

Carlo Boccianti's Churches from the Maremma to the Fucino: not just Houses for the Farmers but Something Strēnūs

ARTICLE

Second Post-War Period, Agrarian Reform, Ente per la Colonizzazione della Maremma Tosco-Laziale e del Territorio del Fucino, Carlo Boccianti, Churches

/Abstract

In the context of post-war reconstruction, the Agrarian Reform that began in 1950 was fundamental to the modernisation and rebirth of Italy. Thanks to the reform bodies, latifundia were expropriated in some regions of the south and in specific areas in others, and the land was distributed among farmers, creating appropriate infrastructures and housing solutions: scattered farms, but also small hamlets, usually centred around a church. An example of this are the settlements designed by Carlo Boccianti (1922-2015) for the Ente per la colonizzazione della Maremma Tosco-Laziale e del Territorio del Fucino in Tuscany, Lazio and Abruzzo. The combination of architecture, which spoke “a very simple language”, almost “semi-classical”, and sculpture, Boccianti’s first love, which was used to “stimulate the sensitivity of the peasants” with something “strēnūs” (bold), animated, with more or less happy results, the church projects that the architect carried out in the Agrarian Reform areas. This essay is a sketch of this path of experimentation and research: from the first of Boccianti’s churches in the Maremma, Santa Maria Goretti in Rispecchia, in the province of Grosseto, where the abstract crucifix by the sculptor Alfio Castelli (1917-1922) around which Boccianti had designed the building’s façade was never placed; to the church of the Cuore Immacolato di Maria in Borgo Ottomila, in the centre of Fucino: a building that, probably, housed this and other valuable works by Castelli and which, with the first nucleus of the settlement, was his only intervention in the Abruzzo area involved in the Agrarian Reform; to the church of San Giuseppe Operaio in Pescia Romana, in the province of Viterbo: one of the last that Boccianti designed for the Ente Maremma and a perfect partnership between architecture and art born, in particular, from the collaboration between Boccianti and the sculptor Pietro Cascella (1921-2008). Carlo Boccianti’s churches from the Maremma to the Fucino, beyond intellectual purposes or the celebration of architecture, gave voice to the need for spirituality and not just houses of the rural communities settled there, with sensitivity to ecclesiastical needs and awareness of the social role of sacred buildings.

/Author

Patrizia Montuori
DICEAA, University of L'Aquila
patrizia.montuori@univaq.it
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5789-6501

Patrizia Montuori is associate professor of History of Architecture at the University of L'Aquila, architect and PhD in Requalification and Insediative Recovery – curriculum in Restoration and History of Architecture – (Sapienza University of Rome). She is member of the teaching board of the PhD in Civil, Building-Architecture and Environmental Engineering at the University of L'Aquila and scientific head of the university research project “Disused Machines à guérir” in L'Aquila and Abruzzo. Knowledge, protection, valorisation” (2023). She is the University’s responsible (with S. Ciranna) in the agreement between the Argentine Embassy in Italy and the University of L'Aquila for the establishment of the ‘Càtedra Argentina’, and has participated in other international agreements and research (UnivAQ-University of Texas at S. Antonio; University of Rome Sapienza – Universidad Nacional de Ingenieria de Lima). She is a member of the Scientific Committee of the scientific journal DISEGNARECON. Her studies focus on the figurative and material consistency of the architectural and urban heritage between the 19th and 20th centuries and the historical-architectural and settlement evolution of urban centres and the territory, in particular, following destructive events. She is the author and editor of numerous essays and volumes including: *La migrazione italiana in Argentina. Professionisti, maestranze, storie*. (Rome: Edizioni Nuova Cultura, 2024), eds with S. Ciranna; *Intervista su Avezzano. Storia della città in sessanta risposte*. (L'Aquila: Textus 2023) with L. Saladino; *History meets Science between Abruzzo and Texas*. (Rome: Quasar, 2019) eds with S. Ciranna and A. Lombardi; *Tempo, spazio e architetture. Avezzano, cent'anni o poco più*. (Rome: Artemide, 2015) with S. Ciranna. *Lima. The Historic Center. Analysis and Restoration*. (Rome: Gangemi, 2012) eds with G. Palmerio and A. Lombardi.

The Post-War Period between Reconstruction, the Search for a New Architectural Language and Agrarian Reform

At the end of the Second World War, Italy underwent a massive mobilisation for the work of reconstruction; from 1945 until the end of the following decade, in a scenario of national rebirth, architectural culture was entrusted with the important role of recomposing the image of the country devastated by war, opting to start again from the explicit renunciation of the monumental forms of the regime and the associated symbolic and scenographic apparatus.

On the contrary, a 'populist' and regionalist spirit is recovered, which well represents Italy's economic and social efforts to be reborn from the poverty and humiliation of the war. The construction of popular residential areas scattered throughout the country thus became the centrepiece of the public administration's building programme. In particular, during the fourteen years of the INA-Casaplan (1949-1963), the settlements inspired by rural villages, with houses grouped around collective, civil and religious spaces, built from the north to the south of Italy, became a fundamental reference point for architectural culture and the reconstruction, including the social reconstruction, of the country.¹ A context, the rural one, which in those same years, was also undergoing profound and rapid changes as a result of the reforms launched in various parts of Italy in 1950.² By 1951, the reform bodies were already operating in the eight districts identified, and in the following two years they had already completed the expropriations and land allocations, and had built, or were in the process of building, houses and villages for the assignees.

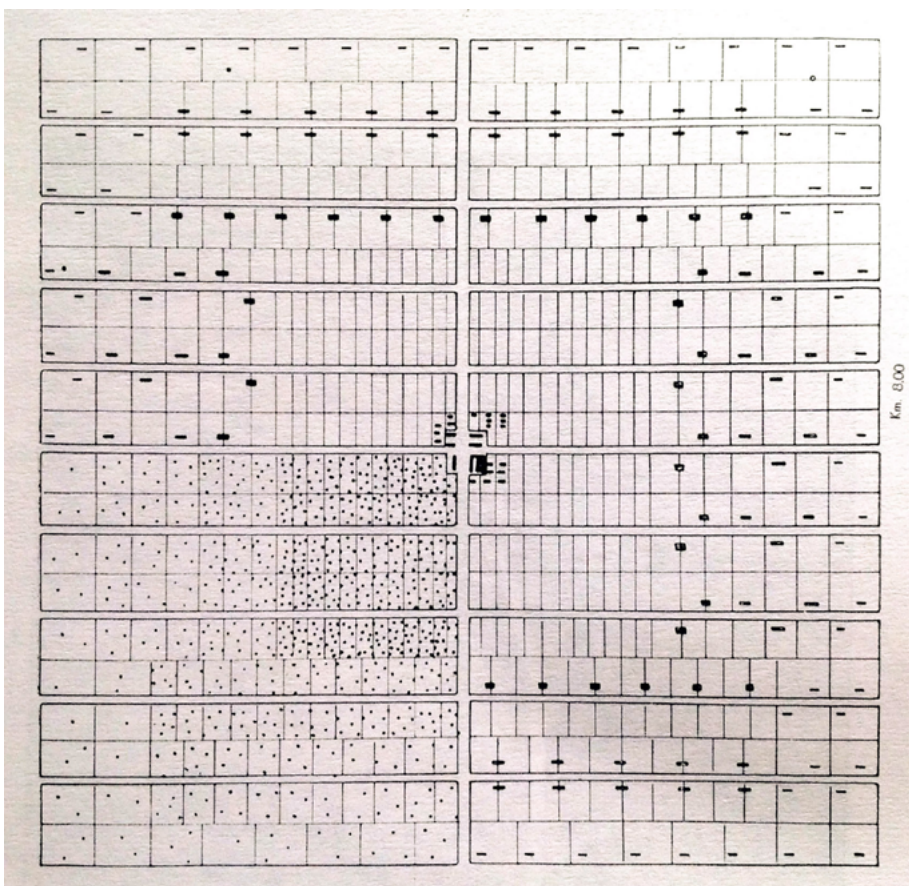
On the one hand, the redistribution of state land or large latifundia to families of agricultural workers or independent farmers has led to a change in the morphology of the places themselves, with the emergence of new settlements; the construction of residential and service villages; the creation of a basic infrastructure network to ensure communication and the provision of essential services; and the introduction of new types of farms and production methods. On the other hand, the transfer of populations from other rural areas to the areas covered by the reform created a real osmosis between the traditions, customs and production techniques of the migrating populations and those of the area in which they settled.

In an initial phase, for example, two areas with completely different characteristics, the Tuscan-Lazio Maremma and the Fucino area, the heart of the Abruzzi Marsica sub-region,³ were united through the intervention of a single

1 See: Paola Di Biagi, *La grande ricostruzione. Il piano Ina-Casa e l'Italia degli anni '50* (Roma: Donzelli, 2001).

2 The "Sila Law" of 12 May 1950 began the process of agrarian reform in Calabria, which was then extended by the "Stralcio Law" of 21 October 1950 no. 841 (Norme per l'espropriazione, bonifica, trasformazione ed assegnazione dei terreni ai contadini – Rules for the expropriation, reclamation, transformation and allocation of land to peasants) also extended to some areas of Abruzzo, Molise, Apulia, Basilicata, Sicily and Sardinia. See: Giuseppe Barbero, *Riforma agraria italiana. Risultati e prospettive* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1960); Giancarlo Di Sandro, *Agricoltura e sviluppo economico. Il ruolo della politica agraria in Italia (1944-1982)* (Milan: Franco Angeli, 2002); Emanuele Felice, *Cassa per il mezzogiorno: il caso dell'Abruzzo* (L'Aquila: Abruzzo Regional Council, 2003).

3 Thanks to the Agrarian Reform, the vast agricultural plain was expropriated to the Torlonia family, concessionaires of the land obtained after the extensive draining of the lake in the second half of the 19th century. The Fucino area was thus divided into 9,000 new plots of land, with an average size of between one and four



body: the *Ente per la colonizzazione della Maremma Tosco-Laziale e del Territorio del Fucino*,⁴ which was responsible for the separation, division and allocation of land and for measures to ensure adequate infrastructure and housing for farmers.⁵ The *Ente per la Valorizzazione del Territorio del Fucino* was established only later with Law No. 639 of 9 August 1954, which sanctioned the separation from the *Ente Maremma* and extended the area of competence in the Abruzzi territory from 16,000 to 160,000 hectares.⁶

hectares, of which the former tenants would become the owners in about thirty years, paying an annual rent of less than half of what they had paid to Prince Torlonia. See: Marcello Vittorini, *Il prosciugamento del lago e l'evoluzione del tessuto insediativo e organizzativo del Fucino*, excerpt from "Fucino cento anni". 1877-1977. *Atti degli incontri e dei convegni svolte per il Centenario del prosciugamento del Fucino e per il Venticinquennale della Riforma Agraria* (Avezzano: n.d., 1977). Patrizia Montuori, "Il Fucino da acqua a terra. Tracce storiche della trasformazione di un territorio, dall'antichità all'epoca contemporanea," in *La città globale. La condizione urbana come fenomeno pervasivo / The Global City. The urban condition as a pervasive phenomenon. Vol. E*, eds. Marco Pretelli, Tamborrino and Ines Tolic (Torino: AISU - Insights, 1, 2020): 490-500. Simonetta Ciranna and Patrizia Montuori, "La Marsica nel Novecento. Transformation, marginality and experimentation," *QuAD- Quaderni di Architettura e Design*, no. 3 (2020): 71-87.

4 On the *Ente Maremma*'s building activity in the Tuscan-Lazio Maremma see: Marco De Bianchi and Luca Seravalle, *Le costruzioni rurali della Riforma Fondiaria nella Maremma grossetana degli anni Cinquanta* (Grosseto: Editrice Innocenti, 2011). Valentina Iacoponi, "Case fino al limite dell'orizzonte. La riforma fondiaria attraverso i paesaggi dell'Ente Maremma," in *I paesaggi della riforma agraria: storia, pianificazione e gestione*, eds. Fausto Carmelo Nigrelli and Gabriella Bonini (Gattatico -RE: Istituto Alcide Cervi, 2017), 249-59.

5 Over a five-year period, Ente Maremma built 5,423 homes for allottees, 66 service villages and 974 kilometres of rural roads in the Tuscan-Lazio Maremma. See: Antonio Valentino Simoncelli, *Dalla riforma fondiaria allo sviluppo agricolo. Archivio storico, 1950-1977* (Roma: Etsaf-Ersal, 1991), 45.

6 The Piani Palentini, the Altopiano delle Rocche and the Valle Roveto were also included in the new Ente Fucino area. This territorial and administrative reorganisation made it necessary to carry out a first review of the measures introduced by the reform and the subsequent actions, and above all to take specific intervention to resolve the age-old housing problem of the Fucino farmers. See: Montuori, "Il Fucino da acqua a terra. Tracce storiche della trasformazione di un territorio, dall'antichità all'epoca contemporanea," 490-500. Ciranna and Montuori, "La Marsica nel Novecento. Trasformazione, marginalità e sperimentazione," 71-87.

In the first phase, the Ente Maremma did not generally promote the creation of rural villages with houses, open spaces and services, both civil and religious, in which the assignees could live a village life. On the contrary, it preferred a form of dispersed settlement that allowed the family to live and work on the allotted land [Fig. 1]. In fact, the Ente's technicians believed that living on the farm helped to reduce travelling time and costs,⁷ ensuring maximum use of the working potential of the entire family nucleus:⁸ this settlement logic was clearly linked to the interpretation of the house that the Ente Maremma gave to the farmers, not only as an adequate dwelling, but also as an "essential tool for the production process to take place".⁹ In general, therefore, it is only in specific cases that Ente Maremma has adopted solutions other than the dispersed model, promoting the construction of residential and service villages. In the Capalbio plain, for example, where about one hundred families who had been left without land in the Fucino area,¹⁰ were resettled on the farms of the former S.A.C.R.A. (Società Anonima Capalbio Redenta Agricola),¹¹ a semi-centralised settlement was planned, better suited to the social needs of the Fucino population, who were more used to village life.

Carlo Boccianti's Rural Churches between Maremma and Fucino

Carlo Boccianti (1922-2015) was an architect originally from Bari, but who lived and worked in Rome.¹² After taking his classical high school diploma at the Liceo Orazio Flacco in Bari, he had moved to the Capital, where he also obtained an art diploma at the high school in Via di Ripetta, driven by a passion for sculpture that would persist throughout his subsequent professional career. Encouraged by his parents to continue his studies, he graduated in Architecture¹³ and registered with the Order of Architects on 9 April 1947 with a provisional qualification and registration number 572.¹⁴ After his first professional assign-

7 The Ente Maremma's planners were inspired by the criteria of rational use, economy, decency and hygiene for the inhabitants, which Amos Edallo had already set out in 1946 in his study of "rural town planning" in the Po Valley. See: Amos Edallo, *Ruralistica- Urbanistica rurale- con particolare riferimento alla Valle Padana: il paese rurale, l'azienda rurale, la casa rurale in funzione dell'organizzazione agricola attuale e futura* (Milano: Hoepli, 1946).

8 Ente Maremma, A.D. 1961, *I borghi di servizio. Strutture periferiche* (Roma: Officina poligrafica laziale, n.d., 1961).

9 Roberto Milletti, *Nuovi progetti di costruzioni rurali e tipi di insediamento* (Bologna: Edizioni agricole, 1958), 11.

10 While in the Maremma many farms were left without tenants after the redistribution of land by the Ente Maremma, in Fucino it was not possible to guarantee land for all the workers and many were forced to emigrate to the Capalbio area. See: Loreto Gigli, *I pionieri della Maremma. Storia recente di Capalbio* (Pitigliano: Editrice Laurum, 2009). Luciano Domenichelli, *Una grande generazione di agricoltori* (Pitigliano: Editrice Laurum, 2009).

11 The Società Anonima Capalbio Redenta Agricola (S.A.C.R.A.), today S.A.C.R.A. S.p.a., was founded in 1922 by a group of friends who took over the property extending from Capalbio Castle to the sea: a territory of about 9,000 square metres that was inhospitable at the time, although it had already undergone an initial reclamation in 1861, which was used for growing cereals, breeding livestock, producing coal and fishing in the lakes. See: <https://sacra.it/territorio/terre-di-sacra-la-storia-del-territorio/> (last accessed December 2024).

12 For a first biographical profile of Carlo Boccianti see: "Profili biografici. Carlo Boccianti," in *Itinerari di architettura contemporanea. Grosseto e provincia*, eds. Marco Del Francia, Giovanni Tombari and Barbara Catalani (Pisa: Ets Editions, 2011), 157.

13 In a video interview kindly provided by his daughter, Boccianti talks about his training, his first assignments and his work at Ente Maremma. Videointerview to Carlo Boccianti by Antonia Genco, Irene Rosato, Francesco Salvatore Genco, 2010. Private archive of Henny Boccianti, Rome.

14 List of registered for the years 1945-56, Historical Archive of Order of Architects, Town planners, Landscapers

Fig. 1 Schematic model of a Reform Farm built on 6,000 hectares with both centralised and distributed settlements (*Esperienze urbanistiche in Italia*. Roma: Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica – INU, 1952).

ments,¹⁵ Boccianti began working for the *Ente Maremma* in 1950: he joined the 'Comitato per l'edilizia rurale economica' (Committee for Rural Economic Development) together with Roberto Milletti, Riccardo Medici and other leading figures from the Italian agricultural and political world, including Giuseppe Medici (1907-2000), President of the Ente and Minister of Agriculture and Forestry in 1954 and 1955;¹⁶ in the following years he designed divisions of land, rural buildings and residential and service villages. This is architect's account of this intense human and professional journey:

I found a job at the Ente Maremma; I was lucky, because I only knew how to be an architect and didn't know how to do anything else. It was about doing architecture. The procedure of the Ente Maremma was first of all to plan the territory, that is, to divide the plots, the houses, etc. Then, little by little, came the more social part, and therefore the rural villages, and therefore churches, schools, nurseries: only then did I thank God that I had not been a sculptor. But sculpture helped me, because instinctively I was interested in everything that had to do with volume, the volumetry of a thing rather than its functionality. But I started shyly, quietly (...). For the Ente Maremma I made 48 churches (...). Little by little I entered into a kind of psychic part, that is, the pleasure of seeing the reaction of the farmers in front of these churches, because in every church, good or bad, there was something strēnūs [bold].¹⁷

In fact, shortly after joining the Ente Maremma, Boccianti had already begun to think about rural building from a social, architectural and aesthetic point of view, as well as a functional one, pointing out that the new impetus in the agricultural sector, in the wake of the Agrarian Reform, was "(...) multifaceted and full of profound innovations".¹⁸ The aim of the interventions promoted by the *Ente Maremma* could therefore be to provide not only shelter for the peasants, but also "a home for man", conceived for economic reasons as a "compromise between the perfect and the necessary" and based on "a kind of philosophy, the most natural one known to man, represented by common sense". In this way, one can be rational and, because of



2

and Conservators of Rome and Province, Rome. The enrolments "with provisional qualification" are those of the years in which the state examination had been suspended.

15 Boccianti reports that one of these assignments was the elevation of the Aurum liquor factory in Pescara, built in the 1930s by the architect Giovanni Michelucci (1891-1990). See: Videointerview to Carlo Boccianti by Antonia Genco, Irene Rosato, Francesco Salvatore Genco, 2010.

16 Iacoponi, "Case fino al limite dell'orizzonte. La riforma fondiaria attraverso i paesaggi dell'Ente Maremma," 252.

17 See: Videointerview to Carlo Boccianti by Antonia Genco, Irene Rosato, Francesco Salvatore Genco, 2010.

18 Carlo Boccianti, "Una casa per l'uomo: nella migliore armonia tra l'ambiente naturale, l'architettura e la necessità del lavoro dei campi," *Agricoltura: rivista mensile di attualità italiane e straniere* I, no 2, (1952): 29.

Fig. 2
Pietro Cascella, photo of the sketch made as a boundary stone in the Agrarian Reform territories (source: *Innovazione e Agricoltura*, no. 1 (III), gennaio/febbraio 2000, 43).

the close relationship between rationality and beauty, one can also solve the problem of aesthetics, which, let us not forget, is first and foremost a problem of logic".¹⁹

It was precisely with the aim of providing the peasants not only with land and shelter, but also with aesthetically pleasing living spaces and something *strēnūs* (bold) that would stimulate their reactions, that Boccianti, already in the study of the scattered appoderaments, commissioned the Pescara-born artist Pietro Cascella (1921-2008)²⁰ to design a sculpture to mark the boundary of the reformed territory, similar to the boundary stones that Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo of Tuscany had placed at the end of the 18th century.²¹ Cascella, with whom Boccianti established an effective collaboration throughout the period in which he worked with the *Ente Maremma*, created a sketch inspired by archaic Etruscan forms [Fig. 2]. However, the proposal was ultimately unsuccessful.²²

Following these initial, failed attempts, Boccianti was presented with the opportunity to direct his work in the Ente Maremma towards social and architectural goals in addition to the previously established bureaucratic and functional objectives. This was due to the plans for the construction of residential and service villages in the Tuscan-Lazio Maremma and the Fucino area, which included plans for churches to serve as the focal point of these communities. Indeed, in these newly constructed villages, which were situated in areas designated for agricultural use and usually uninhabited, the church served not only as a place of worship for farmers but also as a primary hub for social interaction for the residents of the hamlet and surrounding rural communities.²³

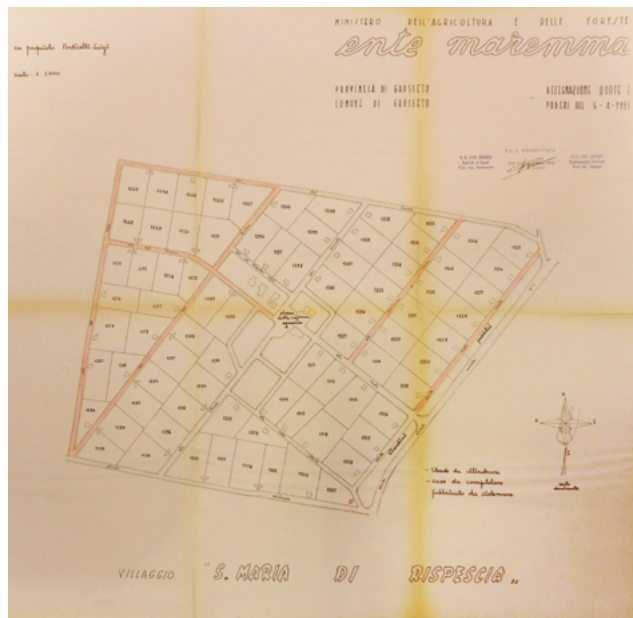
19 Boccianti, "Una casa per l'uomo: nella migliore armonia tra l'ambiente naturale, l'architettura e la necessità del lavoro dei campi," 32.

20 Pietro Cascella was born in Pescara into a family of artists. From an early age, he exhibited a similar artistic passion to that of his grandfather Basilio (1860-1950), his father Tommaso (1890-1968), his uncles Gioacchino (1903-1982) and Michele (1892-1989), as well as his brother Andrea (1919-1990). He undertook studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome (1938) and, following a period of painting, elected to pursue a career in stone and bronze sculpture from the early 1950s onwards. In the great masses of his sculptures, one discerns primordial moments of immediate expression, wherein the archaic motif is contemporized by a pervasive irony. See: Rossana Bosaglia, Mario De Micheli and Pietro Toesca, *Pietro Cascella. Le opere monumentali* (Milano: Electa, 1993). *Cascella. Pietro e la famiglia: una lunga vocazione artistica* (Parma: Guanda, 1998). Patrizia Ferretti, "L'intelligenza nelle mani: opere inedite di Pietro Cascella per l'Ente Maremma," *Nel Lazio Guida al patrimonio storico artistico ed etnoantropologico Rivista semestrale della Soprintendenza per i Beni Storici, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio I*, no. 2 (Gennaio/Giugno 2011): 89-99.

21 The necessity for a more exact control of the territory, associated with the reforming and modernising policy initiated in the latter half of the eighteenth century by the Tuscan government and, in particular, from 1785 onwards by Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo, resulted in a reform that also encompassed a revision of the cadastre and a comprehensive survey of the entire Grand Duchy's borders.

22 Carlo Boccianti, "Gli artisti e le architetture della Maremma," *Innovazione e Agricoltura III*, no 1 (January/February 2000): 43-45.

23 The construction of churches in the villages of the Agrarian Reform was undoubtedly influenced by the concurrent debate that took place at the National Congress of Sacred Architecture in Bologna in September 1955 and the contextual exhibition on Sacred Architecture in Italy between 1945 and 1955, despite the absence of a dedicated body of literature on the subject. These events served to reinforce the urban and social role of the church building in the planning and regeneration of peripheral areas, as well as the concept of the parish as a 'Christian citadel'. This was perceived as a strategic defensive measure against communist proselytism in marginal urban and rural areas. The concept of the church as the physical and ideal fulcrum of the nucleus of buildings necessary for the civil and social organisation of the community settled there thus became central to the projects of the new settlements realised from the 1950s onwards, both in the areas of the Reformation and in various Italian rural areas. For instance, the villages established by Adriano Olivetti in collaboration with the UNRRA-Casas (United Relief and Rehabilitation Administration – Comitato Amministrativo Soccorso Senza Tetto – Unroofed Rescue Administrative Committee) provide a case in point. In particular, the village of Borgo La Martella (1949-54) in Matera, designed by the group led by Ludovico Quaroni, is worthy of note. See: Simonetta Ciranna, "L'architettura delle chiese nell'Italia del dopoguerra. Il Convegno di Bologna del 1955," in *Le pietre e l'eterno. Architetture religiose: costruzioni e restauro*, eds. Daniela Concas and Marco Spesso (Roma: Plan Ed., 2011), 87-93, Andrea Longhi.



3

4

The initial rural village on which Boccianti was engaged was the *Villaggio del Bracciante* (Farmhand's village) in Santa Maria di Rispecchia, situated within the province of Grosseto. Its inauguration occurred in December 1951, with the ceremony presided over by the Minister of Agriculture, Amintore Fanfani²⁴ [Fig. 3]. The village was intended to serve as a hub for the provision of services and a focal point for the aggregation of residents from the numerous farms and farmhouses dispersed across the expansive countryside to the south of the Ombrone river, situated between Grosseto and the hamlet of Alberese [Fig. 4]. The architect devised a plan comprising two distinct sections: a residential area and a central zone designated for services. The residential section was to accommodate 79 plots, each apportioned to a family and encompassing a farmhouse and 46 hectares of land. The second phase of the project was to include the construction of a church, a school, and a kindergarten; a social building with shops and offices; a barracks; a small restaurant; an area designated for shops; and an area designated for a market.

The only edifice that was ultimately constructed was the Church of Santa Maria Goretti, which was completed with the addition of several annexes. The church was consecrated for worship on 6 July 1954 by the Bishop of the Diocese of Pitigliano-Sovana²⁵, Monsignor Pacifico Giulio Vanni (1893-1967). Boccianti designed it in accordance with the criteria of architectural and constructive simplicity endorsed by the *Ente Maremma*, which espoused the

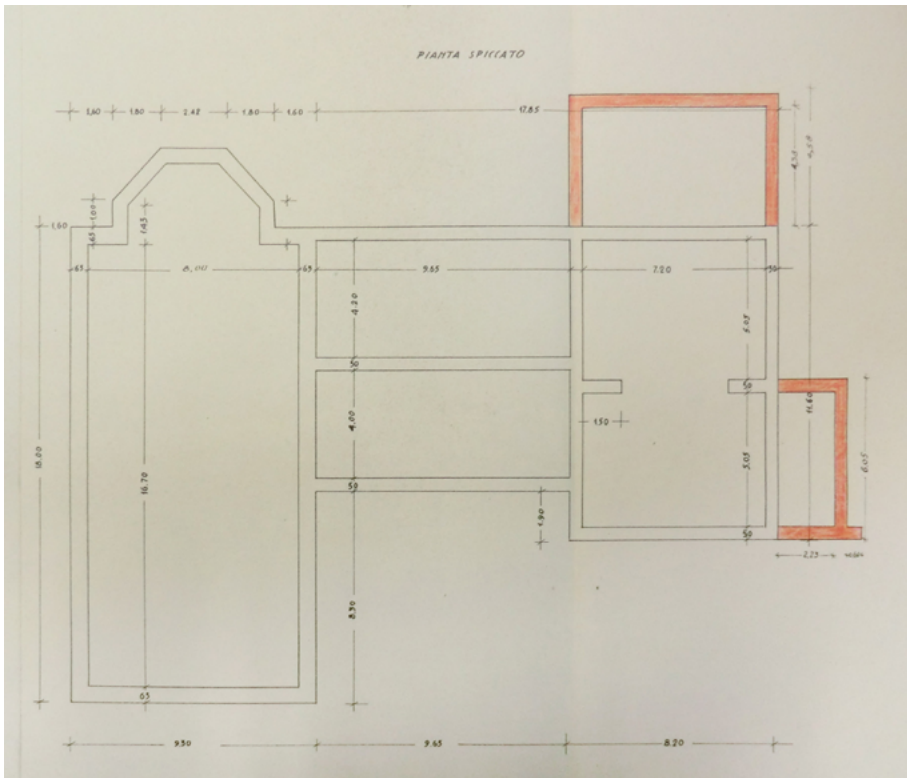
Fig. 3
The Bracciante village of Santa Maria di Rispecchia during the inauguration of the Minister of Agriculture Amintore Fanfani in December 1951 (source: Archive Arsial-Luce, Rome, photo no A00180004).

Fig. 4
Ente Maremma, Village of Santa Maria di Rispecchia, allotment of shares and farms of 06.04.1953 (source: Archive of Agenzia Regionale per lo Sviluppo e l'Innovazione dell'Agricoltura del Lazio Arsial-Luce - ARSIAL -, Rome, projects, file 2043, project for the renovation of buildings and roads in the village of Santa Maria di Rispecchia former Ponticelli Luigi property).

"Laboratori di Architettura per le cittadelle cristiane. Parrocchie e periferie nel dopoguerra," *Thema. Rivista dei Beni Culturali Ecclesiastici*, no. 1 (2012): 36-41; Raffaele Pontrandolfi and Adriana Raguso, *Architettura rurale e novecento: i borghi di Matera nel contesto italiano e internazionale* (Matera: Edizioni Magister, 2022).

24 The initial inauguration was presided over by Minister Fanfani on 21 December 1952. However, the final inauguration, which took place after the village had been completed, was conducted in the presence of Fanfani himself, the mayor of Grosseto, Renato Pollini, and Giorgio La Pira, mayor of Florence. The settlement was designated 'Santa Maria di Rispecchia', in accordance with the dedication of the local parish church to 'Santa Maria Goretti', and was subsequently abbreviated to 'Rispecchia'. See: Antonio Valentino Simoncelli, *Rispecchia. Da villaggio bracciantile a borgo residenziale* (Grosseto: Editrice Innocenti, 2003).

25 The parish was initially subject to the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Sovana-Pitigliano; it was not until 1976 that it became part of the Bishopric of Grosseto.



view that “anything was fine, as long as it was cheap”.²⁶ The religious edifice features a single hall illuminated by pairs of single-lancet windows on both side walls, culminating in an octagonal apsidal termination [Fig. 5]. The roof is gabled with four wooden trusses supporting purlins and prefabricated elements, with Marseille tiles affixed to the surface. The structure is masonry-based and serves to bear the weight of the building. The interior walls are entirely plastered and painted white, with the exception of the rear wall and the interior of the apse. The latter has been frescoed in 1959 by the Bergamo painter Agostino Manini (1922-1999), who depicted the Crucifix, the four Evangelists, two angels and the Eternal Father. The principal façade was also designed by Boccianti with minimalist lines, as “a kind of house, however, with a large roof and a large cross intended to hold a 1:1 human-sized crucifix”²⁷ [Fig. 6]. Indeed, the architect designed the simple yet modern asymmetrical profile with the small bell gable located at the left end with the intention of incorporating a *strēnūs* (bold) element: the crucifix, created by the Marche sculptor Alfio Castelli (1917-1992).

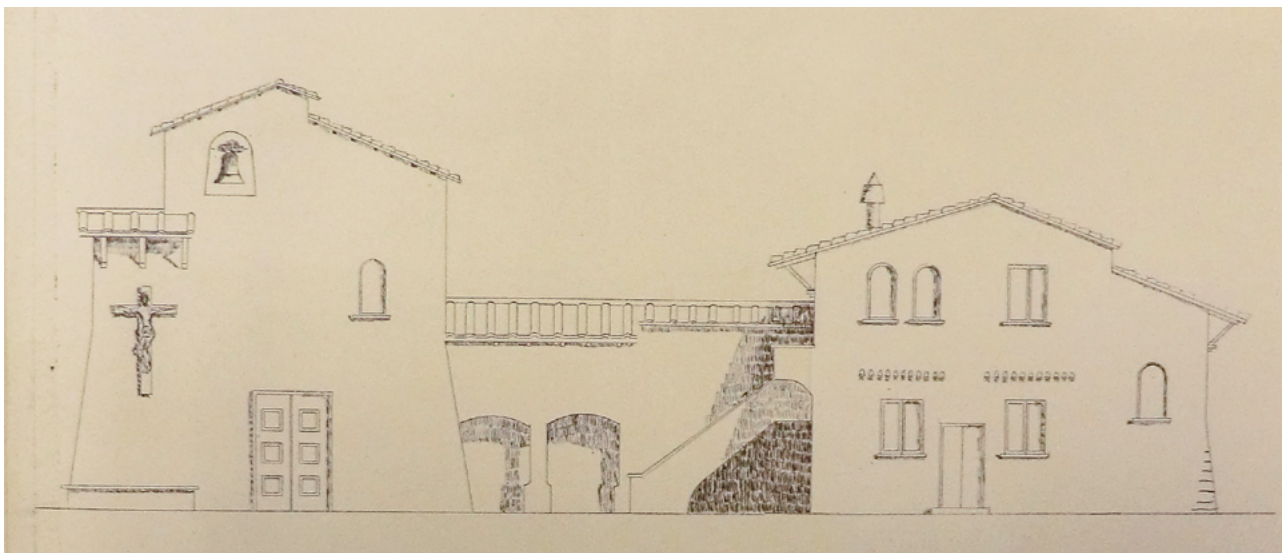
Castelli, who was already a prominent figure in the artistic community, served as the artistic advisor of the *Ente Maremma* from 1952 to 1955. During this period, he created a bronze depiction of Christ for the Rispeccia crucifix, drawing inspiration from 15th-century art but employing a highly stylised, thread-like, and almost larval approach to form.²⁸ Monsignor Vanni, who had only been appointed

Fig. 5
Ente Maremma, Village of
Santa Maria di Rispeccia,
parsonage church, plan, 29
March 1958 (source: Archive
of ARSIAL, Rome, projects, file
3427, restoration work and
church and rectory extension
for the Villaggio Bracciantile di
Rispeccia).

26 See: Videointerview to Carlo Boccianti by Antonia Genco, Irene Rosato, Francesco Salvatore Genco, 2010.

27 See: Videointerview to Carlo Boccianti by Antonia Genco, Irene Rosato, Francesco Salvatore Genco, 2010.

28 Alfio Castelli was born in Senigallia in 1917 and was awarded a scholarship enabling him to enrol at the Institute of Fine Arts in Florence in 1933. He was subsequently awarded a second scholarship which enabled him to enrol and graduate at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. Castelli was a prominent figure in both the Roman and international art scenes. From his inaugural solo exhibition in the Italian capital in 1940, he demonstrated



bishop of the diocese of Sovana-Pitigliano on 10 May 1952 after twenty years of apostolate in China, was not in favour of the introduction of such a work of art into a church built for a rural population. An abstract representation of Christ, in which, as Boccianti himself wrote, “not all the eyelashes and eyebrows were distinct, nor was there any trace of tears along the cheeks. Consequently, the sculpture was relocated to the warehouses of the Gallery of Modern Art [in Rome]. The church, therefore, remained with its wooden cross on the façade”.²⁹

The circumstances surrounding Castelli’s crucifix remain uncertain. Available documentation indicates that it was never housed in either the National Gallery of Modern Art or the Gallery of Modern Art in Rome. Notably, these institutions no longer possess the crucifix. Nevertheless, a virtually identical artwork can be observed adorning the façade of another sacred edifice designed by Boccianti during the same period. This structure, the church of the Cuore Immacolato di Maria in Borgo Ottomila, is located in the Fucino area and exhibits simplified features akin to those observed in the Rispescia church.³⁰ Ottomila is

an affinity for the works of Marino Marini (1901-1980) and Giacomo Manzù (1908-1991). This led to a notable shift in his sculptural style, moving away from figurative representation. During a visit to Paris in 1948, Castelli was profoundly influenced by an encounter with the Swiss sculptor Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966). Giacometti’s threadlike, larval figures, seemingly worn out by the air, left a lasting impression on Castelli. Nevertheless, the influence of Giacometti was only fully manifested in Castelli’s work after 1952, specifically in the pieces he created for the churches designed by Carlo Boccianti in Maremma and Fucino. See: *Alfio Castelli: sculptures and drawings 1979-1987* (Roma: De Luca, 1987); Giorgio Di Genova, ed., *Alfio Castelli: works 1931-1992* (Senigallia: Sapere Nuovo, 1996); Ferretti, “L’intelligenza nelle mani”: opere inedite di Pietro Cascella per l’Ente Maremma,” 89-99.

²⁹ Boccianti, “Gli artisti e le architetture della Maremma,” 43. The still-unknown affair of the Castelli crucifix recalls the similar and more famous *querelle* that arose in the same years over the crucifix created by the French sculptor Germaine Richier (1902-1959) for the church of Notre-Dame-de-Toute-Grâce du Plateau in Assy, Haute-Savoie. The church’s canon, Jean Devémy, was inspired by the renovations promoted by the Dominicans Marie-Alain Couturier and Pie-Raymond Régamey through the magazine *L’Art sacré*. He called on major artists such as Henri Matisse, Pierre Bonnard, Fernand Léger, Jacques Lipchitz, Marc Chagall, Georges Braque and Jean Lurçat to participate in the decoration of the building. He entrusted Germaine Richier with the most important work, namely the crucifix on the main altar. The artist created a depiction of Christ with a minimalist physique, seemingly merged with the cross’s trunk. This prompted considerable backlash and demands for its removal, ultimately leading to its relocation to a side chapel within the church. The controversy surrounding Richier’s crucifix, however, initiated a broader international debate on non-figurative art, which at the time was still regarded as unsuitable by those who continued to view sacred art as ‘the Bible of the illiterate’, designed to instruct the people of God, and a *tòpos* of clerical discourse on images. See: Isabelle Saint-Martin, *Art chrétien/art sacré. Regards du catholicisme sur l’art. France, XIXe-XXe siècle* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015).

³⁰ The name of the village is derived from its location on land eight thousand metres from the Fucino Incile. The neoclassical structure was designed by Carlo Nicola Carnevali (1811-1885), who was Prince Torlonia’s trusted architect. It serves as the monumental head and engine room of the imposing hydraulic work of draining the lake.

Fig. 6
Ente Maremma, Village of Santa Maria di Rispescia, parsonage church, elevation, 29 March 1958 (source: Archive of ARSIAL, Rome, projects, file 3427, restoration work and church and rectory extension for the village Bracciantile di Rispescia).



7

8

a village with services and a few dwellings built in 1952 on land in the centre of the agricultural plain belonging to the municipality of Celano. As local journalist Gennaro Pinelli reported, “the village marks a break in the otherwise wavy, deserted monotony of the 14,000 green hectares of the plain” and “from above and from afar (...), the village has the effect of a raft anchored in the centre of the ancient lake as a fleeting point of landing and rest. It is therefore plausible that the architect Boccianti, who drafted the preliminary design, may have observed it like this”.³¹ On the other hand, as a simple service hamlet built “so that the workers of Fucino, in summer and winter, could find a place to rest from their hard labour”³² was also described by Giuseppe Medici, president of the *Ente Maremma* and then Minister of Agriculture, in the speech he gave on 6 April 1952, when the foundation stone was laid [Fig. 7]. This speech provided an account of Medici’s position, which appeared to favour the adoption of scattered settlement also in the Fucino area. In fact, during the technical elaboration of the intervention, a debate arose concerning the optimal approach to settlement. On the one hand, some proponents advanced an allotment model akin to that adopted in Maremma, comprising isolated farms and farmhouses, which the nucleus with Boccianti’s services would only have to support. Conversely, other supporters advocated for a centralized settlement. Those in favour of the centralised settlement model argued that the scattered model, which had already been used by Torlonia with sharecropping, would result in an unordered and discontinuous distribution of isolated houses. They further argued that this would fail to meet the social needs of the people of Marsica, who are accustomed to an associated life in villages. It was on the basis of these social, rather than functional, motivations that, in September 1954, the engineer Marcello

Fig. 7
Borgo Ottomila (AQ), photo by Giuseppe Medici during the ceremony on 6 April 1952, at the laying of the foundation stone (source: Archive ARSIAL-Luce, Rome, photo no 00175322).

Fig. 8
Marcello Vittorini, maquette of the Ottomila residential suburb to complement the existing service suburb, photo (source: Archivio di Stato dell’Aquila, Marcello Vittorini fund. In: Angela Marino, and Giulio Tamburini, eds., *Città nascenti. I borghi del Fucino*, Roma: Gangemi Editore, 2010, 84).

At this point, the external collector canal for water collection reaches its conclusion, and the underground tunnel of the Torlonia outfall, constructed between 1854 and 1876, commences. See: Simonetta Ciranna and Patrizia Montuori, *Tempo, spazio e architetture. Avezzano cento anni o poco più* (Roma: Editoriale Artemide, 2015), 170-71.

31 Gennaro Pinelli, “È sorto in località ‘Ottomila’ un nuovo villaggio dell’Ente Fucino,” *Il Fucino*, June 15, 1955 (published in: Angela Marino and Giulio Tamburini, eds., *Città Nascenti. I borghi del Fucino* (Roma: Gangemi, 2010), 17).

32 Minister Medici’s speech is quoted in Pinelli’s article. See: Pinelli, “È sorto in località ‘Ottomila’ un nuovo villaggio dell’Ente Fucino,” 17.



9

10

Vittorini (1927-2011) resumed and expanded Boccianti's project and 'Ottomila' became one of the four residential villages built by the *Ente per la Valorizzazione del Fucino* [Fig. 8].³³

The Church of the Cuore Immacolato di Maria constituted the focal point of the initial nucleus of the village, as conceived by Boccianti. In this case, as in Rispecchia, it appears that the architect sought to re-present the concept of a modest 'house of God' in the style of the surrounding rural architecture, incorporating similar 'bold' design elements that had previously been excluded from the design for the borgo in Maremma. The church in Borgo Ottomila is, in fact, even more rudimentary than that in Rispecchia, both in terms of its plan and elevation. The church has a longitudinal plan in the form of a single rectangular hall with no apsidal termination. It is lit by four windows on each side and the presbyterial area is raised by one step. The masonry structure is framed with reinforced concrete and finished with plaster. The two-pitch roof consists of reinforced concrete beams and slab and overlying brick tile covering. The main façade repeats the profile of the gabled roof but is asymmetrical due to the presence of the bell gable leaning against the right side. Boccianti focused his architectural research on this façade, as he had done in Rispecchia, with the intention of incorporating not only a bronze crucifix of a human scale, but also a high-quality bronze relief, which would frame the wooden entrance door [Fig. 9]. Although no specific documentation has been found, on the basis of the style of both artworks, characterised by stylised, threadlike figures [Fig. 10], and

Fig. 9
Borgo Ottomila (AQ), Cuore Immacolato di Maria Church, architect Carlo Boccianti, façade.

Fig. 10
Rispecchia (GR), Santa Maria Goretti Church, architect Carlo Boccianti, photo before December 1951, in which Alfio Castelli's crucifix is still visible on the façade (source: Archive ARSIAL-Luce, Rome, photo no 00176DED).

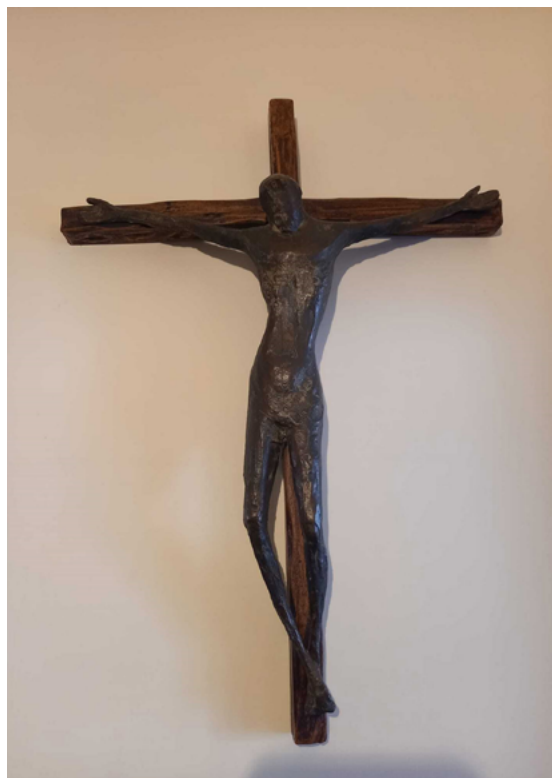
33 As head of the Avezzano-based technical structure of the *Ente Maremma*, from which the autonomous *Ente per la Valorizzazione del Fucino* had been detached in 1954, in addition to the extension of Borgo Ottomila, Marcello Vittorini designed ex-novo the Villaggio del Bracciante of San Giuseppe di Caruscino (1952) and the Borgo via Nuova (1955), in the Avezzano area, and the residential village in Trasacco (1954). See: Angela Marino, and Giulio Tamburini, eds., *Città nascenti. I borghi del Fucino* (Roma: Gangemi, 2010); Angela Marino and Valeria Lupo, eds., *Omaggio a Marcello Vittorini. An archive for the city* (Roma: Gangemi, 2012). Montuori, 'Il Fucino da acqua a terra. Tracce storiche della trasformazione di un territorio, dall'antichità all'epoca contemporanea,' 490-500. Ciranna, Montuori, "La Marsica nel Novecento. Trasformazione, marginalità e sperimentazione," 71-87.

photographic comparisons with other sculptures by Castelli, including a bronze crucifix he donated to Boccianti [Fig. 11], it is possible to hypothesise that the artist from the Marche region was the author of them; indeed, it is likely that the crucifix in Borgo Ottomila is the same one initially mounted in the church of Rispescia, which was later removed at the behest of Bishop Vanni and whose traces have been lost today.³⁴ Boccianti's idea of constructing a sacred building that, like the others planned for the villages of the Agrarian Reform, in form and volume "speaks a very simple language and therefore I would say a 'semi-classical' language"³⁵ but, with the usual bold hints, was already clear in the model of the settlement, presented to the authorities during the foundation stone laying ceremony: indeed, the model of the church exhibited discernible sculptural elements that constituted the foundation for the design of the main façade. The side front was characterised by a mock arcade comprising blind, lowered arches that were affixed to scarp wall partitions. However, this design was ultimately not realised [Fig. 12].

The church's simple hall is also adorned with 14 terracotta tiles depicting the Stations of the Cross, which are likely the work of Alfio Castelli. Boccianti states that an artistic composition repeated for liturgical purposes in all churches was the Stations of the Cross. These were largely copies of an original by Castelli, who created the moulds for the 14 tiles, which were then produced in various churches using different materials, including terracotta, ceramic, and occasionally bronze.³⁶

Bronze tiles depicting the Stations of the Cross, undoubtedly the work of Castelli, can also be found in one of the last churches designed by Boccianti for the *Ente Maremma*:³⁷ the Church of San Giuseppe Operaio in Pescia Romana, in the province of Viterbo. A sacred building with a more complex and sophisticated architectural design than the first ones built in the Maremma and Fucino, it is the centre of the village designed by Boccianti in 1956 and completed five years later.

In November 1950, Dr Riccardo Medici was commissioned by the Ente to study the Pescia Romana estate in order to draw up a plan for its transformation and



11

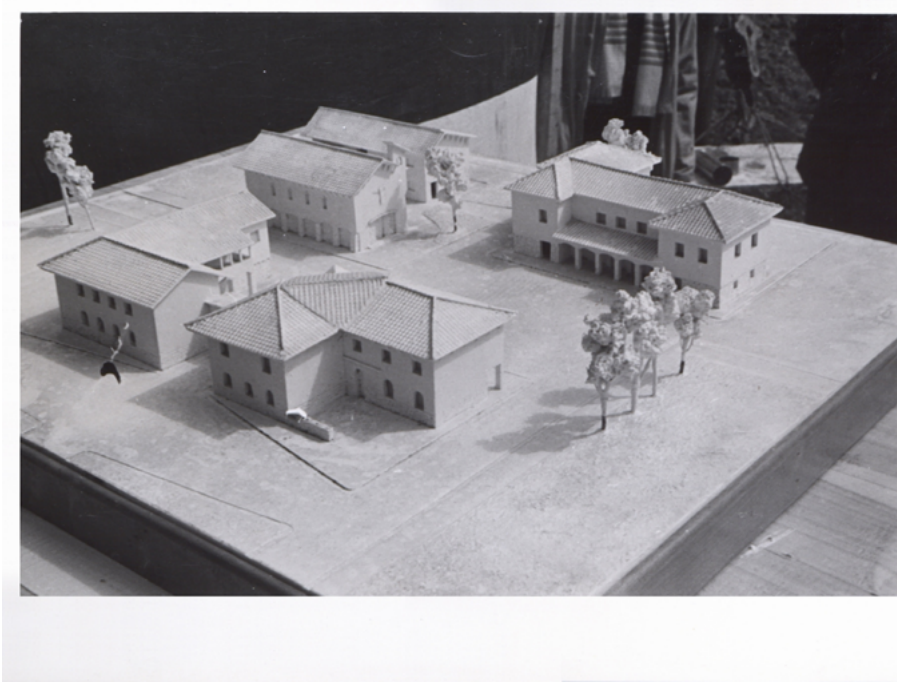
34 In one of the photographs of the Rispescia church retained in the archive of the Agenzia Regionale per lo Sviluppo e l'Innovazione dell'Agricoltura del Lazio (ARSIAL), the crucifix created by Castelli was still visible on the façade of the building. It bears resemblance to the crucifix currently mounted on the façade of the church in Borgo Ottomila. See: Photo 00176DED, Archive ARSIAL-Luce, Rome.

35 Videointerview to Carlo Boccianti during the European Heritage Days, Soprintendenza ai Beni Artistici Storici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio, Borgo San Martino, 26-27 September 2009. Private archive of Henny Boccianti.

36 Boccianti, "Gli artisti e le architetture della Maremma," 43-45.

37 In the following years, the architect, already appreciated for the churches built for the Ente Maremma, designed several others located, mainly, in the Tuscan territory. See: Marica Rafanelli, "L'architettura genera sé stessa. Progetto di ristrutturazione della chiesa del Santissimo crocifisso a Grosseto," in *Le Ville del moderno in Toscana. Roccamare, Riva del Sole, Punta Ala. Tutela e Conservazione*, eds. Riccardo Renzi, Stefano Giommoni and Vanessa Mazzini (Florence: Didapress, 2023), 82-95; Del Francia, Tombari and Catalani, *Itinerari di architettura contemporanea. Grosseto e provincia*.

Fig. 11
Alfio Castelli, bronze crucifix
donated to Carlo Boccianti.
Photo (courtesy of Henny
Boccianti).

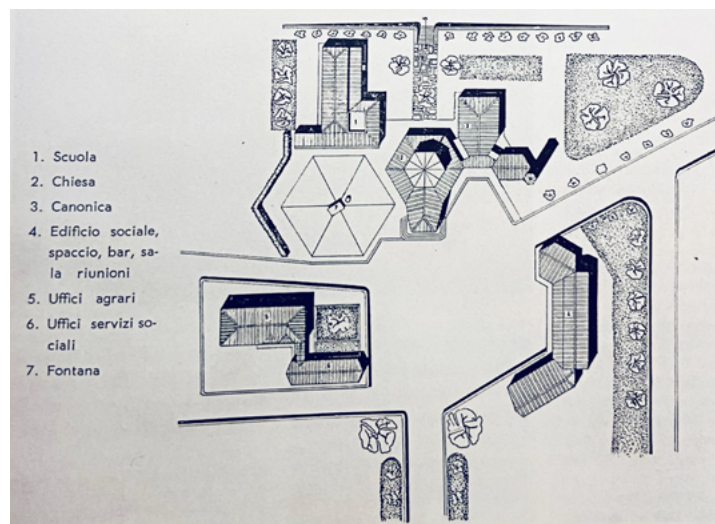
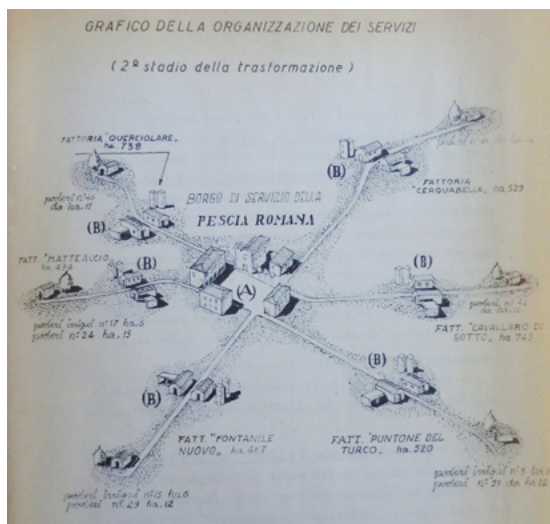


colonisation.³⁸ Situated in the municipality of Montalto di Castro, it was bounded from north-west to north-east by the border between the provinces of Viterbo and Grosseto, along the Chiarone river and the Abbazia road, from south-east by the Tafone river and from south-west by the Tyrrhenian Sea, crossed by the Aurelia state road (from km 118 to 123) and the Rome-Pisa railway between the stations of S. Agostino and Chiarone. According to a survey carried out by the *Ente Maremma*, the estate had a surface area of 3,735 hectares, 12 of which could be built on and used for new developments. From the 1820s until the expropriations following the Agrarian Reform, the Pescia Romana estate was owned by the Boncompagni-Ludovisi family, princes of Piombino: according to Medici, it therefore had “general characteristics that make it particularly suitable for the creation of small farms” and the task of the colonisers would undoubtedly have been simplified “by the intelligent design of the works already carried out in anticipation of future appoderament”.³⁹ In fact, the pre-existing buildings of the estate were already grouped in four main areas: that of Pescia Romana in the central position, the centre of Fontanile Nuovo to the south-west, the centres of Matteaccio and Querciolare upstream of the Aurelia road and to the west and north-west respectively [Fig. 13]. With 85 dwellings, warehouses, barns, garages, workshops and carpentry workshops, and thanks to its barycentric position with respect to the other settlements, Pescia Romana was the most suitable place to assume the function of service and commercial centre of the entire estate. According to the forecasts of the *Ente Maremma*, which did not come

38 Riccardo Medici, *Project for the land transformation of the Pescia Romana Estate, January 1951*. Archivio Centrale dello Stato (ACS), Rome, Ministero dell'Agricoltura e delle Foreste, Direzione Generale Bonifica e colonizzazione, Progetti dell'Ente Maremma Tosco-Laziali 1951-1970, envelope 85.

39 Riccardo Medici, *Project for the land transformation of the Pescia Romana Estate, January 1951*.

Fig. 12
Carlo Boccianti, maquette
of the service village in
Ottomila (AQ) (source: Archive
ARSIAL-Luce, Rome, photo no
001769D8).



13

14

true,⁴⁰ the new hamlet was “destined in time to become a town with its own municipal administration”⁴¹ and, therefore, had to be prepared for a significant population growth. In the report of 21 March 1956 attached to the project for the new settlement,⁴² Carlo Boccianti also pointed out that in the 3,500 expropriated hectares, already divided into 340 farms and 65 quotas,⁴³ lived 1,650 people, including the allottees and their families, and that this number would soon rise to 2,800, 400 of whom would live in the new nucleus to be built. According to the architect, the normal demographic growth of the area, the development that private individuals would have given to the land remaining in their possession and the improved environmental conditions guaranteed by the ongoing reclamation would have meant that this number would have reached around 5,000 in the next thirty years.⁴⁴

This is why he designed the settlement as a first nucleus with various services, to be expanded in the future, centred around a central square “with an almost geometric shape reminiscent of a semi-hexagon”,⁴⁵ on which the volume of the church of San Giuseppe Operaio, also hexagonal, protrudes. Three secondary squares open up around it, with the school and nursery on one side; the presbytery, catechism room and bell tower, also hexagonal, on the other; and, finally, the Assistance and Cooperation building, which closes the square to the north with its U-shape and portico in front [Fig. 14].

40 Today Pesca Romana is still a hamlet in the municipality of Montalto di Castro, about 13 kilometres away. It has a population of 1,013. See: https://italia.indettaglio.it/ita/lazio/viterbo_montaltodicastro_pesciaromana.html (last accessed December 2024).

41 Riccardo Medici, *Project for the land transformation of the Pesca Romana Estate, January 1951*. ACS, Rome.

42 Carlo Boccianti, *Project for a Service Village in Pesca Romana. Report of 21 March 1956*. ACS, Rome, Ministero dell'Agricoltura e delle Foreste, Direzione Generale Bonifica e Colonizzazione, Progetti dell'Ente Maremma Tosco-Laziali 1951-1970, envelope 149.

43 In the distribution of land under the Agrarian Reform, the “podere” corresponded to self-sufficient farms, as their size (up to 15 hectares) was such that they could provide an adequate income for the peasant family, while the “quote” (usually 2 to 4 hectares) were plots of land intended only to supplement the income of peasants who might already own other land.

44 Carlo Boccianti, *Project for a Service Village in Pesca Romana. Report of 21 March 1956*. ACS, Rome.

45 Carlo Boccianti, *Project for a Service Village in Pesca Romana. Report of 21 March 1956*. ACS, Rome.

Fig. 13
Riccardo Medici, *Project for the land transformation of the Pesca Romana Estate, January 1951*, diagram of the organisation of services with the existing nuclei highlighted (source: Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome).

Fig. 14
Pesca Romana (VT)
plan of the service village designed by Carlo Boccianti (source: *Nel Lazio Guida al patrimonio storico artistico ed etnoantropologico*, no 2, I, Gennaio/Giugno 2011, 89).



-HPA 14 | 2024 | VII

Fig. 15
Carlo Boccianti, Pescia
Romana service village project,
Viterbo, 21.03.1956. Church,
plan (source: Archivio Centrale
dello Stato, Rome).

419



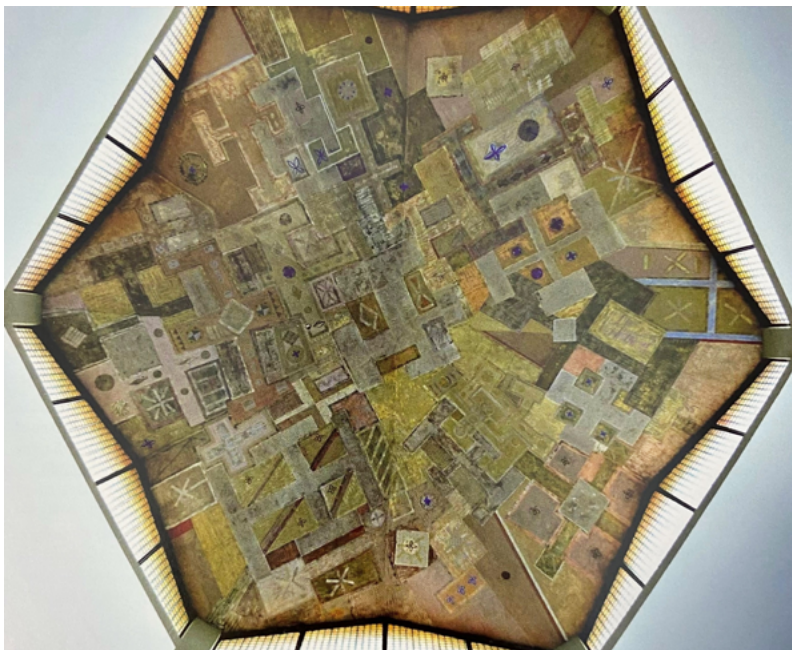
in two planimetric and volumetric areas [Fig. 16]: a lower area for the worshippers and a central area for the presbytery and the altar, with an exagonal drum about 16 metres high, supported by six reinforced concrete piers, covered, like the exterior, with Marciano carved stone, recalling the Etruscan remains already present in the area. The drum is closed at the top by a double-pitched roof, structurally made up of a reinforced concrete slab about 10 centimetres thick, built under the supervision of the engineer Riccardo Morandi (1902-1989),⁴⁸ under which pentagonal windows with decorated glass open, creating a crown of light inside. To enhance the rarefied space at the top of the drum, Boccianti commissioned the artist Pietro Cascella to decorate the intrados of the roof slab with a tempera mosaic of geometric and abstract motifs, which the artist conceived in collaboration with his wife, Anna Maria Sforza Cesarini (1921-2007):⁴⁹ this mosaic creates a kind of *trompe l'oeil* which, viewed from below, makes the surface of the roof, which is geometrically characterised by edges and recesses, appear to be perfectly smooth [Fig. 17].⁵⁰ Boccianti, therefore, articulated the interior of the building in an almost 'baroque' way, but not with a purely intellectual purpose or a celebration of architecture. On the contrary, the solutions he adopted, although more complex than those used in the first churches of the Maremma and Fucino, had the same purpose: to give voice

48 Morandi was involved in Pesca Romana as structural consultant to the builder, engineer Michele Ruffolo, owner of S.P.E. (Strade Ponti Edilizia). *Impresa S.P.E., Chiesa Pesca Romana, 1958*, ACS, Rome, Riccardo Morandi fund, envelope 247, file 808.

49 Anna Maria Sforza Cesarini was born in Trento but studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome, where in the 1940s she began to visit the studios of famous artists (Massimo Campigli, Afro Basaldella, Giuseppe Capogrossi, Carlo Carrà, Giorgio De Chirico, Gino Severini) for whom she created mosaics and collages. In 1945 she married Pietro Cascella, with whom she produced large mosaic works for a long time. See: Ferretti, "L'intelligenza nelle mani": opere inedite di Pietro Cascella per l'Ente Maremma," 94.

50 According to Boccianti himself, this solution, of great figurative effectiveness, which he had already used in other churches built for the Ente Maremma, was also economically motivated: "In the fifties, the limited economic resources with which we had to work suggested solutions that would be absurd today, given the ease with which young artists, who were above all eager to work, could be approached: for this reason I found it convenient to cover the entire ceiling of a church with tempera cartoons by Pietro Cascella, instead of plastering and then painting it. I am referring to the church in the village of San Giovanni in Laiatico (Volterra), which is completely covered with these cartoons with Byzantine-inspired motifs [...]" See: Boccianti, "Gli artisti e le architetture della Maremma," 43.

Fig. 16
Carlo Boccianti, Pesca Romana service village project, Viterbo, 21.03.1956, perspective (source: Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome).



17

18

to the need for spirituality and not only for houses of the communities settled in rural villages, with sensitivity to ecclesiastical needs and awareness of the social role of sacred buildings.⁵¹

The perfect architectural and artistic collaboration between Boccianti and Cascella, author of various works both inside and outside the church, was fundamental in achieving of this goal. In addition to decorating the ceiling of the drum, the artist also created the baptismal font, made of concrete blocks and iron bars, placed next to the central presbytery [Fig. 18]: it stands out against the background of the Marican stone with its size, and its form resembles an oil jar, but with ancient and archaic symbols to remind us that it contains holy water, an essential element not for earthly but for spiritual life: on the right, the X of Χριστός, inscribed in a square in the manner of the early Christians; in the centre, an elementary Greek cross, designed by a mosaic of gilded mirrors. Following the division suggested by Boccianti's architecture, therefore, it seems that Cascella wanted to follow the dialectic between the Old and the New Testament with the division between human space (low and dark) and divine space (high and bright). The works are 'tactile' on the first level (the archaic baptismal font) and 'rarefied' on the second (the abstract mosaic on the drum ceiling). The harmony between Cascella and Boccianti in the construction of the interior sacred space was so intense that it also stimulated the architect's unquenchable passion for sculpture: he himself created a holy water stoup with a clean form that perfectly matched the lines of the baptismal font [Fig. 19].⁵²

51 "[...] the interior space, treated as a place of theophany, gives voice to a spiritual, ecstatic and contemplative need; the mystical impulse of the central space, combined with a decoration that recalls the indefiniteness and unrepresentability of the Divine, proposes a response to the general 'eclipse of the sacred' that the 20th century has dramatically brought to the fore". Ferretti, "L'intelligenza nelle mani": opere inedite di Pietro Cascella per l'Ente Maremma," 96.

52 A similar alliance between art and architecture, present in Cascella's work in general, also characterised

Fig. 17
Pescia Romana (VT), San Giuseppe Operaio Church, architect Carlo Boccianti. Pietro Cascella and Anna Maria Sforza Cesarini, terracotta slab mosaic painted in tempera on the ceiling of the exagonal drum (source: *Nel Lazio Guida al patrimonio storico artistico ed etnoantropologico*, no 2, I, Gennaio/Giugno 2011, 92).

Fig. 18
Pescia Romana (VT), San Giuseppe Operaio Church, architect Carlo Boccianti. Pietro Cascella, concrete and iron baptismal font (source: *Nel Lazio Guida al patrimonio storico artistico ed etnoantropologico*, no 2, I, Gennaio/Giugno 2011, 95).



19

20

Thanks to this perfect harmony between the architect and the artist, in Pescia Romana not only the church but also the open spaces became places to stimulate the spirituality and reflection of the inhabitants of the village, with the usual 'bold' cues: an example of this is the fountain made by Cascella out of concrete blocks bound with iron clamps, which Boccianti placed in the square next to the church [Fig. 20]. The space has a hexagonal shape and rises about 70 centimetres from the sides towards the centre, forming a kind of pyramid whose apex is marked by the work of the Abruzzo sculptor, who here tried his hand at a fountain for the first time. It too presents volumes with a strong archaic connotation, composed by interlocking and a precise choice of materials, subordinated to economic needs but transformed into artistic innovation. In fact, it was the Master's intention that the trickle of water flowing over a porous material such as concrete would allow the birth of small plants that would one day cover the fountain, making it a symbol and proof of cyclical nature. In addition, children leaving the neighbouring school would be able to observe, touch and experience the work as part of their lives. In short, Cascella's idea, which Boccianti takes up and amplifies by placing the fountain in the village, was that this archetypal object should remind the new community settled in the village of times gone by, but made present by its daily activity. It was Boccianti himself who, years later, gave an important reflection on the effectiveness of the 'bold' impulses that he had patiently, and often unsuccessfully, tried to spread in the Agrarian

the collaboration between the Abruzzo artist and the architect Ludovico Quaroni (1911-1987): in particular, in the construction of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Francavilla a Mare, in the province of Chieti (1948-1949), Pietro Cascella, together with his brother Andrea, created works of art that were perfectly integrated into the architectural space conceived by Quaroni. Here too, as in the Church of Pescia Romana, the division between the human space (low and dark) and the divine space (high and bright) suggested by the architecture is fully supported by the artist's works, easily readable in the former and almost elusive in the latter. See: Claudia Lamberti, "S. Maria Maggiore di Francavilla a mare: progetto, costruzione, arredo," *Bollettino ingegneri*, no. 6 (2009): 15-19.

Fig. 19
Pescia Romana (VT), San Giuseppe Operaio Church, architect Carlo Boccianti. Carlo Boccianti concrete and iron stoup (source: *Nel Lazio Guida al patrimonio storico artistico ed etnoantropologico*, no 2, I, Gennaio/Giugno 2011, 96)

Fig. 20
Pescia Romana (VT), Pietro Cascella, hammered concrete fountain and iron staples (source: *Nel Lazio Guida al patrimonio storico artistico ed etnoantropologico*, no 2, I, Gennaio/Giugno 2011, 90)

Reform areas, from the Maremma to the Fucino, and on the success of the Pescia Romana project:

It is difficult to say how well these works of art were received by the inhabitants of the reform territories. What is certain is that, for better or worse, they have captured their imagination, especially those that are more difficult to interpret because they are more abstract. It was enough for me to hear the reaction of a little girl coming out of the school in the village of Pescia Romana, where I had planned the location of a fountain that I wanted to be 'practicable' for the children to experience. I asked the child what it looked like to her and she replied, "It looks like something from a long time ago". She understood perfectly the primitive and timeless character of Pietro Cascella's style.⁵³

53 Boccianti, "Gli artisti e le architetture della Maremma," 45.

Bibliography

- Barbero, Giuseppe. *Riforma agraria italiana. Risultati e prospettive*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 1960.
- Boccianti, Carlo. "Una casa per l'uomo: nella migliore armonia tra l'ambiente naturale, l'architettura e la necessità del lavoro dei campi." *Agricoltura: rivista mensile di attualità italiane e straniere*, no. 2, 1 (1952): 29-32.
- Boccianti, Carlo. *Miglioramento dell'habitat rurale nel comprensorio di riforma dell'Ente Maremma, Relazione presentata al I Convegno Nazionale dell'Associazione Italiana d'Ingegneria Agraria, Portici, 14-15 aprile 1966*. Bari: Laterza, 1966.
- Boccianti, Carlo. "Gli artisti e le architetture della Maremma." *Innovazione e Agricoltura*, no. 1, III (January/February 2000): 43-45.
- Bosaglia, Rossana, Mario De Micheli, and Pietro Toesca. *Pietro Cascella. Le opere monumentali*. Milano: Electa, 1993.
- Cascella, Pietro. *Pietro e la famiglia: una lunga vocazione artistica*. Parma: Guanda, 1998.
- Castelli, Alfio. *Alfio Castelli: sculture e disegni 1979-1987*. Roma: De Luca, 1987.
- Ciranna, Simonetta. "L'architettura delle chiese nell'Italia del dopoguerra. Il Convegno di Bologna del 1955." In *Le pietre e l'eterno. Architetture religiose: costruzioni e restauro*, edited by Daniela Concas and Marco Spesso, 87-93. Roma: Plan Ed., 2011.
- Ciranna, Simonetta and Patrizia Montuori. *Tempo, spazio e architetture. Avezzano cento anni o poco più*. Roma: Editoriale Artemide, 2015.
- Ciranna, Simonetta, and Patrizia Montuori. "La Marsica nel Novecento. Trasformazione, marginalità e sperimentazione." *QuAD- Quaderni di Architettura e Design*, no. 3 (2020): 71-87.
- De Bianchi, Marco, and Luca Seravalle. *Le costruzioni rurali della Riforma Fondiaria nella Maremma grossetana degli anni Cinquanta*. Grosseto: Editrice Innocenti, 2011.
- Del Francia, Marco, Tombari Giovanni, and Catalani Barbara, eds. *Itinerari di architettura contemporanea. Grosseto e provincia*. Pisa: Edizioni Ets, 2011.
- Di Biagi, Paola, ed. *La grande ricostruzione. Il piano Ina-Casa e l'Italia degli anni '50*. Roma: Donzelli, 2001.
- Di Genova, Giorgio, ed. *Alfio Castelli: opere 1931-1992*. Senigallia: Sapere Nuovo, 1996.
- Di Sandro, Giancarlo. *Agricoltura e sviluppo economico. Il ruolo della politica agraria in Italia (1944-1982)*. Milano: Franco Angeli, 2002.
- Domenichelli, Luciano. *Una grande generazione di agricoltori*. Pitigliano: Editrice Laurum, 2009.
- Edallo, Amos. *Ruralistica- Urbanistica rurale- con particolare riferimento alla Valle Padana: il paese rurale, l'azienda rurale, la casa rurale in funzione dell'organizzazione agricola attuale e futura*. Milano: Hoepli, 1946.
- Ente Maremma. A.D. 1961, *I borghi di servizio. Strutture periferiche*. Roma: Officina poligrafica laziale, n.d., 1961.
- Felice, Emanuele. *Cassa per il mezzogiorno: il caso dell'Abruzzo*. L'Aquila: Consiglio Regionale dell'Abruzzo, 2003.
- Ferretti, Patrizia. "'L'intelligenza nelle mani': opere inedite di Pietro Cascella per l'Ente Maremma." *Nel Lazio Guida al patrimonio storico artistico ed etnoantropologico Rivista semestrale della Soprintendenza per i Beni Storici, Artistici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio*, no. 2, I (Gennaio/Giugno 2011): 89-99.
- Gigli, Loreto. *I pionieri della Maremma. Storia recente di Capalbio*. Pitigliano: Editrice Laurum, 2009.
- Iacoponi, Valentina. "Case fino al limite dell'orizzonte. La riforma fondiaria attraverso i paesaggi dell'Ente Maremma." In *I paesaggi della riforma agraria: storia, pianificazione e gestione*, edited by Fausto Carmelo Nigrelli and Gabriella Bonini, 249-259. Gattatico (RE): Istituto Alcide Cervi, 2017.
- Lamberti, Claudia. "S. Maria Maggiore di Francavilla a mare: progetto, costruzione, arredo." *Bollettino ingegneri*, no. 6 (2009): 15-19.
- Longhi, Andrea. "Laboratori di Architettura per le cittadelle cristiane. Parrocchie e periferie nel dopoguerra." *Thema. Rivista dei Beni Culturali Ecclesiastici*, no. 1 (2012): 36-41.
- Marino, Angela, and Giulio Tamburini, eds. *Città nascenti. I borghi del Fucino*. Roma: Gangemi, 2010.
- Marino, Angela, and Valeria Lupo, eds. *Omaggio a Marcello Vittorini. Un archivio per la città*. Roma: Gangemi, 2012.
- Milletti, Roberto. *Nuovi progetti di costruzioni rurali e tipi di insediamento*. Bologna: Edizioni agricole, 1958.
- Montuori, Patrizia. "Il Fucino da acqua a terra. Tracce storiche della trasformazione di un territorio, dall'antichità all'epoca contemporanea." In *La città globale. La condizione urbana come fenomeno pervasivo / The Global City. The urban condition as a pervasive phenomenon*. Vol. E, edited by Marco Pretelli, Rosa Tamborrino and Ines Tolic, 490-500. Torino: AISU (Insights, 1), 2020.
- Pinelli, Gennaro. "È sorto in località 'Ottomila' un nuovo villaggio dell'Ente Fucino," *Il Fucino*, June 15, 1955. In *Città Nascenti. I borghi del Fucino*, edited by Angela Marino and Giulio Tamburini, 17-19. Roma: Gangemi, 2010.

- Pontrandolfi, Raffaele, and Adriana Raguso. *Architettura rurale e novecento: i borghi di Matera nel contesto italiano e internazionale*. Matera: Edizioni Magister, 2022.
- Rafanelli, Marica. "L'architettura genera sé stessa. Progetto di ristrutturazione della chiesa del Santissimo crocifisso a Grosseto." In *Le Ville del moderno in Toscana. Roccamare, Riva del Sole, Punta Ala. Tutela e Conservazione*, edited by Riccardo Renzi, Stefano Giommoni and Vanessa Mazzini, 82-95. Florence: Didapress, 2023.
- Saint-Martin, Isabelle. *Art chrétien/art sacré. Regards du catholicisme sur l'art. France, XIXe-XXe siècle*. Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2015.
- Ceriani Sebregondi, Giorgio, Piero Grassini, Antonio Buongiorno, Nallo Mazzocchi Alemanni, Roberto Milletti, Bernardo Barotta, Adalberto Libera, Marcello Buonuomo, Giorgio Guidi, Pio Montesi and Tito Chioni. *Esperienze urbanistiche in Italia*. Roma: Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica (INU), 1952.
- Simoncelli, Antonio Valentino. *Dalla riforma fondiaria allo sviluppo agricolo. Archivio storico, 1950-1977*. Roma: ETSAF Ente Toscano Sviluppo Agricolo e Forestale, ERSAL Ente Regionale Sviluppo Agricolo nel Lazio, 1991.
- Simoncelli, Antonio Valentino. *Rispescia. Da villaggio bracciantile a borgo residenziale*. Grosseto: Editrice Innocenti, 2003.
- Vittorini, Marcello. *Il prosciugamento del lago e l'evoluzione del tessuto insediativo e organizzativo del Fucino, estratto da «Fucino cento anni». 1877-1977. Atti degli incontri e dei convegni svoltisi per il Centenario del prosciugamento del Fucino e per il Venticinquennale della Riforma Agraria*. Avezzano: n.d., 1977.

Archival Sources

- Carlo Boccianti, *Project for a Service Village in Pescia Romana*. In: Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Ministero dell'Agricoltura e delle Foreste, Direzione Generale Bonifica e Colonizzazione, Progetti dell'Ente Maremma Tosco-Laziali 1951-1970, envelope 149.
- Ente Maremma, *Project for the renovation of buildings and roads in the village of Santa Maria di Rispescia former Ponticelli Luigi property Village of Santa Maria di Rispescia*. In: Archive of Agenzia Regionale per lo Sviluppo e l'Innovazione dell'Agricoltura del Lazio (ARSIAL), Rome, projects, file 2043.
- Ente Maremma, *Restoration work and church and rectory extension for the Villaggio del Bracciante of Rispescia*. In: Archive of ARSIAL, Rome, projects, file 3427.
- Impresa S.P.E., Chiesa Pescia Romana, 1958*, In: Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Riccardo Morandi fund, envelope 247, file 808.
- List of registered for the years 1945-56*. In: Historical Archive of Order of Architects, Town planners, Landscapers and Conservators of Rome and Province, Rome.
- Photos of Rispescia (GR), Borgo Ottomila (AQ) and Pescia Romana (VT). In: Archive ARSIAL-Luce, Rome.
- Riccardo Medici, *Project for the land transformation of the Pescia Romana Estate, January 1951*. In: Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome, Ministero dell'Agricoltura e delle Foreste, Direzione Generale Bonifica e colonizzazione, Progetti dell'Ente Maremma Tosco-Laziali 1951-1970, envelope 85.
- Videointerview to Carlo Boccianti during the European Heritage Days, Soprintendenza ai Beni Artistici Storici ed Etnoantropologici del Lazio, Borgo San Martino, 26-27 September 2009. Private archive of Henny Boccianti, Rome.
- Videointerview to Carlo Boccianti by Antonia Genco, Irene Rosato, Francesco Salvatore Genco, 2010. Private archive of Henny Boccianti.