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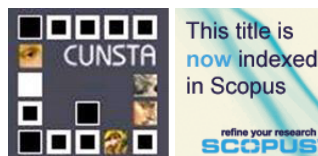
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The management of cultural heritage and landscape in inner areas

edited by Mara Cerquetti, Leonardo J.
Sánchez-Mesa Martínez, Carmen Vitale

Guardo le canoe che fendono l'acqua, le barche che sfiorano il campanile, i bagnanti che si stendono a prendere il sole. Li osservo e mi sforzo di comprendere. Nessuno può capire cosa c'è sotto le cose. Non c'è tempo per fermarsi a dolersi di quello che è stato quando non c'eravamo. Andare avanti, come diceva Ma', è l'unica direzione concessa. Altrimenti Dio ci avrebbe messo gli occhi di lato. Come i pesci¹.

Quando cammino nei prati attorno al Santuario, quasi sempre solo, ripenso a nonno Venanzio che, da giovane biscino, pascolava il gregge negli stessi terreni. Mi affascina il fatto che in questo luogo la cui cifra, agli occhi di chi guarda adesso la mia scelta di vita, è la solitudine, nei secoli addietro abitassero oltre duecento persone. Ancora negli anni Cinquanta, ricorda mio nonno, erano quasi un centinaio gli abitanti di Casette di Macereto tra contadini, mezzadri, mogli, pastori e un nugolo di bambini che costringeva il maestro a salire ogni giorno da Visso per fare lezione a domicilio.

Era una comunità compatta, coordinata come lo può essere quella delle società operose degli insetti: api, formiche, termiti, ma cosa più sorprendente che mai, una comunità niente affatto statica o chiusa².

¹ Balzano M. (2018), *Resto qui*, Torino: Einaudi, p. 175.

² Scolastici M. (2018), *Una yurta sull'Appennino*, Torino: Einaudi, p. 50.

Norcia in the historical seismic sources (14th-19th centuries): a reassessment of the reconstruction and post-seismic management

Maria Teresa Gigliozzi*

*[The Norcini] changed
their beautiful Norcia built in stone
into a miserable wooden Norcia¹.*

Abstract

The seismic event that devastated Norcia in 2016 leads us to reconsider the history of this town and its urban and architectural transformations, through the phenomena of earthquakes. They are in fact a decisive factor in the development of this urban centre. In the past, major damage had been caused by earthquakes of 1328 and then of 1703, 1730 and 1859. The abundant documentation available for the 18th and 19th centuries provides us with an extraordinary quantity of data on many aspects of these catastrophic events, not

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¹ «[I Norcini] cangiarono finalmente la loro bella Norcia di pietra in una miserabilissima Norcia di legno» (Antonio da Orvieto, *Cronologia*, p. 269). The translation into English of the historical sources cited is based on an Italian paraphrase of the original text which is inserted into the notes.

only on material damage and consequent reconstructive actions, but also on the perception of those involved more or less directly in the disaster and the emotional impact that the earthquakes provoked. An overview reading of the sources allows us to follow through the building activities of this urban centre, focusing on its peculiar seismic character, which was re-moulded, redesigned and often modified on the basis of the seismic risk.

L'evento sismico che ha colpito Norcia nel 2016 ci porta a riconsiderare la storia di questa città e le sue trasformazioni urbanistiche e architettoniche attraverso la lente dei terremoti. Essi infatti costituiscono un elemento decisivo nello sviluppo di questo centro urbano. In passato, i maggiori danni alla città furono causati dal sisma del 1328 e poi da quelli del 1703, del 1730 e del 1859. L'abbondante documentazione conservata per i secoli XVIII e XIX fornisce una straordinaria quantità di dati su molti aspetti, non solo sui danni materiali e le conseguenti azioni ricostruttive, ma anche sulla percezione e l'impatto emotivo che il terremoto esercitò su quanti furono coinvolti più o meno direttamente nel disastro. Una lettura complessiva delle fonti consente di ripercorrere le vicende costruttive del centro urbano guardando proprio al suo aspetto peculiare di "città sismica", ripetutamente modellata sul rischio tellurico.

The recent seismic event that struck Norcia in October 2016 leads us to reconsider the history of this town and its urban and architectural transformations through the phenomena of earthquakes². They are in fact a decisive factor in the development of this urban centre. In the past, major damage had been caused by earthquakes in 1328 and then in 1703, 1730 and 1859. For the 18th and 19th centuries the abundant documentation conserved in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, the Archivio di Stato di Roma and in the local archives, provide us with an extraordinary quantity of data on many aspects of these catastrophic events³.

These relate to material damage and consequent action: damage suffered by entire habitations and individual buildings, restoration estimates, accounts for incurred expenses, pleas by the local population for tax deductions, projections

² The subject of this essay was presented at the Interdisciplinary Study Day on *Cities in Crisis: Emergency Measures in Architecture and Urbanism, 1400-1700* (Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome, Italy, September 6-7, 2018), organized by Danielle Abdon (Temple University/Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History) and Margaret Bell (UC Santa Barbara/Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence). The text is partly an English summary of a larger study on this topic, from the Roman age to the 19th century, by the present writer Gigliozzi 2019. I refer to this for further consideration and a more complete bibliography. On the other hand, with regard to the impact on the city of the earthquakes of 1979 and 1997 and the consequences in terms of urban change and architectural restoration, see Benazzi, Toscano 1983; Iambrenghi 1998; more generally *I terremoti dell'Appennino* 2007, pp. 186-232; Piccarreta 2007.

³ A detailed catalog of these sources is in *I terremoti dell'Appennino* 2007. From this research we can obtain the main information on the intensity of each earthquake recorded in that geographical area, between the first century BC and 2000, and on the extent of damage produced. A new and updated version of this catalog, named CFTI5Med, is accessible online: <<http://storing.ingv.it/cfti5>>, 15.12.2018.

for works to be carried out and particularly the construction of temporary wooden buildings (so-called *baracca*) for re-housing the population and for the continuity of public, religious and commercial activities.

From all this documentary material also emerges a perception of the emotional impact on those involved more or less directly in the disaster. We could say that the vastness of the event, characterized by a wide resonance among the population and a particular richness of information, to which we should also point to the notable heterogeneity of sources, generated for the first time a real and proper “media event”.

An overview reading of the documentation allows us to follow through the building activities of the urban centre, focusing on its peculiar seismic character, moulded, redesigned and often modified on the seismic risk.

The first evidence of a seismic event in Norcia occurs in the year 1328, on 4 December, when the shocks led to the almost total destruction of the inhabited part of the town, including the buildings of religious worship and part of the surrounding city walls⁴.

A direct witness was Moshe ben Daniel, a Jewish resident of Ripatrasone, a small village in The Marche. In end-notes in a *Libro di preghiere*, Moshe refers to widespread collapse and numerous deaths, following which the survivors “returned to” the city and applied themselves to reconstructing it in a more extensive form and thus enlarging it:

It was the first day of the month of Tevet of the year 5089 from its creation [...]. In the morning, before dawn, the earthquake broke out, the foundations of the walls trembled due to the impact of the earthquake and the floors of the houses vibrated like a shack. In the cellar, the barrels banged against each other and the wine, oscillating, rang like a bell. I was lying on my bed because the East had not yet lit up [...]. On that day, the same earthquake manifested its intensity in the city of Norcia [...]. We were told that the houses collapsed, the courtyards became ruins and many died when the towers fell. The population was so dismayed. Numerous corpses were found everywhere. There is no adequate lament for its gardens [...]. After that I was in Norcia and as I had heard, so I saw [...]. Afterwards, those who had survived rose and rebuilt the city; they built houses and returned [...] re-started and repaired more than they had in previous times⁵.

⁴ There is no information concerning Norcia in the coeval accounts of the damage caused by earthquakes in Spoleto and Rome on 29 April 801, see *I terremoti dell'Appennino* 2007, pp. 27, 35-37.

⁵ «Era il primo giorno del mese di Tevet dell'anno 5089 dalla creazione [...]. Sul far del mattino, prima del sorgere dell'alba, il terremoto si scatenò, le fondamenta delle pareti tremarono dall'impatto del sisma ed i pavimenti delle case vibrarono come una capanna. Nella cantina le botti sbattevano l'una contro l'altra e il vino oscillando risuonava come una campana. Me ne stavo coricato sul mio letto poiché l'oriente ancora non si era illuminato [...]. In quel dì, lo stesso terremoto manifestava la sua intensità nella città di Norcia [...]. Ci fu riferito che le case crollarono, i cortili rovinarono e molti furono i morti quando le torri caddero. Tanta era la costernazione della popolazione. Numerosi cadaveri si trovavano ovunque. Non vi è lamento adeguato per i suoi giardini [...]. Dopo di che sono stato a Norcia e come avevo sentito così ho visto [...]. Dopo coloro che erano sopravvissuti si levarono e ricostruirono la città; costruirono case e tornarono [...]

We have no specific information as to what the methods of restoration were, nor of what provisional structures were put up for the recovery of the injured and to re-house those made homeless. Contemporary sources provide no information on the modes of intervention. There is a further description by the chronicler Giovanni Villani (died 1348), charged with plenty of rhetoric:

This is an account of how a large part of the city of Norcia of the Ducato [of Spoleto], along with some castles around, collapsed due to the earthquakes. In the said year MCCCXXVIII, at the beginning of December, there were several earthquakes in the Marca and in the districts of Norcia, so that almost most of the city of Norcia collapsed and the town walls and towers, houses, palaces and churches fell, and due to this misfortune, for it was swift and at night, more than five thousand people died. In the same way, a castle near Norcia, called le Precchie (Preci), collapsed, so that neither people nor animals were left alive; and in a similar way were affected the castle of Montesanto, part of Monte Sammartino, Cerreto and the castle of Visso⁶.

We can however speculate in a “negative” way, so to speak, following two routes of enquiry. Firstly, on the question of material structures, by observing how much of the topography and urban structure can be considered as resulting from the post-seismic reconstruction of 1328. Secondly, through documentary sources, by the analysis of chronicles relating to earthquakes in the following centuries, and suggesting that the reactions and consequent actions later adopted for this type of event may have followed a model derived in large part from previous experience, i.e. a form of “behavioural tradition”. In fact, the persistence even to the present day of some of those approaches confirms this.

From the research that I have been able to carry out on this subject, it seems evident that the oldest structures of religious and civil building were begun in

rimisero in piedi e ripararono più di quanto fosse nei tempi precedenti» (National Library of Israel, Heb. 38°4281, Moshe ben Daniel, *Libro di Preghiere*). Part of the translation, from the Hebrew, is in Chiaverini, Severini 2003, pp. 36-37, n. 14. The source was already known in Busi 1995. The manuscript, now available online <web.nli.org.il/sites/nlis/he/manuscript>, 15.12.2018, is kept with the correct signature Heb. 38°4281, cc. 389-390: «Chronicle of the earthquake in Norcia in the year 5089 [1328], which was felt by the writer while he was in La Ripa, and chronicle of the famine which took place in that year» («Cronaca del terremoto di Norcia dell'anno 5089 [1328], che fu sentito da colui che scrive mentre si trovava a La Ripa, e cronaca della carestia che vi fu in quell'anno»). See Gigliozzi 2019, pp. 12-13. I thank Massimo Gargiulo of the Pontifical Gregorian University for the translation from the Hebrew.

⁶ «Come sobbissò per tremuoti gran parte de la città di Norcia del Ducato con più castella ivi intorno. Nel detto anno MCCCXXVIII, a l'entrante di dicembre, furono diversi tremuoti ne la Marca ne le contrade di Norcia, per modo che quasi la maggior parte de la detta città di Norcia sobbissò, e caddono le mura de la terra e le torri, case, e palazzi, e chiese, e de la detta rovina, perché fu sùbita e di notte, morirono più di Vm persone. E per simile modo rovinò uno castello presso a Norcia, che si chiama le Precchie (Preci), che non vi rimase persona né animale vivo; e per simile modo il castello di Montesanto, e parte di Monte Sammartino, e di Cerreto, e del castello di Visso» (Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, t. II, lib. XI, ch. CXI). See *I terremoti nell'Appennino* 2007, pp. 35-36.

the late 14th century and concluded during the 15th century⁷. It is likely that there was a very long period following the earthquake of 1328 during which we can imagine Norcia as a building site, a “temporary city”, as I believe it could be described.

After the clearing of the rubble and the demolition of the dangerous parts of the buildings, the reinforcement of the remaining structures was undertaken, and finally provisional structures in wood were put up. We can deduce all this from documentation in sources of later epochs, and not only in those relating to the case of Norcia. For example, for the two earthquakes that struck the neighbouring town of Cascia in 1599 and 1600 we have an interesting account provided by the *Narratio Terraemotus* of Paolo Rocchi⁸. Other and more numerous sources, as we will see, refer to the earthquakes of 1703 and of 1730.

By the middle of the 15th century, Norcia appeared as renovated, at least in its principal structures. This was evident in the completed forms of the major religious buildings of St. Benedict, St. Francis, St. Augustine, with the decoration of their respective facades presenting an architectural imprint that was widely diffuse in the region during that period (figs. 1-4)⁹. Post-seismic reconstruction time was evidently quite lengthy and was reflected in the completion of other towns geographically close to Norcia which had suffered analogous destruction.

Besides the religious buildings, edifices of civil power were also reconstructed in this period, evidenced in Norcia by its most ancient structures the Palazzo Comunale and the Palazzo of the Podestà (demolished in the 16th century), both facing onto the Piazza Maggiore together with the basilica of St. Benedict and the collegiate church of S. Maria Argentea (this was also demolished in the 16th century but reconstructed nearby). The Piazza Maggiore was the fulcrum of urban addition which, probably by the 13th century, developed towards the valley the perimeter of the Ancient *Nursia* corresponding to the higher part of the actual city¹⁰. The city wall (fig. 5), which continued to enclose Norcia in the characteristic cuoriform (heart shape plan), was actually reconstructed on the occasion of the post-seismic renovation of 1328. This intervention was considered among the most urgent which the Comune undertook in the

⁷ Gigliozzi 2019, pp. 12-24.

⁸ Paolo Rocchi, *Narratio Terraemotus in Comitatus Cassiae, Cerreti et Spoleti anno MDXCIX* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 324, cc. 173-183). See Franceschini 1913, pp. 124-128; *I terremoti nell'Appennino* 2007, pp. 41-44.

⁹ Gigliozzi 2019, pp. 19-20. It would be helpful to expand on studies of late medieval art in Norcia, to be included in the broader context of research on the links and cultural influences that pervaded the area between the Alta Valnerina, the Piceno, the Reatino and the Abruzzo lands. On this geographical-cultural context, I refer in particular to: Marcelli 1998; Cordella 2002; De Marchi, Giannatiempo 2002; De Marchi, Falaschi 2003; Tomei, Benati 2005; Delpriori 2008; Mazzalupi 2008; Pistilli, Manzari, Curzi 2008; Cordella 2014; Pasqualetti 2014; Delpriori 2015; Imponente, Torlontano 2015; Mattei 2015; Viscogliosi 2016; Acconci 2017; Cervini 2018; Garibaldi, Delpriori 2018; Marchi *et al.* 2018.

¹⁰ Sisani, Camerieri 2013; Gigliozzi 2019, pp. 13-14.

aftermath of the earthquake. The hospitals of Santo Spirito and probably of S. Angelo della Pace as well as the Monte di Pietà are also dated in the 15th century (but none of this preserved)¹¹.

The combination of material and archival data therefore demonstrates that once the dramatic effects of the catastrophe were surpassed, the city's economy recovered, enabling local and migrant craftsmen to obtain notable commissions for their work in the reconstruction of the town. This swarm of artists, in continuous movement from one part of the territory to another, followed well-trodden commercial-economic routes and in full expansion during the 15th century. These same roads carried Norcian merchants from Florence to Aquila, Marca to Rome, and as far as Naples, following a road network branching from the central *Via degli Abruzzi*¹².

In the following century and even more so in the first half of the 17th century, the more stable political and economic conditions generated a flourishing building activity in the city, sustained and encouraged by the participation of the *aristocrazia*¹³. To gain a good picture of the city we can turn to at least two notable sources of the beginning of the 17th century: the plan conserved in the Archivio di Stato di Roma (fig. 6) and a *Memoriale* of the Community of Norcia¹⁴. From the description in the *Memoriale* is evident the excellent state of preservation of the buildings, as well as the high quality of the architectural decorations, rich furnishings, frescoes, paintings, altarpieces and *stucchi*. These confirm that Norcia did not suffer the same serious damage witnessed by the town of Cascia in the two strong seismic shocks of 1599 and 1600¹⁵.

The widespread and continuous decoration projects in the Nursine churches, as well as new building sites – such as the Castellina requested by Pope Giulio III in 1554¹⁶ – show that the city underwent a general reconfiguration in respect

¹¹ Cordella 2002; Comino, Iambrenghi 2013. These institutions are mentioned in the Archivio Storico Comunale di Norcia (hereafter ASCN), *Zibaldone Fusconi, Memoriale dato per parte della Comunità di Norcia alli Cardinali della Congregazione Concistoriale per ottenere il ripristino dell'antica diocesi nursina* (17th century), cc. 85-88: 86-87.

¹² Gasparetti 1964-1966; Cordella 1998; Cappelli 2006; Lattanzio 2013; Pasqualetti 2014.

¹³ On these issues I refer to Comino, Iambrenghi 2013.

¹⁴ For the plan, Archivio di Stato di Roma (hereafter ASR), *Disegni e piante*, coll. I, 48, fol. 56/1, coil 18, sequence 80, *L'antica città di Norsia* (17th century). The text is in ASCN, *Zibaldone Fusconi, Memoriale*. See Gigliozzi 2019, pp. 25-26, 43-46. The *Memoriale* is quoted in Comino, Iambrenghi 2013, p. 16.

¹⁵ The greatest damage was suffered by the poorest housing areas. See *I terremoti nell'Appennino* 2007, p. 41.

¹⁶ In the church of St. Benedict on 28 August 1554 the religious rituals and duties were celebrated in the presence of the Norcia Governor Sebastiano Atracino of Macerata, other dignitaries and the architect Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola: «After the duties, they headed to the nearby Governor's Palace and, proceeding towards Porta delle Ceresce, they designated the perimeter of the Castellina to the perpetual peace of the people of Norcia» («Dopo gli uffici costoro si dirigono al vicino palazzo del Governatore e procedendo verso Porta delle Ceresce designavano la Castellina alla perpetua pace del popolo nursino», ASCN, *Zibaldone Fusconi*, cc. 72-73. On this monument, see Cesi 2002; Cordella 2002, pp. 34-35).

to its late medieval layout. From the urbanistic point of view, in the mid 17th century Norcia assumed the form which, in spite of successive post-seismic interventions, would be preserved in legible form up to the present day¹⁷. That which has seen the greater change due to periodic reconstruction was in fact the architectural fabric.

The earliest sources which provide evidence in a detailed way of the post-seismic operations and management of the city date to 1703¹⁸. Immediately following the violent tremors – which between January and February of that year caused major damage in many other parts of Italy – Pope Clement XI instituted a special Congregation for the management of the post-earthquake situation in the Pontifical territories. At the same time, he sent to the disaster sites the Apostolic Commissioner Pietro de Carolis, who wrote a detailed report on Norcia in which he described all the measures adopted from the beginning to support the population affected and to attempt to revive the city's economy¹⁹.

From the report of the Apostolic Commissioner a picture of wide destruction and damage emerges, as in part illustrated in the image showing St. Benedict's square, published in 1706 in the *Lettres* by Guillaume Desnoues and Domenico Guglielmini (fig. 7)²⁰. With regard to the extent of damages, it corresponds only partially to what is shown on a more famous drawing of 1703 (fig. 8)²¹.

This is how De Carolis describes the state of the damage caused to the basilica and monastery dedicated to the patron saint and to the Palazzo Consolare:

The Church of St. Benedict, located in the Piazza Maggiore, in front of the Consular Palace, where all the public functions of the Magistrate were carried out, is reduced to the following state. The main walls that surround it stand with some part of the roof and attic but damaged in several parts with cracks. The fall of the presbytery broke through the vault, where the house of the Patriarch and Protector St. Benedict was: three beams of the ancient covering of this presbytery fell to the ground; the high and magnificent bell tower in gothic-style, severely affected by tremors, dropped three large bells down to the ground within its windows, where they now remain, away from danger, as it would be more dangerous to try to remove them as the bell tower is all curved and bent on one side and is about to fall. The sacristy

¹⁷ See Comino, Iambrenghi 2013.

¹⁸ See *I terremoti nell'Appennino* 2007, pp. 45-59.

¹⁹ *Relazione Generale delle ruine*. A summary of this relationship («*Ristretto della Relazione Generale delle Ruine*») is reported in ASCN, Zibaldone Fusconi, and already published in Chiaverini 2017, pp. 20-33. See also the text of a report by Pietro de Carolis, dated November 20, 1703: ASR, *Congregazioni particolari deputate, cause diverse*, t. 38, no. 8, *Congregazione sopra le materie del terremoto, Relazione del commissario apostolico monsignor Pietro de Carolis al segretario di Stato cardinale Paolucci sui lavori di ricostruzione nelle località colpite dai terremoti del 1703*.

²⁰ *Lettres de G. Desnoues*, pp. 192-204. See Gigliozzi 2019, p. 31. On this, see also: Cordella 2018. The reproduction was erroneously printed in a specular manner (right/left), here instead correct.

²¹ This drawing is conserved in ASCN, *Archivio segreto dei Consoli*, cassetto Z, *Disegno a matita della piazza di Norcia dopo il terremoto [1703?]*, and published in Cordella 2002, p. 32; Comino, Iambrenghi 2013, p. 33.

collapsed over the monastery, where the Celestine Fathers resided, and ruined the four-room apartment with hall and living room, which fell onto five shops which were under the dormitory of fifteen rooms, and another seven on their side all collapsed over several shops which were also destroyed. The Consular Palace with its annexes, that is the Council room and the audience rooms, the apartment of the magistrate with its contiguous residence, the tower with a large bell, and clock with its dial facing the square, were all damaged to the foundations [...], because only a few columns were left standing to support the loggia of the palace, this also partly collapsed²².

The affected inhabitants were sheltered in different areas of the territory, although this did not guarantee their safety. Because of this, De Carolis gave orders for the construction of an agglomeration of *baracche* (fig. 9) in a single, dedicated, part of the city outside the walls. This allowed a more comprehensive and controlled opportunity for the support of the victims of the earthquakes. In addition to this, for example, the urgent reconstruction of mills, furnaces and kilns, in particular the construction of a new basement furnace situated outside the walls, was also implemented. The combined construction of both homes and services close to the city was affected in order to provide an efficient coordination of activities.

At the same time, there was the necessity to recover the city's archives and above all to ensure the continuity of religious practice, by the construction of chapels and altars in country areas. These were modest brick structures sometimes enlarged with tents to protect the faithful from bad weather during celebrations, while a more substantial restoration was planned for the church of SS. Annunziata of Minori Osservanti situated just outside the walls. Among the first actions undertaken by De Carolis was the accommodation of many of the monks in *baracche* constructed within the gardens of the monasteries. In that of S. Maria della Pace, the Apostolic Commissioner raised a wooden chapel. Large wooden buildings were constructed to form the hospital, the granary, the prison

²² «La suddetta Chiesa poi di San Benedetto, situata nella Piazza maggiore, dirimpetto al Palazzo Consolare, ove si facevano tutte le funzioni pubbliche del Magistrato, è ridotta nello stato seguente. Li muri principali che la circondano stanno in piedi con qualche parte del tetto e soffitta, ma stangati in più parti con fessure. La caduta della tribuna sfondò la volta, ove era la casa del suddetto Patriarca e Protettore San Benedetto: tre cavalli del tetto con soffitta antiqua alla detta tribuna rovesciati a terra; il magnifico ed elevato campanile lavorato alla gotica sconcertato dalle scosse lasciò cadere tre grosse campane nel suolo delle proprie fenestre, ove ora rimangono riposte al pericolo, per essere più pericoloso alla vita di chi tentasse scolarle, restando il detto campanile tutto curvo e piegato da una parte in prossimo stato di cadere. La Sagestia rovesciata sopra il monastero, ove risiedevano i Padri Celestini, rovinò l'appartamento di quattro stanze con sala e salone, quali precipitarono entro cinque botteghe che si stavano sotto il dormitorio di quindici camere, ed altre sette verso il loro diroccarono tutte sopra diverse botteghe, le quali anche esse restarono oppresse. Il Palazzo Consolare con tutti i suoi comodi, cioè sala di Consiglio e stanze di udienza, appartamento del Magistrato che aveva contigua la residenza, torrione con una grossa campana, ed altra per l'orologio con mostra arrispondente alla Piazza, il tutto diroccato da fondamenti [...], non essendosi rimasto in piedi, se non alcune colonne, quali sostengono la loggia di esso Palazzo mezza diruta» (*Relazione Generale delle ruine*, pp. 9-10).

and for the housing of orphans (the so-called *Conservatori*). Other structures were set up to contain looms and equipment for wool production, which was one of the principal commercial activities of Norcia.

It is extremely interesting to note the concern expressed by De Carolis for the need to clear the roads of enormous quantities of rubble – according to the report of the architect Francesco Antonio Bufalini – in order to rebuild as soon as possible the buildings that had been damaged or destroyed. Delayed or missed reconstruction would have invalidated the most urgent operations. As De Carolis observed, all that had been achieved was for the purpose of restoring the daily tranquillity of the population, so that «there is nothing left to think about except the new rebuilding»²³.

Also documented are many pleas for aid and economic relief. I quote here some passages of the *Supplica* written on 15 January 1704 by the “Community and Populous” of Norcia to Pope Clement XI:

to rebuild Norcia it is necessary to remove the rubble from the city [...]. Also necessary is the reparation of the walls of Norcia, because the city is only an hour away from the Kingdom [of Sicily] and without them the nuns and the inhabitants would not be safe from the incursions of bandits and criminals. According to the architect Bufalini, these restorations would require 10,000 *scudi* [...]. It is still necessary to restore the Consular Palace, in which there must be at least rooms and halls for meetings and councils, apartments for consuls and their families, accommodation for the captain of the *appellazione* and two doctors, for the consular chancellor, the secret and public archive, for the city chancellery, the armory, the offices of the prefect and captain of the *appellazione*, space for storing cereals, for furnaces, for salt, warehouses, soldiers’ quarters and other rooms for officials needed by the government; the supplicants therefore plead with Your Holiness for help with any expenses that may be necessary or additional [...]. In Norcia and the countryside, there are many families who possess goods and animals and many damaged houses, but since they can not find buyers or those who can help them in the present general misery, it will be impossible for them to rebuild the houses without other help. Therefore, Your Holiness is implored to make a loan with adequate respite for each of these families, at least enough to rebuild a single room to sleep in [...]. According to the estimate of the architect Bufalini, sent to us by Your Holiness, the damage to the buildings of Norcia adds up to 341,000 *scudi*, to 85,000 *scudi* for 18 Castles and Villas and if is calculated the damage to the other 31 Villas and Castles and all the country houses and buildings of Norcia, affected by 4000 and more earthquakes, the costs will exceed a million for the damage of the buildings, which is impossible to get a sense of without seeing those ruins²⁴.

²³ «non resti altro a cui pensare se non alla nuova riedificazione» (ASR, *Congregazioni particolari deputate, cause diverse*, t. 38, no. 8: *Congregazione sopra le materie del terremoto, Relazione del commissario apostolico*).

²⁴ «per riedificare Norcia è necessario lo spurgo del Paese [...]. Et anco è necessario la reparatione delle Mura Castellane di Norcia, che essendo un hora lontana da Regno non sariano senza di esse più secure le religiose et abitanti dall’incursioni de banditi e facinorosi. Per dette restauratione secondo l’architetto Bufalini vi vogliono scudi 10 mila [...]. È necessario ancora rifabbricare il Palazzo Consolare, ove almeno siano sale e saloni per le congregazioni, per consigli, habitazione per li consoli o famigli, commodo per il capitano dell’appellatione e due medici per il cancelliere consolare, archivio secreto e pubblico, cancelleria della città, armaria, offitii del prefetto e capitano

But the Commissioner's wishes did not turn into reality because of the scarce financial resources made available by the Camera Apostolica. Moreover, the Pontifical institutions could not manage in a quick and effective way all the consequences of the earthquake: famine, epidemics, damage to crops and livestock lost. The result was a wide depopulation of the territory, a long economic crisis and thus considerable delays in reconstruction²⁵.

To aggravate this state of affairs, a new and strong earthquake struck Norcia a few decades later, in May 1730. For this further catastrophic event there were also many testimonies regarding the extent of the damage and the management policies undertaken in the succeeding years²⁶. To provide an example I quote here below some words from the *Relazione del Terremoto* of 1730:

as soon as the bad news reached the ears of the Most Eminent Cardinals through the rapid intervention of this Illustrious Prefect, they immediately made provisions to help these depressed and very unhappy people with large and prodigal donations of money and with military pavilions promptly sent for the shelter of the most miserables who, seriously injured, were lying in the streets, and exempted them from all duties; and they continued to help them every day, both with money alms and through security measures to protect the little which they still had; and they sent in many soldiers from nearby places [...] to keep the criminals away from this city²⁷.

dell'appellazione, abbondanza ove si conservano i grani per i forni, salara, depositaria, quartiere de' soldati e sbirri et altri commodi per offitiali necessarij al governo, supplicano per tanto gl'oratori la S.V. di qualche aiuto per spesa tanto necessaria et eccedente [...]. Essendo in Norcia e contado moltissime famiglie le quali benché possiedino stabili, altre animali, e moltissime case mezze dirute perché non trovano i compratori o chi possa aiutarle per le presenti miserie generali, sarà impossibile senz'altro aiuto possano rifabricarsi le abitazioni. Perciò si supplica la S.V. fare un imprestito con la dilatione congrua a ciascuna famiglia sopradetta almeno quanto basti a rifabricarsi una sola stanza da dormire [...]. Che il danno delle fabbriche di Norcia sola ascende secondo la perizia del Bufalini architetto mandatoci dalla S.V. a scudi 341 mila et a scudi 85 mila per 18 Castelli e Ville e se si calcolerà il danno degl'altri 31 Ville e Castelli e di tutti i casali et abitazioni di campagna e delli fondamenti delle fabbriche di Norcia creduti boni con 4000 e più scosse di terremoti supererà il solo danno delle fabbriche un milione essendo impossibile comprendere quelle rovine se non si vedano» (ASR, *Congregazioni particolari deputate, cause diverse*, t. 38, no. 8, *Congregazione sopra le materie del terremoto, Supplica della Comunità e Popolo di Norcia alla Santità di Nostro Signore Papa Clemente XI*).

²⁵ *I terremoti nell'Appennino* 2007, pp. 45-59.

²⁶ *I terremoti nell'Appennino* 2007, pp. 62-73. Among the many sources that report on the earthquake of 1730, see ASCN, *Zibaldone Fusconi, Relazione del Terremoto accaduto in Norcia l'anno 1730*, cc. 15-18. See also: Gigliozzi 2019, pp. 29-32, 47-50.

²⁷ «appena arrivò all'orecchio degl'Eminentissimi Porporati col mezzo sollecito di questo Illustrissimo Prefetto un sì funesto annunzio, che subitamente resero provista di sussidio questa depressa infelicissima gente con larga, e prodiga munificenza di danaro e militari padiglioni sollecitamente spediti per il ricovero de più miserabili, che semivivi giacevano in mezzo alle pubbliche strade, avendoli esentati da ogni dazio; continuando ogni giorno più a soccorrerli non meno di elemosine pecuniarie, che di buoni provvedimenti per sicurezza di quel poco rimastoli; avendo fatto venire da luoghi più vicini gran quantità di soldati [...] tener lontani da questa città i malviventi» (ASCN, *Zibaldone Fusconi, Relazione del Terremoto*, cc. 17-18).

The dynamics of the operation appeared to be similar to those recorded a few decades earlier, including the delays and financial difficulties. Finally, once again, the city's buildings underwent refurbishment and reconstruction, though there was no notable change to the urban layout. That occurred only in the following century, when in 1859 a violent earthquake again caused considerable damage to the city²⁸:

The 22nd day of August of the year 1859 was extremely unfortunate for the city of Norcia; it was shaken by a new earthquake, equal to if not more violent than those remembered both by history and by the particular memories of the city. Without making here a painful description of the disastrous consequences of such a great scourge, we refer only to that which was done to alleviate in part the consternation and immense damage which struck that desolate and terrified population: it should be known that about five thousand people, who had barely managed to save their own lives, suddenly found themselves dispersed in the countryside near the city, all of them needing shelter and food, regardless of their previous state of comfort. It was urgent to take care of the wounded; to recover the bodies of the dead; to help those who could not help themselves because of disability or old age or other circumstances; all this had to be done immediately²⁹.

But this time the Pontifical institutions showed a different awareness, and to them goes the credit for having compiled one of the first set of building regulations, dated to 1860, which established specific rules of construction for anti-seismic buildings. In the reports and accounts produced on this occasion both the incongruous construction systems adopted in the past and the use of inadequate and poor-quality materials were denounced. The regulations also prohibited reconstruction without the necessary authorisations and specified the setting up of a committee to evaluate projects and monitor operations. There was also a proposal, accepted by Pope Pius IX but never put into practice, to build a new village, called Chiusa Zitelli, in the area outside the southern

²⁸ On this see Bianchi *et al.* 2001.

²⁹ «Il dì 22 di agosto dell'anno 1859 fu oltremodo infausto alla città di Norcia, la quale venne scossa da un nuovo terremoto, uguale, se non più violento di quelli ricordati non meno dalla storia che dalle particolari memorie di essa città. Senza fare qui la dolorosa descrizione delle funeste conseguenze di tanto flagello, e riferendo solo ciò che ebbe luogo per alleviare in parte la costernazione e gl'immensi danni che colpirono quella desolata ed atterrita popolazione, è a sapersi che circa cinquemila persone, riuscite a stento a salvare la vita, trovaronsi ad un tratto disperse per le campagne adiacenti alla detta città, e, qualunque fosse il precedente loro stato di agiatezza, tutte avevano bisogno di ricovero e di alimenti. Era urgente il prender cura dei feriti; dovevasi dissotterrare i morti, e custodire le persone che, o per difetto, o per eccesso di età, o per imperfezioni fisiche, o per molte congiunture, non erano in grado di tutelarsi da per loro stesse, ed a tutto dovevasi istantaneamente provvedere» (ASR, *Ministero dell'Interno*, buste 461-462, ex tit. II, rubr. 36, busta 302: *Terremoto di Norcia (1859), Relazione della Commissione speciale nominata con dispaccio del Ministero dell'interno del 24 agosto 1859 N. 33.098 per provvedere ai danni cagionati in Norcia dal terremoto del 22 di esso mese, e per amministrare ed erogare le somme avutesi in favore dei danneggiati; corredata di allegati comprovanti l'esercizio dell'incarico dal giorno del disastro, al 30 novembre 1860 e rassegnata a sua Eccellenza Reverendissima Monsignore Andrea Pila Ministro dell'interno il 15 dicembre 1860, p. 2).*

walls, adapted to a seismic zone and to be used for housing the poorest classes, according to projects of the Jesuit seismologist P. Angelo Secchi and the architect Luigi Poletti (fig. 10)³⁰.

Unfortunately, the innovative character of the 19th century building regulations did not produce the expected results, as in 1861 the slow and complex bureaucratic machinery of the Pontifical State left its post to the not much more efficient newborn Kingdom of Italy. However, it was the new administration that faced the emergency and planned the reconstructions, which required a long development period and considerable economic resources. Few but significant changes were made to the urban layout, such as the opening of the current Corso Sertorio, the extension of Piazza Maggiore now named after St. Benedict, the new Piazza XX Settembre in addition to road paving and regularization (fig. 11). Architectural restoration work was carried out on the main buildings and public structures – the Palazzo Comunale (the *loggia*), the Castellina, the theatre, and then the prisons, schools, barracks, city walls, gates and towers, aqueducts and fountains – and on almost all religious buildings, especially in the renovation of facades, vaults and perimeter walls³¹. The 19th century architecture of Norcia remodeled the appearance of the city without altering too much its urban layout, still surrounded by the fourteenth-century walls. Even in the following century there were no substantial changes in the urban structure. This despite the damage caused by the earthquake in 1979 and a physiological expansion of the town and its commercial activities beyond the walls.

In the urban planning of Norcia and in its architectural history an underlying element emerges: continuity. A settlement continuity and a reconstructive continuity. This is a feature common to many urban centers found in seismic areas, destroyed and reborn from the same rubble. Finally, we can also add a behavioral continuity. The available sources concerning the great earthquakes that struck Norcia have revealed a surprising correspondence with what is still happening today with respect to the seismic event, reactions to it and the type of intervention. The rapid technological progress of the last few decades has not been able to alter the immense emotional impact of the events, nor to prevent the risk significantly, nor to streamline the bureaucratic machine of the State. A “negative” continuity prevails that is nevertheless part of the continuous adaptation of Norcia to periodic seismic activity, a constant “shadow” under which it has always lived.

³⁰ The plan of Norcia with the project of the architect Poletti is unpublished. I would like to thank Maria Elisa Della Casa, Head of the historical collections of the Luigi Poletti Civic Art Library of Modena, for authorising the publication of this plan. Extensive documentation concerning the 1859 Norcia earthquake is in ASR, *Ministero dell’Interno*, buste 461-462, *Terremoto di Norcia (1859)*. See *I terremoti nell’Appennino* 2007, pp. 171-172.

³¹ See Bianchi *et al.* 2001. For a first historical-architectural survey on the nineteenth-century city, see Quinterio, Canali 2010, pp. 482-483.

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Appendix

Fig. 1. Norcia, St. Francis, facade (from <www.artribune.com>, photo M. Mattioli)



Fig. 2. Cascia, St. Francis, facade (photo A. Biagioni)



Fig. 3. Norcia, St. Augustine, portal (photo A. Biagioni)



Fig. 4. Norcia, St. Benedict, facade (photo A. Biagioni)



Fig. 5. Norcia, city wall (photo A. Biagioni)



Fig. 6. ASR, *Disegni e piante*, coll. I, 48, fol. 56/1, coil 18, sequence 80, *L'antica città di Norcia*

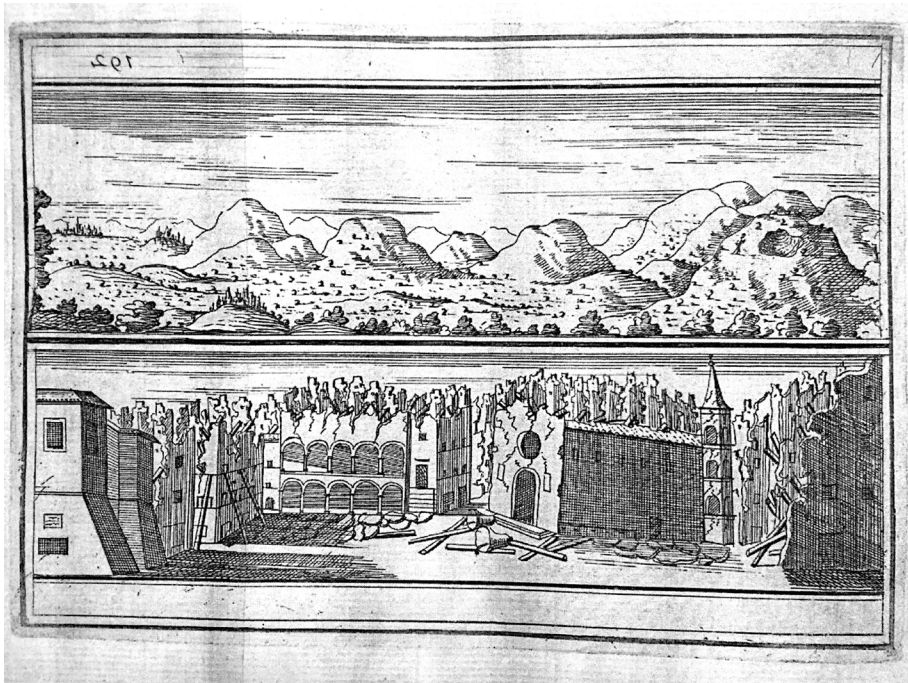


Fig. 7. Guillaume Desnoues and Domenico Guglielmini, *Drawing of the Piazza di S. Benedetto in 1705* (from *Lettres de G. Desnoues*, p. 192)

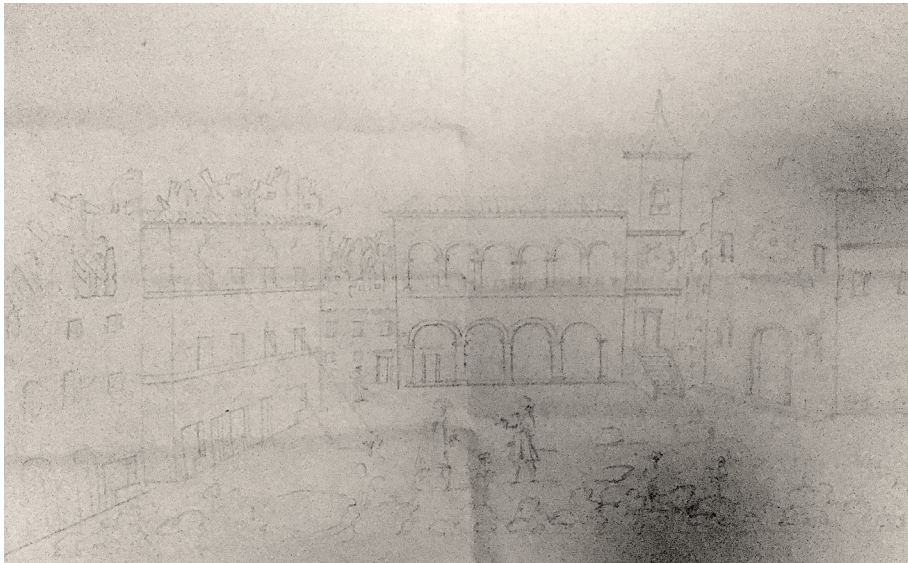


Fig. 8. ASCN, *Archivio segreto dei Consoli*, cassetto Z, *Pencil Drawing of the Piazza of Norcia after the earthquake [1703?]*

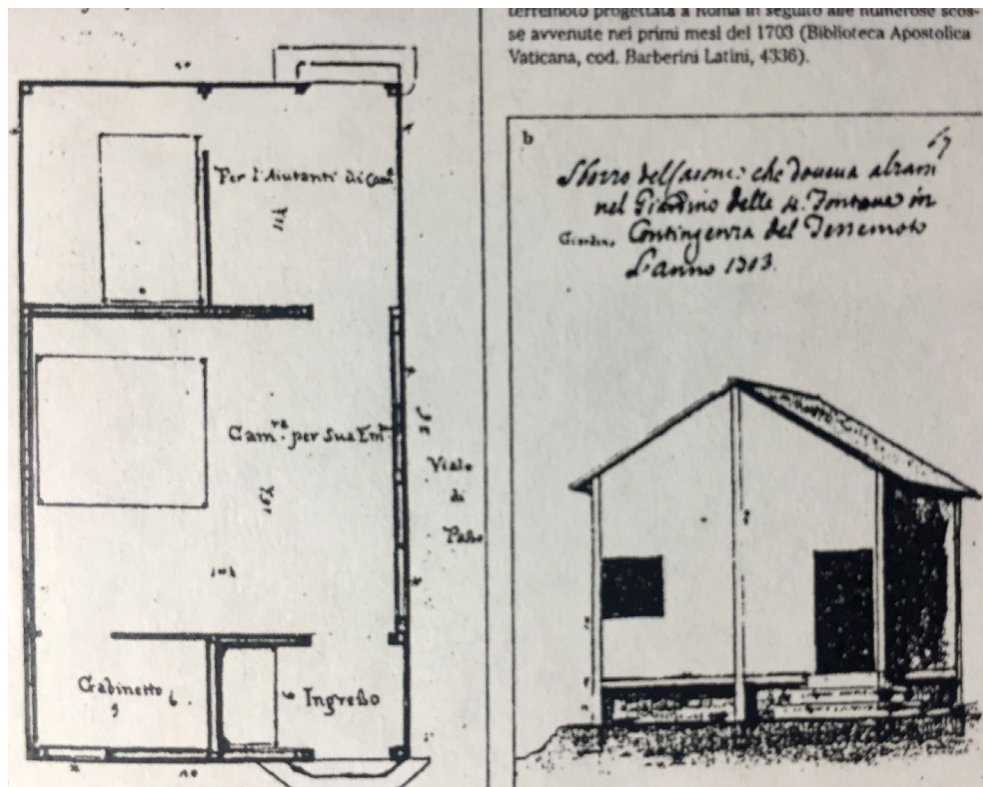


Fig. 9. Shack's project, 1703 (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat. 4336; from *I terremoti nell'Appennino* 2007, p. 57)



Fig. 10. Modena, Biblioteca Civica d'arte e architettura Luigi Poletti, Fondo Poletti, n. inv. 1357, *Pianta della città di Norcia col nuovo Borgo nella Chiuse Zitelli*



Fig. 11. ASCN, *Catasti*, *Plan of Norcia* (1820). Project for the opening of new road (Corso Sertorio), realized before 1897 (from Bianchi *et al.* 2001, p. 24)

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