

# Recognizing Transnational Ties of Architecture

The Presence, Perception and Discussion of Fascist Architecture in Interwar  
Norwegian Architectural Journals

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**Recognizing Transnational Ties of Architecture:**

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## ABSTRACT

The goal of this thesis is to question and challenge the current way in which the architectural history of the early 20th century is written in Norway by looking for a presence of Fascist Italian architecture in the contemporary journals of architecture. These journals were the main medium through which architects established a national discourse on architecture and will, therefore, be revealing as to the degree which Fascist Italy had a presence.

Scholarship surrounding fascist architecture in a national context has existed for a long time, however little is known about the perception of fascist architecture abroad. Informed by insights gained from transnational history writing, I look at how fascist architecture was perceived, discussed and possibly acculturated in Norway between 1922 when the first fascist dictatorship took power in Europe, and 1939, before Nazi Germany and its Axis partners unleashed World War II. My aim is that finding and discussing a connection between a hitherto unmentioned contact between Norway and Italy will challenge the conventional history of interwar Norwegian architecture and open the field for further transnational studies of the transfer of cultural phenomena such as architecture in the periphery.

*Recognizing Transnational Ties of Architecture*  
*The Perception of Fascist Architecture in Interwar Norwegian Architectural Journals*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>THESIS</b>	<b>7</b>
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	8
THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PERIPHERY: WHY BROADEN THE HORIZON	8
REASONS WHY IT IS SURPRISING THAT FASCIST ITALY IS NOT ACKNOWLEDGED	10
METHOD AND THEORY	11
PRIMARY SOURCES	13
ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER	14
DEFINITIONS:	16
<i>Fascist Architecture</i>	16
<i>The De Novo-Category</i>	16
<i>Movement Versus Style</i>	17
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT 1890-1939</b>	<b>17</b>
ARCHITECTURE AND GENERAL SITUATION 1890-1922	18
THE INTERWAR PERIOD IN INTERNATIONAL TERMS	22
<b>CHAPTER 2: THE ITALIAN CONTEXT 1890-1939</b>	<b>25</b>
ITALY 1890-1922	26
ITALIAN INTERWAR PERIOD 1922-1939	31
<b>CHAPTER 3: THE NORWEGIAN CONTEXT 1890-1939</b>	<b>35</b>
NORWAY 1890-1922	36
THE NORWEGIAN CONTEXT IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD	39

<b>CHAPTER 4: CONTACT, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE NORWEGIAN PERCEPTION OF FASCIST/ITALIAN ARCHITECTURE</b>	<b>43</b>
PART 1: CONTACT WITH ITALY	44
<i>Fairs and Exhibitions</i>	46
<i>Congress(es)</i>	52
<i>Study trips</i>	57
<i>Other means of Contact:</i>	59
PART 2: THE DISCUSSION OF ITALIAN AND/OR FASCIST ARCHITECTURE IN BYGGEKUNST	62
PART 3: LEARNING FROM THE FASCISTS?	65
<i>Why Italy was seldom mentioned</i>	66
<i>Meaning of Chapter Findings: Challenging the status quo?</i>	68
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>70</b>
THESIS RECAPITULATED	70
THESIS RELEVANCE	74
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>76</b>
PRIMARY PRINTED SOURCES:	76
CITED SOURCES:	76

# INTRODUCTION

## THESIS

How has the architecture of Fascist Italy influenced the Norwegian national discourse and how can the knowledge of this affect the Norwegian history of architecture? My goal for this thesis is to challenge the conventional belief of exclusivity which surrounds the national history of interwar architecture in Norway through establishing and looking at the interwar Norwegian discussion and perception of the architecture of Fascist Italy. In my opinion, the present Norwegian history of interwar architecture is too asymmetrical and exclusive. It seldom mentions any external influences and when it does it appears to refer only to *neutral*, *safe* or *positive* sources of influences. One example of one positive influence is Holland - which in the interwar was considered politically safe. An external source of influence which has been deemed *negative* by the aftermath is Fascist Italy. Even though Fascist Italy was active on the international field in the interwar period it has by large been ignored in the international and transnational historiography in present architectural history writing. This could be because most of the history which has been written on Fascist architecture has been focused on understanding the relationship between fascism and interwar Italian architecture from a purely national perspective.<sup>1</sup> Only recently have established scholars attempted to look into architectural projections of fascism beyond the national borders, such as Mia Fullers *Moderns Abroad – Architecture, cities and Italian imperialism*.<sup>2,3</sup> I aim to add to this body of research by looking at the presence, perception and discussion of Fascist architecture in Norway in the interwar period. This Italian-Norwegian connection in the history of architecture has never been studied before, and I will attempt to see what the implications such a connection – if existent - will have on the history of Norwegian architecture.

As mentioned, some of the international influences of the interwar period are already to some extent recognized in Norwegian architectural history, such as in Wenche Findal's work on the functionalism and the ties the movement share with Holland and France; or in Nicholas H. Møllerhaug's biography of interwar architect Leif Grung and the mostly

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<sup>1</sup> See for instance works of Ghirardo, Doordan, Painter Jr., Zevi and others.

<sup>2</sup> Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad – Architecture, Cities and Italian Imperialism* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> The most recent attempt at looking into the projections of Fascist architecture abroad that I have found have been in the FASCISM-journal. Take a look at the special edition which was published only in 2018 for the work done. Or at the introduction: Roger Griffin and Rita Almeida de Carvalho, "Editorial Introduction: Architectural Projections of a 'New Order' in Interwar Dictatorships," *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 7, no. 1 (May 2018): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00701001>.

unmentioned connections Norwegian architects had with Nazi-Germany.<sup>4,5</sup> In my opinion, there are plausible reasons to look for and recognize a possible broader influence in the national architectural discourse than currently accepted, especially between Norway and Fascist Italy. The basis of this thesis is informed by the leading Norwegian journals of architecture in the interwar period in addition to insights gained from secondary literature. I seek to apply an understanding of transnational and cultural history writing while analyzing the perception, discussion and acculturation of fascist architecture between 1922, the year when Mussolini and the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (P.N.F.) ascended to power, and 1939, the early years of World War II.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As it is my goal to research the perception of the architecture of Fascist Italy in Norway in the interwar period, and its implications on the Norwegian interwar architectural history, there are some questions which I seek to answer. First, if there was any viable contact between the two nations? By contact, I mean connections such as study trips, exhibitions, congresses or meetings as these will be important in understanding the possibility of a presence in Byggekunst. Secondly, if the architecture of Fascist Italy was discussed at all in Norway? Thirdly, if so, how was the discussion and how did Norwegians perceive the architecture? Fourthly, did Norwegian architects look to Fascist Italy for means of inspiration? Following that, did they recognize the ideological connections of the architecture of Fascist Italy? And lastly, how can this knowledge or lack thereof be of importance to the Norwegian scholarship?

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PERIPHERY: WHY BROADEN THE HORIZON

For me, Norway presents an excellent case to study, especially because it was a late-comer nation that became independent as a nation-state in 1905. This meant that Norway, like other young nation-states in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century (and maybe even more so after so many years of dependence),<sup>6</sup> had to shape and define itself as a distinct nation. The process of self-definition was, however, not a sudden occurrence after the emancipation, but had been brewing for the last century and was visible in various fields. According to Scott Harshbarger, the process of national self-definition is created through cultural factors such as history writing, architecture,

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<sup>4</sup> Wenche Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen* (J. W. Cappelens Forlag a.s, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Nicholas Møllerhaug, *Stupet: Leif Grungs krig*, 2nd ed. (Vigmostad & Bjørke AS, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Prior to 1905 Norway had been under Swedish administration from 1814 and controlled through the Norwegian parliament with its basis in a national constitution separate from the Swedish<sup>6</sup>. Before 1814 Norway had been a Danish protectorate for nearly four hundred years



literature, art, and language. It is to be understood as an “ideology (...) which is powered largely by the imagination” and thusly created through the constituency of national culture.<sup>7</sup> And culture in the late nineteenth century was to a larger degree identified with a *place* and this in order anchored the idea of citizen-ownership and belonging to regions. Architecture was recognized as a crucial and cultural part of constructing a national identity,<sup>8</sup> and coincidentally the popularity and importance of architects increased.<sup>9</sup> Both architects and engineers were invited to partake in establishing and constructing a national style, and what that would entail. Traditionally, there is a conviction of finding something of authenticity as a national marker, but in this thesis, I will argue that that is only part of the picture.

Because it is with some irony that architects who looked to define the national architecture in the interwar period turned their attention to a most international discussion of styles, ideology, and urban planning. Such was the case for Norway and Italy. In Norwegian history of the interwar era there is already an established consensus that Norway was very much inspired by France, Holland and the U.S. on the international arena. I have no doubt that this rings true, but I also believe that this is not the only sources of inspiration for Norwegian national architecture. Italy, being a relatively new nation much like Norway and attempting to establish its own modern architecture under new reigns, was a plausible source for inspiration. It was commonly accepted that Italy was a destination for the creative minds in Norway prior to the First World War and during the interwar years. What is puzzling is that while scholars have no qualms in addressing Italy as a source of inspiration prior to the Fascist period, there is seldom or never a mention by modern- and present-day scholars of a cultural exchange between the two nation states after the instating of the Fascist regime. The negligence by historians of architecture when writing about interwar architecture in Norway is probably similar to national scholarship elsewhere (the US for instance).<sup>10</sup> This presents itself as a sort of dichotomy in the works of architectural history: there are those writers such as Wenche Findal who have focused on Holland, while there are those who have only worked with the “negatives” such as Sharon Macdonald’s article on undesirable heritage in Germany.<sup>11</sup> But

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<sup>7</sup> Scott Harshbarger, “Grimm and Grimmer: ‘Hansel and Gretel’ and Fairy Tale Nationalism,” *Style* 47, no. 4. Narrative, Social Neuroscience, Plus Essays on Hecht's Poetry, Hardy's Fiction, and Kathy Acker (Winter 2013): 493.

<sup>8</sup> Todd Courtenay, “The 1911 International Exposition in Rome: Architecture, Archaeology, and National Identity,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 37, no. 4 (October 2011): 440–59.

<sup>9</sup> Previous to the 1920s and 30s, in both Italy and Norway, contractors and engineers were responsible for construction and the buildings. Architects were simply thought to be responsible for decorating the buildings, sprucing up the plans made by engineers, or they were themselves a sort of decorative engineer taught to build according to physics and math.

<sup>10</sup> See Ghirardo and the other New Deal-book for the dark connections in New Deal-America, providing one of the few or the only account of such connections with Italy.

<sup>11</sup> For the entire article see Sharon Macdonald, “Undesirable Heritage: Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg”, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 12, No. 1, January 2006: 9-28

the history of architecture is much more complex, and history is rarely only positive or negative. This is where the work with recognizing and finding the perception of Italian architecture will add to the larger picture – one cultural connection can signify others. And it is as mentioned hard to believe that, in such an international environment as the interwar era that Italian or Fascist architecture left no or little imprint in other states, even in Norway. Especially in the interwar period when architecture was becoming increasingly laden with ideology and used as propaganda and Italian architecture was very accessible. Architecture was – and is and can be – a means to convey power, be it for the individual or the state.<sup>12</sup>

#### REASONS WHY IT IS SURPRISING THAT FASCIST ITALY IS NOT ACKNOWLEDGED

Based on the historical context it seems likely that Norway should have been influenced by Italy to some degree and the lack of acknowledged ties is surprising as it seems information and contact was available between Norwegians and Italians through various means. Some of the reasons why I believe it is likely that they were in contact are firstly, that their national context was similar in regard to troubles of establishing a national architecture as a newly founded nation. Both countries, although with a very different past, were in the midst of modernizing their new nation and finding the identity markers which would define the national idea.

Secondly, Italy was (and is) regarded as one of the cradles of art, ideas and classic architecture, serving as an inspiration for artists, writers and architects and having a large part of tourism because of said architectural background. For instance, in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth century a style applying motifs and techniques of antique Roman and Greek architecture were present on the larger European Architectural scene – Norway included. In other artistic fields, Norwegian authors Henrik Ibsen and Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson both spent a durable time in Italy and were influenced by politics and even produced large parts of their work there.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> I recommend reading this article for anyone who might find the relation between culture and architecture interesting: "The Cultural Burden of Architecture" by Gülsüm Baydar (Baydar, Gülsüm. "The Cultural Burden of Architecture." *Journal of Architectural Education* (1984-) 57, no. 4 (2004): 19-27. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40480507>. Accessed 18.02.2019 11:28). The discussion in this article is best summed up by a quote: "Questioning the relationship between architecture and culture involved problematizing architecture as an identity category as much as questioning culture as an architectural category. To assume an unproblematic link between architectural and cultural identification means to overlook the dissociation between that which signifies and that which is signified" (pp.26)

<sup>13</sup> Aud Gjersdal and Giuliano D'Amico, "Hvor kommer norsk litteratur fra?: Ibsen og Bjørnson i Italia," *Bibliotekaren*, no. 2 (2018): 34–35. This is a review from the national magazine for librarians, summing up a lecture from professor Giuliano D'Amico of the Centre for Ibsen Studies at the University of Oslo. Further reading on this influence from the south: Carbone, E. & D'Amico, G. (ed.). (2011). *Lyset kommer fra Sør*. Oslo: Gyldendal; Dahl, H. (2008). *Bjørnson i Rome*. Oslo: Messel Forlag; Fulsås, N. & Rem, T. (2017). *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the Making of a World*; Næss, A. & Ljøgdø, K. & Falck, S. (1997) *Ibsens Italia*. Oslo: Gyldendal.

Thirdly, there was a shift in which countries had the spotlight when it came to the interest of architects as France, Germany and Holland had to make space for other influential countries such as the U.S. and “Italy and Japan, not only because of their actual achievements, especially in concrete construction in both cases, but as major influences”.<sup>14</sup> This meant that not only was Italy interesting because of its heritage, but also because of its modern architecture.

Fourthly, there is the established attention that Mussolini and Fascist Italy received in Norway. For instance, scholar Andreas Røste’s thesis where he looked at three Norwegian papers in the first decade of fascism and the newspapers’ perception of fascism – in this case fascism as the Italian ideology and state.<sup>15</sup> Possibly contrary to common belief in the post-World War II era, he found that present in all papers were a positive attitude towards fascism. This was mostly because of a shared contempt for communism and parliamentarism, and a favoring of the economic politics of Fascist Italy. Although architecture is not discussed in his work, his work can be fruitful for all students of history who wish to understand the perception of fascism – especially the perception of fascism in the periphery such as Norway. It provides footing for later studies and can tell something about the general attitude in the first decade of the interwar era.

And the fifth reason is that there is the active spread of Fascist propaganda worldwide through massive effort on Italy’s part regarding international exhibitions – such as World’s Fairs – and, congresses. Additional propaganda which were spread was the propagation of the New Towns in the Pontine marshes, the rebuilding of Rome and national exhibitions.<sup>16,17,18</sup> As press which specifically targeted architecture had an upsurge in the 20<sup>th</sup> century it is likely that the Norwegian journals would mention some of this and possibly discuss what they saw fit.

## METHOD AND THEORY

In conceptual terms this thesis is informed by cultural history through a transnational perspective. By this I mean that I will work with the material with the tools of the cultural

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<sup>14</sup> Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Nikolaus Pevsner, Fourth edition (New Haven and London: Penguin Books Ltd.; Yale University Press, 1977), 556.

<sup>15</sup> Andreas Røste, “Tre Oslo-Aviser, Italia Og Fascismen 1922-1929,” 1969.

<sup>16</sup> Francesco Merlo, “Hydropolitics in Fascist Italy: The Pontine Marshes” (Essay, School of Oriental and African Studies & Università di Torino, 2017), *Academia.edu*, [https://www.academia.edu/39691052/Hydropolitics\\_in\\_Fascist\\_Italy\\_the\\_Pontine\\_Marshes](https://www.academia.edu/39691052/Hydropolitics_in_Fascist_Italy_the_Pontine_Marshes).Merlo.

<sup>17</sup> Diane Ghirardo, *Building New Communities: New Deal America and Fascist Italy*, 1st ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989).

<sup>18</sup> W. Painter Borden Jr., *Mussolini’s Rome: Rebuilding the Eternal City*, 1st Edition vols. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

historian, and one such tool being to focus on how a phenomenon – in this case fascism and fascist architecture – was “disseminated, experienced, interpreted (...)”<sup>19</sup> by its contemporaries in its contemporary time or period. The cultural historian – at least as understood after reading works of Miri Rubin – refrain from stating a definition of the phenomenon/phenomena but rather studies its movement and development.<sup>20</sup> A cultural historian, in my understanding, will focus on the effects and the influence of something – in this case fascist architecture and its ideology – rather than as the social historian often does, applying a present definition as the focal point to study the history of humans.

The idea of architecture as a cultural phenomenon which can be studied is relatively new,<sup>21</sup> but nonetheless essential in understanding and researching the transnational aspect of architecture. The study of architecture and the history writing of architecture is often written as a national history which is general/common for the time. For instance, Henry-Russell Hitchcock tackles the architectural history of the nineteenth- and twentieth century and his work tries to build bridges across nations and styles, but often ends up describing national histories and styles as though they were parallel and separate histories.<sup>22</sup> It will, however, better serve this thesis to try to apply my understanding of Miri Rubin’s method of cultural history. Her practice of history is one where “(...) cultural historians seek out the practices through which religion was disseminated, experienced, interpreted and appalled”,<sup>23</sup> but I find that this method is just as well applicable to any other cultural phenomenon just as religion. In other words, to study the possible transfer, awareness and perception of the cultural phenomena that architecture is.

I chose to work from a transnational angle when working with the spread, perception of acculturation of this phenomenon as it will open for understanding culture as something dynamic and not static and moving across borders. Transnational history is in my opinion to change the perspective from just one nation to several or all nations, and as scholar Thomas Adam writes transnational history “is based upon the fundamental belief that human activities

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<sup>19</sup> Miri Rubin, “Cultural History I: What’s in a Name?,” in *Making History* (Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 2008), [https://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/cultural\\_history.html](https://www.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/cultural_history.html).

<sup>20</sup> Rubin.

<sup>21</sup> Thoroughly researched in: Christian Norberg-Schulz, “Intentions in Architecture” (Doctoral thesis, Universitetsforlaget, 1963), Bibliotekskatalogen, [http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb\\_digibok\\_2012041608046](http://urn.nb.no/URN:NBN:no-nb_digibok_2012041608046).

<sup>22</sup> The trouble with writing the architectural history of a century is that it is easy to both focus on the grand narratives of architectural history – the narratives of France, Great Britain, Germany and the US – and it is also easy to get lost in the description of buildings and style. It is a fine art to both discuss the history and to enlighten with examples and traits typical to the period.

<sup>23</sup> Rubin, “Cultural History I: What’s in a Name?”

across the globe were interconnected".<sup>24</sup> Looking through at the transnational ties can act as a dissolvent in the firm idea of the uniqueness which nations hold and reveal how close we all really are. At some point most areas have been in touch with other areas, whether recent or a long time ago. The transnational perspective can also show the makings of a nations, the shaping of an identity through one specific mix of cultures, ideas and set of beliefs, and help show how one area can turn out to be different or unique from others. As such national ideas can be explained through transnational history and help strengthen the idea of a nation or a culture but without dismissing the connection to the world. The nation, the we-feeling, is constructed through seeing what others are and not but also what oneself is and is not. This ultimately creates a them and a 'we' and thusly serve to strengthen the national identity.

To contextualize the cultural phenomena which one seeks to understand the influence of it is imperative for the research and in understanding the implications of a cultural transfer across national borders. As scholar Jon Arild Lund did in his research of the reception of Fascism in two of the larger national Norwegian newspapers in the 1920s,<sup>25</sup> I too, seek to establish a context to fully comprehend the plausible perception and transfer of Fascist ideals and ideas of architecture, and therefore adapt his method of contextualizing the phenomena in order to understand its' implications as the context of the nations involved is important in order to understand the transfer of a transnational and cultural phenomena.

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

The empirical evidence which my thesis is based on consists of various primary sources, both archival and printed materials. As far as printed materials are concerned, I have analyzed the most important specialized journal for architecture in Norway: *Byggekunst*. The journal was established in 1919, replacing the former co-journal of *Teknisk Ukeblad; Arkitektur og Dekorativ Kunst*.<sup>26</sup> Its publisher is National Association for Norwegian Architects (NAL, in Norwegian *Norske Arkitekters Landsforbund*), an organization founded in 1911. According to Frid Welde, author of Norwegian Encyclopedia Online (SNL, or *Store Norske Leksikon*),<sup>27</sup> NAL is a national association created in 1911 after the establishment of Norwegian Technical Institution (NTH, or *Norges Tekniske Høyskole*) in 1910 which offered the first formal

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas Adam et al., *Yearbook of Transnational History (2018)*, ed. Thomas Adam and Austin E. Loignon (United States of America: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2018), 2.

<sup>25</sup> Jon Arild Lund, "'Se Til Italien! Vi Vil Ingenlunde Dit.': En Analyse Av Tidens Tegn Og Aftenpostens Syn På Den Italienske Fascismen På 1920-Tallet" (Universitetet i Oslo, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Alf Krohn et al., "Byggekunst," *1*, *Byggekunst*, 1, no. 1 (1920 1919): 216.

<sup>27</sup> Norske Arkitekters Landsforbund. (2015, 9. juni). I Store norske leksikon. Hentet 28. februar 2019 fra [https://snl.no/Norske\\_arkitekters\\_landsforbund](https://snl.no/Norske_arkitekters_landsforbund).

education of architects in Norway. NAL's goal was to be the collective voice for architects of Norway and to work continuously towards improvement of the profession and the working environment.<sup>28</sup> This means that the journal was regarded as a central platform for debate on architecture and thusly relevant for my research as the main primary source. In addition, this journal also includes reports from travels conducted by architects, insights into the scholarly teaching of architects and subjective analyses of the architecture built in the period.

In addition to the journal, I have also systematically gone through journals *Arkitektur og Dekorativ Kunst* and *PLAN – Tidsskrift for bolig- og byggespørsmål* from 1933-36.<sup>29</sup> *PLAN* was created by Socialist Architects' Association (Sosialistiske Arkitekters Forening).<sup>30</sup> *PLAN* makes it possible to better understand the various positions that might have existed regarding other countries as possible templates for Norway to get inspiration from.

Nonetheless I have also applied diplomas of the graduates from *Norges Tekniske Høyskole* (NTH) in the interwar period to ascertain names of active architects active in combination with the Norwegian Bibliographic Encyclopedia Online (NBL – *Norsk biografisk leksikon*), and the Norwegian Encyclopedia of Arts/Artists (NKL – *Norsk Kunstnerleksikon*) to make it easier to look for who travelled to and from Italy. I have also made use of Arne Gunnarsjaa's infamous Architectural Encyclopedia from 1999 which combines information from both the Norwegian and international architectural scene, to doublecheck the findings from the NBL.<sup>31,32</sup>

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE PAPER

This thesis is organized in four parts. The first chapter is concerned with the international context – both the prehistory to this paper's main period (from circa 1890s to the ascension of Mussolini and the Fascist party in 1922) and the interwar period (1922-1939). Dating from the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up until 1922, I hope to provide some of the bigger lines of history of architecture so as to understand the context of both countries prior to the interwar period. I have chosen 1922 as the dividend between pre- and interwar context as it is the first year

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<sup>28</sup> Alf Krohn et al., "Byggekunst."

<sup>29</sup> Om *PLAN* av Helga Feiring; <http://www.magasinetkote.no/artikler/2014/5/1/fra-arkitektstandens-krise-til-arkitektstandens-strid-1-plan-gruppens-kritikk-av-samtidens-arkitektrolle>. Access April 2019. I have chosen, going forward, this journal is to be featured as *PLAN* for short.

<sup>30</sup> Arne Gunnarsjaa, *Arkitekturleksikon* (Abstrakt forlag as, 1999), 604. According to Gunnarsjaa only four magazines were produced in the time period 1933-36

<sup>31</sup> The Architectural Encyclopedia of A. Gunnarsjaa was, when first published in 1999, the first of its kind in Scandinavia. It contains information on construction, architecture- and style history and urban planning. (Christian Norberg-Schulz, "Imponerende!," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, no. 8 (1999): 5.

<sup>32</sup> Gunnarsjaa, *Arkitekturleksikon*.

with a Fascist government in Italy and this paper deals with the presence, perception and discussion of the architecture of Fascist Italy

The second chapter will first provide a general outline the prehistory of fascist Italy dating circa from the 1890s to the ascension of Mussolini and the Fascist party in 1922, and secondly, I will map the history of Italian/Fascist architecture in the interwar era. This chapter is to give a picture of the plethora of styles which make up the umbrella that is fascist architecture, and to understand the close ties between architecture and politics in Fascist Italy. I found that it is fundamental to have a feeling of the styles of fascism and its political ties, but it will not be an in-depth study of the stylistic traits which marks fascism – more so a summary of the styles and politics necessary in order to create an understanding and to be able to recognize fascist (or Italian) architecture in the primary sources. In addition, this chapter will also try to paint a picture of the propagandist nature of fascist architecture which were far-reaching and an active part of fascist architects and the regime.<sup>33,34</sup> The reason for including this chapter is to show what the Norwegians were possibly discussing and to have a look at the propaganda of fascist architecture abroad.

The third chapter will provide an overview of the Norwegian architecture discourse in – as with previous chapters – both the prehistory and a historical overview of the interwar era. My goal is here to show the main ideas, currents of styles, the main architects and the process of establishing a national style in Norway. This chapter will prove useful to understand the context in which the Norwegians were in during the interwar period and to more clearly see some of the markedly similarities and differences to contemporary Italy before I go into the meat of this paper.

Chapter four is the main chapter and this is where I will reveal and analyze the Norwegian perception and discussion surrounding Fascist or Italian architecture with basis in the evidence from the primary sources. The chapter is divided into three larger parts, the first dealing with the means of contact which can be established by my research. I will look into exposure of Italy at World's Fairs, exhibitions, congresses, study trips and other means. By other means I am thinking of literature, lectures and international competitions.

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<sup>33</sup> The prime example of this architectural propaganda might be the development of the Agro Pontini-area. Through such projects, fascists wished to show some muscle and showcase the new and stronger Italian state. See: Lisbeth van de Grift, "Introduction: Theories and Practices of Internal Colonization. The Cultivation of Lands and People in the Age of Modern Territoriality.," *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity* 3, no. 2 (2015): 139–58, <https://doi.org/10.18352/hem.480>.

<sup>34</sup> Aristotle Kallis, "Futures Made Present: Architecture, Monument, and the Battle for the 'Third Way' in Fascist Italy," *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 7, no. 1 (May 2018): 45–79, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00701004>.

The second part of this chapter will look into the actual discussion of Fascist architecture in the primary sources in order to grasp exactly just how interested Norwegian architects were in Fascist Italy and its architecture.

With this in mind, the third part will look at what Norwegians learned from the fascists and look into the reasons why Italy was seldom mentioned in the primary sources. Based on the findings I will in this part also discuss how this can challenge the current state of Norwegian architectural history of the interwar period.

#### DEFINITIONS:

##### *FASCIST ARCHITECTURE*

When referring to fascism or fascist architecture in this thesis I refer to the ideology and the architecture built in Fascist Italy 1922-1945. I will refrain from giving a definition of what fascism is as this is something scholars have struggled with since the interwar period and post-World War II and it is hard to reach a consensus which define and summarize fascism. Fascism was (and neo-Fascism probably is) multi-faceted and that is precisely why I believe it was attractive and applicable for many, and also why there is no “one specific” style of fascism in architecture, but rather several. To understand the discussion and the trouble with even establishing the defining qualities of the “*genus* fascism”, I recommend that the reader take a closer look at the book edited by Roger Griffin *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus*, and especially to fully grasp the difficulty scholars have to provide a clear-cut definition of fascism and gain insight into the scholarly debate.

##### *THE DE NOVO-CATEGORY*

Of other things which need defining, I am also placing the modernist architecture within something which I call the *de novo category* of architecture. That is in this case “the emergence of a new vocabulary, new features in artifacts, and theorization about these new features (...)”<sup>35</sup> but a category which “cannot draw on existing assumptions and legitimacy associated with established categories”<sup>36</sup>. This theory of a *de novo category* is used by Candace Jones et. al. in the work “Rebels with a Cause: Formation, Contestation, and Expansion of the De Novo Category ‘Modern Architecture,’ 1870-1975” and works well in describing the usage of new materials in ways in which had not been done previous in architecture.

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<sup>35</sup> Candace Jones et al., “Rebels with a Cause: Formation, Contestation, and Expansion of the De Novo Category ‘Modern Architecture,’ 1870-1975,” *Organization Science* 23, no. 6 (December 2012): 1523.

<sup>36</sup> Jones et al., 1523..



*MOVEMENT VERSUS STYLE*

It is important to understand my usage of movement and style in this thesis as I find that they contain different meaning. The usage of movement is to emphasize the complexity of the styles of the interwar era and to make it clear that it entails the ideological and ideals which drives the style(s) as this is increasingly present throughout the interwar era. Also, as this is a historic paper, the focus will be on the movements as a whole rather than the stylistic traits which would first and foremost belong in an art history-thesis but also because to include details on style would add another dimension but also be irrelevant when the subject at hand is the perception or the opinion of Norwegian architects of Fascist architecture. I made this choice between style and movement because style bears for me only the aesthetic traits of architecture and not the ideas behind it. As I see style it is a more superficial concept which works when ascribing the umbrella notion of the “international style” when discussing the wide range of architecture which bears similar visual traits but proves too narrow when attempting to discuss something with an ideology behind it. Stylistic traits can, however, just as easily be used to describe visual differences between regional and national architecture – such notion as the Scandinavian style which is frequently used to describe the architecture of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland, but will not describe the ideas behind it.

But I have, however, chosen to use the notion of style for the prehistoric context in order to simplify this part and because that is not what I wish to discuss in this thesis.

**CHAPTER 1: INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT 1890-1939**

The intention of this chapter is to provide an understanding of the transnational ties of the interwar period in an international context to underline the plausibility of contact between Italy and Norway. It will therefore provide a brief art historical framework of 1890 to 1939 with the focus of connections and changes relevant to the development of national architecture. To have an understanding of the ideas and the what, who and where of the time period is crucial in order to understand the probability of Norwegian architects of the interwar period to have been exposed to several points of influence and the fluidity of the interwar period.

## ARCHITECTURE AND GENERAL SITUATION 1890-1922

This part revolves around the changes which the architectural discourse went through leading up to the interwar period. These changes meant the establishment of a radical break from what had been the norm and included new materials and the organization of architects. This period in Europe had experienced a long time of peace – no larger conflict had occurred since the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71).<sup>37</sup> Relatively new nations, such as Italy and Germany, worked on establishing a national identity, and many countries experienced economic growth and “the people of Europe had high hopes for the future”.<sup>38</sup> For many countries this meant construction of cities and extensive housing, and the inventions and the architectural currents of style of this period paved the way for Modernism. Architectural historian William J. Curtis has offered this rendition of Modernist architecture

*“was an invention of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was conceived in reaction to the supposed chaos and (...) earlier nineteenth-century revivals of historical forms”<sup>39</sup>*

And according to Henry-Russell Hitchcock the supposed chaos was of international scale and was fueled by historicism and the archeological findings in the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>40</sup> Such revival of styles meant the inclusion of elements of Italian origin and earlier Renaissance,<sup>41</sup> which led to the import and acculturation of traits from historic cities in the Mediterranean – especially from Rome as the epitome of ancient Roman architecture – in order to reinvent the style at home. Norwegians were no exception in this matter as I will explain in chapter three.

As for building materials, the 1890s and early 1900s introduced the use of new materials not always originally found in their own nations and was a sure sign that the world was getting smaller – developments and information from the U.S. and within Europe would for example spread faster than before. The new materials were bearers of the industrial times and had the purpose serve the function of growing industry. The creation and spread of these new materials slowly changed the game for architects from the 1850s and onward merging

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<sup>37</sup> William R. Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World and Beyond: An International History since 1900*, Fifth edition (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2006), 4.

<sup>38</sup> Jack van Domburg and Kai Fridstrom, *Art Nouveau & Society*, Documentary (Réseau Art Nouveau Network, 2008).

<sup>39</sup> William J. R. Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900*, Third edition (Great Britain: Phaidon Press Limited, 1996), 11. Another work on Modernist Architecture which I recommend is Peter Collin's *Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture* (1965) for a more thorough description of what modern architecture entail..

<sup>40</sup> Dennis P. Doordan, *Twentieth-Century Architecture* (Great Britain: Laurence King Publishing, 2001), XIV.

<sup>41</sup> Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 191–92.

old with new forming a de novo category of architecture. This growing de novo category within architecture was the onset of what would later be interwar architecture.<sup>42</sup> The de novo category or the avant-garde category really took hold around the 1890 as “rapid economic expansion, industrialization, urbanization, and the production of new materials such as reinforced concrete and steel” changed the game for a majority of states and countries in Europe and North America.<sup>43</sup> These changes left the architects in a period of stylistic uncertainty.<sup>44</sup> But the uncertainty also paved the way for, for instance, Art Nouveau which would lead to developments towards Art Deco,<sup>45</sup> Futurism and the myriad of movements of the de novo category in the interwar period.

The period around the end of the nineteenth century was also occupied with the development, evolution and construction of cities, private and public housing (various villas, private homes and garden cities), public buildings and the formation of cities were fields of interest for the architect. For instance, the Garden Cities of Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928), which sought to combine the best that modern and rural life had and “represent a novel alternative to the traditional city” when the idea of this city was published in 1898.<sup>46</sup> Urban planning was from the 1890s becoming a constant concern of architects and would accommodate large parts of the architectural discussion well into the interwar period.<sup>47</sup>

Architects became a recognized profession around the latter part of the 1800s and established associations, such as the Dutch association *Architecture et Amicita* in 1855.<sup>48</sup> Norwegians organized as we know nationally in 1911. Through organization came demands for acknowledgement of the profession, licensure and improved formal education. Prior to the early twentieth century, education for architects varied greatly for each country (and in some parts of the world, still do). Most countries at the time did not have an established school of architecture, and it was not uncommon for those who wanted to pursue the profession to have to travel abroad to do so. Also, the profession of architects was thought by many to be a sub-profession within engineering; architects were the decorative engineers of the time. This also meant that to study architecture, one could either study art or study engineering. For instance,

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<sup>42</sup> “Rebels with a Cause: Formation, Contestation, and Expansion of the De Novo Category ‘Modern Architecture,’ 1870-1975,” 1523–45.

<sup>43</sup> Jones et al., 1524. Here Jones et. al. are gathering their information from Guillén, M. F. 2006. *The Taylorized Beauty of the Mechanical: Scientific Management and the Rise of Modernist Architecture*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

<sup>44</sup> Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 307.

<sup>45</sup> Art Deco is perhaps best summarized by Dennis P. Doordan, *Twentieth-Century Architecture*, 24. For a more complete picture, see part of his chapter *The Modern City* pp. 19-31.

<sup>46</sup> In London for instance Hampstead, in Oslo one example is Ullevål Hageby. Doordan 2001, 3–4.

<sup>47</sup> Sverre Pedersen, “Boligsaken,” *Arkitektur og Dekorativ Kunst*, Arkitektur og Dekorativ Kunst., 11, no. 8–9 (1919): 114-122,127-138.

<sup>48</sup> Auke Van Der Woud, *The Art of Building: International Ideas, Dutch Debate 1840-1900*, E-book (Taylor and Francis Ltd., 2017).

architects had organized professionally in the United States by 1900 and already had several schools which offered an education within architecture, and an organization of “state licensure by 1897”<sup>49</sup>. In Europe, students also studied at technical schools, for instance in Germany, France, Great Britain. This was the case for many European countries as they had no established education for architecture, while the British Institute of Architects had actually been established as early as 1834.<sup>50</sup> Along with France and Germany, Britain had formal education in place, but no licensure but rather students of architecture had to seek apprenticeship in order to become architects.<sup>51</sup> In Germany this was all turned around 1919 “when Gropius sought to transform architectural education with the Bauhaus”.<sup>52</sup> Both Norway and Italy were late developers of education and licensure as will be shown in the following chapters.

Together with the students of architecture who often had to travel abroad to study, so too did styles of architecture. What was taught at technical institutions abroad would soon end up in Norway or Sweden. In addition to the transference of architectural ideas through studies there were the newly established journals (made possible by mass production and the mass education in large parts of Europe), and through national and international exhibitions. International (as well as national) exhibitions<sup>53</sup> would mean the exchange of ideas and design and would also prove to both tie the world closer together as architects and designers would be able to see that they were part of an international arena. At the same time exhibitions would also strengthen the nation in that representation at an exhibition would emphasize the focus of being from a nation therefore strengthening the idea of national self. The de novo steel-construction in Paris, the Eiffel Tower,<sup>54</sup> was perhaps the most telling of the new period of architecture, and was presented at such at the World’s Fair in Paris in 1889.<sup>55</sup> The Eiffel

<sup>49</sup> Jones et al., “Rebels with a Cause: Formation, Contestation, and Expansion of the De Novo Category ‘Modern Architecture,’ 1870-1975,” 1530.

<sup>50</sup> Jones et al., 1530.

<sup>51</sup> Jones et al., 1530. Uses information from Scrivano. See Scrivano, P. 2004. “Defining the profession of architect in the twentieth century: France, Italy and the United States.” *Contemporary European History*, vol. 13, no. 3; pp. 345-356.

<sup>52</sup> Jones et al., 1530. Walter Gropius: the founder of Bauhaus and one of the frontrunners of functionalism. (Brochmann, Odd. (2019, 27. mars). Walter Gropius. I Store norske leksikon. Hentet 15. november 2019 fra [https://snl.no/Walter\\_Gropius](https://snl.no/Walter_Gropius)). The Bauhaus was “a school of thought that embraced a host of different theories, methodologies, and pedagogical approaches, which over the course of its brief existence from 1919 to 1933 delved into expressionism, formalism, and utopian collectivism”. (Finborud et. al. (2014):8) It was a school which was connected to and important for many of the functionalist architects of the interwar period. For the first comprehensive article on Bauhaus in Norwegian (from the journal *Kunst og Kultur* (Art and Culture) by Ivo Pannaggi from 1968)) see: Lars Mørch Finborud and Milena Hoegsberg, *Bauhaus på norsk/Bauhaus in Norwegian*, First edition (Oslo, Norway: ORFEUS Publishing, 2014).

<sup>53</sup> “After the foundation was made with the first World Fair in London 1851, industrialized countries practically fought to arrange such an exhibition. To host an exhibition meant prestige and fame, made way for markets and stimulated economy. World fairs (or exhibitions) increased in size and power throughout the last of the nineteenth century and culminated at the Paris World Fair” (Ingeborg Glambeek, *Sett utenfra: det nordiske i arkitektur og design*, First edition (Norway: Arkitektens Forlag og Norsk arkitekturforlag, 1997), 15. My own translation)

<sup>54</sup> Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 384.

<sup>55</sup> Doordan, *Twentieth-Century Architecture*, XVI.

Tower became a point of pride for the French and it showed the power of France design to the world and at the same time made sure of a position in the International arena.<sup>56</sup>

Along with the new materials I have mentioned, such as steel and reinforced concrete, the movements of the time such as Art Nouveau and Modernism were telling of the changes in the period 1890-1922. Different nations and empires throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century were part of the development within the de novo category. These movements introduced a new language for architects to express national identity. One instance of this is the case of Finland. It needed after the separation from Russia to establish a distinct national identity and architects used the untainted language of Art Nouveau together with other methods and ideas, for instance from Britain and America and their own inventions and created their own expression of identity.<sup>57</sup> Based on Wenche Findal's work, modernism can be understood as an epochal definition covering the changes and the movements of the de novo category that started around 1910 following Peter Behrens' and Walter Gropius' factory drawings form respectively 1909 and 1911.<sup>58</sup> Modernism was the forerunner for the largest movement in the interwar period namely Functionalism. It was a movement within architecture which was adherent to the ideals and needs of its time,<sup>59</sup> and it was de novo in that it broke with earlier conventions of architecture in terms of language, techniques and materials, taking things a step further than Art Nouveau. They both aimed

*“to rediscover the true path of architecture, to unearth forms suited to the needs and aspirations of modern industrial societies, and to create images capable of embodying the ideals of a supposedly distinct ‘modern age’.”<sup>60</sup>*

This ideal was cemented by the variety of manifestos of modernist and futurist architecture written around the beginning of the First World War. Perhaps one of the most notable ones which has been recognized in almost all the literature I have read, is Charles Edouard Jeanneret, a Swiss-French architect later famously known as Le Corbusier.<sup>61</sup> He published an article in 1914 writing of a new architecture to come based on “his analysis of the industrial civilization”.<sup>62</sup> This article was maybe more a manifesto and his ideas are still present in

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<sup>56</sup> For more on the power-relations within international exhibitions, read Morna O'Neill, “Rhetorics of Display: Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau at the Turin Exhibition of 1902,” *Journal of Design History* 20, no. 3 (autumn 2007): 205–25.

<sup>57</sup> Doordan, *Twentieth-Century Architecture*.

<sup>58</sup> Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen*, 14–18.

<sup>59</sup> Ute Engel, “‘Fit for Its Purpose’: Nikolaus Pevsner Argues for the Modern Movement,” *Journal of Design History* 28, no. 1 (February 2015): 15–32, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jdh/epu010>.

<sup>60</sup> Curtis, *Modern Architecture since 1900*, 11.

<sup>61</sup> Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen*; Doordan, *Twentieth-Century Architecture*.

<sup>62</sup> Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen*, 16.

today's' modernist architecture. He contributed greatly to modernism by producing the "Domino-structure" using steel vertically to support floors of concrete: the Corbusian form of open spaces quickly became a trademark for modernist constructions.<sup>63</sup> However, the Corbusian form was quite similar to the early inventions of Classical Rationalism of mid-nineteenth century Europe which was "an attempt to devise a systematically designed, scientifically constructed architecture" from around the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>64</sup> Later, in chapter 2, I shall revisit the notion of Rationalism again in Italy, and get more into the importance manifestos played in establishing national movements of architecture.

#### THE INTERWAR PERIOD IN INTERNATIONAL TERMS

This part of the chapter will focus primarily on the modernist movement and its sub-movements, and maybe briefly mention others, keeping in mind the definition and distinction for movement and style provided in the introduction. The names most often mentioned in the literature I have read for this period have been the international bouquet of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Erich Mendelsohn, Gerrit Rietveld, Marcello Piacentini, Konstantin Melnikov, Rudolph Schindler and Richard Neutra and Antonio Sant'Elia.<sup>65</sup> Art and architecture by the European avantgarde of the early 1920s had a need for re-establishing the world so as to not repeat the mistakes of the past. The map of Europe was different than before the war and so too were the countries.

In the greater picture of the interwar period, the Great War of 1914-1918 had just ended and dealt a serious blow to the hopes of prosperous progress from the late nineteenth century, and many empires – such as the Russian tsarist empire and the Ottoman Empire – were no more, leaving several areas stateless. The Paris Peace Conference sought to re-establish order, hopes and prevent such a war from ever happening again, and would also redraw the map of Europe.<sup>66</sup> The satisfaction with the results from the Peace Conference varied. France were satisfied; Germany was deeply dissatisfied having been given all the guilt; Italians were dissatisfied with how little they achieved and in 1922 the *Partito*

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<sup>63</sup> 'Corbusian' means in this case the signatur style of buildings constructed and drawn by Le Corbusier.

<sup>64</sup> Definition according to Dennis J. and Elizabeth R. De Witt, 15: "*Rationalism in architecture, as in other aspects of life, assumes that there are universal laws that can be applied without exception, and generally without concern for any specific physical, historical or architectural context. (...) Jean-Nicolas-Louis Durand, epitomized Rationalist thought, and (his Rationalism) was concerned with primarily with the logic of the building's plan and only in a very general sense that of its use, might perhaps more correctly be called Classical Rationalism.*" Dennis J. De Witt and Elizabeth R. De Witt, *Modern Architecture in Europe*, First edition (Great Britain: Butler & Tanner Ltd, Frome and London, 1987), 15.)

<sup>65</sup> Doordan, *Twentieth-Century Architecture*, 8–9.

<sup>66</sup> Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World and Beyond: An International History since 1900*, 66.

*Nazionale Fascista (P.N.F.)* gained power in Italy;<sup>67</sup> while the United States drew back in isolation. But the peace only lasted two decades, and in the wake of their demise came a “cycle of totalitarianism, genocide, and war on a scale previously unimagined”.<sup>68</sup>

The first decade was all about getting the nations up on their feet, to get them in shape. Unemployment and unrest were not unfamiliar to other countries in the Western hemisphere, and each nation found their way of managing the crisis at hand. In the United States, the solution seemed to be Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal and in Italy, Mussolini’s fascism came to the rescue. Both countries, even though they had a very different political, social and cultural context, had similar responses of ruralization and the establishment and planning of new towns for that purpose in order to avoid the problem of a “radicalized urban working class” and to provide “model communities”.<sup>69</sup>

So, the idea that architects concerned themselves with urban planning, like the garden cities and the expansion larger cities, was still present in the interwar era. The architects of the 1920s-30s also had to tackle the reconstruction of areas left bereft after the First World War. This led to the state becoming increasingly involved with architecture and this would increase the politization of architecture. Exhibitions like the previously mentioned World Fair in Paris were still held;<sup>70</sup> maybe more so than before, and architects formed alliances and organizations across borders. National and regional exhibitions also flourished, and the audience was often international. The increase was perhaps due to the interest by states and nations to “turn to architecture [into] a powerful propaganda tool”.<sup>71</sup> I will go into a more national approach to this in later chapters, but it is important to understand that the major actors such as Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States and the periphery included used architecture to promote themselves. Although there were dissimilarities between the works being shown at the exhibitions, there were also evidence of a shared pool of inspiration. This might be because architects, architectural journalists and scholars “crisscrossed Europe” and engaged in establishing networks and gathering inspiration from

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<sup>67</sup> H. Hearder and P. D. Waley, *A Short History of Italy: From Classical Times to the Present Day*, First edition (Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 203.

<sup>68</sup> Keylor, *The Twentieth-Century World and Beyond: An International History since 1900*, 82.

<sup>69</sup> Ghirardo, *Building New Communities: New Deal America and Fascist Italy*, 186–89. For in-depth comparative analyses of New Deal-America and Fascist-Italy, see the book by Ghirardo, and Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Three New Deals. Reflections on Roosevelt’s America, Mussolini’s Italy, and Hitler’s Germany, 1933-1939*, Kindle edition (New York: Metropolitan Books, Henry Holt and Company, LLC, n.d.).

<sup>70</sup> Doordan, *Twentieth-Century Architecture*, 103.

<sup>71</sup> Doordan, 103.

different corners of Europe.<sup>72,73</sup> There are many examples of this crisscrossing. Le Corbusier himself originally was a Swiss citizen, but he lived and worked in France and eventually attained a French citizenship. Or architect and graphic artist Saul Steinberg who “had just arrived from his native Romania in 1933 to study architecture at the Milan Polytechnic just as Jewish architects Erich Mendelsohn and Konrad Wachsmann were beginning to leave Germany”.<sup>74,75</sup> This year (2019), an exhibition in Moscow, *Bauhaus Imaginista*,<sup>76</sup> will show how the ideas of the Bauhaus School went to the Soviet Union in the 1930s amidst growing antisemitism and unrest in Germany and also how “the first woman to study in the construction department of the Bauhaus in Dessau” went from Germany, to Russia and then to the Netherlands.<sup>77</sup> This exhibition, and works similar to this researching the transnational links between nations of the interwar period, show the social and political affiliations that architects could have and how ideas easily could travel between countries without no obvious link, and also show how design “were developed, adapted, expanded or renewed in different cultural and political contexts”.<sup>78</sup>

Architects also came together for other reasons than because they were forced to leave the country to find work or to attend an exhibition. Congresses were one instance in which they met to discuss architecture and the demands architects faced (this includes Norwegians and Italians as will be seen in chapter four). Arguably the architects became far more politically involved in the interwar era than previously as they discussed both external and internal problems such as housing opportunities for all and the organization of cities. The Bauhaus was one of the beacons of forward-leaning architects and artists who mixed not just the different branches of aesthetics but also politics. In the last years of its existence in the 1930s it held a Marxist profile. This is an important point to make note of as I will argue in chapter 4 that Norwegian architects were not exempt for being politically inclined and they

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<sup>72</sup> Henry-Russell Hitchcock (1903-1987) for instance was a contemporary to the interwar architects, and he was there himself in New York in 1932 with the opening of the International Style-exhibition. See his own objections to his account in the introduction of chapter 23 in his book “Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries” (1977) p. 513.

<sup>73</sup> George Nelson, Kurt W. Forster, and Robert A. M. Stern, *Building a New Europe: Portraits of Modern Architects: Essays by George Nelson 1935-1936*, First edition (United States of America: Yale University; Herman Miller, Inc.; Vitra AG, Basel, Switzerland, 2007), 3.

<sup>74</sup> George Nelson, Kurt W. Forster, and Robert A. M. Stern, *Building a New Europe: Portraits of Modern Architects: Essays by George Nelson 1935-1936*, First edition (United States of America: Yale University; Herman Miller, Inc.; Vitra AG, Basel, Switzerland, 2007), 3; Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Nikolaus Pevsner, Fourth edition (New Haven and London: Penguin Books Ltd.; Yale University Press, 1977), 488.

<sup>75</sup> Saul Steinberg, although educated as an architect, is most known today for “giving graphic definition to the postwar age” and to have had “one of the most remarkable careers in American art”. The Saul Steinberg Foundation offers detailed information on the artist on their webpage: Sheila Schwartz, “Saul Steinberg: An Overview,” .org, *Saul Steinberg Foundation* (blog), 2019, <http://saulsteinbergfoundation.org/essay/introduction/>.

<sup>76</sup> Julia Hitz, “How Bauhaus Came to the Soviet Union,” *Deutsche Welle Online*, September 2018, <https://p.dw.com/p/34fK2>.

<sup>77</sup> Hitz.

<sup>78</sup> Hitz.



were also partakers on the international arena. They were perhaps not branding themselves in vibrant red, but they were absolutely engaged.

As far as politically inclined meetings went, the congresses held in the period 1928 to 1934 by architects of the Modern Movement was perhaps the most important and especially as viable meeting grounds for Norwegian and Italian architects. The origin of the congresses by the Modern Movement was conceived in 1928 when around two dozen architects, including Le Corbusier, met in La Sarraz (Switzerland) and organized the first of many congresses for CIAM.<sup>79,80</sup> The idea behind the gathering of the CIAM that architects had for too long been occupied by repeating history and not accommodating buildings and houses to the modern age.<sup>81</sup> I think that Edvard Heiberg, a Norwegian architect, make a good summarization of the ideology of CIAM in an article from *Byggekunst* in 1923: “But let us not draw lines, but housing for humans”.<sup>82</sup> CIAM quickly gained the position as the dominant international forum for discussing and dissecting ideas on modern architecture and urban planning with many of the leading architects of Modernism at the wheel.<sup>83</sup>

As this chapter shows there was an established consensus on the international character of architecture. This was due in part to travel such as study trips, education, congresses, exhibitions and to the spread of literature and newspapers. The most important was that the architectural movements all made use of new material that previously had not been used and found new ways in construction based on an idea of functionality.

## CHAPTER 2: THE ITALIAN CONTEXT 1890-1939

In order to understand the meaning and the significance of what Norwegians possibly were discussing in the national journals it is of essence to understand the context of Italy. This means to understand that Italy just as Norway was a relatively new nation and economic issues had slowed the process of evolvement of architecture. The Italian context is also important in order to note the differences between the two nations, such as the amount of civil unrest and ideology. This will improve the understanding of why Italy is at the same time a very likely source of inspiration to be perceived and discussed in Norwegian journals in the

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<sup>79</sup> Doordan, *Twentieth-Century Architecture*, 13–14.

<sup>80</sup> For a more thorough reading of the different CIAM-congresses in the interwar era, check out this work: Martin Steinmann, *CIAM: Internationale Kongresse für Neues Bauen: Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne; Documente 1928-1939*, Print book: conference publication, Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur an der Eidgenössischen technischen Hochschule Zürich 11 (Basel, 1979).

<sup>81</sup> Joe Bosman, “CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne),” *Grove Art Online*, 2003, <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uio.no/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.article.T017701>.

<sup>82</sup> Edvard Heiberg, “Fransk nyttearkitektur,” *Byggekunst* 5 (1923): 88. ”Men la os ikke tegne mønstre, men boliger til mennesker.»

<sup>83</sup> Bosman, “CIAM (Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne).”

interwar period but also why historians (and possibly contemporaries) deemed Italy a *negative* connection.

### ITALY 1890-1922

The new kingdom of Italy emerged as whole in 1870 at the end of the Franco-Prussian War, but as written by John McKay et. al. (2011), “the new Italy was united on paper, but profound divisions remained”<sup>84</sup>. What these divisions entailed was a dichotomy between northern and southern Italy. The northern part of Italy had more progression in industry than the southern part which was more rural and agrarian; the northern part were also more literate than the southern part which meant that due to the Piedmontese Constitution “less than three per cent [sic] of the population had a vote”,<sup>85</sup> as well as the fact that the country was newly united meant that Italy had soil fit for the growth of unrest which would come.<sup>86</sup> Even so many Italians believed in being one state within the borders of a nation and this belief united the country.<sup>87</sup> Additionally, Italy as a region had a long history going back to the Romans of ancient times and this heritage was vital in the feeling of national unity. Due to this heritage the process of creating a new national architecture was slow and “the Italian revival was somewhat delayed as compared to the ‘modernist’ [or de novo] movements throughout Europe”.<sup>88</sup> This was mainly due to the slow state of industrialization in Italy at the time as it was simply not as apparent on the Italian peninsula as in other parts of Europe. This changed in the twentieth century as a a movement within art and architecture, which is referred to as the Italian Liberty style, arose in 1885 just shortly after “the beginning of the international *art nouveau* movement in Belgium and France” - as mentioned in the previous chapter – and quickly became part of the international discourse.<sup>89</sup> The movement shared similar aesthetics with art nouveau, such as leaning heavily on floral motifs and in its usage of materials like iron and cement and was key to later architectural movements. The journal *Emporium* was created by the Liberty Movement and was actively in contact with international figures at the

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<sup>84</sup> John P. McKay et al., *A History of Western Society, Volume II: From the Age of Exploration to the Present*, vol. 2, A History of Western Society 2 (Unite States of America: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 755.

<sup>85</sup> Hearder and Waley, *A Short History of Italy: From Classical Times to the Present Day*, 157.

<sup>86</sup> Hearder and Waley, 141–42. “It [the Piedmontese Constitution] included such elementary guarantees of liberty as security of person and property, equality before the law, parliamentary control over taxation, a free press, right of public meeting, and the formation of a citizen army or National Guard. A collection of constitutional maxims rather than a constitution, it supplied, nevertheless, a very fair basis on which to build up a free government. From it rose the constitution of United Italy which remained in being until the advent of Fascism.”

<sup>87</sup> Directly translated by me from: Robert B. Marks, *Den moderne verdens opprinnelse*, 1st ed., mundus 1 (Norway: Pax Forlag A/S, 2007), 171.

<sup>88</sup> Roberto Marraffa, “Modern Architecture in Italy,” *East and West* 1, no. 4 (1951): 231.

<sup>89</sup> Rossana Bossaglia, “The Protagonists of the Italian Liberty Movement,” *The Journal of Decorative and Propaganda Arts* 13, no. Stile Floreale Theme Issue (1989): 34, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1504046>.

time.<sup>90,91</sup> The Liberty style was the first step towards a renewal of architecture and art in Italy. It is also telling in that it was part of an international arena, giving a picture of the art and architecture scene in Europe to be open and shared: ideas and ideals were perhaps national in origin, but was quickly acculturated by other nations which resulted in a highly international scene. The internationalization was something which would be part of future de novo-movements of architecture.

Italy did in the 1890s face a short period of disorder as politics split into two very distinct camps: socialists and conservatives.<sup>92</sup> The conservative branch “had their roots far back into feudalism, together with the capitalists of the new industrialism”,<sup>93</sup> while the socialists consisted of two camps: one extremist camp which was minor, but dangerous, and the other which was organized and soon made up a national party which included workers, farmers and intellectuals.<sup>94</sup> In 1898 tensions increased and outbursts of riot spread through Italy.<sup>95</sup> This left both the papacy, industrial owners, capitalists and conservatives in fear socialism, and socialists were not harboring a necessarily positive attitude towards the conservative wing. The solution came in the shape of Giovanni Giolitti, a liberal politician and prime minister,<sup>96</sup> who knew how to handle both the socialists and the conservatives.<sup>97</sup> In the first decade of the twentieth century governments introduced social reforms, foreign trade expanded, and industry grew. Many Italians also emigrated to the US - much like many did in Norway as I will show in chapter 3. Italy was, as Norway was at the same time, in no way as advanced as other contemporary countries, but the situation had improved and this in due course meant more work for architects, builders and construction of housing and the expansion of already existing cities.

The slow revival of Italian architecture started to speed up as a result of *The Futurist Manifesto* by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti published in 1909.<sup>98</sup> It was a manifesto which

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<sup>90</sup> The founding of “the Italian review *Emporium (Istituto Italiano d’arti grafiche (Bergamo, Italy). 1895. 140 volumes, and can be accessed at the Cambridge University Library, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, University of Liverpool, Sydney Jones Library, LIBRIS in Stockholm, University of London – Courtauld Institute of Art, Book Library, and the National Library of Scotland.)* [based] on the model of the English review *The Studio*(Bossaglia, 35.)”.

<sup>91</sup>The publishers of *Emporium* also held an exhibition the same year with “a detailed catalogue and documentation of the exchanges that occurred between the editors of *Emporium* and many international cultural figures”, pointing to the international character of the movement. Bossaglia, 35.

<sup>92</sup> For a more detailed read on the political split and evolvment, see social history scholar Emil Oestereicher’s article Emil Oestereicher, “Fascism and the Intellectuals: The Case of Italian Futurism,” *Social Research* 41, no. 3 (Autumn 1974): 515–33.

<sup>93</sup> Hearder and Waley, *A Short History of Italy: From Classical Times to the Present Day*, 181.

<sup>94</sup> Hearder and Waley, 181.

<sup>95</sup> Hearder and Waley, 182.

<sup>96</sup> Giovanni Giolitti. (2009, 14. februar). I Store norske leksikon. Hentet 1. mai 2019 fra [https://snl.no/Giovanni\\_Giolitti](https://snl.no/Giovanni_Giolitti)

<sup>97</sup> Hearder and Waley, *A Short History of Italy: From Classical Times to the Present Day*, 185.

<sup>98</sup> Dennis P. Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 1st edition (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988), 6.

forewarned a “revolution in Italy’s stagnant cultural life by breaking all links with the past”.<sup>99</sup> Marinetti believed that a coming war would change the ground for which art could grow upon and his ideas were solidified when he reported on various conflicts.<sup>100</sup> The revolution he presupposed would come meant a forging of a new architecture consisting of new materials such as “reinforced concrete, iron, glass, carton and textiles – those materials which can replace wood, stone and brick”,<sup>101</sup> and he believed that architecture should function as smoothly as a machine. Interestingly, Marinetti published his first article “on the front page of the Parisian newspaper *Le Figaro*”,<sup>102</sup> a newspaper which it is believable that contemporary Le Corbusier read which can show just how border-crossing architecture was at the time. It is possible the fact that Marinetti and his successors chose to call their plans for the future of architecture a manifesto show the defining break in the Italian architectural discourse. In the words of his daughter Luce Marinetti Barbi: “Futurism was the only movement up to that time equipped with a global ideology that for the first time imposed a vital relationship between art and life”<sup>103</sup>. She also accounts for the spread of futurism, writing of Marinetti’s travels to for instance Russia in 1914 and his close ties with France after having studied there at the Sorbonne.<sup>104</sup> Doordan has narrowed Futurism down to three elements essential to their approach to architecture: their break with the past and traditions; design was a free, lyrical and creative act; they were greatly and nearly uncritical in their fascination with machines<sup>105</sup>.

Italian early 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture, like we will see in contemporary Norway, was marked by some fundamental manifestos which braved the way for a more politically driven architecture. Parallel to Le Corbusier’s *industrial civilization*-text as mentioned in chapter 1, the Italian architect Antonio Sant’Elia wrote in 1914 a “Manifesto of Futurist Architecture”<sup>106</sup>. His manifesto was according to Bruno Zevi co-written by Marinetti and his secretary Decio Cinti.<sup>107</sup> Of all the manifestos this was perhaps the most internationally

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<sup>99</sup> Selena Daly, *Italian Futurism and the First World War*, First (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 4.

<sup>100</sup> Daly, 4.

<sup>101</sup> Findal, p. Translated by me. Original: «jernbetong, glass, karting og tekstilfaser, det vil si alle de erstatningsstoffer som finnes for tre, stein og tegl – og som gir høyeste elastisitet og letthet»

<sup>102</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 6.

<sup>103</sup> Luce Marinetti Barbi, “Myth, Machine and Marinetti,” *Architectural Design* 51, no. 1/2 (1981): 30. For more information on the ideological aspect of futurism I recommend reading Ernest Lalongo, “Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: The Futurist as Fascist, 1929-37,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 18, no. 4 (2013): 393–418, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354571X.2013.810800>.

<sup>104</sup> Marinetti Barbi, “Myth, Machine and Marinetti,” 30.

<sup>105</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 27.

<sup>106</sup> Doordan, 1. For the full manifesto, see Antonio Sant’Elia, “Manifesto 1914,” *Architectural Design* 51, no. 1/2 (1981): 20–23.

<sup>107</sup> Bruno Zevi (1918-2000) an Italian theorist of architecture who used “history as methodology of architectural practice”(Ardizzola 2018:5), and were one of the founders of organic architecture; a de novo architecture with origins in the works of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright of the Modern Movement; he was also one of the contemporary critics of Italian Futurism. For a thorough but neat biography, read Paola Ardizzola, “History Will Teach Us Everything: Bruno Zevi and the Innovative Methodology for Future Design,” *ResearchGate Online*

renowned and the ideas of Sant'Elia has often been likened to those of Le Corbusier.<sup>108</sup> Two other Italian Futurist, Enrico Prampolini and Umberto Boccioni, also produced manifestos of a de novo character.<sup>109</sup> Common for these manifestos was that they “advocated a decisive break with traditional forms and practices and envisioned an architecture radically different in its forms, materials and spatial character” thus anchoring the movement in the de novo category which the liberty-movement had been the start of in Italy.<sup>110</sup> A common feature for the other futurist manifestos was that the writers seldom had only ever been inside their own country's or empire's borders; most had travelled abroad and had influences from elsewhere. Antonio Sant'Elia for instance was inspired by “the Viennese motifs of the influential Otto Wagner in his Futurist drawings”<sup>111</sup>; Marinetti had travelled all over Europe<sup>112</sup> and his international review of poetry by poets; Prampolini went to both Germany and France<sup>113</sup>; artist and architect Fortunato Depero (1892-1960) lived in Rome, New York and then back to Italy<sup>114</sup>. But their importance is unquestionable and according to Zevi: “Futurism meant a purifying, drawn out Sturm un Drang: its furies and boasts were necessary to bring Italy's cultural conformism under accusation”.<sup>115</sup> it paved the way for the architectural movements such as futurism, neoclassicism, rationalism and the Novecento movement as well as a continued futurism after the end of the First World War.<sup>116</sup>

Italy joined the First World War (1914-1918) in 1915, and the war would have massive effects on the social, political and artistic situation of Italy. Armistices were signed on both fronts of the war in 1918, and Italy was left bereft of manpower and those left would have to be reabsorbed into the rest of the population. The economy and production as well had been formed to match the demands of battle, but after the war Italy “was hampered more than other countries by lack of coal and raw materials and the shortage of shipping, and like her Allies she had an enormous budget deficit”.<sup>117</sup> The financial status had an effect on

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Article (September 2018): 5–11, <https://doi.org/10.4399/97888255150531>. To understand Bruno Zevi's stand on Italian Futurism, read his article “Lines of Futurism,” *Architectural Design* 51, no. 1/2 (1981): 24–25.

<sup>108</sup> Richard Rothschild, “Retningslinjer i Italias arkitektur idag,” *Byggekunst* 15, no. 1 (1933): 78–79.

<sup>109</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 8–9. Boccioni's manifesto was unfortunately never published before 1972, but his discussions and ideas were familiar to others. Prampolini's manifesto was titled: “Atmosphere-Structure, Basis for a Futurist Architecture” and Boccioni's simply “Manifesto 1914”.(Umberto Boccioni, “Manifesto 1914,” *Architectural Design* 51, no. 1/2 (1981): 17–18.)

<sup>110</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 10.

<sup>111</sup> Bernard Tschumi, “Episodes of Geometry and Lust,” *Architectural Design* 51, no. 1/2 (1981): 26.

<sup>112</sup> Tschumi, 28.

<sup>113</sup> Ada Louise Huxtable, “The Troubled State of Modern Architecture,” *Architectural Design* 51, no. 1/2 (1981): 33.

<sup>114</sup> Huxtable, 33.

<sup>115</sup> Zevi, “Lines of Futurism.”

<sup>116</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*; Richard Rothschild, “Retningslinjer i Italias arkitektur idag.”

<sup>117</sup> Hearder and Waley, *A Short History of Italy: From Classical Times to the Present Day*, 196.

politics and architecture. In terms of politics, the war had made Italy one of five great powers after the war; however Italy was a relatively small nation and faced disadvantages at the peace table.<sup>118</sup> This led to even more unrest at home, and when the Italian demands were not met some Italians seized the northern area Fiume as a result.<sup>119</sup> This was a foreboding happening of what was to become organized fascism. The years between 1919 and 1922 were rattled with the “disintegration of parliamentary democracy”,<sup>120</sup> much like other parts of Europe would be in the 1920s. At first there was the wave of socialist riots and unrest; second the wave of politically active Catholics<sup>121</sup>; thirdly, the *Fascio di Combattenti* of Mussolini in Milan and all “were full of ardour to crush the so-called ‘Reds’”<sup>122</sup> – many of the last group joined the seizing of Fiume. In the two years that followed Fascism was on the rise and were gaining popularity among those with power as they sought to quell the Socialists’ attempt at revolutionize Italy. In 1921 Mussolini entered Parliament and the P.N.F. was established with a program of

*“social reform, national prestige abroad, rigid economy at home, the restoration of the authority of the State, financial equilibrium, the cessation of strikes, and arbitration of difficulties between capital and labour”*<sup>123</sup>.

Futurism, post-World War I, had to go on without Boccioni and Sant’Elia. Marinetti continued working and recruiting architects in the name of futurism, and one of those architects were Virgilio Marchi. He published yet another “Manifesto of Futurist Architecture” in 1920<sup>124</sup>. Much like other Futurist architects, he believed that the architecture “should reflect our modern sensibility, and the architect should draw his inspiration from the modern spirit that animates the world around him”<sup>125</sup>, echoing the words of other futurists and avant-garde architects – common for all was the belief in the modern spirit which can be understood as the modern life brought forward by the industrial revolution, as a dynamic form of architecture, or it was more the act of creativity come to life in architectural ideas. And at

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<sup>118</sup> Header and Waley, *A Short History of Italy: From Classical Times to the Present Day*.

<sup>119</sup> For an account on the seize of Fiume, I recommend Michael A. Ledeen, *The First Duce: D’Annunzio at Fiume* (Baltimore, U.S.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977).

<sup>120</sup> Header and Waley, *A Short History of Italy: From Classical Times to the Present Day*, 200.

<sup>121</sup> «A new force emerged, the *Partito Popolare*, founded by the Sicilian priest, Don Sturzo. Trying to reconcile modern social and democratic ideas with the ancient faith of the Catholic Church, the *Popolari* were the political ancestors of the present-day Christian Democrats.”

<sup>122</sup> Header and Waley, *A Short History of Italy: From Classical Times to the Present Day*, 202.

<sup>123</sup> Header and Waley, 203.

<sup>124</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 19.

<sup>125</sup> Doordan, 19.

perhaps the peak of Futurism in 1922, the March on Rome left the Fascist in control of much of Italy and in October Mussolini formed a cabinet at the request of the king.

#### ITALIAN INTERWAR PERIOD 1922-1939

The Italian interwar period is important for the thesis in order to understand what was happening in Italy to place what might be found in the primary journals into context and to add an understanding of what Norwegian architects possibly discussed at the time and the potency of Italian architecture in order to help explain the plausibility of exposure of Fascist Italian architecture. Futurism experienced a great surge of interest at the same that as PNF rose to power in Italy in 1922.<sup>126</sup> The Futurist Movement, much because of Marinetti's close relationship with PNF-leader Benito Mussolini, had partaken in the early period of the fascist movement and saw itself as having the "right (...) to serve as the artistic interpreters of the Fascist regime"<sup>127</sup> and like the fascists they brought "youth, energy, and new ideas to Italy"<sup>128</sup>. But like all architectural movements in Italy throughout the interwar period they would struggle for this position, but none would officially get it. They were in favor of state involvement in the arts, and in 1923 another manifesto was published in the journal *Noi* under the name of "The Artistic Rights Advocated by Italian Futurists: A Manifesto to the Fascist Government".<sup>129</sup> This was one of many issued directly to the state attempting to persuade in the potential use of the arts for the national cause.<sup>130</sup> In turn, this reveals the close relationship between architecture and ideology which was especially dominant in Fascist Italy.<sup>131</sup> This was also exploited by both architects, artists and the state as architecture and the arts were immensely important for Mussolini and Italy to showcase to the outside the splendor of

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<sup>126</sup> By the Italian nationalism, I mean the feeling of a national identity and national pride as Mussolini set forward to "inspire patriotism in a country which was a unified nation in name only". Ghirardo, *Building New Communities: New Deal America and Fascist Italy*, 18.

<sup>127</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 22. "During the first months of the Fascist movement, Marinetti and Mussolini shared a commitment to the radical transformation of Italian society based upon the principles of Revolutionary Syndicalism. In his manifesto "Beyond Communism", published in 1920, Marinetti called for the abolishment of the Italian monarchy, the Parliament, and the institution of marriage, and the eviction of the Papacy from Italy, among other things. Marinetti's radicalism soon proved too extreme for Mussolini, however, and in the wake of a devastating electoral defeat in November 1919, Mussolini re-examined the content of the Fascist program. At the Second Congress of the Fascist Party in May 1920, political pragmatism triumphed over intransigent radicalism, and Mussolini made conciliatory gestures to both the Church and the monarchy. After 1920 Marinetti's influence over the political direction of the Fascist movement waned. His personal relationship with Mussolini and his prominence in intellectual and artistic circles insured him a privileged position on the Italian intellectual scene during the 1920s however".

<sup>128</sup> Borden, *Mussolini's Rome: Rebuilding the Eternal City*, 2.

<sup>129</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 22–23.

<sup>130</sup> Terry Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy: Visions of Utopia, 1900-Present*, vol. 2, *The Architecture of Modern Italy 2* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2005), 68, <https://link-springer-com.ezproxy.uio.no/book/10.1007%2F1-56898-632-7>.

<sup>131</sup> This is an interesting account of the relationship between ideology and architecture in Fascist Italy: Nathan Fallon, "How Does the Aesthetic of Fascist Architecture Reflect the Nature of Fascist Political Ideology in Italy during the Years of Benito Mussolini's Regime from 1922-1943?," 2016, 20–36.

fascism. Nonetheless, no movement or style was ever elected as the official aesthetic look of the state and Terry Kirk writes: “the term Fascist architecture (...) has little meaning at all”.<sup>132</sup>

Although the Futurists might appear organized on paper and that was the goal of Marinetti, the Futurist movement was scattered within and organized in theory only. But without their very close and public relations with fascism, the politicization of architecture might never have ended up on the table for architectural historians. Their explicit and close relationship with politics makes it an apparent subject which those who study the architecture of this time have to relate to – no matter the country. This has been one of the main focus’ of the history of interwar Italian architecture, but in Norwegian history this relation is largely overlooked. It seems that in areas not touched with troubled architectural history, even though there are evidence of connections and of attitudes among architects who today are praised, the political aspect of architecture is neglected by the majority<sup>133</sup>. Those alive and active in the interwar period, however, might have been aware of this in their perception of the architecture, and it should therefore be of interest to present day architectural historians to look into this.

Futurism has been considered by architectural historians to be proto-Rationalist (by which meaning I will soon get to), and as has the Novecento Movement. Futurists built little, but they have remained visionaries of their time and been of inspiration for others.<sup>134</sup> The novocentists, unlike the futurists, did not have one leader and visionary of the movement nor any manifests. Rather, novocentists believed in building rather than talking, and a review article which one of the dominant characters (Giovanni Muzio) of the movement wrote in 1931 provides a map of the ideals. According to this article educated architects who were educated just prior to the First World War and therefore could not start their career until after the war.<sup>135</sup> Having survived warfare, the architects sought “order, discipline, and a new sense of tradition” and found inspiration in the “latest technical inventions” and “contemporary

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<sup>132</sup> Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy: Visions of Utopia, 1900-Present*, 2:68.

<sup>133</sup> For instance, something that popped up during my research; the international and French works on the fascist nature of no other than Le Corbusier himself – the one name that inspired and informed both Norwegian and Italian architects. See for instance Simon Richards work *Le Corbusier and the Concept of Self*<sup>133</sup>; Simone Brott’s article *Architecture et revolution: Le Corbusier and the Fascist Revolution*<sup>133</sup>; Mary McLeod’s “*Architecture or Revolution*”: *Taylorism, Technocracy, and Social Change*”; and the controversial work of journalist Xavier de Jarcy: “*Le Corbusier, un fascisme français*”<sup>133</sup>. Of course, this view is very recent and stirred up quite the discussion in the early 2010s – but nothing points to him not being fascist either.

<sup>134</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 27.

<sup>135</sup> Giovanni Muzio, 1931, “Some Architects of Today in Lombardy” (“Alcuni architetti d’oggi in Lombardia”), translated in Doordan, 29–33.



works of engineering”.<sup>136</sup> Doordan has summed up the views of the movement in both the historical debate in the 1970s and 1980s<sup>137</sup>, and in the 70s the consensus was that the movement was in reality a form of moderate avant-garde, while in the 80s it was agreed upon that the movement was actually “emphasized the proto-Postmodern aspects (...) and portrayed it as a precursor to Postmodernism”.<sup>138</sup>

In terms of education for this period, architects often studied abroad, had a period of internship with other national architects, or went to university.<sup>139</sup> Some, as Le Corbusier, were to a large degree self-taught or had a mixed educational background but practiced architecture. A good example to illustrate this point in Italian context is the educational history of Giuseppe De Finetti, one of the Novecento architects. He was educated in Milan where he was born but spent the rest of his education in Berlin and in Vienna at the same time as Adolf Loos<sup>140</sup>. Later, he also received a formal degree from the Academy of Fine Arts in Bologna.<sup>141</sup> This is also useful as an account of the international atmosphere in interwar Europe, and

*“many architects, artists, and writers had begun to think of their work as European rather than strictly national (...) and held architecture to cultural and industrial standards that necessarily transcended political boundaries”<sup>142</sup>.*

Le Corbusier, like many of his contemporary de novo-architects, were part of a movement which focused on social issues and believed that architecture was one way which the social problems could be solved. He believed that “a given situation must be studied, a program must be formulated, then we can go ahead” and believed that this was best solved in

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<sup>136</sup> Doordan 1988, 30. From Doordan’s own translation of architect Giovanni Muzio’s article of 1931; “Alcuni architetti d’oggi in Lombardia,” in Patetta, *L’architettura*.

<sup>137</sup> Borden W. Painter, Jr. specifically points out “The Italian architectural historian Giorgio Ciucci [who] led the way in the study and reassessment of the fascist regime’s relationship to architecture and architects in the 1980s. His book *Gli architetti e il fascismo: Architettura e città 1922-1944* (1989) provided a compact and comprehensive guide to urban architecture during fascism.” (Borden, *Mussolini’s Rome: Rebuilding the Eternal City*, XVII.)

<sup>138</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 29.

<sup>139</sup> In Italy one would need a *liceo classico*<sup>139</sup> before taking on higher education at university-level, and it was not accessible for everyone. This was the highest secondary education in Italy at the time (and for most part of the twentieth century) and the only way to access university-level education and involved an education of the classical languages (Greek and Latin). As this education had limited access, it is believable that those who wished to pursue higher education could enroll at universities, internships/apprenticeships and technical schools abroad.

<sup>140</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 35. Adolf Loos, as mentioned in the introduction as one of the most important theorists, famous for his work *Ornament und Verbrechen* (1908). Born in 1870 in Austria, died in 1933. Was one of the forerunners of functionalism in his preference for puritanical and cubically shaped buildings, and known for his agitation against the current architecture – art nouveau – and wrote an essay championing an anonymous culture free of ornaments. (Adolf Loos. (2009, 14. februar). In Store norske leksikon. Accessed 4th of may 2019: [https://snl.no/Adolf\\_Loos](https://snl.no/Adolf_Loos))

<sup>141</sup> Doordan, 35.

<sup>142</sup> Nelson, Forster, and Stern, *Building a New Europe: Portraits of Modern Architects: Essays by George Nelson 1935-1936*, 17.

company. This indicated the highly international aura of the interwar period. In terms of his educational background, it made him both popular and unpopular as those with educated backgrounds accused him of having “poisoned the minds of the youth of France (...) and of Italy, too”.<sup>143</sup> But as George Nelson points out in his in-depth interview with Le Corbusier as they both visited Rome, there was “scarcely a country in the world that cannot point to at least one construction based on his work”; pointing to his success despite his lack of education.<sup>144</sup>

However, in Italy as elsewhere in Europe and the states the tide was turning, and architects were towards the end of 1930s becoming increasingly more national and less international as well. The international feeling of a united conglomerate of architects still existed, and the connections were there, but the ownership of the various designs was beginning for many of the architects to feel more national than European or international. There was the traditionalist camp, who believed that the modern movement provided a brutal and ugly kind of architecture, and also had its fair share of variations; then there were the myriads of national variations within the modern movement; then there were all those in-between.<sup>145</sup> In Italy, a third camp of *de novo* architecture emerged in the late 1920s which had “a strong chauvinistic belief in an Italian cultural mission”,<sup>146</sup> namely rationalism. It is the rationalists, specifically Giuseppe Terragni and cultural critic Pier Maria Bardi, who in 1931 like the Futurists “called independently on Mussolini to elevate architecture to the status of the official art of the state (*arte de stato*)”.<sup>147</sup> It is also the rationalists which the writers of *Byggekunst* is mostly focused on during the interwar period as I will show in chapter four.

Whereas both futurism and the Novecento movement had been more “Italian” in their approach to architecture and had leaned heavily on their cultural heritage, the rationalist went about it in a similar but slightly different manner. The rationalists were more functionalistic in their ideas on architecture and also underlined the eternal validity of classicist elements in their work. This gave them an international albeit very national style and approach, a sort of third way of architecture as it presented a very monumental functionalism. They believed, like other parts of the international discourse, in the inevitability of internationalization and

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<sup>143</sup> Nelson, Forster, and Stern, 70.

<sup>144</sup> Nelson, Forster, and Stern, 70.

<sup>145</sup> For instance, Magnus Poulsson: most scholars have previously believed him to belong to the traditionalist camp, and to be one of the most important national romanticists of the twentieth century. However, Mark Robert Mansfield published his PhD from the Oslo School of Architecture and Design (AHO) in 2015 questions this belief and look at Poulsson’s “modernist ambitions and theoretical implications of his so-called romanticism”. (Mark Robert Mansfield, *Modernism and National Romanticism in the Work of Architect Magnus Poulsson (1881-1958)*, First (Arkitekt- og designhøgskolen i Oslo, 2015), 9.)

<sup>146</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 46.

<sup>147</sup> Kallis, “Futures Made Present: Architecture, Monument, and the Battle for the ‘Third Way’ in Fascist Italy.”

embraced external influences.<sup>148</sup> But at the same time they also held the belief that every country “in spite of their absolute modernity will keep national characteristics”.<sup>149</sup> The leading section of this camp was the Gruppo 7,<sup>150</sup> who wrote a series of articles which made up a manifesto for the *nouveau spirit* in architecture echoing the work by le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and others.<sup>151</sup> Common for all of Gruppo 7 was that they were all part of a generation educated post-First World War I in contrast to the other two camps who were constituted of members having been active or educated prior to the war and who had experienced the war closely at hand. The Gruppo 7 was also closely linked to the CIAM-congresses and their architecture can be summarized as “an architecture at once contemporary, vibrant and useful as propaganda. It is therefore likely that it is the Gruppo 7 which will turn up if there were a discussion on Italian interwar architecture in the primary journals.

### CHAPTER 3: THE NORWEGIAN CONTEXT 1890-1939

The goal of this chapter is to establish the national context of Norway prior to and of the interwar period in order to understand the plausibility of Norwegians actually being in contact with external sources of inspiration. Providing a context will also help understand why it is likely that Norwegians were open to influence from Fascist Italy. Norway was in the period from 1890 and well into the interwar era struggling to establish a formally educated architects at home and at the same time trying to figure out the essence of Norwegian identity. Irony has it that it was through outside influence that the architectural discourse surrounding the national style actually evolved. Architectural historians have long agreed that Norwegians went out both to learn and to study the architecture of other areas and nations, like Holland, England, the US and France. I believe that this is only part of the picture and this chapter will attempt to give some fluidity to the existent history so as to open for other influences as well.

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<sup>148</sup> This is a translation of Gruppo 7's own articles first published in 1926 by Ellen Shapiro in *Oppositions* 6 (Fall 1976) applied by D. P. Doordan 1988, 48.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> David Rifkind, *The Battle for Modernism: Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy*, 5th ed., Premio James Ackerman per La Storia Dell'architettura 6 (Marsilio: Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio Fondazione, 2016), 23–35.

<sup>151</sup> Doordan, *Building Modern Italy*, 45.

## NORWAY 1890-1922

It is relevant to have a grasp of the period prior to the 1920s and 1930s in order to understand the landscape which Norwegian architects found themselves in and which resulted in the architectural environment of the interwar era. This pre-context will be telling of the openness to outside influence and help explain the relations which already existed between Italy and Norway prior to Fascist Italy and make the continuance of an Italian-Norwegian relation well into the interwar era undisputable despite the ignorance of the current art history-discourse.

The relatively new nation around 1900 was still in search for its own style and Norwegians had since the 1830s been experimenting with various forms.<sup>152</sup> During the period of 1875 till 1922<sup>153</sup>, Norway was in the middle of “the third leap”, going from being rural to being industrial and this was the third period of growth and development of technology and industry in the country.<sup>154</sup> This also meant that the increasing differentiation among professions fostered different interests and lead to the organization of various professions – such as architects.<sup>155</sup> Norway anno 1890-1900 were in a process of industrialization and economic growth with varied opportunities for work. It was also a period where many Norwegians emigrated to for instance North America in pursuit of better conditions.<sup>156</sup> In terms of architecture Norway was in the middle of establishing a national identity and “the idea of Norway as an independent nation was gathering momentum, but the reality was still in flux” as Norway would be under Swedish control till 1905. All the same, this was a period where many attempted to find what was national, and as with other newly established countries – like Italy – the arts, history writing, and architecture looked back in time to find inspiration and examples of what was truly Norwegian. The history and architecture therefore sought to find what was traditionally Norwegian and in the process of finding this, a national narrative was established. Mark Robert Mansfield explains that this was a “pressing political and cultural agenda that” highly affected this period of time.<sup>157</sup> At the same time architects

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<sup>152</sup> Somewhere in Norsk arkitekturhistorie

<sup>153</sup> Here I am applying Rolf Danielsen’s and Edgar Hovland’s periodization; according to them the period of 1875-1920 was decisive in the shaping of modern Norway, and this periodization serves well as a backdrop for my thesis as it accounts for the (for the interwar period) relevant changes which modernized Norway. See

<sup>154</sup> Berg Furre, *Norsk historie 1914-2000: Industrisamfunnet - frå vokstervisse til framtidstvil*, 6th edition, Samlagets Norsk Historie 800-2000 6 (Norway: Det Norske Samlaget, 2012), p. 19. Furre quotes “det tredje spranget” by Jostein Nerbøvik, *Antiparlamentariske straumdrag i Noreg 1905-14. Ein studie i motvilje.*, Historiske studier fra de norske universiteter (Universitetsforlaget, 1969). This is my translation of the quote.

<sup>155</sup> Furre, *Norsk historie 1914-2000: Industrisamfunnet - frå vokstervisse til framtidstvil*, 19.

<sup>156</sup> Rolf Danielsen et al., *Grunntrekk i norsk historie*, 1st edition (Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget AS, 2007), 226–57.

<sup>157</sup> Mansfield, *Modernism and National Romanticism in the Work of Architect Magnus Poulsson (1881-1958)*, 29 and footnote 9. He is informed by the work of historian Leslie F. Smith, *Modern Norwegian Historiography* (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1962) and especially chapter I, “National Romanticism” which outlines the founding historians and the definition of history where Norwegians, “were reassured on the greatness of their past”.

also relied on the existing discussion of architecture and art which existed in Europe and the US at the time. The European discussion was readily available for most Norwegian students of architecture and architects as exhibitions were a large part of the field of architecture in the from the 1890s and well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And as those who wished to pursue the profession of architect in Norway would until the establishment of NTH in 1910 have to look abroad to achieve proper education.<sup>158,159</sup> It was common to receive their education primarily in either Germany<sup>160</sup>, Denmark, Great Britain or Sweden and add to that education through apprenticeships and study trips<sup>161</sup>. Architects of the city hall in Oslo, Arnstein Arneberg and Magnus Poulsson, received part of their formal education in Sweden. And after the establishment of NTH, some still travelled abroad to study. Would-be functionalist Lars Thalian Backer (1892-1930), who has been most hailed as the founder of Norwegian functionalism, was among one of those educated in Sweden at Kungliga Tekniska högskolan<sup>162</sup>.

For both countries, this was a period of secession for architects. Prior to the NTH architects had been grouped together with engineers. The common belief among layman was either that engineers and master-builders did the construction and the architects decorated; or that an engineer, master-builder and an architect were somewhat the same and there was no clear separation of the professions.<sup>163</sup> However, with the introduction of national education of

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<sup>158</sup> In Norway in the nineteenth century education for the masses was a new phenomenon, just as elsewhere in Europe. In 1889 new legislation made schools mandatory of a standardized education -which also meant that there was a great need for new school buildings (this responsibility fell upon the communes as is practice today: buildings for higher education is a matter of the state, such as universities). In 1904 it was decided that an institution for technical education would be established in Norway (a further step in nationalization of education also in the higher levels of education); this school was designed by Bredo Greve from Oslo – an architect with his education from Germany and whom was inspired by the American Louis Sullivan (The Transportation Building). The institution (Norges tekniske høiskole/*Norwegian University of Technology*– NTH) was supposed to be a focal point for contact between Norway and the outer world in terms of technology. (Ingunn Haraldsen et al., *Hundre års nasjonsbygging: arkitektur of samfunn 1905-2005*, ed. Ulf Grønvold, First Edition (Norway: Pax Forlag A/S, 2005), 139–55.)

<sup>159</sup> It was practice to receive some training in drawing in Norway in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In Christiania, for instance, there was the Wilhelm von Hanno’s drawing school for students of architecture (Ulf Grønvold, *Arkitekt Lars Backer og hans tid* (Oslo, Norway: Pax Forlag A/S, 2016), 25–27.. And it was common for architects to travel to Germany to study the arts of the continent in the nineteenth century; the destination for travel would shift toward the centennial shift. Prior to the latter half of the nineteenth century it was common for German-born architects to travel to Norway and thus transfer their knowledge: now it was the Norwegians themselves who would be responsible for this. The practice of going abroad for inspiration and knowledge on architecture was something which has followed Norwegian architects – it also gives Norwegian architects the benefit of sharing their own ideas and knowledge. For more on the available education for architects in Norway in the latter part of the nineteenth century, see Grønvold, 43–49.

<sup>160</sup> “The majority of the architects who were active in Norway around the centennial turn, had their education from Germany, and the historicist ideals of style on the continent were just as present in Norway” (Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen*, 27) “Many of the professors at the new technical school had their education from the technical school in Berlin/Charlottenburg (CTH), for instance, Jens Z. M. Kielland, the first to become a professor of architecture at the NTH.” Haraldsen et al., *Hundre års nasjonsbygging: arkitektur of samfunn 1905-2005*, 146.

<sup>161</sup> **Authors note:** There existed (and most likely do today as well) a plentiful of scholarships which founded study trips abroad for students of architecture as well as for architects: it seemed it was important for the profession to keep up with the rest of the field and to gather new inspiration. Italy was a popular travel destination, as I will get back to, which makes it almost impossible that the architecture of Italians – and Fascists – would have no effect on Norwegian architects (and artists).

<sup>162</sup> Grønvold, *Arkitekt Lars Backer og hans tid*, 15.

<sup>163</sup> A useful piece of reading if one is interested in the evolving of the profession architect in Norway Elisabeth Seip provides a thorough analysis of the nineteenth century, architects and engineers in her PhD.-thesis: “Brødre og søstre i arkitekturen: ingeniøroffiserer og

architects in several countries, architects had the means to request the recognition as a protected title. In the early twentieth century there was also an agreed upon consensus internationally amongst architects to convince states to protect the title of architects, but the demand was met by only a few countries. Italy was one of the few countries which had established a licensure for architects.

The period between 1890 and 1922 can be stated as simply to be an explorative period in search of national identity markers. In this period, architects experimented with various forms which it found inspiration from abroad, just like their Italian counterparts. Examples of inspiration could be Ebenezer's garden cities or art nouveau. Elements were acculturated into a national-like architecture with various traits. The first part of this period is known for its "dragon style" introduced by architect Holm Munthe in an attempt merge a continental style with borrowed elements from medieval Norway.<sup>164</sup> Around this time, the railway was making the gap between rural and urban smaller, and industrialization was. This period was marked by urbanization due to industrial and infrastructural advances and this affected the architectural discourse. New materials were introduced, and architects scrambled to arrive at a "new national conception" just like other countries<sup>165</sup>. The first decade of the twentieth witnessed the rise of a Norwegian art nouveau, of a nationalized neo-baroque and neoclassicist style with elements from Norwegian history and nature. These styles would later be criticized for being too foreign.

Paradoxically, as pointed out by architectural historian Guthorm Kavli, architecture in Norway benefited from the First World War. This was because the Norwegian Merchant Navy benefitted financially and led to a significant increase in the number of individuals who could afford to build private housing.<sup>166</sup> This helped spread the building of villas which would be an important playground for interwar architects. Architect Ole Landmark's article in *Byggekunst* 1933 stated that the period of 1915-1923 was a prosperous time in terms of villas and has coined this period as "our golden era of villas".<sup>167</sup> In addition to increased wealth, another result from the First World War was the increase in stone as a building material – and was evident in the villas of that time as well. Just as for other nations in this period, the expansion and building of cities and housing were of focal interest to architects (and

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sivilarkitekter i Norge rundt 1800" (The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, 2008), University of Oslo: Library of the Humanities and Sosial Sciences (720.9481 Sei).

<sup>164</sup> Guthorm Kavli, *Norwegian Architecture: Past and Present*, First edition (Oslo: Dreyers Forlag, 1958), 102.

<sup>165</sup> Kavli, 105.

<sup>166</sup> Kavli, *Norwegian Architecture: Past and Present*.

<sup>167</sup> Ole Landmark, "Gullperioden i vår villabygging," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 15 (1933): 25–26.

politicians) in Norway, and villas would become – for many architects – the free space in which to design by their own personal preferences.

The national discussion of architecture would by the 1920s culminate in two movements, the national romanticism and neo-classicism.<sup>168</sup> Both sought to modernize and architecture – one to nationalize it and the other to keep the international appearance of the style. This struggle between these two poles is apparent in all the different phases of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Norwegian architecture. Especially as romanticism has come to define the un-modern, and the neoclassical has been criticized for being “a rational architecture based on typification” dependent on outside stimulus and not part of the nationalizing project of the twentieth century.<sup>169</sup> Although the styles of this period were prominent and had its leading architects, there is still much debate on how to characterize the period from 1900-1920. Most commonly it has been characterized as a period of confusion and of many styles all at ones. But common was the discussion as to whether to include international influences in Norwegian architecture, as either movement polarized the discussion into against or for internationalization.

#### THE NORWEGIAN CONTEXT IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

The Norwegian interwar context was as its Italian counterpart increasingly entering the international discourse of architecture through means of exhibitions and congresses. According to Ingeborg Glambek Scandinavian architecture was increasingly recognized internationally, and it was either architecture seen as Swedish or Scandinavian architecture which was mentioned in international journals, seldom Norwegian architecture specifically.<sup>170</sup> At home, the architects were struggling in their attempt to land one architectural movement which would dominate the Norwegian discourse. Around 1920 two movements were prominent and widely discussed both by historians of Norwegian architecture and the architects themselves in *Byggekunst*; this dichotomy in the discussion would follow suit throughout the interwar period.

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<sup>168</sup> For a short introduction to Norwegian neo-classicism, I recommend the work by Kaare Stang, *Moderne tider: 1900-tallets stilarter i norsk arkitektur, kunstindustri og design*, Cappelen Fakta (Oslo: Cappelen, 1996). Wenche Findal's description of the national-romanticism: “a lush synthesis of art nouveau, baroque, local materials and Norwegian rose painting resulted in a pompous and excessive architecture that was largely reserved for the rich” underlines the confused state of Norwegian architecture of which the period found itself in the interwar period. (Mark Robert Mansfield, *Modernism and National Romanticism in the Work of Architect Magnus Poulsson (1881-1958)*, First (Arkitekt- og designhøgskolen i Oslo, 2015), p.169; this is his translation of Wenche Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen* (J. W. Cappelens Forlag a.s, 1996), p. 28)

<sup>169</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Modern Norwegian Architecture*, First edition (Oslo, Norway: Norwegian University Press, 1986), 45.

<sup>170</sup> Glambek, *Sett utenfra: det nordiske i arkitektur og design*.

By late 1920s most neo-classicists and some national romanticists were either being replaced by or turned into functionalists. According to a book review in *Byggekunst* 1932 “architecture was as all art international but was at all times to cover the decisive internal factors of its specific time period”.<sup>171</sup> Functionalism would perhaps, as Italian rationalism, offer a third way. But this debate between two believed sides in architecture, and especially those who favored the “old” and those who favored the “new” was one which would follow the architects throughout the interwar period and it would harden the lines between conservatists and modernists and in turn also be representative of the political views each *side* was to be related to. Functionalism was often considered too foreign but did blend ideas from other nations with national adaptations.

Still the incorporation of elements thought to be national and unique to Norway were as in Italy still incorporated into architecture throughout the entire interwar period. In present day the emphasis of the interwar period on national motifs can be seen as fascist because it was tainted during the Second World War in Norway, but it is as Mansfield underlines important to remember the point of Bodil Stenseth that most political parties in the interwar period in Norway was applying what was considered authentic and Norwegian and that each movement be it political or architectural struggled “about the ownership of the national”,<sup>172</sup> and willingly criticized others for not being modern but rather “slaves of fashion”.<sup>173</sup> In the interwar period the negative connotations of nationalism were non-existent as the Second World War had not yet occurred. Therefore, the usage of national motifs in buildings from this period was simply an attempt to claim the ownership to the definition of national. It is also therefore it is important to look at how Norwegian architects of the time thought of fascist architecture, and if they saw it as such and chose to incorporate this to their architecture, then it can be said to have been fascist because it was given the significance.

As most newly educated architects who had received their diploma in Norway, many decreed for a more artistic and literate approach to architecture. The more technical education was in their eyes not sufficient to become full-fledged architects and believed that one would also need to know of and use the past to create the future. This longing and young generation of architects were at the forefront of establishment of the Norwegian Architectural Academy

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<sup>171</sup> Christian Jørgen Moe, “«Bokanmeldelser. «Funksjonalisme. Kurvatur-arkitektur og andre problemer.» Første hefte. .» (s.11),” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 14, no. Attachment (1932): 11.

<sup>172</sup> Mansfield, *Modernism and National Romanticism in the Work of Architect Magnus Poulsson (1881-1958)*, 334.

<sup>173</sup> Norberg-Schulz translates an article from the Norwegian newspaper *Dagbladet* in 1924 by Henrik Sørensen, where Sørensen claims this (*Modern Norwegian Architecture*, 45.) Bodil Stenseth, *En norsk elite: nasjonsbyggerne på Lysaker 1890-1940*. (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1993).



in Oslo in 1923 which would provide additional aesthetic studies for architects.<sup>174</sup> However, the neoclassicism changed throughout the 1920s till it was not purely classicist anymore. It became a movement more concerned with lifting “one’s spirit to a higher level and create a framework for strong and positive thinking”,<sup>175</sup> much along the thinking of contemporary Italian architects. This meant that neoclassicism was classicist more in spirit than in look; it was a stripped or more abstract than its predecessor had been. And neo-classicists would also be some of those travelling abroad to study the art and architecture of Italy, but however focus more on the antique and historic architecture rather than the newer projects.

In an article in *Byggekunst* 1925, art historian Carl W. Schnitler wrote that “nationalists romanticists and classicists”<sup>176</sup> would have to declare peace. No peace was declared, but a third way was found: functionalism. But both the traditionalists and the modernists had “contributed greatly to the development of a new architecture to suit” the interwar period and leave a lasting legacy on the architecture post-war in the 1950s. But after 1925 and forward, functionalism filled the space which the neo-classicists had occupied and became the established umbrella under which architects found themselves creating designs. Functionalism was proclaimed as the new and modern architecture, heavily leaning on the functions which architecture could have for humans and for society. In the new and modern movement, new materials that were of its time was introduced such as steel and concrete just as elsewhere in Europe. Prior to this period stone and iron were the modern materials of the industrial revolution and was usually favored by national romanticists.

In 1925, similar to a manifesto,<sup>177</sup> Backer wrote an article praising the new architecture which was evolving in Europe and argued that the present state of confused architecture in Norway would have to change and argued for a purposeful architecture: “We have discuss the burning questions of our time and city and find lines which we can agree on”.<sup>178</sup> The same year, there was the Paris Exhibition where Edvard Heiberg who was a strong champion for the new

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<sup>174</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Modern Norwegian Architecture*, 46.

<sup>175</sup> Norberg-Schulz, 43.

<sup>176</sup> Carl W. Schnitler, “Klassisistisk Og Malerisk Arkitektur i Norge Og Italien. Klare Linjer - Ingen Samlingspolitikk.,” *Byggekunst* 7, no. 1 (1925): 49–54.

<sup>177</sup> Findal writes in her book on Norwegian Functionalism that the article which Backer wrote was a polemic against the architecture of the time and in favor of modernity (Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen*, 44. After having read it, I will liken it more to a manifesto of what would have to be done and how it would be done, echoing the words of both Le Corbusier and his contemporaries in Italy mentioned in chapter 2. The Oxford Dictionary explains the word manifesto as such: “A public declaration of policy and aims, especially one issued before an election by a political party or candidate” (“manifesto”: English Oxford Living Dictionaries. Accessed 06.05.2019, URL: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/manifesto>). Backer’s article was very much a public declaration of how and why there should be a new architecture.

<sup>178</sup> Lars Backer, “Vor holdningsløse arkitektur,” *Byggekunst* 7 (1925): 173–75. Author’s translation of: “Vi maa ta op tidens og vor bys brændende spørmaal til diskussion og finde de linjer vi kan samle os om», p.175

movement and thinking within architecture, viewed only the architecture which dealt with function as being of worth, while noting that the exhibition proved a growing gap between architects and movements.<sup>179</sup> Later, in 1927, Johan Ellefsen held a speech in favor of the new architecture which was later the same year published in *Byggekunst*,<sup>180</sup> and the article “still stands as the manifesto of Modern Architecture in Norway”.<sup>181</sup> This manifesto attempted to define contemporary architecture and at the same time to understand the forces within the architectural discourse. Ellefsen believed that there would always be the push and pull of nationalism and internationalism in architecture,<sup>182</sup> and in the midst of this process the national architectural expression would appear in a synthesis. Ellefsen also pointed to the theories of Le Corbusier and “clarified that modern architecture should not only adapt to ideas of previous currents, but also consider regional conditions such as climate, topography and materials”.<sup>183</sup>

The functionalism of the interwar period was according to architects Herman Munthe-Kaas and Gudolf Blakstad a time of upheaval where the “young wanted to get away from romanticism and individualism, which did not satisfy their demands of calm, order and monumentality (...)”<sup>184</sup> and was maybe even more than the predecessors, functionalism was a result of the industrial age. Le Corbusier, futurists and rationalists believed that this was the era of the machine and that the house was a machine for humans to live their lives just as the chair was a machine for sitting.<sup>185</sup>

One of the changes that followed with functionalism, in Norway and elsewhere, was a change in attitude towards the space which one built in. Previously the space would have to fit the needs of the building, which was to be constructed, but with functionalism there was an increased awareness of the landscape and the milieu which the building was to fit in. The building was designed to fit into the environment; not the other way around. This is evident in one of the ground principles of this movement, that form follows function. And contrary to the more static classicist approach, which was thought to be stale and unmoving of the new generation of architects, the new style was thought to be a return to a more dynamic way of

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<sup>179</sup> Edvard Heiberg, “Utstillingen for Dekorativ Kunst i Paris 1925.,” *Byggekunst* 7 (1925): 177–84.

<sup>180</sup> Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen*, 32.

<sup>181</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *Modern Norwegian Architecture*, 51.

<sup>182</sup> Johan Ellefsen, “Hva Er En Tidsmessig Arkitektur?,” *Byggekunst* 8, no. 1927 (1927): 170.

<sup>183</sup> Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen*, 33.

<sup>184</sup> Gudolf Blakstad and Herman Munthe-Kaas, *Arkitekt Ove Bang: hans læreår og virke*, First (Oslo, Norway: Dybwad, 1943), 65.

<sup>185</sup> Charles Edouard Jeanneret, “«En ny byplan» Gjengitt etter le Corbusiers foredrag i O.A.F. 31te januar 1933,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 15 (1933): 1–5.

building and designing. The goal was to actively cooperate with the space and landscape in which the buildings would be erected. The 1920s and 1930s was in Norway, as in other countries, the time for the grander designs of entire cities or part of cities. The architects were removing themselves as a sub-category in engineering and becoming a visible actor in society, at international exhibitions and congresses.

Towards the end of the interwar period, functionalism waned in popularity however and along with the radicalization in politics the architectural movements also radicalized. Interestingly, as noted in chapter two, the Italian architecture of the interwar period has always been linked with the ideology of its time as either a proponent of it or against it but the architecture of Norway has not been linked to the political ideas of its time – not in the interwar period nor by art historians after the Second World War. This de-politization of architecture could perhaps also explain the lack of perceived negative connections mentioned in interwar art history written after the war. What is clear in this chapter is that Norwegian architects oftentimes travelled outside of Norway and were in some way influenced by external ideas which sometimes were acculturated. The most obvious movement in regard to establishing a national identity through national identity markers and external influences in the interwar period is functionalism, as fronted by Backer, Heiberg and Ellefsen.

#### **CHAPTER 4: CONTACT, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF THE NORWEGIAN PERCEPTION OF FASCIST/ITALIAN ARCHITECTURE**

In this chapter I seek to establish a connection between Norway and Italy in the interwar era as this is lacking in today's art history, before I look into the perception in the public architectural discourse in Norway and discuss whether anything ever was perceived as Fascist architecture or if it was only thought to be a "new" Italian architecture. At the end of the chapter I will look into the possible acculturation of the architecture of Fascist Italy in Norway – either physical or in the discourse as revealed by the primary sources.

Although the political and economic situation differed in Italy and Norway, one being a losing victor in the First World War and the other a newly independent neutral state, they were both still part of the international discourse on architecture and in search of a national style. In the contexts established in previous chapters it is clear that there was a consensus for

international contact, and there were contact between Norway and Italy, albeit mainly asymmetrical as more Norwegians travelled to Italy than the other way around.

Byggekunst serve as the main source in regard to the public discourse on architecture and was also the medium through which architects were in contact with the current situation both in Norway and abroad. Arkitektur og Dekorativ Kunst and PLAN will be largely left out as neither had any mentions of Fascist Italy or Italy at all. The closest to a mention is in PLAN in regard to the use of Italian brick. This signifies that Italian materials were in circulation, but nothing of value to the thesis. Byggekunst on the other provide several mentions of interwar Italy and contact points between Norwegians and Italians. As seen in chapter three, Byggekunst portray the image of a nation scuttling to find itself in the midst of a ‘battle’ of styles in Norway with repeated attempts to make an impact and to ‘salvage’ the nation through the right architectural movement – whether neo-classicist, functionalist or national romanticist. This internal discussion on style is mirrored in Byggekunst and it is visible through international contact such as summaries from international exhibitions. It is in the international space which the national discourse is presented to the various national discourses of Europe - most importantly (for this thesis) to the Italian discourse. Europe and Italy were at the time in a turbulent political state, and aesthetics was becoming increasingly connected with politics and ideologies as nationalism surged. It is therefore interesting to note the two-faced approach Byggekunst had in its approach to architecture. On the one hand the journal aimed to be anti-political, on the other hand the journal was very selective as to who were given coverage – the *positive* nations like France, Holland, England and the U.S. was given much space. I argue therefore that the aim of being anti-political was a failed attempt as which nations were given coverage mirrors the implicit idea of who were important and vice versa gives away the political stance of the journal. For instance, Germany was less mentioned once the national socialists came to power in the 30s. Soviet was as Italy mentioned, but to a lesser degree than England for instance.

#### PART 1: CONTACT WITH ITALY

In order for any discussion or for anything to be perceived, there has to be some form of exposure. Cultural phenomena prior to the internet do not cross borders alone; people, literature and commodities do however, and bring cultural phenomena with them. Contact can come in various forms and can be as simple as meeting one another or through word-of-mouth. Based on the primary sources, the focal point of contact between Norwegian- and Italian architects in the interwar era has been travel. This is travel conducted directly to and

from Italy and Norway, but also travel to the same international and national fairs and congresses in third countries. Historically it was more traditional for Norwegians to travel abroad for studying and for gleaning inspiration and not the other way around, but the material has left little information on Italian architects travelling to Norway. There has been one exception to this which I shall get back to later in this chapter. Other means of contact have been through the sharing and translation of readable material such as books and journals. So contact was through travel in various form and of various means – and not always directly to Italy -, but also through accessibility of literature from other countries (journals and books was translated and reviewed in *Byggekunst* or available at libraries) and through other means such as word-of-mouth and recommendations.

Travel conducted by architects and students of architecture had throughout the last centuries led to an acculturation of varying architectural ideas in Norway, resulting for instance in the presence of baroque, art nouveau and neo-classicist architecture. Although as mentioned in chapter three architects agreed around the turn of the twentieth century that it was high time for Norway to find a style of its own, the what and how varied greatly. There were those who clung to the idea of heritage, while others thought that in order to evolve and find architecture fitting for the new and modern Norway the superfluous ornamentation and unnecessary construction would have to go for a more functional format. One observation I have made during my work is that most Norwegian architects travelled outside of Norway at one point or at least were in contact with the architectural discourses in other countries and other continents as is evident in *Byggekunst*. For instance, in *Byggekunst* from 1923 there are mentions of the new French architecture<sup>186</sup>, Norway's pavilion in Rio de Janeiro<sup>187</sup>, a congress in Gothenburg<sup>188</sup>, and an article discussing the possibility of work for Norwegian architects in Afghanistan<sup>189</sup>. This points to a wide array of contact points between architects and the world beyond Norwegian borders. And based primarily on *Byggekunst*, travel singlehandedly made up the largest portion of material when it came to visible contact between Norway and Italy. The most important aspect of contact through travel based on the primary sources was firstly due to participation in both international and national fairs, a close second in magnitude was participation at congresses, and finally and thirdly study trips.

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<sup>186</sup> Heiberg, "Fransk nyttearkitektur."

<sup>187</sup> R. E. Jacobsen, "Norges utstillingspavillon i Rio de Janeiro," *Byggekunst* 5 (1923): 139.

<sup>188</sup> Andreas Bugge, "Byplanutstillingen og byplankongressen i Gøteborg," *Byggekunst* 5 (1923): 47.

<sup>189</sup> Alf Krohn, ed., "Arbeide for norske arkitekter i Afganistan," *Byggekunst* 5 (1923): 172.

## FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS

Fairs and exhibitions were one of the most important aspects of contact between architects of different nationalities, and in this case between Norwegians and Italians. During the interwar period seven world fairs were arranged, spread throughout Europe and the U.S. In the same time period, a variety of other exhibitions were also held. The fairs and exhibitions were a means of showmanship on part of the states participating and also a way to enter into and contribute to the international and national discourse on architecture (and art and industry for instance).

The reason I have chosen to separate World's Fairs from the rest of the exhibitions is that the purpose of World's Fairs was a collection of exhibitions by governments and private agencies under one grander topic, but with ample opportunities to showcase several fields. The other exhibitions usually only had one exhibitor or one topic but could include participation by several, but never in the same scale as a World's Fair. The same is true for the opportunity for propaganda and press. As stated by Knut Knutsen et. al. in an article in *Byggekunst* 1938; "The international kind of exhibition diverts from more local exhibitions in that propaganda is placed in the foreground".<sup>190</sup> The Fairs in themselves were perhaps the greatest arena in the interwar period for exhibitors to propagate themselves and nations knew to exploit this knowledge. An article written prior to the World Fair in New York 1939 adds to confirm the possibility for propaganda inherent in World's Fairs and especially maybe in this particular fair:

"It is a great parade of news, publicity, propaganda! (...) That is why the New York Fair seems destined to become the greatest single public relations program in all history".<sup>191</sup>

To sum it up, the main difference between World's Fairs and other exhibitions is the sheer scale (of area and of exhibitors) and the influential proximity. Therefore, it also seem that the international fairs would provide the greatest opportunity for an interaction between Norwegians and Italians (as well as other nations). This is not to diminish the importance of national exhibitions, but unless there is specific mention of Italians at exhibitions which

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<sup>190</sup> Knut Knutsen, Arne Korsmo, and Ole Lind Schistad, "Norges paviljong på Verdensutstillingen i Paris," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 20 (1938): 1–3.

<sup>191</sup> Bernard Lichtenberg, "Business Backs New York World Fair to Meet the New Deal Propaganda," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (April 1938): 314–20.

Norwegian architects reviewed in Byggekunst this is a larger grey area and harder to indicate any relation.

From what is reviewed and mentioned in Byggekunst and in the secondary literature, the main point of interest whether we are talking a World's Fair or a different exhibition were the pavilions. Pavilions were in the interwar period an embodiment of national identity and architecture and the means which nations could survey each other. Pavilions were, according to Joel Robinson, "a work of pure architecture, dressed up as a housing prototype or model factory."<sup>192</sup> Pavilions at fairs and exhibitions provided ample opportunity for architects to influence, inspire or appall each other. This also explains the fluidity of architectural styles – architecture became more of a movement, of a conscious choice close to ideology for architects rather than a simple preference for stucco or arched entryways. Italy was no exception. In the interwar period, Italians would oftentimes present some of the larger displays or pavilions of architecture – surely in an attempt to propagate the success of Italian architecture and city planning and its monumental history. Art and architecture especially were one of the main mediums through which Fascist Italy showed its success and supremacy. That this would go unnoticed by Norwegian architects present at the fairs and exhibitions seems inconceivable as we shall see going through the primary and secondary sources entertaining fairs and exhibitions as points of contact and then I will in part three argue based on the findings (or lack thereof) the standpoint of Norwegian architects in regard to Italian architecture.

#### WORLD'S FAIRS

As a point of contact World's Fairs were highly relevant, being the biggest venues for each country and industrial actor to propagate themselves. Just to underline the exposure of fairs, the exhibitions were according to scholar Alexander Geppert in total visited by over 450 million, making them a likely point of inspiration for ideas to be brought back home and acculturated.<sup>193</sup> Both Norway and Italy partook at the fairs of the interwar era and thereby increased the possibility for exposure. The World's Fairs had for over 100 years been one of the most effective way for nations, artists, industry and architects to showcase their talent and to challenge the status quo, and the interwar era was perhaps even more of a world stage than ever before with increasing tension and ideologies.<sup>194</sup> World's Fairs were also key in the

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<sup>192</sup> Joel Robinson, "Introducing Pavilions: Big Worlds Under Little Tents," *Open Arts Journal*, no. 2 (2014 2013): 4.

<sup>193</sup> Alexander C.T. Geppert, "World's Fairs," *EGO. European History Online*, January 15, 2018, 5.

<sup>194</sup> Erik Mattie, *World's Fairs* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998).

staggering speed in which ideas and culture was exchanged. And although the World's Fairs were of fleeting existence as they were all planned to be demolished after having run its course of approximately six months, many of them left lasting impacts. It is therefore interesting to see the extent of the impact Italian pavilions on Norwegian architects. The examples of the Crystal Palace and the Eiffel Tower proves the impact which such a fair or pavilion could have.

The first World's Fair after the First World War was fittingly hosted by the French in Paris in 1925, considering France was thought to be one of the major actors in the aesthetic scene in the twentieth century and the city in which stood one of the hallmarks of industrial age and the *de novo*-category in architecture as mentioned in chapter one. The exhibition of 1925, «L'Exposition des arts décoratifs», was covered in *Byggekunst* the same year by E. Heiberg. He described the exhibition as marking the end of an era of fairs: this was an exhibition in which pavilions were no longer created harmoniously but rather showed a divide in opinion on architecture: one side more ornamental and decorative, and the other more functionalistic and “modern”.<sup>195</sup> The article did however not mention Italy or any Italian architecture. No mention does however not mean no participation, it simply states that this was not as noteworthy as other pavilions to Heiberg. Italy did participate at the fair, but their pavilion was not of interest for Norwegians. The Italian pavilion was, according to Kirk, “an official declaration of aesthetic war against European modernism” and telling of the historicizing and glamorization which the architects of Fascist Italy made themselves prone to in the interwar period.<sup>196</sup> Which was the opposite of what Heiberg highlights in his article. And although the style of the Italian pavilions at the fairs to come would eventually change into more a modernist or functionalistic style, the anchoring of history with the architecture of the Italian pavilions of the fascists was something which would be constant but to a varying degree – a third way in architecture as in ideology.<sup>197</sup> Kirk points out that it is this historicizing which makes the modernism of Italy stand out from the other manifestations of modernist architecture, as many pavilions and architectural modern movements was often based on the more recent history. A prime example were the Soviet pavilions of the interwar era.

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<sup>195</sup> Heiberg, “Utstillingen for Dekorativ Kunst i Paris 1925.”

<sup>196</sup> Kirk, *The Architecture of Modern Italy: Visions of Utopia, 1900-Present*, 2:63.

<sup>197</sup> Fascist architecture as the third way explained: Kallis, “Futures Made Present: Architecture, Monument, and the Battle for the ‘Third Way’ in Fascist Italy.”



The second World's Fair was held in Barcelona and Seville in 1929. This was perhaps one of the smaller fairs of the time, with 18 countries participating and went by in *Byggekunst* with only a two-page article by Ole Lind Schistad concerning itself with only the Norwegian section and the showcasing of Norwegian actors within trade and commodities such as fish and beer, and mentioning the other smaller countries with which Norway shared exhibition space, namely Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden, Austria and a Spanish hydropower-section.<sup>198</sup> To a similar degree, the focus of the articles of *Byggekunst* concerning themselves with the third fair (The 4<sup>th</sup> International Exhibition of Decorative Arts in Antwerp, 1930) was the Norwegian section or pavilion and a description of the Norwegian works presented with no mention of the Italian pavilion. Art historian Erik Mattie points out in his work on the World's Fairs that for instance at the 1930 fair the largest pavilions (in addition to those from Belgium) were from England, France and Italy.<sup>199</sup> In 1933 the World's Fair "A Century of Progress Exposition" in Chicago had more than 48 million attendees and

«of the foreign pavilions, Adalberto Libera's Italian entry, with its giant stylized fasces stands out. The structure was based on his design for the Exhibition of the Tenth Anniversary of the Fascist Revolution, which would be reprised yet again at the Brussels 1935 fair".<sup>200</sup>

This time around, the fair is not mentioned at all. For the year 1933, the most important international aspects mentioned in *Byggekunst* was a collaboration between NTH and the technical college in Berlin, international congresses, the architectural movements in Italy and a meeting in Milan. It is therefore rather odd that pavilions gained no mention by the Norwegian architects present at the fair. And the fair in Brussels in 1935 is mentioned in *Byggekunst*, but as an echo of previous reviews it only contains information on the Norwegian pavilion.<sup>201</sup> Interestingly Mattie points out that Fascist Italy was once again one of the largest pavilions of this fair, and for the first time Norway is also mentioned in relation to the representation of modernist buildings<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ole Schistad, "Barcelona-utstillingen. Norges avdeling.," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 1929, 155–57.

<sup>199</sup> Mattie, *World's Fairs*, 154–59.

<sup>200</sup> Mattie, 164.

<sup>201</sup> Ole Lind Schistad, "To utstillinger: Norges paviljon på Verdensutstillingen i Brüssel," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 17 (1935): 239–40.

<sup>202</sup> Mattie, *World's Fairs*, 172. "One of the largest foreign entries (over 6 acres with a 164-foot tower) was from Fascist Italy. The design, but Adalberto Libera with Mario de Renzi, was essentially a modified version of their 1932 building for the Exhibition of the Tenth Anniversary of the Fascist Revolution in Rome (Mussolini himself had requested that it be used as the pavilion's model). Revised, the façade boasted four giant, stylized fasces applied to a white rectangular block portico punched with a grid of tiny windows. On the interior was a didactic installation on the development of fascism."

However, something changed regarding the last two World's Fairs. Both the one in Paris in 1937 and the one in New York in 1939 got a much more in-depth coverage, and in reading the journals from 1938 and 1939 it is clearly visible that more funds and more effort was being put into the pavilions. Much of the problem prior to the end of the interwar period for Norwegians had been a lack of financial means and still posed some trouble. Additionally, though it is not openly used as an excuse or stated in *Byggekunst*, it is possible that the disagreement between architects rendered any unified front difficult to present internationally. But in 1937 and 1939 Norwegians stepped up the game, although the reception of the pavilions varied, increasing the exposure of Norwegian architecture – but also meaning that some of the bigger names of Norwegian architecture of the time would travel to the sites and meet other nationalities and bring home their impression of other pavilions. In the World's Fair in Paris, for instance, architect Knut Knutsen writes that “in the same areal which our building was positioned, was also many of the greater powers' exhibitions, such as the German and Soviet large pavilions”.<sup>203</sup> Mattie also mentions the stand-off so to speak between the German and Soviet pavilions and claims that they competed in terms of size and monumentality with “those of Italy (...), France, and a host of other nations”.<sup>204</sup> Knutsen or the others writing on the topic of the fair in Paris does however never mention Italy in their reviews, but points out that although the Norwegian pavilion was not the sign of innovative architecture it should have been, it is an opportunity to prepare for the fair in New York in 1939. The preparations did however not yield any remarkable results for Norway in New York (Gudolf Blakstad argues in an article that it was due to the exclusion of architects in preparation for the fair and Finn Bryn points out that the changing of architects and the limited time also made the Norwegian pavilion appear uncoordinated),<sup>205</sup> and there is next to nothing in regard to any observations of the Italian pavilion – although it was again one of the greater ones. There is a vague mention of the Italian pavilion prior to the fair in *Byggekunst* 1938 in an anonymous sketch of a small Norwegian Pavilion in the front of a great Italian pavilion drawn with hard monumental and functionalistic lines in addition to the tower of Pisa. This is however the only mention in *Byggekunst* to the closeness the Norwegian pavilion probably had to the Italian one. And the only mention of Italy in the 1939 volume of

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<sup>203</sup> Knutsen, Korsmo, and Schistad, “Norges paviljong på Verdensutstillingen i Paris,” 3. «I samme del av utstillingsarealet, som vår bygning var, lå også en del av stormaktenes utstillinger, som Tysklands of Sovjets kjempepaviljonger»

<sup>204</sup> Mattie, *World's Fairs*, 184.

<sup>205</sup> Gudolf Blakstad, “Våre riksutstillinger i utlandet, - den norske i New York in mente,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 21 (1939): 145. and Finn Bryn, “Noen erfaringer etter New York-utstillingen,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 21 (1939): 146–50.

Byggekunst is confined to one sentence on the planned exhibit in Rome couple of years later.<sup>206</sup>

#### EXHIBITIONS

In terms of other exhibitions, there are very rarely any mention of Italian or Fascist architecture or architects in the interwar period. There are mentions of the political climate and increasing tensions amongst various European nations, but all in all, Byggekunst remained true to its focus from the World's Fair in that the main interest when discussing exhibitions were the Norwegian contributions or a discussion of the architecture in usually the neighboring countries such as Sweden, Finland and Denmark. I find this puzzling, especially since Italy embarked on great exhibitions during the 1930s The Mostra della rivoluzione fascista from 1932 which celebrated ten years of fascism and lasted for two years, and was perhaps the most noticeable. This exhibition was mentioned once in Byggekunst in 1933, by Munthe-Kaas in a lengthy article on his journey through ten countries:

“In memory of 10 years Fascism a great exhibition is held, «mostra» which is built in the most modern style, flanked by mighty tin-plated columns. The interior is impressive in their grand height, but it seems tiring to queue through an exhibition mainly consisting of text, especially when one is not very familiar with the language. To make sure that all visitors are able to see the exhibition the price for railway-tickets have been lowered, and the tickets have to be stamped by attendance in the inner room of the exhibition”.<sup>207</sup>

The exhibition was “the symbolic center of fascist worship around the world, attracting an estimated four million visitors and drawing widespread praise for its artistic as well as its political significance”. It should therefore be obvious that in the span of 1932-34 Byggekunst would include some mention of it, and especially as the Italian pavilion of World's Fairs 1933 and 1935 was based on the exhibition. Additionally the scholar Cagol Stefano's PhD-thesis points out that the amount of exhibits arranged by the regime in the 1930s is striking,<sup>208</sup> and

<sup>206</sup> Blakstad, “Våre riksutstillinger i utlandet, - den norske i New York in mente.”

<sup>207</sup> Herman Munthe-Kaas, “Optegnelser fra en studiereise gjennom 10 land,” *Byggekunst*, Byggekunst, 15 (1933): 115. «Til minne om 10 års fascisme avholdes en stor utstilling, «mostra», som er bygget i den aller mest moderne stil, flankert av veldige bilkkbeslåtte søiler. Interiørene er imponerende ved sine veldige høide, men det virker i lengden trettende å gå i kø gjennom en utstilling vesentlig bestående av skrift, særlig når man ikke er helt sikker i sproget. For å sikre sig at alle tilreisende får se utstillingen er jernbane-billettprisen under jubileet nedsatt, og billettene må stemples ved personlig fremmøte i utstillingens innerste rum”.

<sup>208</sup> Stefano Cagol, “Towards a Genealogy of the Thematic Contemporary Art Exhibition: Italian Exhibition Culture from the Mostra Della Rivoluzione Fascista (1932) to the Palazzo Grassi's Ciclo Della Vitalità (1959-1961)” (PHD Thesis, Royal College of Art, 2014), 32, Royal College of Art Online Archive, <http://researchonline.rca.ac.uk/id/eprint/1642>.

despite the fact that many architects travelled abroad, there is as we have seen little mention of these exhibits at all in any of the primary sources.

#### CONGRESSES

In addition to exhibitions, Norwegians and Italians partook in a variety of congresses and meetings between architects. The interwar period entertained a variety of congresses and meetings between architects, such as the International Congress of Modern Architecture (CIAM), Permanent Committee of Architects (CPIA),<sup>209</sup> and the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning (IFHTP).<sup>210</sup> This was a result of the growing numbers of organized architects and a growing awareness of a responsibility for building, planning and constructing the lives of society as a result of the urbanization. Industrialization, migration and the First World War had changed the living patterns in Europe and the US. Issues such as town- and city-planning and rational construction of living quarters made architects seek each other's council to figure out solutions. Industrialization had for instance brought with it the idea of standardization – a topic very much debated in *Byggekunst* and *PLAN* – and the idea of a universal solution was appealing to many.

Based on the primary journals, the most important congresses for Norwegian architects in the interwar era in terms of contact with Italy was those conducted by CIAM. Second most important congresses concerned those regarding the profession of architects and the education of architects. In chronological order, the first congress of importance regarding Italian-Norwegian relations is the International Congress for Education of Architects in London 1924.<sup>211</sup> At this congress, many of the most vital countries but Germany, met to discuss the formal education and to present the national education. Sverre Pedersen wrote of Italy as being one of the four great nations and the congress lasted for three days, and what is interesting is that this is one of the the first mention of interwar Italy since the Fascist

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<sup>209</sup> Martin Kohlrausch, "3. Organising New Architectural Goals," *Brokers of Modernity: East Central Europe and the Rise of Modernist Architects, 1910-1950*, 2019, 99, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvcwnzhj.8>. "The Comité Permanent International des Architectes (Permanent Committee of Architects, CPIA), founded in Paris in 1867. (...) The CPIA's prime goal was to represent the profession of architects"

<sup>210</sup> Kohlrausch, 99–100. "the International Federation for Housing and Town Planning (IFHTP), established in Britain in 1913 by Ebenezer Howard. Howard had been instrumental in the garden city movement and the Town and Country Planning Associations (TCPA) set up fourteen years earlier, in 1899, with a much more national, British outlook.(...) The IFHTP strove, particularly from the late 1920s, for knowledge exchange and exchange of best practices. Whereas spreading national models had been its key mode of operation before the war, in the 1920s the focus shifted to reaching a consensus over standards in a clearly defined fields of expertise, and employing scientific methods".

<sup>211</sup> Sverre Pedersen, "Indtryk fra den internationale kongres for arkitektundervisning i London sommeren 1924," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 5 (1924): 169–75.

takeover in 1922 (the first in 1923, see *Other Means*). He goes on to describe the presentation from Italy as

“showing signs of a greater independence than previously. There is the pressure of the mighty tradition. The explanations presented justifies that there is a good system in place for a gradually increase of education. Though there are no results as of yet». <sup>212</sup>

In the following years, it is on the other hand certain key congresses which is most noteworthy and a handful of them were CIAM-congresses. In *Byggekunst* CIAM is referred to the *Internationale Kongress für neues Bauen*,<sup>213</sup> and this points to the fact that German was a language more readily available for many Norwegians seeing that Norwegians studied in Germany and the ties with Germany had a longer history and stronger than the ties with France (although some Norwegians were also fluent in French). The congresses were usually in German, but by the last one in Athens German, French and English were used as the formal languages. Munthe-Kaas pointed out in his review of the congress that the inclusion of other languages posed some trouble with communication. This is interesting for the perception of Italian architecture as it would indicate that certain countries – Italy in this case – were not as accessible as others to Norwegian architects.

An international array of architects, Norwegians and Italians included, used the CIAM congresses as the method in which they dissected and discussed modern architecture and urban planning. The CIAM viewed itself, according to scholar Martin Kohlrausch, “as artistic-aesthetic avant-garde which at the same time tackled concrete social problems”.<sup>214</sup> And as explained in chapter 1, CIAM was not an organization or union, but rather an amalgamation of architects who arranged a series of congresses with the participation of several nationalities – such as Norwegians and Italians and therefore rendering the congresses as important and likeable points of contact. According to the Progressive Architects’ Group Oslo, Norway (PAGON)<sup>215</sup> – the Norwegian fraction of the CIAM established in the beginning of the 1950 – CIAM was an international reaction to a hollowness existent in the

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<sup>212</sup> Pedersen, 175. «Italiens utstilling viser tegn til en større selvstændighet end før. Den vældige tradition trykker jo. De redegjørelser som fremkommer godtgjør at der er utarbeidet et greit system for en gradvis stigende undervisning. Resultater foreligger dog endnu ikke.»

<sup>213</sup> In Norwegian CIAM would be called something like «*Den internasjonale kongress for moderne arkitektur*», while the preferred name in English secondary sources have constantly been CIAM or the Congrès Internationale Architecture Moderné.

<sup>214</sup> Kohlrausch, “3. Organising New Architectural Goals,” 108.)

<sup>215</sup> Christian Norberg-Schulz, *The Functionalist Arne Korsmo*, 1st ed., Norwegian Architects 3 (Oslo, Norway: Universitetsforlaget, 1986), 70. Norberg-Schulz on the topic of establishing PAGON: «The year in America was a many-sided window onto what was going on in the world, and motivated Korsmo to return to the stagnant Norwegian milieu with renewed energy. When the author of this book, at the request of S. Giedeon in 1950, asked Korsmo to head a Norwegian section of the CIAM, Korsmo accepted with enthusiasm. It was called PAGON, (Progressive Arkitektters Gruppe Oslo Norge) and, in addition to the two men already mentioned, had P.A.M. Mellbye, Sverre Fehn, Geir Grung, Odd Østbye, Håkon Mjelva and Robert Esdaile as members. The group was active up to 1956, involved in large- and small-scale projects. On several occasions Jørn Utzon took part in the work”.

architectural discourses in various countries and the goal was to discuss the modern architecture and how to establish an international discourse which was beneficial to most.<sup>216</sup> Or as described by Herman Munthe-Kaas as an international congregation with the task to lead the new buildings on a sound rational track”.<sup>217</sup> The CIAM, or “Neues bauen” as it was often called in *Byggekunst*, had a total of four congresses during the interwar period, the first and inaugural one being in La Sarraz in Switzerland in 1928. Italy was very much part of the first meeting, with Alberto Sartoris attending on behalf of Italy. Based on his untitled manuscript report on the first CIAM it is clear that the

“first action of the congress was to identify the particularities of each nation’s modern architecture, then to identify specific principles that could be imported by each nation, in order to develop a course of action proper to each country”.<sup>218</sup>

However, this is never mentioned in *Byggekunst* and Munthe-Kaas emphasize in his article from 1933 that CIAM is an apolitical congregation consisting of groups from twenty countries.<sup>219</sup> He then goes on to explain that it was in fact Lars Backer who founded the Norwegian group of Neues Bauen,<sup>220,221</sup> but the existence or work by this group has never been confirmed or followed up in the editions of *Byggekunst* or *Plan* in the 1930s. Nonetheless, Lars Backer was also part of the delegation that went to the second CIAM-congress in Frankfurt in 1929 with architects Herman Munthe-Kaas, Frithjof Reppen and Harald Aars.<sup>222</sup> The results from this congress is discussed in the 1932 volume of *Byggekunst* by Herman Munthe-Kaas.<sup>223</sup> Italy is never mentioned in the articles referring to the congress,

<sup>216</sup> Carl Corwin et al., “Hva er CIAM?,” *Byggekunst* 34, no. 6–7 (1952): 94–96.

<sup>217</sup> Herman Munthe-Kaas, “Kongress i Moskva: ”Den funksjonelle by.” *Byggekunst, Byggekunst\_15\_ Attachment (1933): 4.*

<sup>218</sup> David Rifkind, “‘Everything in the State, Nothing against the State, Nothing Outside the State’: Corporatist Urbanism and Rationalist Architecture in Fascist Italy,” *Planning Perspectives* 27, no. 1 (January 2012): 77, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2012.629810>. Footnote 21.

<sup>219</sup> Herman Munthe-Kaas, “Kongress i Moskva: ”Den funksjonelle by.” *Byggekunst, Byggekunst\_15\_ Attachment (1933): 4.*

<sup>220</sup> Grønvold, *Arkitekt Lars Backer og hans tid*, 24. The author writes that there has not been possible to find an international organization under the name of Neues Bauen – I argue, based on the articles in *Byggekunst* and specifically those by Munthe-Kaas, that Neues Bauen simply is a short version of the *Internationale Kongress für neues Bauen*. Given the relations that Backer had outside of Norway and his consistent trips abroad (“beyond the expected holidays architect have the right to every other year go on a study trip with permission from work for up to three months”) “Utover de vanlige ferier har arkitektene ret til andet hvert aar, vekselvis, at foreta en studiereise med permission optil 3 maaneder”, U. Grønvold, 2016, p. 214) it is very likely that he was in touch with, cooperating and working with the architects of CIAM. It was also Lars Backer, Herman Munthe-Kaas, Frithjof Reppen and Harald Aars who went to the second congress of CIAM in Frankfurt in October 1929 and it is likely that Lars Backer after this attendance formed a Norwegian section for CIAM – but one which was never acknowledged or made public due to the lack of evidence in Norwegian sources.

<sup>221</sup> Herman Munthe-Kaas, “Kongress i Moskva: ”Den funksjonelle by.” *Byggekunst, Byggekunst\_15\_ Attachment (1933): 4.* «Den norske gruppe blev stiftet av arkitekt Lars Backer. Også denne gang vil den norske gruppe delta med en undersøkelse av Oslo byplan.»

<sup>222</sup> Alf Krohn, ed., “Internasjonale Kongress for moderne arkitektur. Frankfurt A. M., 24.-26. Oktober 1929.,” *Byggekunst* 11, no. 1 (1929): 176.

<sup>223</sup> Herman Munthe-Kaas, “rationelle bebauungsweisen» verlag: Englert u. Schlosser, Frankfurt a.M.,” *Byggekunst, Byggekunst*, 14 (1932): 15. “Vi kjenner forhåpentlig alle: ‘Die Wohnung für das Existensminimum’, utgitt av: Internationale Kongress für neues Bauen: resultatet av kongressen i Frankfurt 1929. Uundværlig for enhver som har den minste interesse for boligsakens 100 forskjellige løsninger av boligen for eksistensminimum. Også Norge er representert likesom de aller fleste civiliserte nasjoner.

but according to art historian David Rifkind the Gruppo 7 (the rationalists - see chapter 2) attended both the congress in Frankfurt and the third congress in Brussels in 1930.<sup>224</sup> However, the Brussels-congress is never mentioned in the primary sources.

The participants from Norway are however back again at the fourth (and infamous) congress in 1933 in Athens, and in a more detailed article than previously there are also mentions of the Italian delegation in *Byggekunst*. The headline for the congress was “The Functional City”, and 16 countries got together to discuss all the architectural, technical, economic and social aspects of urban planning and the scope of interest was widened from districts and cities to also include regional and national planning and thus fawning over more than architects previously had.<sup>225</sup> Munthe-Kaas details that 33 cities had been thoroughly researched by various national groups, including Oslo, Littoria, Como, Verona and Rome.<sup>226</sup> The congress was held in due order to discuss the analysis of the situation in each city and how the planning should be conducted in order to be fully functional. In this period the members of the congress only met once in Barcelona, but not at an official congress such as the one in Athens. The only mention of Italy was as a participant and the cities which were presented. However, Rifkind, on his work with the journal *Quadrante* (1933-1936),<sup>227</sup> writes that this journal perhaps presented the most detailed resumé from the congress and points to the choice of including Littoria - “the first of the new towns built as part of the Pontine marshes reclamation south of Rome”.<sup>228</sup> The choice to showcase the urban planning Littoria and new towns was probably part of the propagandistic scheme of the Fascist state, to show the third way even in terms of architecture in combining highly modern urban planning with cities of historical significance.<sup>229</sup>

A fifth congress was planned in 1937, but as to my knowledge was never completed or hosted. *Byggekunst* nor the other journals contain any information of this congress. But the fact that Italy were part of the CIAM from the early days, and attempted to

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<sup>224</sup> Rifkind, *The Battle for Modernism: Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy*, 28. Footnote 10.

<sup>225</sup> Rifkind, 237.

<sup>226</sup> Herman Munthe-Kaas, “Den 4de Internasjonale Kongress for Nybygging (Neues Bauen),” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 16 (1934): 54–60.

<sup>227</sup> Rifkind, *The Battle for Modernism: Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy*, 10. “The short-lived cultural journal *Quadrante* transformed the practice of architecture in Fascist Italy. Over the course of three years (1933-1936), the magazine agitated for an “architecture of the state” that would represent the values and aspirations of the Fascist regime, and in so doing it changed the language with which architects and their clientele addressed the built environment. The journal sponsored the most detailed discussion of what, precisely, should constitute a suitably “Fascist architecture.” *Quadrante* rallied supporters and organized the most prominent practitioners and benefactors of Italian Rationalism into a coherent movement that advanced the cause of specific currents of modern architecture in inter-war Italy. »

<sup>228</sup> Rifkind, 238.

<sup>229</sup> Ruth Ben-Ghiat, “Italian Facism and the Aesthetics of the ‘Third Way,’” *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 2 (1996): 293–316, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002200949603100205>. “(...)fascism as a third way distinct from liberalism and Marxism.”

adapt ideas from the congresses with Fascist ideals in order to improve the living and industrial conditions in Italy,<sup>230</sup> means that Italian architects working for the Fascist state were present at congresses and therefore it is plausible that Norwegians adapted some of their ideas on city planning and house building into Norway.

Other congresses, such as those conducted by the CPIA, were also mentioned in *Byggekunst* ever now and again, but only as a footnote and anything in relation to Italy was never mentioned. For instance, the XII International Congress for Architecture in Budapest by CPIA had several nations present, Italy and Norway included.<sup>231</sup> But to confirm the presence of Italians at the congress one will have to double-check journals and sources from other countries – in this specific case the Italian journal *Architettura e Arti Decorative* from 1931 as Rifkind has done in his work.<sup>232</sup> The same for the XI Congress in Amsterdam and Hague in 1927.<sup>233</sup>

Having said that, the strongest connection between Norwegians and Italians which I have found in regard to congresses is the notice in *Byggekunst* 1935 on CPIA's congress in Rome in September the same year. This is also just the second time when I have found an abbreviation of the word fascism in all of the volumes of *Byggekunst*;

“XIII. International Congress for Architects in Rome 22<sup>nd</sup> -28<sup>th</sup> September 1935, arranged by the Italian section of CPIA and the national fascist syndicate of Italian architects.”<sup>234</sup>

But this is also the only mention of this congress and any details on the result of the congress is never shared in *Byggekunst* or in *Plan*. Furthermore, there was also one notable congress conducted by the IFHTP in 1935; this is only mentioned in notices in *Byggekunst*. Howard R. Wiener writes that this congress in London was the way which many of the non-Italians learned of the urban planning and draining of the Pontine Marshes (for those not present at the

<sup>230</sup> Rifkind, “‘Everything in the State, Nothing against the State, Nothing Outside the State’: Corporativist Urbanism and Rationalist Architecture in Fascist Italy.”

<sup>231</sup> Sverre Poulsen, ed., “Notis,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 12 (1930): 176. “Følgende land deltok: Frankrike, Italia, Grekenland, Spania, Citta del Vaticano, Sverige, Finnland, Danmark, Norge, Østerrike, De Forenede Stater, Storbritannia, Argentina, Polen, Czechoslovakiet, Ungarn.”

<sup>232</sup> Rifkind, *The Battle for Modernism: Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy*, 45. Footnote 91. “Recent issues of *Architettura e Arti Decorative* had included a tribute to Sant’Elia and a sympathetic account of the Rationalists’ contributions to the exhibition of modern architecture at the xii International Congress of Architects in Budapest. Ferdinando Reggiori, “In memoria di Antonio Sant’Elia,” in *Architettura e Arti Decorative*, 7, March 1931, pp. 325-331; “I Lavori del xii Congresso Internazionale degli Architetti a Budapest,” in *Architettura e Arti Decorative*, 6-7, January-February 1931, pp. 293-302. Coverage of the Budapest show focused on Pagano and Levi-Montalcini’s Palazzo Gualino, Terragni’s Novocomum and the Gruppo 7’s Casa Elettrica, all of which would be featured in the miar exhibition. The Italian work sent to Budapest was collected by Piacentini and sanctioned by the syndicate, whose involvement in the exhibition was prompted by Griffini’s advocacy of the matter. Archivio iuav, Archivio Progetti, Fondo Griffini, Venice (fgv), Griffini, letter to Calza Bini, 4 April 1930.»

<sup>233</sup> Andreas Bagge, “11. Internasjonale Arkitektkongress i Haag,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 10 (1928): 11–13.

<sup>234</sup> Andreas Nygaard and Ole Lind Schistad, eds., “Fra O.A.F. Kongresser,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 17, no. Attachment (1935): 13–14.



CIAM congress in 1933 at least).<sup>235</sup> And although the Pontine New Towns was an urban planning project, it also had the additional function of spreading the word of the success and wealth in Fascist-Italy. However, the closest mention of any other countries than the hosting nation is only when the author mentions “interested personalities from all countries”.<sup>236</sup> I will discuss the meaning and the reason behind the lack of mention and acknowledgement in the last part of chapter four.

#### STUDY TRIPS

Although study trips make up a margin of the presence of Italian-Norwegian contact in the Byggekunst, I argue that they are no less important and provide the architects with the possibility to seek what the individual finds interesting as well as making the learning situation more open. It is, however, harder to state something based on the evidence from primary sources, and what can be stated will be mostly based on secondary sources and backed up by the diplomas from the NTH. There is no official register which I have been able to identify which details the who travelled where.

Today study trips are often conducted as part of an official education and in coordination with the institution which the student travels from. The study trips by architects in the interwar era were not conducted as part of an official education program, such as at the technical institutes, but rather conducted in order to study the architecture and discourse elsewhere and architects of all ages could go on a study trip. It was common for architects to conduct such a trip in a short period of time after one’s formal education finished, but not mandatory. Not all did or could afford going abroad. Sometimes architects travelled abroad only to World’s fairs and other congresses and exhibitions on behalf of ministries – both the Ministry for Commission and for Ministry for Foreign Policies was involved in invitations and in funding some of the travels of architects.

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<sup>235</sup> Howard R. Wiener, “New Towns in Twentieth Century Italy,” *Urbanism Past & Present* 2 (Summer 1976): 16–17. “«Unlike many of the Fascist building schemes which went unrealized or resulted in ludicrous monumentality, the planning of the Pontine towns fell to a vigorous generation of architects, some of whom showed considerable independence. The five new towns of Littoria (now Latina, 1932), Subaudia (1934), Pontinia (1935), Aprilia (1937) and Pomezia (1939) all achieved some sense of human scale, function and spacing. Many non-Italian urbanists learned of the new town plans from Luigi Piccinato’s 1935 presentation at the Fourteenth International Housing and Town Planning Congress in London. Piccinato, one of the creators of Sabaudia, outlined a program of controlled urban growth in the tradition of the medieval walled city. The expensive purchase of parks and the threat of land speculation within cities, he asserted, necessitated a regional planning approach. Piccinato foresaw, however, that such a new town policy would require a level of trust of planners and new urban settlers on the part of local authorities which would be difficult to achieve. Moreover, the towns would need to maintain a viable economic and social relationships with the countryside. The creation of expensive administrative organs in the town would be detrimental if the siphoned off of the rural population. The function of the new towns lay in improving the agricultural economy through the provision of services to the countryside.»

<sup>236</sup> Harald Aars, “Referat fra XIV Housing and Town Planning Congress, London 1935,” *Byggekunst* 17, no. Attachment (1935): 25. “Ikke minst er det fruktbringende og inspirerende å diskutere hvad man ser og de problemer som melder sig I forbindelse dermed interesserte personligheter fra alle andre land, hvor forholdene muligens arter sig helt anderledes enn i England eller Norge, men hvor problemene til syvende og sist kanskje er de samme.»

As previously discussed, in chapter three regarding the Norwegian context, the education of Norwegian architects was first formalized in 1910 and it was a highly technical education and did not focus too much on the aesthetic development of the students. These types of classes were provided at the Academy in Oslo instead. But this idea of having all creative arts gathered nationally and collaborating was a rather new idea in the industrial world of interwar Europe. The Bauhaus school (1919-1933) of aesthetics was brand new in that regard providing a wholesome artistic approach to education. Many forward-thinking or adventurous architects were looking at Bauhaus and Europe for new takes on architecture. According to articles in *Byggekunst*, there was an ongoing debate in the interwar era of which style of architecture to prefer and neither camp was agreeing it seems.

Regarding the diplomas from NTH, the Norwegian Encyclopedia of Arts and Artists (NKL) have proven useful in cross-checking which of the educated Norwegian architects travelled and if they travelled to Italy. After I went through the list of those who received their diplomas from NTH in the period 1914-1944 only 20 verifiably travelled to Italy. 19 did maybe travel, but only travels to the European continent are mentioned – nothing specific. Interestingly only 19 definitely never travelled. But in total this means that out of 304 who received their diplomas in this timespan, the travels of 246 are unaccounted for. One of these were Arne Korsmo, one of our time's most recognized functionalist, who finished his education in 1926. Christian Norberg-Schulz reveals the details of Korsmo's study trip abroad in 1928 after having received Henrichsens scholarship, of the young architect's travels through Germany, Italy and Holland. The main sources of inspiration for him, according to Norberg-Schulz, was the use of light in Italy, the contact he gained there with soon to be leading voices within the world of architecture and his travel to Holland:

“It was an unforgettable experience. We were received as friends – which was owing not least to the visit from the Oslo Architect's Association several months before ... The journey from Italy to Hilversum is a long one – but it is not far from Amalfi to Mr. Dudok's village. The same simplicity in solving the problems ...”<sup>237</sup>

But, of course, it is important to take into consideration that these are only those who received their education or official diploma in architecture in Norway. It was still common for many to split up their education and formally end their quest to become architects abroad. Lars Backer, the protagonist of 1920s Norwegian functionalism, was for instance one of few who studied

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<sup>237</sup> Norberg-Schulz, *The Functionalist Arne Korsmo*.

in Sweden after the opening of NTH in Norway and who also travelled abroad. One thing to be aware of is that as the financial capability for which limited Norwegian architects at exhibitions was also mirrored when it came to journeys abroad. *Byggekunst* 1935 reveal that Ingrid Pedersen at the office of architecture at NTH was working on statistical overview of NTH-graduated architects and their travels, and she discovered a fluctuation throughout since the first graduates and till 1932. According to her work, among those who received their diplomas in the period 1914-16 not one travelled abroad. The number increases towards the mid-1920s (in 1923 especially, as circa 75 percent leave the country at some point, mostly to the U.S.) (Lars Backer having crossed borders in 1920-21 fits into this statistic), but then decreases around the 1930s. This could very well be because of the economic depression which probably made work scarce. In 1932 not one of the graduates ventured out.<sup>238</sup> I have unfortunately not been able to get hold of this work or any information regarding the exhibition of her statistics which is mentioned in the notice.

One way to counter any financial limitations was by applying for grants, endowments and scholarships. These were handed out annually, and if could provide an additional way in which to control who went where in this timespan. But no such luck – there are a few times mention as to where some recipient went in the appendixes of the journal *Byggekunst*. The only example I was able to find regarding a trip to Italy financed by a grant was in *Byggekunst* vol. from 1937; “December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1936: Arch. Finn Bryn: “As recipient of the Eger-grant [went] to Greece, Italy and France”.<sup>239</sup> There was also a the second who travelled abroad in the interwar period was Herman Munthe-Kaas, but the financing of the trip is never mentioned. Munthe-Kaas published an article in *Byggekunst* 1932 based on his observations from ten countries he visited, and among these countries Italy was mentioned. In a brief account he has written that much has changed in Rome, but little is changed in Florence with the new regime. I will discuss this account further below.

#### OTHER MEANS OF CONTACT:

Although travel was the most important aspect of contact there was also other means for how architects could be presented to the contemporary architecture of Italy such as foreign journals, literature and word-of-mouth. Foreign journals were available for Norwegian

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<sup>238</sup> Andreas Nygaard and Ole Lind Schistad, eds., “Statistikk over arkitekter og deres arbeidsforhold,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 17, no. Attachment (1935): 48.

<sup>239</sup> *Byggekunst*, vol. 19, 1937: appendix p. 6: Report from meeting in O.A.F: (Oslo Architects Union/Oslo Arkitekt Forening) «3. desember 1936: Ark. Finn Bryn: «Som Egerstipendiat til Grekenland, Italia og Frankrike»

architects at different sites such as the library at the Architectural Academy (SHKS), the library at NTH and the spaces for the architectural unions of the cities or at NAL's office in Oslo. These journals were sometimes accounted for in *Byggekunst* at the end of the journal, and one thing to note is that in the interwar period there were always Italian journals present in addition to a wide range from other countries. This meant that not only were the architecture of Italians available for Norwegian architects to read (if able to), but if other foreign journals ever did a piece on the Italian architecture at the time some Norwegians were prone to read the piece. Journals could for example present Norwegians with manifests of architecture from other countries, such as Sant'Elia's and Le Corbusier, but only Le Corbusier's ideas were discussed and acculturated by Norwegian architects. However, the presence of journals underlines that Norwegians were prone to look abroad for inspiration was made throughout the interwar period, but is perhaps best said by Carl Berner on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the existence of a Norwegian journal on architecture:

“What can the reason be that we Norwegians so willingly open our doors to strangers? We have done this ever since the Bronze age and repeatedly today. (...) We travel a lot and pay attention to the literature, but it is still strange”.<sup>240</sup>

Having said that, which specific articles were available I am not able to confirm as going through all those journals and in various languages is too time consuming in relation to the size of this paper. Nonetheless, for the interest of the connection between Norway and Italy in the interwar period, the journals available was *Casabella*, *Domus*, *Rassegna De Architettura* and *Case d'Oggi*. It is important to note that Italian journals were first available in the latter part of the 1930s. However, the most recognized and influential journal of architecture in Italy during the interwar years was *Quadrante*,<sup>241</sup> but this is never mentioned as being available for Norwegian architects at the offices or libraries.<sup>242</sup> For the case of this thesis, I wish to emphasize the importance of *Casabella*. The journal was founded in 1928 as a magazine for housewives,<sup>243</sup> coinciding with the congress in La Sarraz. As a product of its time, it was

<sup>240</sup> Carl Berner, “Norsk arkitektur i 25 år. Et tilbakeblikk i anledning N.A.L.s 25 års jubileum,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 17 (1935): 92. «Hvad kan grunnen være til at vi nordmenn så villig rekker hånden til det fremmede? Helt fra bronsealderen av kan vi iakttatte dette fenomen, som gjentar sig den dag idag. Franske arkitekter kjenner for en stor del ikke Le Corbusier, her i landet er han vel kjent. Vi reiser meget og følger med i litteraturen, det gjør vi, men allikevel er det underlig»

<sup>241</sup> Rifkind, *The Battle for Modernism: Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy*. Or David Rifkind, “Pietro Maria Bardi, Quadrante, and the Architecture of Fascist Italy,” *MAC.Modernidade Latina. Os Italianos e Os Centros Do Modernismo Latino-Americano*, n.d., 11.

<sup>242</sup> For the role of the *Quadrante* in Fascist Italy, I recommend this book by Rifkind, *The Battle for Modernism: Quadrante and the Politicization of Architectural Discourse in Fascist Italy*.

<sup>243</sup> Franco Raggi, “Casabella,” in Isabella Pezzini and Jacques Gubler (eds.), “Architecture in Journals of the ‘Avant-garde,’ Part 1,” in *Art Libraries Journal*, 9, 1, Spring 1984, pp. 3-42.

turned into a modern critique of the architecture of its time under the pens of Alberto Sartoris and Giuseppe Pagano from 1929. And apropos Pagano, he actually held a lecture at the National Architects' Organization (NAL) in 1939 and was the first and only Italian mentioned to have ventured to Norway in *Byggekunst*. He had been a prominent fascist since his enrollment in 1919 and throughout the interwar period,<sup>244</sup> but as he was against German collaboration, he joined the Resistance in Italy in and died in a German concentration camp.<sup>245</sup> Alas, as an architect and a writer, he was a rationalist and his lecture regarded the “Modern architecture of Italy”.<sup>246</sup> I will further discuss the importance of this lecture in a little while.

Although Pagano is the only one mentioned in *Byggekunst*, another well-known Italian architect also travelled to Norway in the late 1930s: Ivo Pannaggi. His first visit was in 1935, but his connections with Norway goes further back. This example of Italian-to-Norway-contact I have discovered through secondary literature, and for historians of Norwegian architecture he is probably familiar. He was an Italian architect, artist and one of the grander names of Italian futurism and later championed the functionalism of Bauhaus. He is also a prime example of Italians bartering abroad in the interwar period. Most of what he is known for today is from his work after the Second World War, but he was an active participant in the Norwegian field of art and architecture already from his first visit to Norway 1935. He attended Bauhaus in its last days and brought the ideas of Bauhaus home with him as he moved back to Italy in 1933. He was very involved on the Norwegian scene through his contact with Ola Mørk Sandvik<sup>247</sup> – the only Norwegian architect who finished his studies at Bauhaus and one of the most influential architects during the latter part of the interwar period and after. Ola Mørk Sandvik travelled to Italy in 1933 after finishing his studies at the Bauhaus,<sup>248</sup> the same year that Pannaggi moved home and in one of the years of the Mostra-exhibition. 1936 Pannaggi travelled the north of Norway and wrote articles for an Italian journal. In 1939 he even married a Norwegian and he published in the fifties the first long historiography on Bauhaus in Norwegian. What is interesting with this very obvious link to

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<sup>244</sup> Diane Yvonne Ghirardo, “Italian Architects and Fascist Politics: An Evaluation of the Rationalist’s Role in Regime Building,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 39, no. 2 (May 1980): 109–27. Ghirardo makes an excellent case of researching further the difference between architects of Fascism and Nazism, as well as to emphasize the importance to know that the many of the Rationalist architects were in fact Fascist even though they renounced Fascism around 1942/43.

<sup>245</sup> Flavia Marcello, “Giuseppe Pagano: A Rationalist Caught between Theories and Practices of Fascist Italy,” *Architectural Theory Review* 8, no. 2 (2003): 96–112, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13264820309478487>.

<sup>246</sup> Eyvind Alnæs et al., eds., “Årsberetning fra O.A.F.,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 21 (1939): Attachment.

<sup>247</sup> Finborud and Hoegsberg, *Bauhaus på norsk/Bauhaus in Norwegian*, 109–10.

<sup>248</sup> Seip, Elisabeth. (2014, 20. november). Ola Mørk Sandvik. I Norsk kunstnerleksikon. Hentet 3. november 2019 fra [https://nkl.snl.no/Ola\\_M%C3%B8rk\\_Sandvik](https://nkl.snl.no/Ola_M%C3%B8rk_Sandvik)

Italian architecture – and in this case futurism and functionalism – is that Pannaggi was in the same circle of architects as Marinetti whom we learned earlier had close relations with Mussolini and the Fascist movement<sup>249</sup>. And in 1942 he moved permanently to Norway after having worked in Northern Norway as an Italian journalist and then married a Norwegian.<sup>250</sup>

A second lecture of importance was at the Oslo Architect Association in 1932, were A. P.L.'Orange lectured on the matter of "Roma Mussoliniana",<sup>251</sup> and a third in 1936 by the Norwegian-German Association represented by Dr. Brinchmann with a lecture on "Eigenart und Unterschiede der Kunst, Deutschlands-, Italiens-Frankreichs".<sup>252</sup> On top of that another point of contact was through the ministries and embassies. One such example is the invitation by Afghanistan's minister in Rome through the Norwegian minister in Rome in 1923 asking for Norwegian architects and engineers to come to Afghanistan to aid the construction of the new capitol Dar-El-Aman.<sup>253</sup> Or the notice of the possibility to apply for free access to Italian national archives from the Norwegian Minister in Rome through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

And lastly, international competitions for architecture was one way for Norwegians to be exposed and possibly discuss Italian architecture. The only example I found was related to the competition for the design of the building for the League of Nations in Genova.<sup>254</sup> In part three of this chapter I will discuss how travel, study trips and word of mouth were an effective way of sharing culture and how this plays into the perception of Fascist Italy's architecture.

## PART 2: THE DISCUSSION OF ITALIAN AND/OR FASCIST ARCHITECTURE IN BYGGEKUNST

We have now been through various points of contact between Norway and Italy, but whether this entered into the printed press of architecture still remain undiscovered. This part of the chapter will deal with the discussion of Italian interwar architecture in the journal *Byggekunst*. My main goals are to see how Fascist Italian architecture is presented in the various journals and to determine whether the architects ever described the architecture from Italy as Fascist. In part three of this chapter I will as planned discuss the meaning of the (possible) discussion in *Byggekunst*. Through the above part of chapter four I have looked for

<sup>249</sup> See page chapter 2, page 37

<sup>250</sup> Finborud and Hoegsberg, *Bauhaus på norsk/Bauhaus in Norwegian*, 110.

<sup>251</sup> Sverre Poulsen, ed., *Byggekunst*, vol. 14 (Oslo, Norway: C. Dahls Bok- & Kunsttrykkeri, 1932), Attachment, p. 15.

<sup>252</sup> Andreas Nygaard, ed., *Byggekunst*, vol. 19, *Byggekunst* (Oslo, Norway: C. Dahls Bok- & Kunsttrykkeri, 1937), Attachment, p. 6. Translation of title of lecture: «Uniqueness and difference of art, German, Italian, France ».

<sup>253</sup> Alf Krohn and Herman Munthe-Kaas, eds., "Notiser," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 5 (1923): 172.

<sup>254</sup> Alf Krohn and Sverre Poulsen, eds., "Bygning for Nasjonenes forbund, Geneve," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 9 (1927): 104–6.

connections regarding anything Italian or Fascist and found that Norwegians were indeed in contact with Italians (and others) through various means such as travel, literature, lectures and migration. But the points of contact with Italy that could be established through the *Byggekunst* were scarce and few in-between. And as mentioned, the journals *Arkitektur og Dekorativ Kunst* and *PLAN* were of no help in regard to Fascist Italy.

It is no surprise that in the first years of *Byggekunst*, Italy was seldom mentioned. In the 1919 edition, the only mentions of something Italian was the use of a “light Italian red”<sup>255</sup>, Swedish King Johan III’s fondness for Italian renaissance architecture<sup>256</sup>, and that Italy – among other countries – was one of few who was as a source of inspiration for Norwegian architects and that Italian motifs were often acculturated<sup>257</sup>. The implementation and outsourcing for classicist elements from Italy can be explained by the neo-classicist context at the time in Norway (see chapter three). The antique aspect of Italian architecture would continue to interest Norwegian architects both as inspiration but also in establishing the proper educational and historical background for architects at the NTH. It is also not odd that Italy was not mentioned further as the country was staggering to establish itself among other countries after the First World War and the first years the focus nationally was perhaps not so much the flourishing of Italian architecture as much as war reparations.<sup>258</sup> This take on Italian architecture would remain intact until 1923. In this *Byggekunst* there was the notice mentioned above on work for architects and engineers in Afghanistan in which the new government is briefly mentioned:

“Italy has for a while worked hard to gain access to these new work-opportunities in Afghanistan, and what is accomplished is considerable since last years established Italian legation in the country”.<sup>259</sup>

Additionally, in regard to the exhibition in Gothenburg the same year, S. Pedersen wrote in his summary of the exhibition and congress that “Italy had little on display, but it has considerable to show for in modern urban planning in Milan, Genoa, Naples and Rome”.<sup>260</sup> The same implicit reference to the new Fascist government is repeated in the notice of the

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<sup>255</sup> *Byggekunst*, vol 1, 1919, p.37

<sup>256</sup> *Byggekunst*, vol 1, 1919, pp. 59-60

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid*, p. 117

<sup>258</sup> For Italy’s involvement in the Peace Treaty and the Peace Conference in Wien I recommend reading \_\_\_ and \_\_\_.

<sup>259</sup> Krohn and Munthe-Kaas, “Notiser,” 172.” Italien har i længere tid arbeidet ganske energisk paa at søke at komme ind i disse nye arbeider i Afganistan, og adskillig synes at være utrettet gjennom den ifjor etablerte italienske legation i landet.»

<sup>260</sup> Sverre Pedersen, “Byplanutstillingen og byplankongressen i Göteborg,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 5 (1923): 156.

International Congress on Education for Architects in London in 1924. I will get back to discussing the implicit mention of the new Italian government in part three.

1923 also called for a change of tides at the entrance of an interesting influx from Europe. Edvard Heiberg writes an article on the usefulness of a new way of thinking architecture. This is the, albeit, slow start of functionalism. This influx was telling of the changes which the architectural scene in Norway is going to be experiencing in the next two decades until the Second World War. With functionalism and the new styles, I will argue, Norwegian architects around the same time as the Italian architects opened their minds for this new architecture and the more functional aspect of architecture and urban living. And as we learned in chapter 3, the first texts declaring functionalism was published in *Byggekunst*. Both Backer and Heiberg published their articles praising this new style in 1925 as mentioned in chapter three, but with no mention of Italy. The same volume also included a comparison between “classicist and scenic architecture in Norway and Italy”<sup>261</sup> written by Schnitler and in which he stated that there are “clear lines – no collective policy”.<sup>262</sup> However, in his article he never discussed art and architecture from contemporary Italy but rather up to the turning of the century – rendering no perception of contemporary, fascist Italy. The rest of *Byggekunst* 1925 did not mention Modern Italy, and in the 1926-volume the only mention of Italy is that Schnitler held a lecture on “French and Italian gardens”.<sup>263</sup>

In 1927, the most noteworthy of this volume in terms of Fascist Italy was the article on the “Building for the League of Nations, Genova” which informed that one Italian architect was in the jury (Attilio Muggia) and that four Italian contributions won prizes and were bought.<sup>264</sup> The 1928 edition of *Byggekunst* also featured two articles mentioning Rome and Italy, but there were no mentions of the interwar regime and only pre-First World Italy were referred to.<sup>265</sup> The content of the 1929-edition of *Byggekunst* mostly concerned itself with materials, waterpipes in tall buildings and isolation, but also with the planning of coming travels. *Byggekunst* of 1930 and 1931 contained some information on various international congresses and exhibits (in for instance Budapest, New York, Barcelona, Antwerp, Stockholm) but never mentioned Italy; the only mention was in the ongoing project of

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<sup>261</sup> Schnitler, “Klassisistisk Og Malerisk Arkitektur i Norge Og Italien. Klare Linjer - Ingen Samlingspolitikk.” Author’s translation of title.

<sup>262</sup> Schnitler.

<sup>263</sup> Alf Krohn and Gunnar Bjerke, eds., “Notis,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 8 (1926): 95.

<sup>264</sup> Krohn and Poulsen, “Bygning for Nasjonenes forbund, Geneve.”

<sup>265</sup> Andreas Bugge, “11. Internasjonale Arkitektkongress. Haag, Amsterdam, Rotterdam 29. august til 4. september 1927,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 10 (1928): 11–13; Sverre Poulsen, “Jens Thiis: Fransk ånd og kunst,” *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 10 (1928): 25–27.



protecting the title of architect – Italy is mentioned in relation to this as already having protection for the profession in place.<sup>266</sup>

While *Byggekunst* 1932 on the other hand tackled the issues of urban planning and construction in Europe and Italy after the First World War. Fredrik Marle mentioned in his article the rise in population and the increase of migration to the largest cities, and how the Italian state (which we know was Fascist) would grant 25 years of tax-relief for all new buildings in order to speed construction, as well as founded buildings for officials.<sup>267</sup> The interest of Italy as found in *Byggekunst* peaked in 1933, with two larger articles concerning Italy; Munthe-Kaas's study trip in ten countries – Italy included,<sup>268</sup> and a guideline to the architectural movements of Italy by Richard Rothschild.<sup>269</sup>

As for the years 1934-39 Italy was again mentioned (but not discussed) in one form or the other in regard on the article on 4<sup>th</sup> congress of Neues Bauen in 1934, in 1935 the 13<sup>th</sup> International congress by C.P.I.A., a lecture in 1936 by the Norwegian-German Company, in an article from 1939 discussing the various solutions to building bus stations with Nice as an example, the lecture by Pagano, and the mention in 1939 of a planned a field trip to Rome in 1942 for an International Exhibition.<sup>270</sup>

### PART 3: LEARNING FROM THE FASCISTS?

As far as someone actively adapted any ideas, that is to say, acculturated Italian or fascist architectural ideals and having put that in printing, it is not present in any of the volumes of *Byggekunst*. I had hoped to find acculturation of some of the aspects of Fascist Italian architecture when I went through the different journals – especially *Byggekunst* – and I was optimistic of this as I learned that the Dutch architects had taken an interest and applied Fascist experience in urban planning from the draining of the Pontine-marshes. My belief was that this would surely mean that Norwegian architects would have done the same. However, based on the journals this was not the case. I have been able to locate and prove that Norwegians had several points of contact in the interwar period with opportunity to interact with Italians, and this has been mapped thoroughly in the above sections of this chapter. The aim of this part will be to analyze and discuss the meaning of the points of contact, the

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<sup>266</sup> Sverre Poulsen, ed., "Arkitektittelen for arkitekter," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 13 (1931): 41; Sverre Poulsen, ed., "Arkitektittelens beskyttelse," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 13 (1931): 201.

<sup>267</sup> Fr. Marle, "Boliganlegg i Europa efter krigen (1920-1930)," *Byggekunst*, *Byggekunst*, 14, no. Attachment (1932): 25–26.

<sup>268</sup> Munthe-Kaas, "Optegnelser fra en studiereise gjennom 10 land."

<sup>269</sup> Richard Rothschild, "Retningslinjer i Italias arkitektur idag."

<sup>270</sup> Bryn, "Noen erfaringer etter New York-utstillingen."

discussion in *Byggekunst* and address the lack of visible acculturation – to see what Norwegians learned or not.

In *Byggekunst* Italy was not given the most space – not as an inspiration of classicist aesthetics nor as a modern nation. I believe this is partially because it is Italy, but also due to the focus of *Byggekunst*. Although there is a clear tendency of a change from looking inward at the Norwegian architectural situation to looking abroad in this period, the main focus of *Byggekunst* have still been the state of Norwegian architecture, national urban- and town planning and the education of architects. This shifted slightly throughout the 1920s and 1930s as the drive behind the articles changed from a focus on how Norwegians themselves can change the architectural discourse to how Norwegians can contribute and learn from the international scene in order to improve and change the national architectural discourse. Therefore, as with other countries, the mention of contemporary Italy increased in the 1930s. The peak of interest for Italy was reached in *Byggekunst* in 1933, with the texts from R. Rothchild and H. Munthe-Kaas from 1933. I will get back to these texts in a bit. Apart from these texts and mentions of lesser scale in notices, literature and in relation to international congresses, Italy was as we have seen seldom mentioned.

#### WHY ITALY WAS SELDOM MENTIONED

One of the reasons for the scarce existence of Italy-related text in *Byggekunst*, could be due to a language-barrier. Seeing as German, French and English were more accessible for Norwegians as they were a large part of Norwegian school curriculum it is no wonder that countries where the usage of these languages were common were of greater interest.<sup>271, 272</sup> It therefore makes sense that Germany, England, the U.S., Switzerland, France, Belgium and Holland was mentioned more often than Italy – the knowledge of Latin and Greek came second as they were elective in secondary education and this meant that few would master the languages. And out of the three mandatory languages, German was as mentioned above the first secondary language which Norwegians were taught, while English was the second and French third. One example of the troubles with language is pointed out by Munthe-Kaas in his

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<sup>271</sup> Gabriel E. Loftfield, "Secondary Education in Norway. Bulletin, 1930, No. 17" (Office of Education, United States Department of the Interior, 1930), 20–21, ERIC - Institute of Education Sciences, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED542050>. "German is the foreign language taught first; it has one year more of study than any others. At the same time it suggests both method and content for the other languages. Linguistically, Norwegian has more in common with German than with English or French. Economically and commercially, Norway is perhaps more closely related to Germany than to any other country. Added to these reasons is the close cultural relationship, especially in education and philosophy. The Norwegian system of education has its main root in the German system"

<sup>272</sup> Loftfield, 42–43. "In the gymnasium three foreign languages (German, French and English) are regularly required, besides Greek and Latin as electives (...) the gymnasium curriculum linguistically [is] rather top-heavy; the Norwegian feels it is justified by both practical and cultural considerations".

resume of the 4<sup>th</sup> International Congress for Neues Bauen: “The difficulties with language was this time especially larger for us northerners than at previous congresses where German was the applied language”.<sup>273</sup>

Another reason why Italy is so seldom mentioned could be because *Byggekunst* throughout the interwar period was highly centered on its national discourse and the Scandinavian discourse, and only portions of the journal covered anything related to other nations outside of Nordic countries. There is a mention of either a Nordic Congress, Nordic meeting of a national exhibition in either of the Nordic countries – Helsinki, Gothenburg and Stockholm were particularly popular throughout the interwar period. The Italian discourse, although available through established contact points between Norwegians and Italians, was simply not as important nor accessible as the Norwegian discourse nor the Nordic discourse.

A third reason, and one which I found fascinating, is the anti-political stance of *Byggekunst*. There was some form of censorship in *Byggekunst* on which topics could be discussed and this explains the lack of mentions regarding Soviet and Nazi-Germany as well. Soviet and Nazi-Germany: barely mentioned as well. This anti-political attitude among the editors and the stance the journal took was a conscious one according to an article from 1939 discussing an undisclosed political related event:

“The Norwegian Architects Association is and will be anti-political with the purpose of, in the best interest for the people, caring for the profession and the interests of architects. This is the task of the Norwegian Architects Association, and nothing else.”<sup>274</sup>

This bears witness to the tumultuous times that the interwar years were and became politically. The “safe” countries and their architecture were discussed at length, as they had little to no troublesome politics as Germany, Soviet and Italy had. *Byggekunst* was at times seemingly ignorant of the situation in the rest of the world. The mention and the disagreement with the closing of Bauhaus is the closest *Byggekunst* came to open disagreement with national socialism in Germany – and this was before the Nazi Party were elected.<sup>275</sup> And in

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<sup>273</sup> Munthe-Kaas, “Den 4de Internasjonale Kongress for Nybygging (Neues Bauen),” 54.

<sup>274</sup> F. W. Rode, “Kollegialt eller ukollegialt,” *Byggekunst* 17 (1939): 1. “Norges Arkitektforbund er og blir et upolitisk forbund hvis oppgave det er, til gagn for folket, å vareta fagets og standens interesser. \_Dette er Norges Arkitektforbunds oppgave, og ingen annen.”

<sup>275</sup> Poulsen, *Byggekunst*, 14:122. «Protest mot lukningen av Bauhaus Dessau! (...) Nedleggelsen vil også hos oss på det skarpeste fordømmes av alle fagfolk.»/«Protest against the closing of Bauhaus Dessau! (...) The closing will also by us be most condemned by all professionals”)

discussing the architecture in France, there were never any mention of the troubles of 1934,<sup>276</sup> and any affiliations that prominent architects had was never aired.<sup>277</sup> And based on two articles that mentioned Fascism in relation to Italy, it is therefore hard to properly establish the attitude Norwegian architects had towards Fascist architecture. To call it one of cautious observation would be the best fit and would neither state whether Byggekunst or its writers were in favor or not. This vagueness mirrors the confusion among liberal newspapers of contemporary Norway as mentioned in the introduction. It is probable that Norwegian architects had trouble deciding whether they were in favor of fascism or not. Although Byggekunst in no way takes an official stand, its writers had opinions which sometimes was let through the anti-political stance – such as the stand against the censorship of Bauhaus. Liberal contemporary newspapers, according to Lund, shared this lack of one opinion on the matter of fascism – be it condemnation or praise. The fear of any kind of revolution, but especially a communist revolution was very present in liberal newspapers, and fascism was seen as a reaction to communism but not something which was desired for Norway.<sup>278</sup> This could possibly be the drive behind the anti-political stance of Byggekunst as well.

#### MEANING OF CHAPTER FINDINGS: CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO?

But even though Italy was scarcely mentioned in Byggekunst, it was also mentioned in two rather large articles in 1933. Rothschild's article discussing the various architectural movements in Italy is, however, only one voice; as is Munthe-Kaas' rendition of his study-trip. But in the scarcity of information that was made available for the readers of Byggekunst, these were one of few articles of the interwar period which delved into the architectural discourse of a non-German, non-French, and non-English nation. Other articles which included a special on the architectural discourse in another such nation was one on Spain.<sup>279</sup> In his article Rothschild wrote that the architecture of the rationalistic Gruppo 7, such as

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<sup>276</sup> J. Wardhaugh writes a clear and concise analysis of the situation in France here: Jessica Wardhaugh, "Between Parliament and the People: The Problem of Representation in France, 1934-39," *Parliaments, Estates & Representation* 27, no. 1 (2007): 207–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02606755.2007.9522262>.

<sup>277</sup> For instance more present day discoveries that Le Corbusier was actually Fascist; see Simone Brott, "The Le Corbusier Scandal, or, Was Le Corbusier a Fascist?," *Fascism. Journal of Comparative Fascist Studies* 6, no. 2 (December 8, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1163/22116257-00602003>; Tim Benton, "Review: New Books on Le Corbusier," *Journal of Design History* 22, no. 3 (September 2009): 271–84.

<sup>278</sup> Lund, "'Se Til Italien! Vi Vil Ingenlunde Dit.': En Analyse Av Tidens Tegn Og Aftenpostens Syn På Den Italienske Fascismen På 1920-Tallet."

<sup>279</sup> Richard Rothschild, "Ny byggekunst i Spania," *Byggekunst, Byggekunst*, 15 (1933): 18–20.

“‘Novocomum’ in Como by Terragni, ‘Casa Elettrica’ on the international art-industry exhibition in Monza, and the administration complex for the Gualino group in Turin by Pagano-Pogatschnig and Levi-Montalcini,”<sup>280</sup>

from 1930 all triggered a discussion of modern architecture to the greater public and then goes on to state that this group was of most interest for “us” – but never explained this further.<sup>281</sup> The article then stated that Sant’Elia was given a canonized position in Italy for two and a half years ago by Marinetti and then claim that “Sant’Elia is for Italy what Wright is to America, Berlage to Holland and Gropius for Germany”.<sup>282</sup> Rothschild stated the importance of the rationalists and that the modern movement of rationalism could be seen as a promise for the development of modern Italian architecture, but he never mentioned fascism or the usefulness of rationalism could have in Norway. This therefore was an observation in which it is clear that the author was positive to the development in Italy, but never anything further. The same goes for Munthe-Kaas’ travel rendition. He observed, from a distance, the changes which had or had not occurred in Italy, but never discusses the implications of this in Norway any further.

There is also the mention of lecture on the architecture of Mussolini and the lecture by rationalist and fascist Giuseppe Pagano. Rothschild was right in his observation as rationalism as the most vibrant and most influential architectural movement in 1930s Italy – the architecture of Fascist Italy was heard elsewhere in the world such as at the World’s Fairs. So, Italy was of some interest – just not of very much interest. Through the notices and small mentions of Italian participation at exhibitions and congresses, we can learn that Italy was of some interest for Norwegian architects but not as much as first believed plausible, but it is there. This has also made it clear that the lack of attention given other aspects of influence in the history of Norwegian architecture most probably because of their political ties – such as Soviet, Nazi-Germany and Italy – has provided the present with an asymmetrical picture of the interwar architectural discourse in Norway and of the architectural history in general. In Norwegian architectural history, among the giant works of Norwegian architectural history,<sup>283</sup> the interwar period is almost brushed aside – except for the functionalism which undeniable dominated the time. An additional aspect is that architectural historians write of the garden

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<sup>280</sup> Richard Rothschild, “Retningslinjer i Italias arkitektur idag,” 78.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Richard Rothschild, “Retningslinjer i Italias arkitektur idag,” 78.

<sup>283</sup> Arne Gunnarsjaa, *Norges arkitekturhistorie* (Abstrakt forlag as, 2006); Gunnarsjaa, *Arkitekturleksikon*; Findal, *Norsk modernistisk arkitektur: om funksjonalismen*.

cities, industrial buildings, housing for workers and urban living in cities but cease to mention the ideology behind it except for a preference for machine-like design. If one is hellbent on finding any information regarding this, one has to look at either the contemporary sources such as *Byggekunst* or the biographies of the architects. In the last decades there has been a resurrection of previously un-nameable architects – such as Leif Grung, one of those architects seemingly closest in thinking and theory to Le Corbusier of the time, has been ignored because of his relation to Nazism and the work he supposedly did undercover for the Nazis under German occupation.<sup>284</sup> Magnus Poulsson has been ascribed to the label of National Romanticist, but an English scholar who previously studied in Norway,<sup>285</sup> has questioned the label as too narrow-minded and that Poulsson in reality was modernist in his approach. What I am trying to say, is that there is a lack of curiosity it seems among architectural historians of the twentieth century – especially in acknowledging negative ties with the outside world. Yet historians of architecture are quick to acknowledge the urge Norwegian architects of early twentieth century had to look abroad for inspiration to find themselves, but never if they had historically negative ideas or ties. The journal *Byggekunst* does additionally nothing but paint a picture of Norwegian architects as (mostly) men of the world, even though there were female architects. But the complexity of the time and the debates of the time completely vanishes as post-Second World War architectural historians writes of any other period which is not tainted by recent history. It would therefore be interesting to take this further and look into other contemporary newspapers and international reviews, newspapers and journals to see the perception of Fascist architecture in a wider Norwegian context and the perception internationally.

## CONCLUSION

### THESIS RECAPITULATED

In this thesis I have sought answer the question “How has the architecture of Fascist Italy influenced the Norwegian national discourse and how can the knowledge of this affect the Norwegian history of architecture?”. My goal was to challenge the limitations of the established Norwegian history of architecture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through attempting to reveal a relation between architects of Norway and Fascist Italy based on how contemporary Norwegian journals viewed Italy. It was therefore plausible that the connection between

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<sup>284</sup> Møllerhaug, *Stupet: Leif Grungs krig*.

<sup>285</sup> Mansfield, *Modernism and National Romanticism in the Work of Architect Magnus Poulsson (1881-1958)*.

Norway and Italy, amongst other connections, have been repeatedly overlooked by historians of architecture because of the negative implications of such ties. This has, in my opinion, rendered the history of architecture asymmetrical.

The connection between Italy and Norway should have been strong enough to warrant mention and effect on the Norwegian architectural discourse. I based this on the similarity in situation between the two nations; they were both relatively 'newborn' nations and attempting to create a national identity. The establishment of a national identity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century became increasingly connected with the idea of self-propagating the nation as well as having something solely national – in this case architecture. Both nations actively sought outside means of influence in order to establish a national identity in the field of architecture as a piece of the idea of a nation – and their similarity in sourcing inspiration would probably have made them connect at one point.

Secondly, I believed the Italian-Norwegian connection was likely was because of the historical ties between the two nations. Historically Norwegians had before the First World War travelled to Italy aspiring to be inspired by its art and architecture. Thus, seeing as neo-classicism was one of the larger architectural currents in Norway at the beginning of the interwar period, there should have been a continuation of this tradition to study the architecture of Italy.

Thirdly, there was the attention Fascist Italy had received in Norwegian contemporary media. As various scholars have conducted research on the interest and discussion surrounding Fascism in Norwegian media, I believed that there was no reason to why Fascism should not have been of interest to architects in Norway seeing as architecture was in the 1930s proclaimed the art of the state by Mussolini.

My goal by applying Norwegian contemporary journals and secondary literature was to establish that there was contemporary consensus for contact between Italy and Norway. It was also to see if there were any acculturation of what the Norwegians deemed Fascist or Italian architecture. This would be achieved through establishing thoroughly the international, Italian and Norwegian historical context as means to make the content of Byggekunst accessible, and give room for understanding the context which Norwegian architects found themselves in.

## THESIS FINDINGS

Through my reading of the journal *Byggekunst* I discovered that, as put into context in previous chapters, there were several viable points of contact between Norway and Italy which was not exploited as I had thought. However, the points of contact of most importance are still relevant for understanding the transnationalism which colored national discourses in Europe at the time and the international profile which architecture actually had, and even though the points of contact were not used as a means for interaction with Fascist Italy, the lack of mention also tells us something of why the Norwegian national discourse on architecture seem limited.

## CONTACT BETWEEN NORWEGIAN AND ITALIAN ARCHITECTS

The most important points of contact as found in the primary sources can be divided into three groups: exhibitions, congresses and study trips. However, in order to confirm exposure between Italy and Norway outside of the contemporary journal, one would have to address non-Norwegian sources such as Italian journals. These are therefore the points of contact which I was able to find in *Byggekunst*.

Exhibitions, such as World's Fairs and other national and international exhibitions, was next to congresses the arena where most architects of various nationalities physically met. This meant that the possibility for a cultural exchange of ideas surrounding both the style itself but also the ideology behind the architecture (what I have called a movement) increased. Because at exhibits nations would set up pavilions which would propagate the essence of its architecture and its nation, and as learned from secondary sources the Italian pavilions of the 1930s were some of the most noticeable in size and architecture therefore making it unlikely that it would go unnoticed by Norwegians. However, they did, and this lack of mention will be explained in a bit.

Congresses, on the other hand, was actively used as methods of discussion and attempting to establish an international discourse of architecture. The congresses of most importance in regard to Italian-Norwegian contact were those by the C.I.A.M. (especially 1933, where Italy is mentioned in *Byggekunst*), those by C.P.I.A. (especially the 1930 XII International Congress for Architecture in Budapest) and the one International Congress for Education of Architects in London 1924.

Thirdly, study trips were of importance. However, the total magnitude of study trips has been hard to prove. Based on a comparison between the diplomas from N.T.H. and



secondary sources (such as The Norwegian Encyclopedia Online), I have found some architects who definitely travelled to Italy for studies, as well as a few mentions in *Byggekunst* and in biographies. In *Byggekunst* I was only able to confirm two study trips conducted to Italy by architects (S. Pedersen and H. Munthe-Kaas). But a reason for this, as found in *Byggekunst*, was due to the fact the varying financial means of architects and that there were large fluctuations in when architects travelled.

#### THE DISCUSSION IN BYGGEKUNST

The discussion in *Byggekunst* was quite scarce on the matter of Fascist Italy. It was briefly mentioned from 1923 till 1939, but mostly in notices or in relation to Norway's participation on international congresses and exhibitions. In this time period, the most outstanding findings relating to perception of Fascist Italy was from *Byggekunst* 1933 by Munthe-Kaas and Rothschild. Munthe-Kaas, as mentioned, had a rendition of a study trip conducted to ten different countries – Italy included. He noted on the present architectural situation, but only as to changes done and not discussing the meaning or relevance for Norwegian architects. Rothschild did offer the most important article on Italy as he detailed the present situation in architectural movements, noting the virility of the Rationalists could be interesting for “us”.<sup>286</sup> “Us” probably meaning Norwegian architects, but he never explained why it is interesting. Nonetheless, like Munthe-Kaas, he was cautious throughout the article and the articles does not offer any perception other than interesting for the reader.

#### THE LACK OF MENTION

Although Italy is not given the space in the primary sources which I imagined at the beginning of this research, it was still given space and that in itself is a find. The primary sources prove that there is evidence to warrant a broader perspective on the Norwegian history of architecture than has been consensus as the journals show an interest and participation in international- and other national discourses. Nations such as Germany, France, Russia (Soviet), Japan, the U.S., Spain, (then) Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Greece received some form of mentionable interest just as Italy. The scarcity of other national presences in *Byggekunst* can be explained by various factors, but their scarcity does not mean that a transnational or international approach is irrelevant for the entirety of history of architecture.

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<sup>286</sup> Richard Rothschild, “Retningslinjer i Italias arkitektur idag.”” og for oss interessanteste gruppe er “razionalisti»./ «and for us the most interesting group is the ‘rationalists’.»

#### LANGUAGE BARRIER AND NORDIC-CENTRISM

One of the most important factors in the limitations of mentions in *Byggekunst* is due to a language barrier. Norwegians were trained in school in German, English and French, but with German being the most applied secondary language. This was due to the cultural and historical ties with Germany preceding the First World War, such as education and work. That these three languages was the preferred foreign language taught to Norwegians also explains the lenience toward German-, English- and French-speaking nations rather than countries of other languages – these nations were simply more available for Norwegians than was Italy or Spain. And in terms of availability, *Byggekunst* also had favored the Nordic countries (such as Sweden, Finland and Denmark) rather than other European countries. Most frequently mentioned throughout the twenty-year period of *Byggekunst* was either a Nordic congress, Nordic meeting or Nordic exhibition. In addition to being available through language and geographically – as travel took longer than it does today – these nations were also politically safe.

#### THE JOURNAL'S ANTI-POLITICAL STANCE

Apropos politically safe nations, there is the interesting element of the anti-political stance held by *Byggekunst*. It is not something which is openly defined until 1939 after a political incident involving architects, but it is evident in the period through the lack of any political mention in the journal. By this I mean that the anti-political stance functioned as a censorship on the cases which were included in *Byggekunst* and can also explain the lack of representation of countries with “troubling” policies – such as Soviet, Nazi-Germany and Fascist-Italy. *Byggekunst* mostly refer to interwar Italy as Italy, although some variation of the term fascism is mentioned twice, but that is a rarity. The choice of referring to the countries with their “neutral” name instead of acknowledging Nazism, Fascism or Communism, is political in itself. And this anti-political stance probably also limited the findings in terms of the visible political element of the architecture which could have been found in the journal, such as the texts from 1933.

#### THESIS RELEVANCE

My goal with this thesis was to prove the presence, perception and discussion of Italian interwar architecture in order to challenge the conventional historical narrative of the time period. Many scholars only entertain the *positive*, *neutral* or *safe* connections when writing the history of a nation, never acknowledging the full width of the transnational or

international world which the nation would have to engage with. This is therefore an attempt to broaden the horizon and although I did find little which confirmed the connection with Fascist Italy in the contemporary Norwegian journals *Byggekunst*, *Arkitektur og Dekorativ kunst* and *PLAN*. However, I found the presence of a variety of countries which are presented in the various journals in addition to those already recognized such as Holland, England, Germany and France. Of the countries where Norway does not have much knowledge of the language Italy, Spain, Soviet and Greece were presented and discussed in the journals. It means that the architectural situation was more fluid in general than previously acknowledged. Moreover, it underlines Norway's role a still emerging nation state on the search for a national style as Norwegians turned their focus externally – especially toward the 1930s. This points to a contemporary awareness which has either been ignored or gone unnoticed later by architectural historians and which should be included in the history because the national style of architecture in Norway is not as set as previously stated.

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