

New powers, old territories. Spatial strategies of appropriation in the European context.

Innsbruck, 5–7 November 2020

As part of its research project, *The Appropriation Strategies of Italy in South Tyrol and Trentino after the First World War*, the Unit of Architectural History and Monument Conservation (bg+d) at the University of Innsbruck is organizing a study day to present initial results and discuss them in a broader European context. The project has been running since 2018 and is funded by the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung.

The focus of the research is state building measures that were drafted and implemented to a varying degree throughout the former Habsburg territories Trentino and South Tyrol/Alto Adige. Planning and building played a key role in accelerating the process of Italianization in those regions. Through this process, topoi such as "italianità" and "modernità" were coined as new reference points of cultural policy. Those ideas, however, were applied distinctively different in the predominantly Italian-speaking Trentino and in the predominantly German-speaking South Tyrol. So far, research has neglected to take a comparative approach to the two newly acquired territories. This desideratum is one of the starting points of our research project. The different strategies of appropriation turned into guiding themes when they were taken up elsewhere. The case of Trentino became exemplary for planning and building on the Italian peninsula from the late 1920s onwards. Through the case of South Tyrol a form of urban planning was established that was racially and ethnically motivated. This became a key strategy in the conquest of the colonies of Mussolini's ›Impero‹.

Taking the project's central ideas as a starting point, the study day would like to look at other European border regions during the interwar period which were also subject to a change of national affiliation. The research project wants to ask which spatial strategies of appropriation were practiced in those instances.

Possible guiding questions include:

- 1.) Actors and networks that either shaped the building activity in an area that was taken over by a new state or were displaced from their traditional positions. The focus can be on individual examples as well as on networks and groups that positioned themselves within this field of tension.
- 2.) Continuities and caesuras that may either be a construct of architectural and art historiography, as the architectural realities appear much more complex in practice, or the result of the will of political powers. Questions about the motives for taking over the administrative structures of an old systems can be considered, as well as political, "stylistic" and personal caesuras and their direct effects on the building process and reception.

This field of tension cannot be understood without a deeper look at 3.) Ethics and standards. Those considerations can range from questions of moral responsibility of the individual architect acting in a totalitarian system to questions about the normative and ideological guidelines of the state and the extent to which these structures left room for adaptation.

4.) Image and media strategies are indispensable tools for dictatorships to assert their self-designed idea of state order. This preformation of (constructed) reality in the image and in the minds of the recipients – via the state’s cultural offerings and everyday media in equal measure – is capable of changing reality to a very decisive degree.

The complex of 5.) Myths and constructed heritage plays a decisive role in this context. New narratives for the present political moment can be created from material that the past provides. Re-interpretation or repression of myths play a role in this context, as well as an “invention of tradition” and its realization in the built environment. While considering these aspects, the project does not exclude other perspectives and ways of conceptualization.

We ask for a meaningful abstract (max. 900 characters including spaces) and a CV by 29 May 2020. Text and presentation should be in one of the conference languages German, Italian or English. Confirmation of participation in the conference will be given by 26 June 2020. Travel costs (2nd class train ride) and overnight stays in Innsbruck will be covered. A publication of the papers in an edited volume is planned.

Contact:

Univ.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. Klaus Tragbar

Dr. Elmar Kossel

Universität Innsbruck

Institut für Architekturtheorie und Baugeschichte

Arbeitsbereich Baugeschichte und Denkmalpflege

Technikerstraße 21

6020 Innsbruck (Österreich)

F +43 512 507.640.10 (Office .11)

M klaus.tragbar@uibk.ac.at

M elmar.kossel@uibk.ac.at

W www.baugeschichte.eu