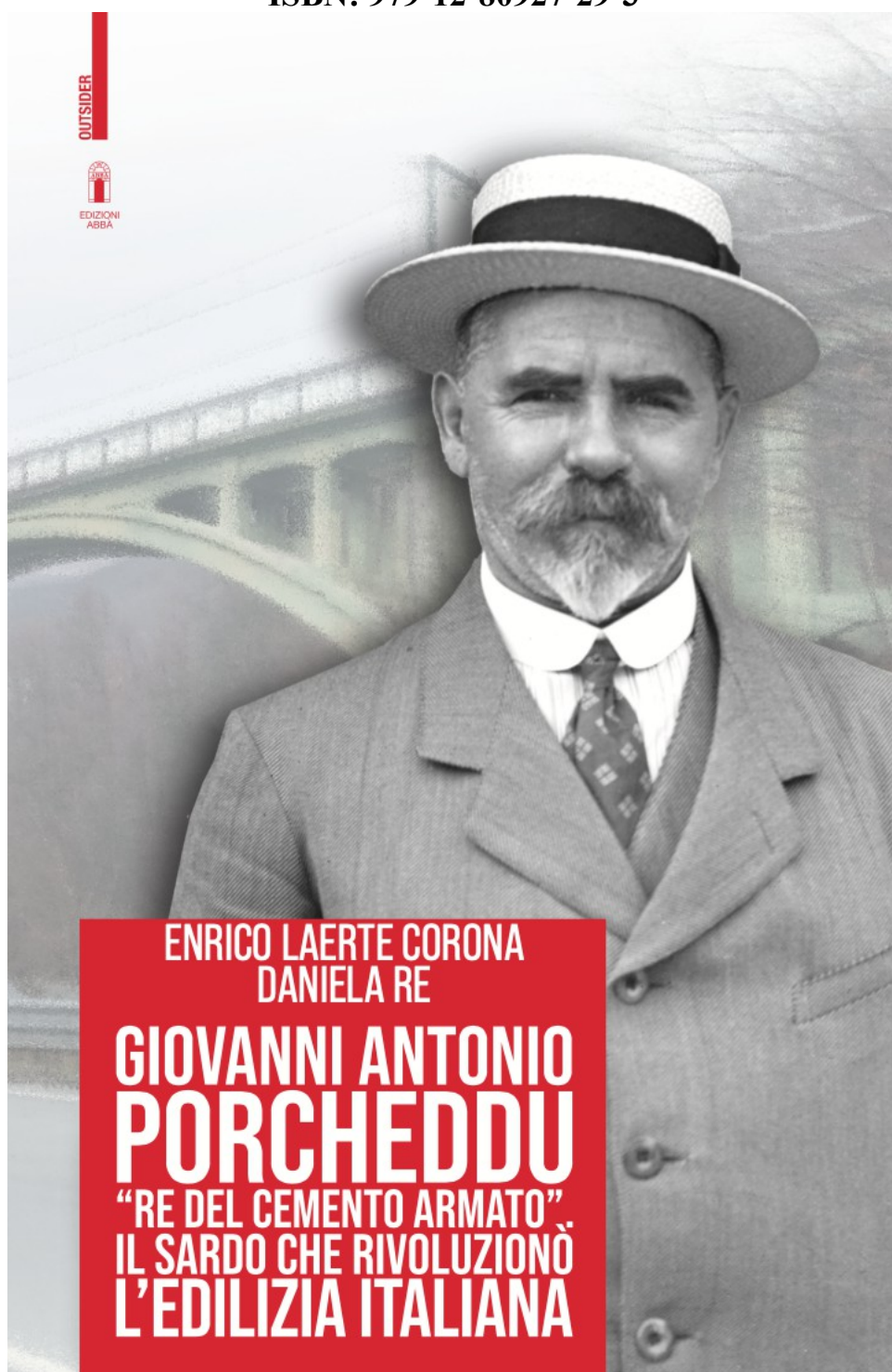


SHEET BOOK

E. L. Corona, D. Re *GIOVANNI ANTONIO PORCHEDDU "KING OF REINFORCED CONCRETE" THE SARDINIAN WHO REVOLUTIONIZED ITALIAN CONSTRUCTION* Abba Edizioni, Cagliari 2026

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Every Italian knows the bell tower of San Marco in Venice, the Risorgimento bridge in Rome or the Lingotto factory in Turin, but few know that there is a common thread that binds them: that of having the structure bearing in reinforced concrete designed and built by a truly peculiar personality, the engineer Giovanni Antonio Porcheddu.

In February 2026, the first monograph entirely dedicated to the life and works of **engineer Giovanni Antonio Porcheddu** edited by **Enrico Laerte Corona**, engineer and scientific communicator and **Daniela Re**, architect and tourist guide. The book aims to fill a gap: the almost total oblivion into which this incredible designer, entrepreneur and manager has fallen who, at the end of the nineteenth century, acquired the Hennebique patent on reinforced concrete. He is essentially responsible for the spread of this new construction technology that revolutionized the way of building, based until then, in Italy, on load-bearing walls.

“I came across the figure of Porcheddu about 15 years ago when, after moving to the former working-class district of Barriera in Turin of Milan, I began to study its urban evolution and architectural.” testifies Daniela Re “Extending my research to the entire city of Turin, I kept encountering the works of Porcheddu. But who was this engineer, why did he appear in so many buildings and, above all, why didn't anyone know anything about him? Year after year, the idea matured in me that something had to be done something to bring his figure back to light. The meeting with Enrico Laerte Corona, engineer and scientific communicator has been fundamental, as expert in the matter, connoisseur of figure of the Sardinian entrepreneur and his fellow countryman.”

From a very poor family, originally from Sardinia, he studied, lived and worked in Turin obtaining three degrees in Engineering, constituting **the first large structural engineering firm in Italy** together with a construction company specialized in reinforced concrete structures. His was a pioneering, extensive work lasting about forty years.

Almost 2700 works scattered throughout Italy, reaching **many Italian, European and world records**, the structures of Porcheddu dot our cities: from the villa of Queen Margherita in Bordighera to the buildings of the Bank of Italy, the Stock Exchange and the Poste in Piazza de Ferrari in Genoa, from the Assicurazioni Generali building in Piazza Cordusio in Milan to the Borsalino factory in Alessandria, from the six bridges over the Po and Dora rivers in Turin to the Basilica of Bonaria in Cagliari. Not to mention of the houses and buildings after the 1908 Messina earthquake, viaducts, hospitals, university locations, asylums, cisterns, churches, schools, stadiums etc.

Many works, over six hundred and fifty, were carried out in Turin alone, over a 1200 in all of Piedmont. **Porcheddu's factories are present in all districts of Turin:** in addition to the aforementioned FIAT factory in Lingotto, we can still admire today the Docks Dora and the Porcheddu ex SIMA truss in Barriera di Milano, the military factory formerly the Venchi confectionery company in Vanchiglietta district, the former Gilardini and the large condominiums around Piazza Alimonda, the Grandi Motori workshops, the SAEAI electric company, now the headquarters of Lavazza coffee company, in Aurora district. Moving south we meet Casa Marangoni and the Umberto I Night Shelter in San Salvario, the palace of Assicurazioni Generali in Piazza Solferino, the Cassa di Risparmio di Torino bank in via XX Settembre, just to name a few. Almost thirty buildings were designed with Pietro Fenoglio, the Art Nouveau engineer; the collaboration with Giacomo Mattè Trucco, FIAT's leading designer from 1905, was very strong. Among the world records is the Stadium, the largest stadium in the

world in reinforced concrete built for the grandiose universal exposition of 1911: demolished, now the Polytechnic of Turin stands there.

Genoa is one of Porcheddu's strongest squares, with hundreds of constructions: among the buildings still existing we remember the constructions on the new axis of value, via XX Settembre, and the imposing buildings of Piazza de Ferrari, the Mercato Orientale, the Hennebique Granary Silos at the port, the church of Santa Zita, the Grand Hotel Miramare and the Hotel Columbus, but also the Albergo Popolare (popular Hotel) for the emigrants who embarked for the Americas, as well as valuable eclectic condominiums on via Raggio.

Porcheddu's company operated extensively in Rome, building the structures of numerous buildings, many of which still exist. Among others, there are the Avena building in the Vittoria district and the Villino Brunialti in Prati. In addition to the Ponte Risorgimento, from 1911, the longest bridge in the world in reinforced concrete, (record surpassed only in 1921 by a bridge in the United States), Porcheddu's structures include the Waldensian Temple and some buildings of the Salesian church and oratory of Santa Maria Liberatrice in Trastevere. In Rome Porcheddu devoted himself a lot to entertainment buildings such as the Moderno theater, the Eliseo, and the Brancaccio theater, but rebuilt also some popular houses in via Ariosto and some attics of the baroque Theodoli Bianchelli palace, now seat of offices of the Chamber of Deputies.

The reinforced concrete frames extend into almost all regions of Italy: to mention only the main works, we cannot but start from the **reconstruction of the bell tower of Venice collapsed in 1902**, in which the new material allows to erect the artifact identical in exterior, but with a decidedly lighter soul. A ruinous fire destroys the **social theater of Rovigo**: Porcheddu's reinforced concrete allows the construction of a state-of-the-art, completely fireproof theater. And Porcheddu's projects are still protagonists for the reconstruction **after the earthquake of Messina and Reggio Calabria of 1908**, where the material proves to have excellent seismic behaviour and the experimentation will lead to the definition of Italian regulations in this field.

Porcheddu's figure is not only important from a technical or engineering point of view, but also because **he managed to organize a national construction company** with multiple contemporary construction sites in various parts of Italy (or abroad); he collaborated also with many designers of the time. In the works carried out in Turin, Genoa, Piedmont and Liguria, Porcheddu writes the history of the new Italian architecture and engineering, intertwining connections with equally interesting stories of the aviation, ceramic, textile, automotive, cereal and much more industrialists. There and in other places his structures, sometimes declared, sometimes hidden by eclectic or Art Nouveau decorations, take us back to Italy in great development, crossed by new men, pioneers, engineer-entrepreneurs who brought profound transformations to Italian society.

The book tries to reconstruct therefore not only the works, but also **the historical, artistic and productive context of Italy in full industrial progress**, with a focus on geographical areas (Turin and Piedmont, Rome, Sardinia, Genoa and Liguria, but also Milan, Messina, etc), on peculiar aspects (the design of bridges, records, construction technique, the Sardinian context of origin, the economic-financial relations), ending with the proposal of tourist itineraries to be followed in some of the cities where he worked: Rome, Turin, Genoa, Cagliari.

The book wants to be an informative text, designed to stimulate curiosity towards one of the key figures of architecture and engineering of the early twentieth century, to bring him out of the knowledge limited to professionals and to help to better understand the architectures that dot the Bel Paese and that until now have been poorly valued. **The publication is the result of a multi-**

year research carried out by the authors with investigations on the field, oral witnesses interviews and at the precious [Porcheddu Archive](#) preserved at the DISEG of the Polytechnic of Turin: the director of the department, professor Sebastiano Foti, and doctor Enrica Bodrato, Head of Management Office of the Historical Heritage of the Polytechnic of Turin, have signed a section dedicated to the Archive itself.

The search has had the fundamental support of the [association of Sardinians in Turin Antonio Gramsci](#).

The book is published by Abbà Edizioni of Cagliari.

The book can be purchased online from the [Abbà Editions website](#), or on [distribution channel SarIBS](#).

More information on the figure

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<https://www.danielare.it/ingegnere-porcheddu/>