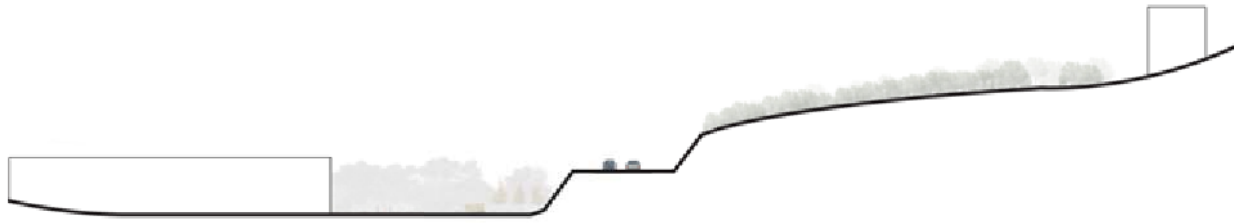


Bird view above Ascoli Piceno

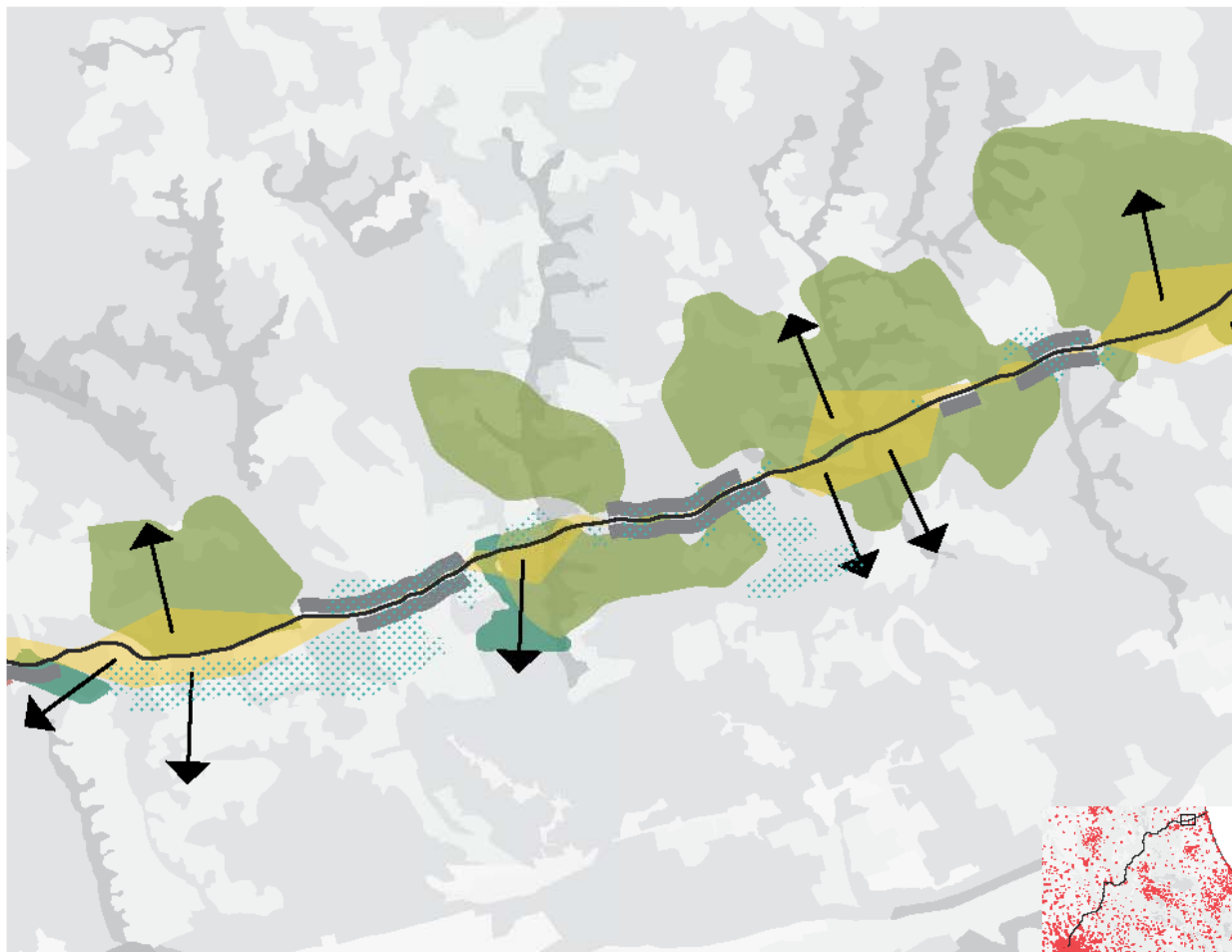


There is some modernized high-rise housing built beside the road, the road is completely under the urban street condition, and there are not many pedestrians.

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Cross-section of via Salaria in Brecciarolo



- █ Forests
- █ Agricultural fields
- █ Tree plantations
- █ View obstructed by vegetation
- █ View obstructed by topography
- █ Open view
- █ Dense urban settlements
- █ View obstructed by buildings

### Landscaped Parkway

The views start to widely open up to the surrounding peaceful landscapes and different types of vegetations along the road. The average speed decreases in this segment.



Bird View



The industrial area parallel to the road.



Road is involved with all kinds of vegetations.



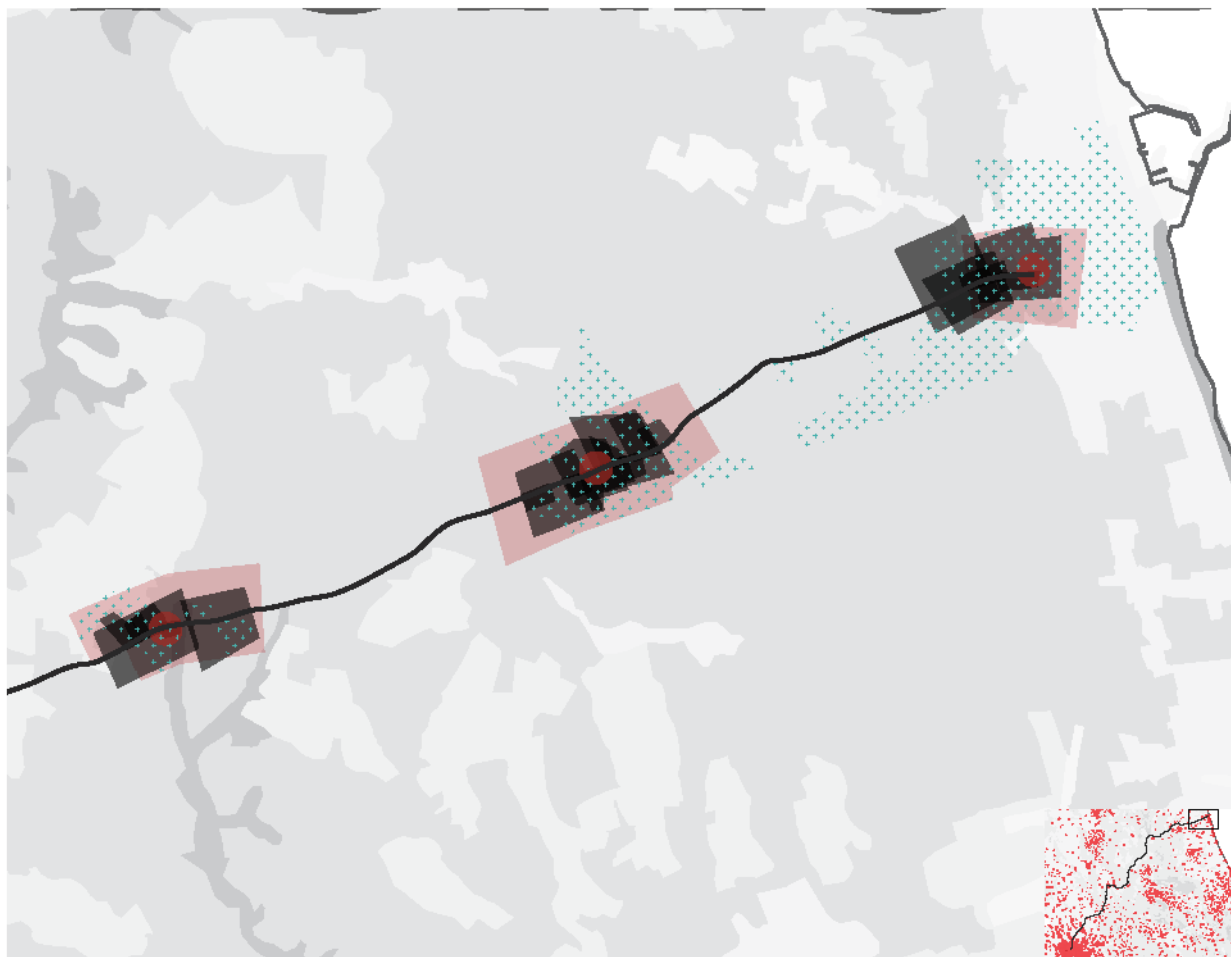
Wide views of landscape along the road



Traffic load start to increase



Cross-section of via Salaria in Centobuchi



- Sidewalk
- Dense Urban Settlement
- Built Area
- Bus Stop

**Mixed-use urban street**

The urbanized pattern in this segment tends to be linear close to the street. Variety of life can be found along the street.

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Bird view



Various types of land use long the street



Linear development of housing next to the street



Parking space exist beside the street



The buses on the street is designed to linking each vil-lages.

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### MAPS

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### INTERVIEWS

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## IMAGE CREDITS

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