

POLYTECHNIC OF TORINO
FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE
Degree in Architecture
Honors theses

The presence of Italian Architects in the Dodecanese

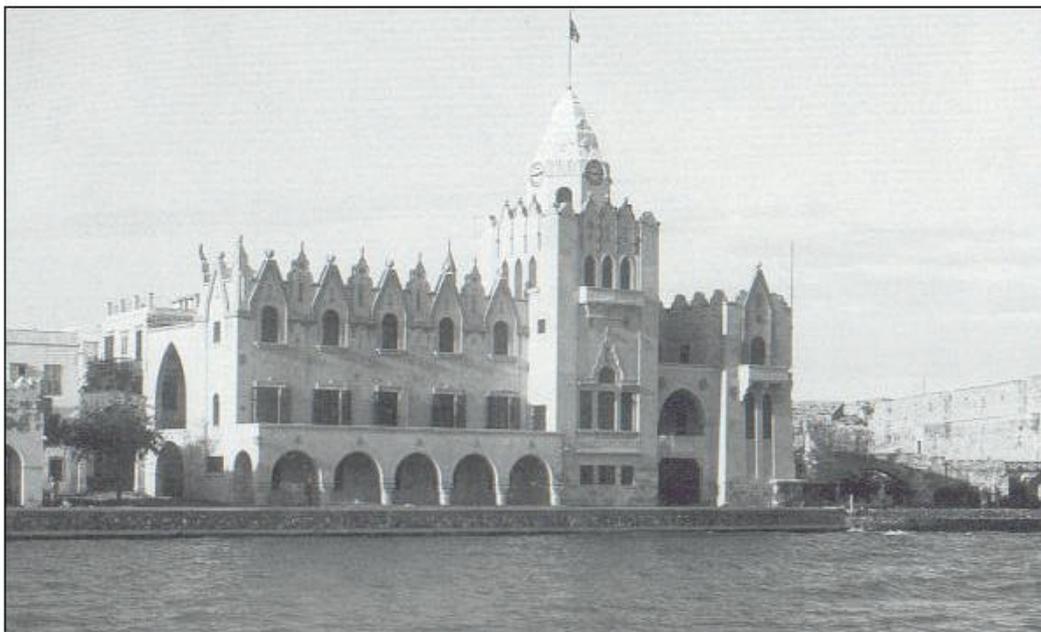
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(also [greek version](#))

This thesis consists of two sections. In the first part I describe the evolution of architecture in independent Greece and in the Dodecanese during the Italian occupation that lasted until the 1940s - that is until the moment of reunion of the Dodecanese to Greece. Such analysis helps us understand the different political and historical motivations that generated such different results in the two considered territories. In this part I also try to explain the causes that led to the present situation in the Dodecanese and debate whether and how the Italian occupation influenced architecture and town planning both in Greece and in the isles of the archipelago.

In the second part of the thesis I present a documentation of the events and the works which I discussed in the first part. They deal with various aspects of building policy and urban planning at the time of the Italian occupation: territorial planning, programmes for the development of tourist facilities, archaeological excavations, plans for the urban expansion of the main cities. I also speculated on coeval new towns in order to be able to make comparisons with what was going on in the Dodecanese, and to understand the cultural background that brought to such results in terms of urban planning.



Kos, government building, main facade, 1927-1929, architect Florestano Di Fausto,
(Documentation Centre of the Italian Touring Club, Milan)

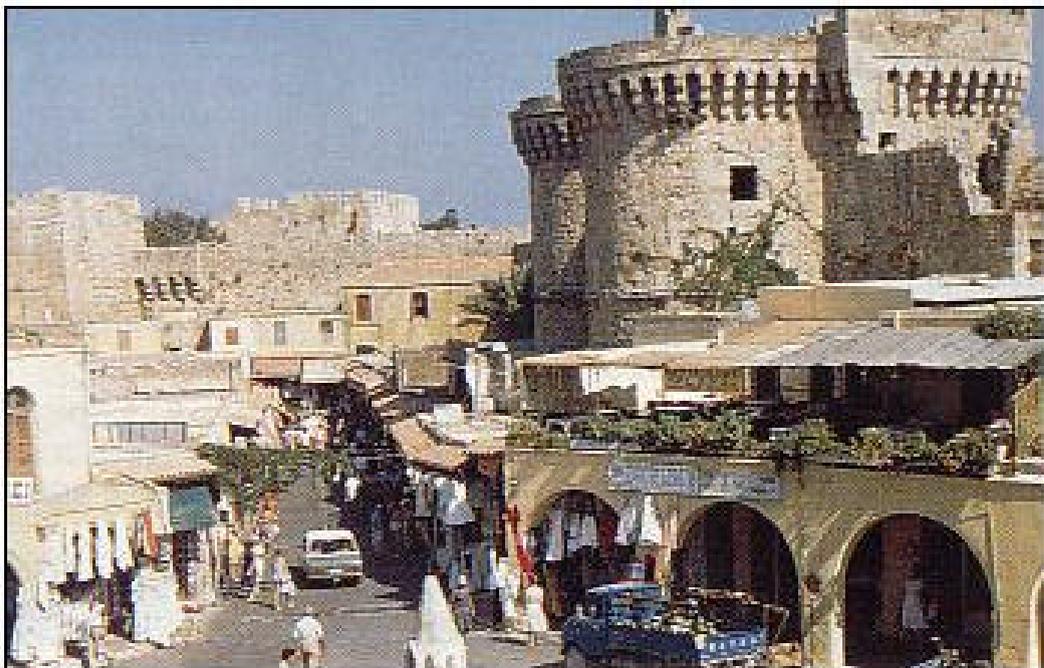
The Dodecanese islands had been under the Turkish rule since 1523, when they were invaded by the Italians in 1912. This invasion fell into the hostilities occurring between Italy and Turkey in the Tripolitanian region. The Italian rule lasted until 1943 and in 1947 the area was annexed to Greece.

In thirty years the Italians undertook a series of works to reorganise the whole territory, developing the infrastructural network, organising a cadastre for the main islands, constructing both public buildings and housing estates and drawing the urban development scheme of Rhodes, Kos, Laki and other smaller towns.

The Italian architects in the Dodecanese worked in total isolation from the rest of independent Greece and this generated aesthetical languages that had nothing in common with what was happening in Greece in the same years.

When the Dodecanese was annexed to Greece, it occupied a peripheral place and a lot of buildings of the Italians were abandoned and deteriorated, with the exception of the smaller isles, where these buildings were reused as seats of administrative bodies. In the same period Greece was facing major problems such as the reorganisation of Athens and Thessaloniki that had become the destination of massive migrations from the coast of Anatolia and the countryside.

The architecture of the Italians did not affect contemporary Greek architecture, but their master plans have influenced the development of the islands. Town planning provided these towns with the basis for the organisation of tourist trade and with the main elements that are necessary to construct the charming image attracting the numerous tourists that visit the archipelago every year.



Rhodes, the fortified city today: an ensemble of souvenir shops and restaurants in a medieval environment, (photo by the author)

For example, Rhodes and Kos revolve their current economy around tourism, exploiting the oriental atmosphere created by the Italians and their restorations and reconstructions of medieval buildings which they carried out in the 1930s. The city of Rhodes has improved the areas which, according to the Italian master plans, were destined for tourist facilities and hotels and Kos still preserves the organisation of the archaeological areas and the tree-lined avenues.

Some critics state that the Italian occupation did not facilitate the development of tourism in Rhodes. However, the Greek point of view is less rigid at present: on the one hand, the Italian early interventions were not forgotten, on the other hand, Greek entrepreneurial initiative is always emphasised, in order to highlight the efforts made by islanders and Greeks in general to exploit and intensify tourist trade.

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