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**Modernism Outbound.
Architectures and Landscapes of Agrarianism**
ed. by Axel Fisher, Aleksa Korolija & Cristina Pallini

**Modernisme de plein air.
Architectures et paysages de l'agrarisme**
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Abstract In the aftermath of the Second World War, the Italian discourse on planning turned to regionalism as a model. Architects and planners sought substantial alternatives in urban design. Fascinated by the US examples, they emphasized the need for establishing a cooperative and democratic process of planning which could involve the urban and the rural simultaneously. On the other hand, providers of US aid for post-war reconstruction urged the Italian technical bureaucracy to explore new forms of regional development that, in line with the overseas experience, could reclaim the landscape of Southern Italy from its structural backwardness and provide the design tools for an overall land reform. Against this contrasting background, two river basin authorities in the Lucania region started updating their old development plans to obtain funds from US agencies. This paper highlights an obscure case study, with the aim of presenting and understanding some of the key aspects of the Italian discourse on rurality and regional planning. It deals with the work of the Metaponto and Bradano Valley Authorities and their consultants – the agrarian economist Manlio Rossi-Doria and the agrarian engineer Nallo Mazzocchi Alemanni – framing their key but often underestimated role in the multilayered Lucanian experience. Inscribed in the contemporary debate on land reform and resettlement, the pragmatic and techni-

cal stance of Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi Alemanni would provide the foundation for the contested and multifaceted influence of the US models, and for the interweaving of contradictory ideologies deployed by intellectuals and activists who considered alternative forms of democratic planning.

Keywords agrarian reform, post-war Italy, regional planning

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Bureaucracy Designs. Mazzocchi Alemanni and Rossi-Doria's Approaches to Rurality and Regional Planning: 1946–55*

Regionalism and rurality in post-war Italy

In the aftermath of the Second World War, reconstruction in Italy was the opportunity to go beyond the idea of the city as a single artefact, limited in its own extension and differing from the surrounding rural and productive areas. Architect and planner Adalberto Libera (1903–63), one of the most active Italian professionals of the time, was among the first to speak about this new ambition. In the few lines of a quick sketch, he summarized the need to extend the scope and aims of planning: the focus was now to be an extended area in which urban and productive areas overlapped in a continuum (Polin and Marzari, 1989: 104). This new approach – epitomized by Libera's sketch – became common to most architects and planners involved in the discourse on national reconstruction. Pushed by the urgency to resolve how best to apply the 1942 urban planning law and 1950 land reform acts, Italian intellectuals and technical elites had for years debated which model

to follow, frequently searching abroad for the best references and a break with the Fascist past (Tafuri, 1986). The main challenge was the redefinition of the tenets of the planning discipline, to understand its scope as well as the way in which to encompass a wider range of design scales (Olmo, 1992). Journals, publications and institutions concerned with architecture and planning steered the debate toward an open and multidisciplinary discourse, which, apart from constituting a moral stance, was also intended to broaden the scope of the discipline to the largest possible extent.¹ On the other hand, beyond abstractions stemming from the intellectual debate, planning and design practices witnessed the increasing involvement of new professionals such as social scientists, economists and agrarian engineers, who until then had been excluded from the decision-making process. Within such a controversial framework, the concept of regional planning emerged as one of the most relevant fields for both technical elites and intellectuals to engage in their respective battles on reconstruction and planning. During the fifteen years following the end of the Second World

* This is a revised and expanded version of the conference paper "Regionalism at all costs. Nallo Mazzocchi Alemanni and the Bradano Valley Land Reclamation Project, 1955" presented at the 2018 MODSCAPES Conference & Baltic Landscape Forum, held at the EMÜ (Estonian University of Life Sciences) and at the Estonian National Museum, 11–13 June 2018, Tartu, and published in BELL, S.; FISHER, A.; CAPRESI, V. *et al.* (eds) 2019. *Modernism, Modernisation and the Rural Landscape*, (SHS Web of Conferences: 63), Les Ulis, EDP Sciences. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20196302001>.

1 See, for instance, the first issues of *Metron* (1945–54) and *Comunità* (1946–52), in which prominent individuals such as Bruno Zevi (1918–2000, architect, planner, scholar, editor and politician), Luigi Piccinato (see note 8), Mario Ridolfi (1904–84, architect) and Ludovico Quaroni (see note 7) were involved.

War, the *region* as a socio-economic rather than administrative unit became a major subject of debate and discussion (Dickinson, 1947: 4; quoted in Musatti, 1955: 129), the paradigm around which the ideological and technical debates grew, shedding light on alternative forms of human associations. Models such as greenbelts, garden cities and neighbourhood units – largely debated also in the pre-war period – were now explicitly propagandized with the aim of promoting balanced social and economic development through decentralization and urban dispersal.² They gradually emerged as the key concepts to overtake the restrictive administrative logic mainly based on municipal boundaries and jurisdiction, towards a more comprehensive planning approach to tackling the 1942 urban planning law's rationale. This work aims to shed new light on the Italian debate over regional planning, presenting two case studies developed from 1946 by two agrarian technicians, agrarian economist and politician Manlio Rossi-Doria (1905–88)³ and engineer and agrarian economist Nallo Mazzocchi Alemanni (1889–1967).⁴ Through review of existing literature and analysis of archive materials, the present contribution focuses on their pioneering activity in the Lucanian region⁵. To critically

approach their work, it investigates their contacts with overseas officers as well as the controversial reception of their ideas by individuals such as engineer and industrialist Adriano Olivetti (1901–60),⁶ architect and planner Ludovico Quaroni (1911–87),⁷ and architect and planner Luigi Piccinato (1899–1983)⁸ – those, that is, who would eventually shape the narrative around the Lucanian town of Matera, the best-known application of regional planning principles in post-war Italy. Against consolidated interpretations, especially in the field of architectural and planning criticism, this work attempts to offer an alternative understanding of the rise of post-war regional planning in Italy, arguing that its earliest and most crystalline expressions materialized not so much in the ambiguities of the architectural intelligentsia as in the reformist stances of the agrarian technical elite. The concept of the region, therefore, pushed the discourse far beyond the edges of the planning discipline. Apart from the anxieties which agitated the Italian debate, in fact, introducing the concept of region implied re-establishing the very fundamentals of national politics and economics: embracing the countryside within a regional perspective allowed steering new

- 2 The first issue of *Metron*, in August 1945, opened with an essay by Lewis Mumford (1895–1990, US-American social philosopher and historian of cities and urban architecture) on the garden city and its reception in the United States (Mumford, 1945).
- 3 Member of the Communist party during the Fascist era, he was exiled in Lucania from 1939 to 1943. After the Second World War, in his capacity as professor at the Institute of Agriculture at the University of Naples, he emerged as one of the most active individuals involved in the agrarian reform.
- 4 During Fascism, Mazzocchi Alemanni had been working on the African continent (Somalia and Angola). Upon his return to Italy, he served as adjoint director of the *Opera Nazionale Combattenti* (National Association for First World War Veterans) during the reclamation of the Pontine Marshes. After coordinating the *Ente per la colonizzazione del latifondo siciliano* (Sicilian Latifundium Colonization Authority) in 1940, he was involved in several post-war experiences of land reclamation (Umbria, Latium, Apulia, and Lucania).
- 5 [Editors' note] Lucania is the historical name for a region in Southern Italy, extending approximately over today's Basilicata, part of Calabria and Campania.

- 6 Olivetti became director of the *Società Olivetti* (Olivetti company) in 1932, after having obtained a master's degree in chemical engineering at the Politecnico di Torino. In 1937, he was among the promoters of the *Piano regolatore della Valle d'Aosta* (Master planning scheme of the Aosta Valley), perhaps the first regional planning experiment in Italy. In the aftermath of the Second World War, he founded the *Movimento di Comunità*. He became the director of the *Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica* (INU, National Institute for Urbanism) in 1949, and was an influential member of the Italian branch of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA).
- 7 Quaroni was among the most influential designers of pre-war and post-war Italy. He complemented his professional activity with teaching, at the University of Florence (urbanism) and Rome (architectural design).
- 8 Piccinato practised in Italy and abroad from the earliest 1930s to the late 1970s. Designer of the new town of Sabaudia during Fascism, after the Second World War he was among the leaders of the Italian *Associazione per l'Architettura Organica* (APAO, Association for Organic Architecture: 1945–50), together with Bruno Zevi (see above, note 1) and Quaroni (see note 7). He taught urbanism in Naples, Venice and Rome.

forms of large-scale economic development, a reasoning in line with the US ambition to export growth and modernization, whose tenets were now penetrating the Italian debate through multiple channels. At the same time, it ensured the protection of human communities against cultural and material backwardness, especially in the many underdeveloped areas of the south of the country where agriculture still occupied the greater part of the population.

The reforming imperative for the Mezzogiorno and its contradictions

For those yearning for new directions in planning, development and modernization, the structural weakness characterizing the heart of Southern Italy turned into a paradoxical treasure. In the words of the Italian writer, poet and politician Rocco Scotellaro (1923–53),⁹ “[A]griculture in Lucania was something crazy” (Scotellaro, 1954: 34). It relied on each farmer’s donkey, forced to ride for hours to reach a small piece of land, often dozens of kilometres away from their dwelling. This condition, of course, was not limited to the Lucanian area, being common to most of Southern Italy’s agricultural areas. However, the Italian *Mezzogiorno* started ranking high in national and foreign attentions only after Carlo Levi’s memoir *Cristo si è fermato a Eboli* (Christ Stopped at Eboli).¹⁰ The shock of discovering people still living with their animals in cave settlements, paired with the number of dedicated ethnographic studies that appeared after the Second World War, conveyed contradictory impressions: on the one hand, the need to attract funds for reconstruction, thereby remedying the region’s dire state of poverty (Forty, 2017); on the other hand, the appeal

of a morally uncorrupted and unmechanized society which displayed the failure of Western development models. However controversial, such a portrait was multifaceted enough to gather a large political and intellectual consensus. All, in fact, agreed on the need to establish a bold relief programme for the Lucanian area. In less than ten years, the town of Matera and its countryside stood at the crossroads of the largest and most complex regional planning operation ever undertaken in Italy. Since 1948 – the year when the first parliament of the Italian Republic was elected – transnational and local authorities, intellectuals, politicians and associated technicians, from both Italy and the United States, put forward various schemes and solutions, each carrying out their own personal vision, often with little to no coordination between them.¹¹ Although they all aimed at modernizing and lifting the region out of its backwardness (Grassini, 1952), the number and nature of actions undertaken revealed a substantial contradiction. Soon enough, in fact, the political and technical bureaucracy’s modernization and land redistribution stance clashed with the ideological narrative of an uncorrupted and anti-capitalist vocation.

Like Carlo Levi, Manlio Rossi-Doria was exiled in Lucania by the late Fascist regime, from 1939 to 1943. Being a pragmatic technician profoundly involved in the politics of the Italian *Mezzogiorno*, Rossi-Doria immediately grasped the organic but contradictory character of the Lucanian countryside – with which he had been acquainted since 1925¹² – well before Levi’s 1945 description (D’Antone, 1998: 213). This character, he wrote in 1944 (Rossi-Doria, 1946; quoted in Musatti, 1955), resulted from a primordial

9 Mayor of the small village of Tricarico, Lucania, from 1946 to 1950, and friend of Rossi-Doria, Scotellaro’s action has been acknowledged as one of the most influential in the development of Southern Italy.

10 The most famous and important work of Carlo Levi (1902–75), Italian writer and painter as well as one of the most active anti-fascist intellectuals. The book, published in Italy in 1945 and in the US in 1948, sprang from his exile in Lucania (first in Grassano and then in Aliano) between 1935 and 1936.

11 According to data provided by the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* (1950–84), a government-run authority which oversaw public works in Southern Italy, 446,000 hectares of land were subject to reclamation. The first decennial plan following the 1950 Land Reform Act included a vast process of relocation that included the construction of 163 rural villages and over 45,000 isolated houses (Grassini, 1952).

12 Between 1925 and 1928 Rossi-Doria was engaged in a training internship on a farm in the Agri River Valley, in Southern Lucania (D’Antone, 1983).

balance, a thousand-year layering of human practices spread out over towns and cultivated lands. In the Lucanian lowlands, in fact, the urban and rural life were still intimately connected. This was due to a unique relationship between the land tenure pattern – mainly consisting of huge estates extending across the valleys – and the location of settlements – large but isolated villages sitting on a hilltop – a layout which mirrored a centuries-old social relationship. With agriculture in the hands of a few owners, no or little space was left for individual initiatives or upgrading (Alacevich, 2013: 91). Therefore, most farmers were forced to leave their house each day to work the land, which entailed an eight to ten-hour round-trip (Rossi Doria, 1946; Musatti, 1955). Rossi-Doria identified the essence of regionalism precisely in this back and forth movement, the only possibility that farmers had of working while keeping their lives connected to a larger human community. However, this organic essence had its counterpart in the impressive overcrowding of towns where farmers used to dwell with relatives, neighbours, and animals (Musatti, 1955). In 1947, Matera – the town that a few years later would become a paradigmatic case of the Lucanian experience – housed some 30,000 people, including 17,000 farmers in two urban neighbourhoods built upon and within ancient cave settlements, the so-called *Sassi di Matera* (lit. the Matera Rocks), well below any acceptable standard of living. Despite allowing a minimum degree of social stability, as Rossi-Doria wrote, this extreme concentration of people living in such hovels was like a disease that required urgent treatment (Rossi-Doria, 1946). Rossi-Doria was among the first to identify this intimate contradiction: on one side, the purity of values of the Lucanian rural life; on the other, the unacceptable condition they had created. Nevertheless, as an economist interested in progress and modernization, he had no doubt that new, consistent development had to be pursued. The key was reform of the ancient practices of land distribution and ownership, a theme he had approached since 1937, when he developed a more mature reasoning on agriculture in Southern Italy

(D'Antone, 1983: 292). At this stage, however, the challenge of agrarian reform was essentially related to political decisions. It was only after the unlocking of past labour relationships, Rossi-Doria argued, that public authorities could trigger a genuine process of modernization, and leave behind farming customs that, while conveying an image of allegedly *pure* authenticity, resulted in reproducing miserable living conditions for farmers.

Encountering overseas models

After the pleas of a few prominent individuals, the improvement of living conditions in Southern Italy through a large-scale agrarian reform soon became an imperative for local and national public bodies. The Metaponto and Bradano Valley Authorities (in Italian, *consorzi*) – two local agencies established respectively in 1925 and 1931 to oversee land reclamation works in the Lucanian lowlands – resumed their activity in 1946. That very same year, they entrusted Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi Alemanni to update their pre-war development plans.¹³ This decision must be considered in the context of the decisive role Italian agrarian technicians had been assigning to irrigation schemes and programmes as instruments for land transformation since the Fascist era. Such an apparent continuity, however, was now informed by the explicit reference to US experiences.

The Italian-American Conference on Irrigation, organized in Milan in 1946 (Associazione Italo-Americana, 1946), marked a milestone in the debate, demonstrating the increasing influence of overseas models and their controversial appraisal. During the conference, many US attendees provided extensive documentation of the activities and accomplishments of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), whose works were presented as a source of inspiration for parallel initiatives, especially for Southern Italy. Although “on a smaller scale and with more modest means”, hydropower

13 The two areas' reclamation plans had both been drafted by engineer Maglietta in the late 1920s (Consorzio della Bonifica di Metaponto, 1949).

and infrastructural schemes such as those undertaken by the TVA were seen as key assets, especially in the development of effective reconstruction policies on a regional basis (Scrivano, 2012: 140). In fact, the Italian debate on regional planning had already turned to the TVA as a model, but Italian architects and planners seemed attracted mainly by its ideological resonance. It is not a coincidence that Giuseppe De Finetti (1892–1952), a respected and experienced Milanese architect, complained that the Italian translation of Lilienthal's *TVA: Democracy on the March* (1944) was not available for the 1946 Conference on Irrigation (De Finetti, 2002: 573).¹⁴ Lilienthal dealt mainly with political aspects and their social effects – decentralization, balance of central and local powers and participation practices – with little if any reference to technical or managerial issues (Scrivano, 2012: 139). This socio-politically oriented exposure of the US endeavour had an unquestionable influence. Most of the intellectuals steering the Italian debate ended up overlooking key technical aspects of land transformation, so that primary aims such as large-scale modernization slipped into the background. For the elites advocating social and political reforms, the TVA's experience became a metaphor for establishing a “democratic process of planning” (Scrivano, 2012: 140–3), with frequent and extensive endorsements emphasizing its potential to encourage decentralization and public participation (Gentili Tedeschi, 1945; Calcaprina, 1946). Nevertheless, while for most Italian intellectuals the TVA was merely a general reference for evoking government-run reforms, technicians and professionals involved in development sought a different and more profound vision, having established direct connections with the US officers involved in the post-war reconstruction process. Pressured politically,

the Italian technical bureaucracy – essentially managers, engineers, and consultants from Southern Italy's river basin authorities and agrarian consortiums – would see in US projects and schemes a true design model for launching a wide-ranging modernization and poverty-eradication programme. Agrarian economists such as Rossi-Doria, and experts in agricultural and hydraulic engineering such as Mazzocchi Alemanni, started considering themes like irrigation, land use, and infrastructural design, with the aim of attracting funds from the European Recovery Program (ERP, i.e. the Marshall Plan) and implementing their basins' management plans. Against this backdrop, the Italian architecture and planning elite remained essentially excluded, as large-scale planning became the prerogative of a government-run technical bureaucracy.

Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi Alemanni, in their capacity as planning consultants for the Metaponto and the Bradano Valley Authorities, succeeded in blending political stances with solid technical engagement, without falling prey to the ideological contradictions typical of the coeval architectural and planning debate. Although neither had any background in architecture or planning, both Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi Alemanni successfully handled the regional scale of the Bradano River basin, from its middle course to the sea, embracing an interesting variety of themes and laying the basis for the reform of rural practices, with direct reference to the US pre-war models.

The first opportunity for Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi Alemanni to approach such issues comprehensively came in the spring of 1948, when the United States launched the European Recovery Program. A few days before the March 1948 Italian general election, they received two US officers, Max Adams McCall (1888–1964) of the Department of Agriculture and Georges E. Tomlinson (1906–86) of the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, at the University of Naples's Institute of

14 David E. Lilienthal (1899–1981) was a US-American lawyer and civil servant and the first director of the TVA. His *TVA: Democracy on the March*, released by the Turin publisher Einaudi in late 1946 under the title *Democrazia in Cammino. Dieci anni di esperienza del TVA*, was the first document about the TVA to deserve an Italian translation.

Agriculture.¹⁵ The visit's purpose was an extensive survey of the country's south to identify good irrigation practices. This was driven mainly by Italian bureaucrats' having successfully persuaded the US to direct ERP funds first to the modernization of the south, particularly through land reclamation, irrigation, and hydropower. Rossi-Doria was very interested in this approach, which gradually appeared as the most appropriate means for laying the foundation for agrarian reform: it is not without coincidence that, in his keynote speech at Portici, he repeatedly advocated extending reclamation works as much as possible. Infrastructure required for reclamation would be instrumental in increasing land accessibility, reducing land property size, and diversifying cultivation. This enabled Rossi-Doria to apply his pre-war training – embodied by the idea of *bonifica integrale* originated by the agrarian economist and politician Arrigo Serpieri (1877–1960)¹⁶ – and his fascination with US planning schemes, which he had extensively investigated since the 1930s and were now available for implementation (D'Antone, 1998). In the months following the first US mission to Italy, Rossi-Doria did everything possible to consolidate his vision: he exchanged extensively with both Tomlinson and McCall, asking for documents and publications related to reclamation, irrigation, planning, and housing in the US.¹⁷ He wanted to learn from and inter-

nalize the US models, especially those for the Columbia Basin and the Central Valley, in order to transfer their principles to the Lucanian landscape:

I think we should keep working, as we have discussed, in order to cooperate with the American technicians and let us fully absorb your experience. I keep going in this direction. For those reasons, during the last months, I tried to assimilate your experience of the Columbia River Basin as much as I could, in view of the preparation of a plan for the Metaponto area, that you should certainly remember. (Rossi-Doria, 1948)

Thanks to the fruitful collaboration with the US officers, the plans for the Tennessee Valley, Columbia Basin and Central Valley became benchmarks. This was true for Rossi-Doria but also for his colleague Paolo Buri¹⁸ and, of course, Mazzocchi Alemanni, who had extensively benefitted from materials and documents shipped from the US.

Modernization and land reform

The results of the 1948 national elections effected a definitive shift in the actions of Rossi-Doria and, to a lesser extent, Mazzocchi Alemanni. The disillusion resulting from the Christian Democratic Party's victory over the Communists and the Socialists convinced Rossi-Doria to leave behind political stances and push for a more pragmatic approach. Indeed, with the power in the hands of the Christian Democratic Party, the dream of redefining land tenure by law no longer seemed realistic. The new political circumstances demanded alternative strategies and Rossi-Doria was not caught unprepared (D'Antone, 1983, 1998). Before undertaking an overall agrarian reform, he said, renewed attention should be paid to some preliminary methodological issues such as mapping and data analysis,

15 The meeting was held in Portici on 15 April 1948. Records are held at: Associazione Nazionale Interessi Mezzogiorno Italiano (ANIMI), Fonds Rossi-Doria, cmm, f.28.

16 Serpieri had a crucial role in the reclamation of the Pontine Marshes and the *Tavoliere* between 1935 and 1946, where he applied the tenets of *bonifica integrale* (lit. integral reclamation). According to Serpieri's idea of *bonifica integrale*, reclaimed land should be intended as an integrated system of components in which agriculture coexisted with many other aspects, both tangible and intangible, such as infrastructure, labour organization, and production (D'Antone, 1998: 215).

17 The first three volumes of the Columbia Basin scheme were sent immediately after the mission, while other publications, especially on rural housing and farm buildings, were shipped later, in October 1948. The comprehensive list of documents shared by the US officers can be found at: Associazione Nazionale Interessi Mezzogiorno Italiano (ANIMI), Fonds Rossi-Doria, cmm, f.28.

18 In his correspondence with Tomlinson and McCall, Rossi-Doria mentioned only the name of his colleague Paolo Buri, an economist who was part of his academic group. However, he often referred to "other colleagues" working on the Lucanian plans, which likely indicates Mazzocchi Alemanni (Rossi-Doria, 1948).

through which to reframe the problem and define actions that could achieve land transformation with a solid technical base, in line with US examples. In other words, land tenure reform would be possible only after an extensive and technical process of development and modernization (Rossi-Doria, 1948). For these reasons, Rossi-Doria and the other consultants from the Metaponto and Bradano Valley Authorities primarily considered environmental transformations to address soil erosion, geological deterioration and, ultimately, land unproductiveness, in line with the recommendations of the US officers. For them, the general condition of the Lucanian countryside was so poor as to leave no other choice. According to Tomlinson,

population pressure is so great that the amount of presently available good land is insufficient under the present system of intensified use. This unhappy combination makes it necessary to force land into cultivation which either should not be farmed or should be cultivated only by the most careful methods to prevent erosion and serious deterioration. The situation is critical not only because it seriously lowers living standards of peasants in such lands, but also because it is a menace to soil resources in extensive areas. (Tomlinson, 1948: 150)¹⁹

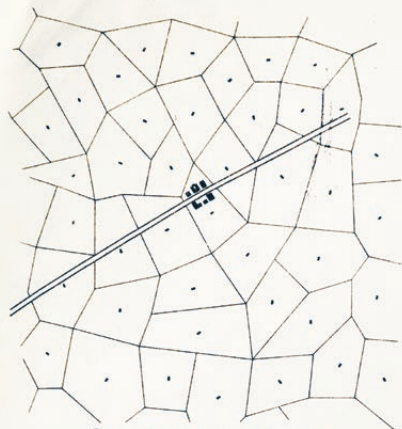
The alignment between the Italian technical bureaucracy and the US audit became evident right after Tomlinson and McCall's departure, when the Bradano and Metaponto authorities released a joint memorandum in order to obtain ERP funds. The document aimed at illustrating the logic of intervention through a detailed account of the key activities and works. In this list of priorities, dams, hydropower schemes and canals ranked very high (Consorti della Bonifica..., 1948). While implying that an overall modernization process should depend first on reclamation, such a great

emphasis on water management and control had two intimately related major consequences. First, it entailed identifying the area of intervention with the entire river basin, which was to be intended as an extended planning unit; this was in accordance with the logic of US pre-war programmes, repeatedly mentioned in the memorandum as a true model. Second, it provided river basin authorities with a very prominent role, the area under their supervision being distinct from any administrative boundary. Both these consequences, which had a long-standing tradition overseas, were substantially alien to the Italian debate on planning. Their occurrence epitomized the need to encompass environmental, planning and legal issues into a cross-cutting and more coherent planning whole which would go far beyond the rigid administrative framework established by the 1942 urban planning law. In this sense, the approach developed by the Metaponto and Bradano Valley Authorities represented a substantial advancement. Building on the suggestions expressed by Harold L. Ickes (1874–1952), the former US Secretary of the Interior quoted in the memorandum (ibid.), the approach aimed to convey a multitude of competences via a single technical body that tackled key topics such as reclamation, land tenure, and resettlement at the most appropriate scale.

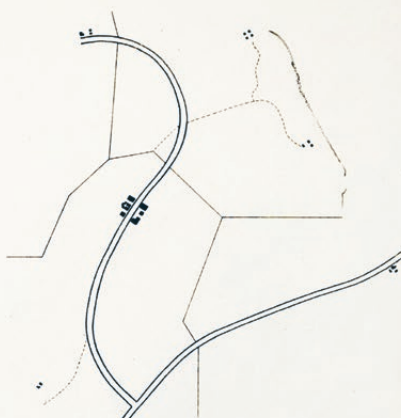
This approach to genuine transformation owed much of its character to the US experience. Of the latter's many features, Italian agrarian scientists retained those with less ideological implications. Rather than addressing a vague and generic democratization of the planning practice — as the architecture and planning elites had been seeking since 1946 — they turned to overseas experiences as models to launch extensive campaigns of land modernization, with the aim of transforming arable areas from their condition of backwardness and decentralizing agricultural practices. Against this background, the logic of decentralization and democratic redistribution of land had to be seen not as a premise but as the effect of a wider structural vision including infrastructure such as roads, railways, electrification lines, canals, dams, etc. To some

19 The two US officers wrote a short official report. Most of their conclusions can be found in articles published in the media outlets of the Bureau of Reclamation of the Department of the Interior.

BORGHİ DI SERVIZIO

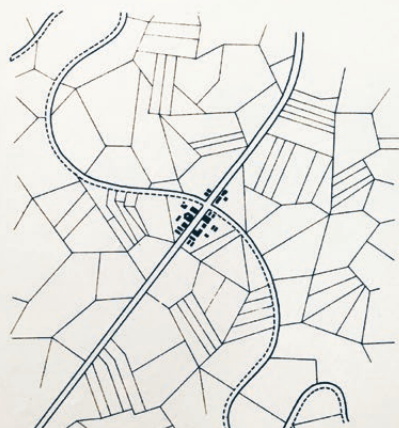


A - INSEGIAMENTO IN CASE SPARSE

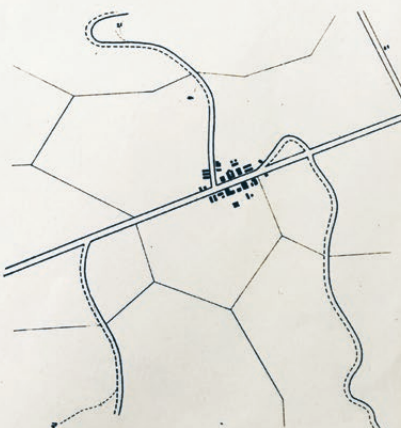


B - INSEGIAMENTO IN AZIENDE ACCENTRATE

BORGHİ RESIDENZIALI



A' - PROPRIETÀ FRAZIONATE SENZA INSEGIAMENTO IN LOCO



B' - AZIENDE ACCENTRATE SENZA INSEGIAMENTO IN LOCO

Fig.1 Manlio Rossi-Doria and Vincenzo Calia, *Typologies of settlement in the Metaponto Plain*, 1949, Consorzio della Bonifica di Metaponto. Source: Consorzio della Bonifica di Metaponto (1949).

extent, thoughts and reasoning driving the action of the Metaponto and Bradano Valley Authorities anticipated a larger perspective which would materialize only after 1950, when the Italian government launched a national authority in charge of funding and operating programmes (the so-called *interventi straordinari*) to remedy Southern Italy's economic backwardness. Not by chance, the activity of the *consorzi* proved to be crucial in the implementation of irrigation programmes established by the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno*, and they always enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy, especially in the design and planning phases (Alacevich, 2013: 95; Scoppola Iacopini, 2018).

Metaponto and Bradano Valley reclamation schemes

Before being entrusted with developing the two schemes, Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi Alemanni were asked by engineer Vincenzo Calia (director of both the Metaponto and the Bradano Valley Authorities) to conduct two pilot studies for the municipalities of Pisticci and Irsina, to verify some specific assumptions such as the network of irrigation and the location of new settlements (Mazzocchi Alemanni, s.d.; 1953). After this verification, and in conjunction with the 1948 general elections, they started working on updating the former river basin schemes (Consorzio della Bonifica della Valle..., 1949; Consorzio della Bonifica di Metaponto..., 1949). A first version was released in January 1949, when the ERP delegates' second site visit was in preparation (Consorzi della Bonifica..., 1949). Although the two plans had a common background in terms of objectives and tools, measures and actions suggested by the two consultants diverged considerably, especially in methodological approach. On the one hand, both Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi Alemanni were persuaded by the need to establish as much arable land as possible, as the countryside was almost completely uninhabited. On the other, issues raised during site observation convinced the two consultants to work independently on separate solutions, although their aims substantially corresponded.

Rossi-Doria came to a first understanding of the state of the Metaponto Plain by cross-checking data on population density, labour force and employment rate: according to his analysis, the main obstacle to modern agricultural production was underemployment. Two-thirds of the planning area consisted of a few large estates in the hands of a low number of owners (*ibid.*). Assuming that this huge portion of land could absorb a very small labour force – approximately one-third of the total – the remaining manpower would share small and medium-size parcels, usually located around the few major villages. As a result, he said, the only way to rectify such a significant disproportion and create employment was to address existing land tenure, which was no longer able to accommodate the increasing job demand, and extend reclamation works. Prior to subdivision and redistribution, lands should have been materially transformed and modernized: river diversion projects and irrigation schemes were considered imperative not only for development but especially for dwelling, particularly in the coastal marshy areas where malaria had not yet been eradicated. In addition to this new hydraulic network, roads, electric lines, forestry and geological stabilization works would provide the framework for an extensive agricultural diversification and resettlement programme²⁰ involving some 1,000 families which would be transferred to five rural villages and three auxiliary centres built from scratch (Consorzio della Bonifica di Metaponto, 1949). (**Fig. 1**)

Driven by a selective and analytical approach, and free of any ideological narrative or political bias (Alacevich, 2013: 93), Rossi-Doria's plan for the Metaponto Valley Authority resulted in a tight infrastructural network echoing Arrigo Serpieri's pre-war theorizations.²¹ From this perspective of

20 In addition to new settlements, the scheme also forecasted a general plan for demographic redistribution according to four typologies of housing aggregation. Lands in the Metaponto Plain would benefit from huge reclamation works undertaken upstream, along the course of Basento, Agri, and Sinni Rivers.

21 See note 16.

modernization, the very notion of agricultural landscape definitely evolved, materializing into a purely artificial environment which “emanates out of the city” (D’Antone, 1983: 292): for Rossi-Doria, modernization in agriculture implied that cultivated and inhabited areas coexisted on the same conceptual level as parts of an integrated territorial system, which itself is the unique precondition to achieving a well-balanced demographic and economic redistribution.

The case of the Bradano Valley was considerably different, first because of the debate concerning the overpopulation of dwellings and urban neighbourhoods in the Materan area. While Mazzocchi Alemanni began updating the scheme for the Bradano Valley, between April 1948 and January 1949, the conditions of people inhabiting the *Sassi di Matera* cave dwellings and the surrounding villages had captured the attention of Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA)²² officials. In September 1948, the head of the ECA mission in Italy, James David Zellerbach (1892–1963), visited Matera for the first time and confirmed the ECA’s willingness to help the Italian government find a solution for what was increasingly being called “a national shame”. Thus Mazzocchi Alemanni included a solution for the *Sassi*’s recovery in the draft proposal for the January 1949 Bradano Valley scheme, and in the memorandum prepared for the second ECA visit one month later. But what made Mazzocchi’s proposal pioneering was the decision to inscribe the question of the *Sassi* into a broader frame. Their recovery through evacuation became crucial to planning the regional scale. Like Rossi-Doria, Mazzocchi Alemanni referred to agricultural landscape as a unit to revive, in which different stances – the urban and the rural, but also the geographical and the social – would organically converge. However, their methodology differed substantially. While the former addressed planning issues through data collection and analysis – focusing on

density, population, and labour force as the multiple keys for handling the regional scale and identifying its actual challenges – the latter relied on the synthetic approach developed through his extensive planning practice in Italy and abroad. Mazzocchi’s capacity for synthesis underlay what he defined as an “organic vision of the problem, which pertains at the same time the urban and the rural, with all their social, sanitary and economic aspects” (Mazzocchi Alemanni and Calia, 1950: s.p.). In this sense, the *Sassi* was inherently connected with the reform of the surrounding rural areas. The evacuation of these 17,000 inhabitants potentially represented a driving force for a vast programme of resettlement on a regional basis. Cave dwellers were to move to three rural hamlets – Timmari, Venusio, and Torre Spagnola, to be built along the main roads connecting Matera to the countryside – and two low-income neighbourhoods, located on the town’s outskirts.²³

The evacuation proposal would be further developed in 1950 (*ibid.*), then sent to an Inter-Ministry Board, chaired by then Under Secretary of State for Agriculture Emilio Colombo, and finally established by law in 1952. In 1955, when the last edited version of the Bradano Valley plan was released, evacuation and resettlement became the core concepts of the overall land transformation (*ibid.*).

Mazzocchi Alemanni was fundamentally persuaded that the adoption of a dispersed settlement pattern was the essential precondition for a proper land tenure reform. Additionally, he was already familiar with the question of dispersal, as he had applied a similar strategy to plan a rural scheme for the *Tavoliere* (or *Tavoliere delle Puglie*, the Apulian Tableland), a plain in Northern Apulia, in 1946 (Mazzocchi Alemanni and

23 The three villages of Borgo Timmari, Borgo Venusio, and Borgo Torre Spagnola were located 10 to 12 km from the *Sassi*. The two low-income neighbourhoods were to fall within the urban area of Matera, in the Piccianello and Cappuccini areas. This programme was realized almost in its entirety between 1951 and 1955. Of the three rural villages, two were built (Borgo Timmari, then renamed La Martella, and Venusio), while the third, Torre Spagnola, was not.

22 The ECA (1948–51) was the US-government agency entrusted with administering the European Recovery Program, also known as the Marshall Plan.



Fig. 2. Nallo Mazzocchi Alemanni, *Existing farmhouses, villages and towns in the Bradano Valley*, *Bradano Valley Authority Development and Reclamation Plan*, 1955, Consorzio di Bonifica "Media Valle del Bradano". Source: Mazzocchi Alemanni (1955).

Consorzio Generale..., 1946; Misiani, 2017). Compared to the Apulian case, however, circumstances in the Bradano Valley were simultaneously more complex and challenging. Planned settlements in Northern Apulia were conceived by Mazzocchi as satellite cities depending on a main centre. In Lucania, conditions were inherently different for at least two reasons: the first was the expected evacuation of the *Sassi* and the consequent necessity to resettle its former inhabitants; the second referred to characteristics typical of existing towns and their location. According to Mazzocchi's interpretation, the Bradano Valley area corresponded to a well-defined model of human settlement consisting of a series of isolated and independent towns sitting on a hilltop (Mazzocchi Alemanni and Calia, 1950). This pattern was the reason behind the round-trip that farmers were forced to undertake each day: people lived together in the few large rural towns, which were separated by up to forty kilometres, and the fields could be six or even eight hours away. Mazzocchi Alemanni shaped his proposal according to this simple spatial interpretation: to reduce

the distance between houses and fields and thus farmers' wasted time in daily round-trips, he deemed it necessary to multiply the number of settlements over a broader area. In this sense, the three rural villages planned for the outskirts of the city of Matera were conceived not only to address the national shame and rehouse people from the *Sassi*, but also to move some 1,500 families closer to their fields and situate the problem within the framework of a large-scale planning programme (Mazzocchi Alemanni and Calia, 1950; Mazzocchi Alemanni, 1951). While dealing with the urban and the rural as a unique entity, Mazzocchi Alemanni established a truly organic perspective that aimed first at unlocking, then rebalancing, a desolate landscape of sparse, overpopulated settlements. His appraisal was merely technical and aspired to maximum efficiency, with no ideological nostalgia for the supposed values that would inevitably be lost. (Fig. 2)

Both Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi Alemanni pursued the same goal: simultaneous land tenure reform for rural and inhabited areas. Both considered landscape an entity resulting from these areas' close

interaction. Nevertheless, they rooted their reasoning in different, even opposite, methodological concerns. Unlike Rossi-Doria's selective rationale, Mazzocchi's approach was based on his experience in interpreting facts and figures organically. It relied on a comprehensive process of observation encompassing many aspects at once – geographical, social, economic. These multiple aspects were subsequently abstracted into one main issue – overpopulation – which became the baseline for addressing the largest scale. While Rossi-Doria moved from abstraction to reality, Mazzocchi Alemanni did the contrary. At any rate, in early 1949, both Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi Alemanni had already provided a first benchmark for the planning of the lower Lucania region (Consorzio della Bonifica della Valle..., 1949; Consorzio della Bonifica di Metaponto, 1949). Some of their preliminary assumptions were already part of the national debate, especially in reference to the forthcoming agrarian reform.

Communitarian ideologies

In January 1949, when the two drafts were released, Adriano Olivetti endorsed Mazzocchi's reformist thinking²⁴ in the first issue of *Comunità*, the house organ of the *Movimento di Comunità*, affirming that the "rural village would be the motor for enhancing local productive communities and their social role" (Olivetti quoted in Fabbri *et al.*, 1994: 40). On the one hand, Olivetti's endorsement was instrumental to getting a foothold in the *Questione meridionale* (Southern Italy question) and triggering a process of democratic planning on the model of the Tennessee Valley Authority. His explicit reference to the TVA was in line with the emphasis that Italian elites in architecture and planning had been placing on overseas experiences since 1945 (Fabbri *et al.*, 1994; Talamona, 2001: 186). Of this emphasis, Olivetti was one of the most

influential inspirers: it was also thanks to his cultural activism that the Tennessee Valley Authority turned into a metaphor for the intellectuals who strove for social and spatial redistribution. On the other hand, Olivetti saw in Mazzocchi's strategy an interesting way to put his own reformist thinking into practice, especially against surviving conservative tactics. The prospect of demographic decentralization promoted by Mazzocchi Alemanni was not fully welcomed, mainly because of the contrasting policies of the *Ente Irrigazione Puglia e Lucania*, whose actions moved in the opposite direction (*Ente per lo sviluppo...*, 1956; Scoppola Iacopini, 2018).²⁵ Regarding Mazzocchi's organic perspective, Olivetti appreciated the blend of moral and technical stances. Mazzocchi's approach to dispersal, however, had little to do with Olivetti's communitarian beliefs. It descended from the same pragmatic and non-ideological attitude he had disclosed since his first Lucanian project at Irsina, in which he made explicit reference to the need to "colonize" lands by creating "demographic centres", to encourage a population decrease in existing towns and permit development beyond the logic of the auxiliary centres and isolated houses of the *Agro Pontino* (Pontine Marshes) (Mazzocchi Alemanni, s.d.; Mazzocchi Alemanni, 1953). For his part, Olivetti partially misrepresented Mazzocchi Alemanni's assumption, emphasizing his tenuous communitarian stance against the much more relevant technical aspects of his proposal (Fabbri *et al.*, 1994).

While the 1950 visit of Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi (1881–1954) confirmed the relevance of technical aspects and

24 Mazzocchi Alemanni had already published a short account of his strategy for the Lucanian area in the journal *Italia Socialista* in December 1948, while drafting the plan for the Bradano Valley Authority (Mazzocchi Alemanni, 1948).

25 The *Ente Irrigazione Puglia e Lucania* (Apulian and Lucanian Irrigation Authority), renamed in 1951 *Ente Riforma Puglia Lucania* ([Land] Reform Authority for Apulia and Lucania), was initially established in 1948 as a technical body aimed at implementing development plans conceived by consortia, then at overseeing and realizing infrastructural programmes funded by the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno* (see note 11). Resettlement programmes resulting from infrastructural schemes, also managed by the *Ente*, were usually grounded on the idea of isolated farms and auxiliary services. The architect in charge of their implementation was Plinio Marconi (1893–1974), professor of urbanism at the University of Rome.

the prominence of infrastructural works (Consorti di Bonifica..., 1950; Pontrandolfi, 2019),²⁶ the need to remedy living conditions in the *Sassi* became increasingly pressing. The *Movimento di Comunità* seized this opportunity: Olivetti came into contact with US officers²⁷ (Talamona, 2001: 186) in the fall of 1948, when Mazzocchi Alemanni's ideas had begun to circulate via the periodical *Italia Socialista*.²⁸ Then, in late 1949, Olivetti was appointed editor in chief of *Urbanistica*, a leading planning journal, and director of the *Istituto Nazionale di Urbanistica* (INU, National Institute for Urbanism). Finally, in early 1951, Olivetti joined the housing board of the Italian branch of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration: UNRRA-CASAS (Scrivano, 2012: 100). Given Olivetti's rise, the UNRRA-CASAS was now ready to steer his activity toward small town design projects, and the Materan area was soon considered the best terrain to test and apply his new approaches (Talamona, 2012). Intellectual elites started gaining leverage in addition to influence in technical bodies. After Mazzocchi Alemanni had released his study of the *Sassi* on behalf of the Bradano Valley Authority, the town became the focus of those striving for a new approach to social and spatial planning, from Italy and abroad. The dire living conditions in the *Sassi*, which were not necessarily understood as a form of underdevelopment, became a subject of study and theoretical speculation, to such an extent that the place was even labelled “an autonomous rural community” (Tafari,

1974: 34–6²⁹) where misery was raised to the rank of a value to be documented, if not preserved (Di Lena, 2007; Toxey, 2011).

In 1951, in partnership with INU and UNRRA, Olivetti launched the *Commissione per lo Studio della città e dell'agro di Matera* (Committee for the study of the city and countryside of Matera). Its board, which brought together ethnologists, sociologists, psychologists, social engineers, and architects,³⁰ was constituted with the aim of investigating and researching each of the key factors that had shaped the Materan environment. The research was instrumental to developing new *communitarian* planning models towards the accomplishment of what Riccardo Musatti had defined “area of common living” (Musatti, 1955: 129), echoing Patrick Geddes (1854–1932, Scottish biologist and planner³¹).

The *Commissione*'s aims and actions, however, proved to be highly controversial from the beginning. As highlighted by Manfredo Tafuri, experts and intellectuals on the board regarded the *Sassi* as the place to retrieve the fundamentals of a new and cooperative social layout. However, the communitarian values they identified proved to be nothing less than historical remains. This was especially true in the case of the *vicinato*, the smallest unit of the *Sassi*'s social and communitarian life, which in that period had definitely

26 In 1950, the irrigation schemes along the Bradano, Agri, and Sinni Rivers were launched, with three major dams (San Giuliano, Gannano, and Santa Laura) under construction. See above, note 20.

27 Olivetti met the influential ERP US officer Guido Nazdo (1905–1988) thanks to the architect Ludovico Quaroni, who was collaborating with the ERP at that time. According to Ludovico Quaroni, Olivetti and Mazzocchi Alemanni worked together on the 1950 reclamation plan for the Municipality of Matera (Ochetto, 2011).

28 At that time the journal *Italia Socialista* was edited by the architect and planner Riccardo Musatti (1920–65), one of the most influential members of the *Movimento di Comunità* (see note 6). Musatti served as director of Olivetti's regional planning activities since 1949, and was also among the editors of *Metron* (with Bruno Zevi; see note 1) and *Zodiac*.

29 Tafuri quoted the interpretation of Levi provided by Alberto Asor Rosa (1933–2022, leftist intellectual, literary critic and politician).

30 The *Commissione*'s most important members were: Friedrich Georg Friedmann (1912–77, German sociologist who dedicated his doctorate to archaic agrarian culture in Matera), Giuseppe Isnardi (1886–1965, historian and geographer), Eleonora Bracco (1905–77, archaeologist), Francesco Saverio Nitti (1868–1953, economist), Tullio Tentori (1920–2003, anthropologist), Federico Gorio (1915–2007, engineer, planner, and academic), L. Quaroni, Rocco Mazzone (1912–2005, physician), Lidia De Rita (?–2014, psychologist), Giuseppe Orlando (1918–92, agrarian economist and politician), Gilberto Antonio Marselli (1928–2019, sociologist) and Rigo Innocenti (?–1966, manager), Giovan Battista Martoglio (*Commissione* coordinator, engineer). To disseminate its research, the *Commissione* prepared nine volumes, of which only three were published.

31 Active as a planner in Great Britain and India. Geddes's main work, *Cities in Evolution*, was published in 1915 and widely translated.

lost its significance (Tafari, 1974: 46–55; Bilo and Vadini, 2015). Against this background, the preservation or the transfer of these values emerged as a mere act of nostalgia, an ideological operation aiming at projecting onto the future a no longer credible past.

Seeking vague historical traces instead of active or existing practices, the work of the *Commissione* lost its forward-thinking power. Paradoxically, it ended with turning back to a conservatory and reactionary position (Musatti, 1955) which denied the very premises of its mission. According to Tafari, bringing back to life forms of human association which had been lost was nothing but a measure of social control to preserve underdevelopment and prevent rural workers from partaking in any sort of urban integration.

Meanwhile, the situation evolved. In 1951, the Italian government run by the *Democrazia cristiana* (DC, the Christian Democratic Party) assimilated Mazzocchi Alemanni's proposal in law, evacuated the *Sassi*, and launched the construction of two neighbourhoods (Serra Venerdi and Spine Bianche) within Matera's urban area and three rural settlements outside of it.³² In parallel, Bradano Valley Authority consultants prepared a municipal reclamation plan to be included in the future city master plan (*Piano Regolatore Generale*) prepared by Luigi Piccinato (Piccinato, 1955), with the details of all major interventions, including resettlement.³³ In 1951, UNRRA-CASAS provided financial and technical support to build the first rural village in the area of La Martella. Conceived by Ludovico Quaroni

and his team³⁴ as an open but autonomous entity inspired by Olivetti's communitarian expectations, La Martella was meant to house the first and poorest farmers evacuated from the *Sassi*. However, the construction of the first rural village was subject to many controversies essentially because of the enduring interference of agencies such as the *Ente Irrigazione*, which aimed at a different resettlement policy (Tenzon, 2018). The design of a second rural village in the Venusio area was assigned to Piccinato, in parallel to drafting the master plan of the entire Materan municipality. In his plan, Piccinato embedded all the recommendations proposed by Mazzocchi-Alemanni, underlining the need of a large-scale vision framing the urban and the rural questions together:

Issues arising from the planning of Matera should refer to a wider problem, which questions the redesign of the whole countryside. New directions in town planning are to be found only through restructuring the economy of the whole region. The resettlement of fifteen thousand people (from the Sassi) could not be solved within the urban frame. On the contrary, the aim is to look at the whole municipal area – one of the largest in Italy – and seek new sources for rural economy through land transformation. (Piccinato, 1955)³⁵

Matera offered to the architecture and planning elites the opportunity to further develop the debate on regional planning. In 1953, the INU requested Italian architects and planners to elaborate reconnaissance schemes and approach regional planning in line with the administrative subdivision. Quaroni's report for the Basilicata region,³⁶

32 (Special) law n. 619, 19 May 1952 "for the restoration and evacuation of the Sassi". According to data included in Mazzocchi's report on which the law was grounded, 3,374 houses were surveyed; only 43 were inhabitable houses; 859 were houses to be repaired; 2,472 were to be evacuated. The location of the three rural settlements followed the draft elaborated by Mazzocchi Alemanni in late 1948, except for Timmari, which shifted north-east in the area known as La Martella. See above, note 23.

33 The reclamation plan incorporated in Piccinato's 1952 master plan (*Piano Regolatore Generale*) of the city of Matera was signed by Mazzocchi Alemanni, Calia, and Fedele Aiello (agrarian economist). Interventions detailed in the plan included resettlement, road constructions, reforestation works, and irrigation.

34 The design group was formed by L. Quaroni, Federico Gorio, Michele Valori (1923–79, architect, planner and academic), and Luigi Agati (architect). Quaroni and Gorio were also part of the *Commissione* (see note 30).

35 Translation by the author.

36 The preliminary regional plan for the Basilicata region (*Accertamenti preliminari per un piano della Basilicata*) was prepared by a team led by L. Quaroni with architects Luisa Anversa Ferretti (1926–2022), Carlo Aymonino (1926–2010), and Piero Moroni (?–1980).

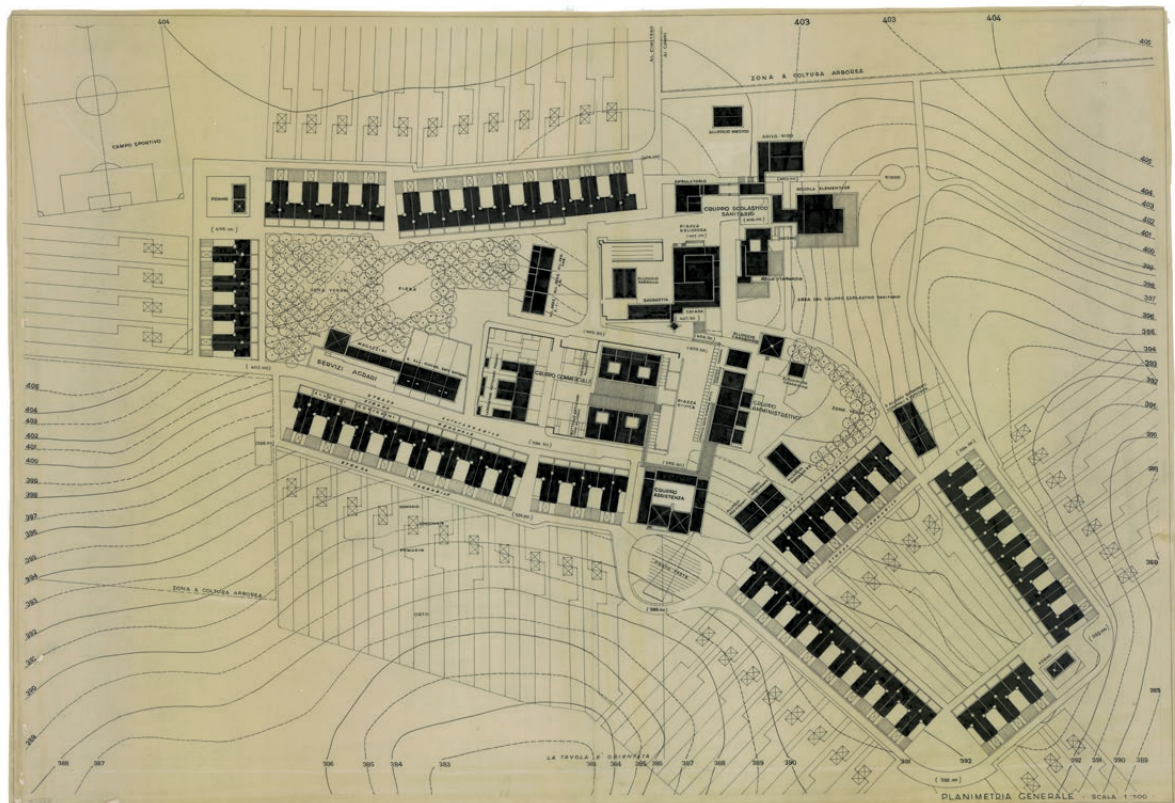


Fig. 3. Ludovico Quaroni, Luisa Anversa Ferretti, Carlo Aymonino, Piero Moroni, *Accertamenti preliminari per un piano della Basilicata*, 1954. Source: Private collection.

presented along with Piccinato's master plan in 1954 during the fifth INU Congress (Fig. 3), revealed the entanglement of political and cultural stances (Quaroni, 1955).

Despite being an active member of the *Commissione*, Quaroni sensed the paradox inherent to the communitarian vision: pushing for development and reform by safeguarding the existing social balance ignored the fact that the lack of development was caused precisely by that balance and its persistence. Against the controversial challenge between reformist ambitions and reactionary tendencies, Quaroni directed his praise to the reclamation consortia, which were considered the only entities actually concerned

by long-term and large-scale modern environmental planning and amongst the most advanced agencies in the field of planning throughout the European continent (ibid.). Unfortunately, Quaroni's appraisal fell on deaf ears. With respect to all the activities and measures established to put the land reform into practice, the Italian elite gathered in Genoa kept referring to the work of the *Ente Irrigazione* and its "farmhouses within the fields" (Marconi, 1955: 56–64) as a model (*Ente per lo sviluppo...*, 1958), while the third rural village, Torre Spagnola, was never built. (Fig. 4)



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Fig. 4

Federico Gorio, Michele Valori,
*Competition entry for the rural
village of Torre Spagnola,
Matera: general layout, 1954.*
Source: courtesy of MAXXI
National Museum of XXI
Century Arts, Rome. MAXXI
Architecture Collection.
Michele Valori fonds.

Fig. 5

Nallo Mazzocchi Alemanni,
*Public works and
infrastructures, Bradano
Valley Authority Development
and Reclamation Plan, 1955,*
Consorzio di Bonifica "Media
Valle del Bradano". Source:
Mazzocchi Alemanni (1955).

Fig. 6

Nallo Mazzocchi Alemanni,
*Land tenure pattern, Bradano
Valley Authority Development
and Reclamation Plan, 1955,*
Consorzio di Bonifica "Media
Valle del Bradano". Source:
Mazzocchi Alemanni (1955).



Conclusions

In 1955, Mazzocchi Alemanni published the final version of the Bradano Valley scheme (Mazzocchi Alemanni, 1955). Relying on more than 700 pages of data, he extended the area of intervention to 237,000 hectares located between the municipalities of Matera and Potenza, an area which could accommodate 145,000 inhabitants in some eighteen towns. More than 90% of people lived in towns or villages, with an average population density of ninety inhabitants per square kilometre, less than half the rest of the country. Starting from a natural focus on resettlement and land redistribution, he subsequently approached all questions related to land reclamation and public infrastructure in the most organic and comprehensive manner (Fig. 5). The Bradano Valley plan achieved the aim of regional planning, starting from the same premises that had featured in the *Sassi* recovery plan but stretching their logic to an unprecedented scale of intervention. Inscribed in an overall perspective of environmental modernization, the plan envisaged a broad spectrum of public and private interventions ranging from roads to reforestation, from aqueducts to geological stabilization, with some ten new rural villages and three auxiliary settlements. Each operation was rooted in a wide and exhaustive background of data, a sort of allegedly neutral platform on which to justify all the operations of spatial and social rebalancing. Indeed, nostalgic ideologies were at last put aside for the sake of a technically oriented and appropriated vision that found in dispersal and infrastructural networking its key aspects. For Mazzocchi Alemanni, the entire valley had to be inhabited in a way which resized the pattern of land ownership (Fig. 6), diversified the type of cultivations, and reduced the distance between the house and field. Such a multilayered rationale would also encourage the cooperation of institutional bodies and authorities involved in the planning process. Public entities such as UNRRA, *Ente Irrigazione*, and INU, as well as the many municipalities, would be allowed to work together on the plan's multifaceted structure, taking over management of the many tasks and actors involved, which

Quaroni described as astonishingly pulverized at the 1954 INU Conference (Quaroni, 1955). Finally, by extending to Bradano Valley some of the previously proven actions, Mazzocchi Alemanni saw the 1955 plan as the platform on which to verify and generalize some of his guiding principles. Far from revealing ideological communitarian bias, the Bradano Valley scheme paved the way for a mature and evolved view of regional planning in which rural and urban issues coexisted with a *scientifically responsible* environmental frame.

The Metaponto and Bradano Valley Authorities, on their own, had pursued regionalism on a scientific basis. By detaching planning practices from the strict administrative subdivision, they ended up tackling one of the most controversial challenges of regional planning, namely the need of a certain planning tool to be associated with a defined political space, as was established by the 1942 urban planning law. Establishing the area of intervention according to an environmental rationale, as in the case of Mazzocchi and Rossi-Doria's schemes, led the two authorities to cross the urban with the rural, embrace the landscape as a living organism and pursue its overall transformation. To some extent, the organic vision of the river basin authorities and consultants implied evolution rather than development, the former intended as the manipulation of the deeper structure of the human environment toward adaptation and modernization. This ambition allowed agrarian economists and engineers such as Rossi-Doria and Mazzocchi not only to cure the disease affecting the Lucanian landscape but also and particularly to re-establish an area of common living that, if not adequately identified and transformed, would be inevitably lost.

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