The archaeological sites of Agrigento and Paestum during the fascist regime in Italy

Greek History in Times of ‘Roman-ness’

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Index

Introduction: 4
Chapter 1: Magna Graecia and the reception since the Renaissance 10
Magna Graecia 10
Reception since the Renaissance 12
Chapter 2: Mussolini, *romanità* and Italian fascist appropriation of ancient history 15
Chapter 3: Magna Graecia during Mussolini's regime 21
Theatres and temples 21
Writing about ruins: Pirro Marconi 26
Umberto Zanotti-Bianco and the Società Magna Grecia 30
Conclusion 37
Bibliography 39
Primary sources 39
Newspaper articles 39
Literature 39

Introduction:

"The best-preserved Greek temples in the world are found not in Greece but in Italy".[1] This is how Giovanna Cesenari starts her book *Italy's Lost Greece*. These temples are the remnants of Greek colonial expansions in the south of the Italian peninsula and Sicily between the eight and third century BC, an area that is referred to as Magna Graecia. Several Greek poleis – like Euboea and Patras – colonized coastal regions and founded *poleis* here, bringing along with them their customs, language and their architecture.[2]

The UNESCO has appointed three of these ancient Greek sites in Italy as World Heritage. This was mainly done because of the uniquely good preservation of buildings at these sites and the fact that these Greek remains can be found in Italy. The three former Greek colonial settlements on the UNESCO World Heritage list are Agrigento, Syracuse and Paestum.[3] The choice was made to omit Syracuse in this research. While Syracuse was one of the major *poleis* during the Greek colonial period, subsequent civilisations like the Romans, Arabs, Normans and the Aragon kings all have left their traces on this city, meaning that Greek remains are scarce and were often changed throughout time, such as the temple of Athena, which was constructed around 480 BC, transformed into a church in the sixth century AD and in the 17th century renovated into a Baroque church.[4] Therefore, only Agrigento and Paestum are discussed, since these two sites have similar remains of the ancient Greek cities, such as the remnants of multiple temples and a clear street-grid pattern.[5]

Paestum is situated in the Italian National Park Cilento and Vallo di Diano, which encompasses three mountain ridges in Campania. This park was included in the UNESCO World Heritage list, because the mountain passes acted as a highway of contact between regions in prehistory and the Middle Ages, as well as containing important ancient Greek archaeological sites like Velia and Paestum – two significant cities during the existence of Magna Graecia.[6]

In contrast, Agrigento is part of UNESCO World Heritage as a site in itself. This archaeological location is praised for the Greek remains found there, which are described as some of the best remaining examples of Doric architecture, lacking any later adjustments. On the UNESCO website, Agrigento is furthermore described as typical for Greek colonial settlements. It is unsurprising that the emphasized

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[1] Giovanna Cesenari, *Italy's lost Greece. Magna Graecia and the Making of Modern Archaeology* (Oxford 2012).
[2] Charles Gates and Andrew Goldman, *Ancient Cities: the Archaeology of Urban Life in the Ancient Near East and Egypt, Greece and Rome* (Third Edition; London-New York 2024) 341, 343-345.
[3] UNESCO – Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park with the Archeological Sites of Paestum and Velia, and the Certosa di Padula https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/842 (accessed 29-04-2025); UNESCO – Archaeological Area of Agrigento https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/831 (accessed 29-04-2025); UNESCO – Syracuse and the Rocky Necropolis of Pantalica https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1200/ (accessed 07-05-2025).
[4] UNESCO – Syracuse and the Rocky Necropolis of Pantalica https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1200/ (accessed 07-05-2025).
[5] UNESCO – Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park with the Archeological Sites of Paestum and Velia, and the Certosa di Padula https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/842 (accessed 29-04-2025); UNESCO – Archaeological Area of Agrigento https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/831 (accessed 29-04-2025).
[6] UNESCO – Cilento and Vallo di Diano National Park with the Archeological Sites of Paestum and Velia, and the Certosa di Padula https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/842 (accessed 29-04-2025).

criteria mostly deal with the outstanding qualities of this site.[7]

Although there are remnants of ancient Greek times visible at both of these sites, time did not stand still. Different regimes, organisations and people have interacted in various ways with this Greek heritage in Sicily and the southern Italian peninsula. These reactions to the Greek heritage are not mentioned anywhere by the UNESCO, even though they can provide valuable insight into the culture, ideology and beliefs of different time periods and the way both locals and scholars have reacted to the presence of these Greek remains.

This research is situated within the theoretical framework of heritage studies. Heritage studies focuses on how heritage is created, what heritage precisely is, what it does and the relationships between people and heritage. Heritage studies is an interdisciplinary field, that borrows ideas, techniques and theories from many other fields, like architecture, archaeology, history and art, as well as from psychology and tourism.[8] The UNESCO has played a great role in defining what heritage is, with their definition being; "Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations."[9] However, other groups, organisations and individuals on all levels of society also contribute to the debates surrounding heritage, such as Laurajane Smith's work, in which she criticizes the fact that within heritage, groups like the working class and indigenous peoples often get overlooked.[10]

Heritage studies first emerged in the 1980's. It was a response to various developments during this period, like postcolonialism, which allowed different stories about the past to emerge, and post-modernity within academia, which went against authority and knowledge claims. This in turn allowed people to ask questions about heritage, for example about how places would gain the status of heritage.[11] As Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and John Carman put it, the 1980's where a time in which: "Our relationship to and practice of 'heritage' shifted from being a taken-for-granted field of meanings and practices to becoming an area calling out for investigation and analysis aiming to understand how heritage becomes constituted, what it is and does, and how different groups engage with it."[12]

The notion that different groups have different ways of engaging with heritage as mentioned by Sørensen and Carman is most pertinent for this study. This query will be evaluated in correlation to three case studies in the third chapter of this research. Some historiographical context about Magna Graecia will be given first, before discussing the analysis of the sources in more depth.

Research into Italy's Greek past has been around since the Renaissance, although the first real

[7] UNESCO – Archaeological Area of Agrigento https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/831 (accessed 29-04-2025).
[8] Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and John Carman, 'Introduction: making the means transparent: reasons and reflections', in: Idem, *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches* (London-New York 2009) 3-10, there 3; Marie Louise Stig Sørensen and John Carman, 'Heritage Studies: an Outline', in: Idem, *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches* (London-New York 2009) 11-28, there 17.
[9] UNESCO – World Heritage https://www.unesco.org/en/world-heritage (accessed 10-06-2025); Sørensen and Carman, 'Heritage Studies', 12.
[10] Sørensen and Carman, 'Heritage Studies', 12; Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London 2006).
[11] Sørensen and Carman, 'Heritage Studies', 11, 17.
[12] Ibidem, 17.

increase in interest on Magna Graecia happened during the 18th century, which is discussed further in chapter 1, as it provides context to the ways of thinking after the turn of the 20th century.[13] It was in the 1960's that increasingly more research was being published about Magna Graecia, as interest was set off by a two-part publication *Heraion alla Foce de Sele* (part I in 1951, part II in 1954) from archaeologist Paola Zancani Montuoro and Umberto Zanotti-Bianco – who will be the topic of discussion in one of the case studies in chapter 3.[14] Their works were a result of archaeological research on the recently discovered Hera-sanctuary near Paestum.[15]

The publication of these results provoked fascination into Magna Graecia among scholars concerning themselves with the ancient world. Some of the works published as a result of this, include *De Griekse Kolonisatie in Zuid-Italië en Sicilië* by Herman T. Wallinga, *The Greeks in the West* by Arthur G. Woodhead and *Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece* by A.J. Graham.[16] All of these works present a more general history of Magna Graecia and/or Greek colonial expansions, with topics like trade, politics and culture being discussed.

In 2006 and 2008, a two-part series was published with articles regarding all different topics surrounding ancient Greek colonisation, fittingly called *Greek Colonisation*, edited by Gocha R. Tsetszkhladze. The different articles in these bundles are mainly focussed on Greek colonisation in different parts of the Mediterranean, like Sicily and Cyprus, while also containing other articles, such as one dealing with the topic of Phoenician colonisation. Overall, this book gives a good overview of the different Greek colonies and their history.[17]

Around the same time as the aforementioned bundles, more distinct topics related to the history of Magna Graecia began to be explored. One example considered the social aspects the Greek colonies brought with them, for instance in interactions between the Greek settlers and the indigenous populations of southern Italy. 'Greek Perception of Frontier in Magna Graecia: Literature and Archaeology in Dialogue' by Airton Pollini and Pedro Paulo Funari deals with this topic.[18] They use both literary and archaeological evidence – the latter not used before in this context – to discover how the frontier of the Greek colonies in Sicily and the Italian peninsula was perceived by the people living there.[19] In his work 'Iconographical Representations of Musical Instruments in Apulian Vase-Painting as Ethnical Signs', Fabió V. Cerqueria has attempted to see if the depiction of musical instruments on vase-paintings were

[13] Cesenari, *Italy's lost Greece*, 2.
[14] De Haan, 'Passato Remoto', 63-65; Nathalie De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', *Anabases* 9 (2009) 113-125, there 122.
[15] Paola Zancani Montuoro and Umberto Zanotti Bianco, *Heraion alla Foce del Sele* I (Rome 1951); Paola Zancani Montuoro, and Umberto Zanotti Bianco, *Heraion alla Foce del Sele* II (Rome 1954).
[16] Herman T. Wallinga, *De Griekse Kolonisatie in Zuid-Italië en Sicilië* (Groningen 1965); Arthur G. Woodhead, *The Greeks in the West* (New York 1962); Graham, A.J., *Colony and Mother City in Ancient Greece* (Manchester 1964).
[17] Tsetskhladze, G.R. ed., *Greek Colonisation. An Account of Greek Colonies and other Settlements Overseas, Volume One* (Leiden-Boston 2006); Tsetskhladze, G.R. ed., *Greek Colonisation. An Account of Greek Colonies and other Settlements Overseas, Volume Two* (Leiden-Boston 2008).
[18] Airton Pollini, and Pedro Paulo Funari, 'Greek Perception of Frontier in Magna Graecia: Literature and Archaeology in Dialogue', *Studia Historica: Historia Antigua* 23 (2013) 331-344.
[19] Pollini and Funari, 'Greek Perception of Frontier in Magna Graecia', 331-332.

signs of cultural interaction between the Greeks and the indigenous Italian populations in the Apulian region.[20] The works mentioned before all omit discussion on the reception of Magna Graecia during different time periods.

Studies on this reception of the archaeological sites related to Greek colonies were nevertheless conducted. During the 19th century, the *Risorgimento* took place, which aimed to unite the Italian peninsula as a whole for the first time since the fall of the western Roman empire. However, a young nation needs a history. For antiquity the Italians had their Roman history, but before the Romans there were multiple different peoples living on the peninsula and there were the ancient Greek colonies in the south. How did this Greek history fit within the narrative of the young country? This is the question that is answered in 'Eine Nation, "Una di Memoire, di Sangue e di Cor"? Das Antike Sizilien und die Magna Graecia in de Italienischen Altertumsforschung des 19. Jahrhunderts' by Elisabetta Lupi.[21]

One of the most extensive works on the reception of Magna Graecia belongs to Giovanna Cesenari with her book *Italy's lost Greece. Magna Graecia and the Making of Modern Archaeology*. In this work, she discusses the ways in which the Greek history and heritage was perceived by Italian scholars and other prominent people, organisations and regimes beginning in the Renaissance and spanning all the way until after the Second World War, also mentioning the fascist response to Greek history in Italy. Her aim with this book was to give a more nuanced overview of the history of the reception of Magna Graecia.[22] Though in-depth, the reception of Magna Graecia during the fascist regime is but a part of this work.

Nathalie de Haan has written multiple works about the earlier mentioned Umberto Zanotti-Bianco, a social activist and archaeologist working on the remains of Magna Graecia in fascist Italy. In 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', De Haan discusses the founding, founders and functioning of the *Società Magna Grecia* and how this archaeological society worked within the context of Italy's fascist regime.[23] In 'Wheeling and Dealing. The Multiple Networks of Umberto Zanotti-Bianco (1889-1963), Social Activist and Dissident Archaeologist in Fascist Italy', De Haan more specifically looks at Zanotti-Bianco and his position as an archaeologist and anti-fascist.[24] De Haan's research on Zanotti-Bianco are some of only few works discussing the reception of Magna Graecia during the fascist regime.

During the fascist regime, the Italian government looked towards the ancient Roman history to create a sense of a great historical past, which they then in turn would use to construe their own identity.

[20] Fabio V. Cerqueira, 'Iconographical Representations of Musical Instruments in Apulian Vase-Painting as Ethnical Signs: Intercultural Greek-Indigenous Relations in Magna Graecia (5th and 4th Centuries B.C.)', *Greek and Roman Musical Studies* 2 (2014) 50-67.
[21] Elisabetta Lupi, 'Eine Nation, "Una di Memoire, di Sangue e di Cor"? Das Antike Sizilien und die Magna Graecia in de Italienischen Altertumsforschung des 19. Jahrhunderts', *Historische Zeitschrift* 314 (2022) 283-311.
[22] Giovanna Cesenari, *Italy's lost Greece. Magna Graecia and the Making of Modern Archaeology* (Oxford 2012).
[23] Nathalie De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', *Anabases* 9 (2009) 113-125.
[24] Nathalie De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing. The Multiple Networks of Umberto Zanotti-Bianco (1889-1963), Social Activist and Dissident Archaeologist in Fascist Italy', *Incontri: Rivista Europea di Studi Italiani* 34:1 (2019) 97-109.

This was done too under the rule of Mussolini. In the publication *Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany*, edited by Helene Roche and Kyriakos Demetriou, multiple authors discuss the various ways in which 'Roman-ness', or *romanità*, was constructed and how this cult of *romanità* was spread among the Italian people – and how the Germans appropriated the Greek past. From architecture to exhibitions and film, all these topics are discussed in their publication.[25] However, the Greek history of Italy – and the response of the fascist regime to this – is not discussed in this bundle.

It is Mussolini's fascist regime and their reaction to events and research being done at ancient Greek sites that will be the focus of this thesis, with the research question being: How did Mussolini's fascist regime react to the ways in which the ancient Greek past and the archaeological sites of Paestum and Agrigento were used and appropriated between 1922 and 1943? The choice for discussing the period of Mussolini's rule was made, because of the clear focus on the Roman past this regime had, the so-called *romanità,* which means as much as the desire to be like the Romans or 'Roman-ness'.[26] How, then, did they react to the Greek colonial past of Italy? While individual topics, like Umberto Zanotti-Bianco, have been investigated, no research thus far has combined multiple different case studies regarding the archaeological sites of Agrigento and Paestum during the fascist regime. By combining these, conclusions can be made on what was seen as the 'appropriate' use of Greek heritage during Mussolini's rule, as well as explaining why some events, like theatres at the sites of Agrigento and Paestum, were allowed, while others were frowned upon.

The first chapter of this essay is split into two parts. The first part will cover the history of Magna Graecia itself, with a special focus on the history of Agrigento and Paestum. The second part of this chapter will give a brief overview of the ways in which the history of Magna Graecia and its heritage – in the form of archaeological sites – was received in Italy from the Renaissance until the end of the 19th century. This second part of the chapter is important for understanding the stance on Magna Graecia and its heritage by scholars and politicians alike, as some of these ideas surrounding the former Greek colonies will still be visible during the fascist regime in Italy. Additionally, the discussion of the *Risorgimento* also provides a background for the rise of fascism in Italy. Terms like nationalism and imagined community will be explained, as well as their relation to *romanità* in Italy during the *Risorgimento*.

The fascist period of Italy under the rule of Mussolini from 1922 until 1943 is the talking point of the second chapter. Mussolini's rise to power is briefly discussed, but further discussion of his rule will be omitted, as this falls outside of the scope of the research. Instead, attention is given to the cult of *romanità* and how this was spread around Italy in order to get as many people as possible convinced of

[25] Helene Roche and Kyriakos Demetriou eds., *Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Leiden 2017).
[26] Nathalie De Haan, 'Passato Remoto – Ver Verleden. Magna Graecia en Historische Beeldvorming in Italië', in: Bert Roest ed., *De Last der Geschiedenis. Beeldvorming, Leergezag en Traditie Binnen het Historische Metier* (Nijmegen 2013) 47-65, there 61.

a reawakened 'Roman-ness'. In this chapter, multiple of these ways of spreading *romanità* will be discussed in order to show their relevance to the fascist regime, as well as illustrate why the Greek history of (southern) Italy might have been seen as uncomfortable. Although the meaning of *romanità* has already been discussed previously, attention is given to the ways in which the meaning this concept has changed during the fascist regime.

The last chapter is made up off three case studies that all revolve around Agrigento, Paestum or both of these archaeological sites and their heritage. The first case study will concern theatrical performances at both of these sites, carried out during the regime. Newspaper articles about some of these performances and a short, ten-minute recording of one of the plays are used for examining the relation to the temples during these performances and how and why these performances were approved by the fascist regime. The second case study considers archaeologist Pirro Marconi and two of his books on the archaeological site of Agrigento. The contents of both books are analysed and they will be compared to each other in order to see what the differences are in content and intended use and audiences. This information will be used to understand why the fascist regime allowed these books on a Greek archaeological site to be published during a time in which Roman history was seen as superior. The third and final case study is about Umberto Zanotti-Bianco and the *Società Magna Grecia*. As the name of this society implies, it revolved around Magna Graecia. Zanotti-Bianco and an archaeologist associated with the *Società* discovered a Greek sanctuary, which prompted international attention. Newspaper articles about this discovery will be analysed following critical discourse analysis. Through this, an answer can be given to the question about why the fascist regime stopped these excavations, although other underlying reasons for this decision will also be discussed.

The research method utilized in the first two chapters is literature analysis, as these chapters are aimed at providing context for the topic of this essay. For this, relevant and – where possible – recent studies are used in order to get the most recent state of affair regarding research on Magna Graecia and its reception, as well as how fascism came to power and their use of *romanità*. In the third chapter, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is used for analysing the sources. This research method was first introduced into historical research in the 1980's by, among others, Fairclough, Van Dijk and Wodak. CDA is quite suitable for the topic of this research, since the method looks at the ways in which messages are transmitted in primarily written texts, as well as how these texts handle existing social (power)structures.[27] For the case studies newspaper articles were retrieved from Dutch newspaper database Delpher, Australian newspaper database Trove and The British Newspaper Archive. These are only some of the archives that are available, but because of the scope of this research, the use of further databases has been omitted. These newspaper articles are used to illustrate the effect of mass-media on the spread of news that might or might not have been favoured by the fascist regime. In the discussion

[27] Theo Van Leeuwen, 'Critical Discours Analysis' in: Keith Brown ed., Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics (Oxford 2006) 290-294, there 290-292.

of the first case study, a short film from the LUCE archive is used. This film shows one of the performances as carried out at Agrigento during the regime and is therefore relevant to the question of how the regime reacted to certain activities surrounding Agrigento and Paestum. Here, special attention is given to the inter-titles and the setting of different scenes. The second case study revolves around two books, whose contents and exterior are evaluated. While both of these books were published during the fascist regime, the topic is the same: Agrigento. With the help of CDA, the differences in both of these books will be analysed in order to come to a conclusion as to why the books were allowed to be published.

Chapter 1: Magna Graecia and the reception since the Renaissance

In this chapter, Magna Graecia is the central topic. While there is much to say about this episode of Italian history, here only a brief synopsis will be given of this period, with specific attention to Agrigento and Paestum. After this discussion, the reception of Magna Graecia from the Renaissance until the late 19th century is considered. This will give a brief outline of the ways in which scholars and politicians viewed this Greek history of Italy, while simultaneously discussing the way in which the south of Italy was perceived. This part of the chapter also aims to illustrate some of the ideas regarding Magna Graecia that were relevant during Italy's fascist period.

Magna Graecia

Around the eight century BC, Greeks from different poleis began settling around the mediterranean sea. The Greeks often were already familiar with the regions they settled in through trade contacts. While authors like Charles Gates and Andrew Goldman attribute the founding of Greek colonies to overpopulation, food shortages and the search for raw materials, Gocha R. Tsetskhladze argues that sources from ancient Greek times show no compelling evidence for the aforementioned reasons for colonisation. What is mentioned in some ancient sources, is that tyrants occasionally used forced migration as a way to get rid of political dissidents.[28]

The Greeks were already familiar with the southern Italian peninsula and Sicily through trading contacts with the Phoenicians. The first settlements were mostly used as trading posts, such as Pithekoussai and Kyme (later Cumae). Some of these (earlier) settlements were even built on existing villages from the indigenous peoples – like Naxos.[29] Tsetskhladze says that evidence from a number of

[28] Charles Gates and Andrew Goldman, *Ancient Cities: the Archaeology of Urban Life in the Ancient Near East and Egypt, Greece and Rome* (Third Edition; London-New York 2024) 341-344; Gocha R. Tsetskhladze, 'Introduction. Revisiting Ancient Greek Colonisation' in: Idem, *Greek Colonisation. An Account of Greek Colonies and other Settlements Overseas, Volume One* (Leiden-Boston 2006) xxiii-lxxxiii, there xxviii-xxx. There are also debates on what colonialism exactly means in the context of ancient Greek history, since terms like colonies and colonialism are more recent terms. For more information on this debate, see: Tsetskhladze, 'Introduction', xxiii-xxviii.
[29] Gates and Goldman, *Ancient Cities*, 341-343.

colonies suggests that the Greeks and indigenous populations lived alongside each other. He also mentions that while it was previously thought that Greeks brought civilisation to indigenous groups – like the Italic people –, this way of thinking is not popular anymore. Tsetskhladze states that any interaction is two-way, and that while the indigenous groups definitely adopted (elements of) Greek culture and their practices, the same happened the other way around.[30]

From the 7th and 6th centuries BC, the Greek colonies on the Italian peninsula started creating colonies themselves. The colonies started being organised as *poleis* and contact between the colonies and motherland remained. While the western Greek colonies were not threatened by the Persians, they were threatened by (the presence of) Carthage.[31] Agrigento – then called Akragas – was one of the colonies that sprung from another colony between 600 and 575 BC. This settlement was founded by the colony Gela – founded around 688 – whose population was made up of off Dorians, Rhodians and Cretans.[32] Adolfo Domínguez says that Gela wanted to create this colony as a way of creating more control over the region. Akragas was situated on an elevated plateau between two rivers. The landscape allowed for a natural *acropolis*, on which the temples of Athena and Zeus Atabyrius were situated. The settlement seemed to have been planned in advance, as suggested by the clear street-grid pattern. There were expansive necropolises outside of the city, that were in use from the mid-sixth century BC until the seize of Akragas by the Carthaginians in 408 BC.[33] Not much is known about the Carthaginian period in Akragas. During the First and Second Punic Wars, the city was repeatedly taken over by Rome and Carthage, ultimately becoming part of Roman territories around 210 BC. Cicero states that Agrigento was one of the largest cities in Sicily and during the late republic, when the town was characterized by a Greco-Roman culture.[34]

Paestum – known as Poseidonia by the ancient Greeks – was founded around 600 BC. This settlement was likewise founded by people from another Greek colony, namely Sybaris. It is speculated that this place was chosen because of the availability of drinkable water and the possibility for agriculture. For two centuries this city was populated by the Greeks, with their culture being dominant and a democracy even developing here. Around 400 BC, Paestum was taken over by the Lucanians, an Italic people. However, the Greek culture and customs continued until the Roman conquest in 273 BC. Nowadays, three well-preserved temples from the Greek period can still be seen. The temples were made from sandstone and travertine, as marble was unavailable in the area around Paestum. Besides this, a frescoed tomb has been found, called the Tomb of the Diver, after the depiction of a diving man. The tomb also contains a banquet scene. It is now thought that this grave belonged to an elite member of an Italic tribe. Other graves in Paestum also point toward a mixed population in Paestum in the sixth and

[30] Tsetskhladze, 'Introduction', lii-liii.
[31] Gates and Goldman, *Ancient Cities*, 344.
[32] Tsetskhladze, 'Introduction', lxiii-lxiv, lxvii.
[33] Adolfo J. Domínguez, 'Greeks in Sicily' in: Gocha R. Tsetskhladze, *Greek Colonisation. An Account of Greek Colonies and other Settlements Overseas, Volume One* (Leiden-Boston 2006) 253-357, there 308-310.
[34] Laura Pfuntner, *Urbanism and Empire in Roman Sicily* (Austin 2019), 107, 109, 111.

fifth centuries BC.[35]

When Rome rose to power, the Greek cities in the lower half of the Italian peninsula came under the rule of this soon-to-be empire, with the last of them being taken over by the Romans around 210 BC. It was the Romans who had coined the term Magna Graecia, with the term first appearing in Polybius' *Histories* written in the second century BC. Greek culture and language remained important in the southern peninsula and Sicily after the Romans conquered the southern peninsula and Sicily. In Sicily for example, Greek culture and language both remained dominant until the Arabian conquests in the 9th century A.D.[36]

Reception since the Renaissance

After the fall of the Roman empire, the history of Magna Graecia was forgotten until the Renaissance. Petrarca was one of the first people during the Renaissance to comment on the Greek history of Italy. Around 1333, he travelled to different libraries across Europe in the search of manuscripts containing texts from ancient authors. In some of these texts he encountered mentions of Magna Graecia, though Petrarca called the Italian glory greater than that of Greece.[37] This way of thinking remained prevalent in Italy throughout the following centuries.

In the Renaissance, the genre of historical geography was revived, with publications on Italy appearing as well. Here, the Greek history of Italy caused some unease. Flavio Biondo (1392-1463) was commissioned by Alfonso V of Aragon, king of Naples, to make a historical geography of Italy, the *Italia Illustrata*. Biondo passed away before he could finish his work, with the southern regions of Italy being the missing part of this work. It took a century before these regions would be included in a historical geography, namely in the work *Descrittione di tutta Italia* (1550) by Leandro Alberti. The history of Magna Graecia was a problem, as Humanists believed that history was one continuous story from past to present and that both past and present were inseparable from each other. The ancient authors Alberti based himself on for his work, however, argued that the Greek history in Italy stopped once these regions were conquered. Therefore, incorporating the story of Magna Graecia was seen as a difficulty, although inclusion could be omitted, because, according to Alberti, not much remained of this Greek period. Alberti was also one of the first people to introduce negative stereotypes on the people in the south of Italy, by calling the people there lazy and poor.[38]

Some Italian writers, especially those born in the south, had a different perspective on the Greek past. Galateo (1444-1517) for example called the Greeks people living in the colonies of Magna Graecia superior to those in Greece and argued that this is where the name Magna Graecia came from.[39] This

[35] Gates and Goldman, *Ancient Cities*, 345-349.
[36] Gates and Goldman, *Ancient Cities*, 344; Cesenari, *Italy's lost Greece*, 7.
[37] Nathalie De Haan, 'Passato Remoto – Ver Verleden. Magna Graecia en Historische Beeldvorming in Italië', in: Bert Roest ed., *De Last der Geschiedenis. Beeldvorming, Leergezag en Traditie Binnen het Historische Metier* (Nijmegen 2013) 47-65, there 47.
[38] De Haan, 'Passato Remoto', 49-50.
[39] Ibidem, 50-51.

was a way of using the history and heritage of this region to portray themselves in a superior light – a tactic that will be discussed a lot in this research.

Because of the discovery of more archaeological sites, the 18th century saw an increase in interest for the southern Italian peninsula and Sicily. During the rule of king Charles VII of Naples, excavations began at for example Herculaneum and Pompeii. Count Guevara, who had previously given the king a bronze tablet with inscriptions, commissioned antiquary Alessio Mazzocchi to write a work about these inscriptions. Mazzocchi was of the opinion that in order to better understand these tablets, more context about their origin was needed. This research resulted in two sizeable works, called *Commentarii in regii Herculanensis musei aeneas tabulas Heracleenses* (1754-1755), which is often seen as one of the first modern studies on Magna Graecia. This work left such a great impression that another bronze tablet was given to the king, both of which had been retrieved from Heraclea (Calabria) in 1732.[40] In his work, Mazzocchi also includes the ancient indigenous people of southern Italy and he attributes a special role for them. He was of the opinion that it was the Italian inhabitants that brought knowledge to the Greeks that settled there, as these Italic peoples were colonists as well, namely descendant of Biblical peoples.[41] By saying this, he was arguing that ancient Italy was superior to ancient Greece, which could help deal with the uneasiness that might have come from the fact that parts of the Italian peninsula had been colonized.

This way of rationalising – thinking the Italian population had been superior to the ancient Greeks – can be found in a lot of works surrounding Magna Graecia in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Italian historian and archaeologist Giuseppe Micali (1768-1844) did research on the Italian peninsula before the Roman period. He tells of the peoples that lived there and argued that they were not barbarians – as was the consensus at that time – but were highly organised societies already. Micali furthermore suggests a unity in the Italian peninsula before the Romans.[42] The supposed superiority of the Italic peoples was written about in fiction as well. The Italian author Vincenzo Cuoco (1770-1823) wrote an historical fiction called *Platone in Italia* (1806), in which he had translated fictional rediscovered manuscripts. In the book, he let Plato travel around the entire Italian peninsula, letting this fictive Plato describe the peoples he met and making them seem more advanced than the Greeks. This work became popular and while it was fictional, the ideas of Italian superiority became widespread during the beginning of the *Risorgimento* and acted as a means of incorporation of the south of Italy into the story of Italy as a whole.[43]

There namely was – and still is to this day – a stark division between the north and south of Italy in many aspects. Cesenari calls this the *Mezzogiorno*. The basis of this divide was the economic situation

[40] Ceserani, 'The Antiquary Alessio Simmaco Mazzocchi', 251.
[41] Ibidem, 251-252. While what is stated at the end here seems odd now, attributing a Biblical origin of a people was quite a common practice. Cesenari mentions that Annius of Viterbo fabricated a Biblical origin for the town and people, as to legitimise Viterbo as the cultural centre of Europe.
[42] De Haan, 'Passato Remoto', 58.
[43] Ibidem, 58-60.

of both parts of the country. While the north of Italy was made up of several thriving city-states, the south had a much more agrarian economy. Granted, Naples was one of the biggest cities in eighteenth-century Europe and had a lively cultural and scientific community – something that is being studied more as of recently –, but the countryside remained underdeveloped compared to this city. Cesenari says that this divide also has an ideological dimension, containing a lot of stereotypes, like the ones named before.[44]

During the 18th and 19th centuries, some participants of the Grand Tour made the decision to travel to Naples and even further south further, even though Rome was the usual endpoint of this educational journey. There, these travellers went to Paestum and Herculaneum, which had become highlights for the kingdom of Naples. The exotic stereotypes of the south of Italy that had been around since the 16th century were only strengthened by these travels. In some of his letters, Johann Winckelmann wrote that the landscapes in the south were beautiful, but that the people there were unbeseeming and had a lot of African blood. Others echoed this sentiment: Charles de Brosses called the Neapolitans lazy, Auguste Creuzé de Lesser and Ernest Renan said that Europe stopped at Naples and De Lesser described that the farther south you came, the more Greek the people seemed.[45]

During the *Risorgimento* – the unification of Italy during the nineteenth century – uniting such a divided country proved to be a challenge. How could such differences inside a country be overcome, in order to create a united Italian nation? Here, it is good to look at two theories, namely 'nation' and 'imagined community'. For 'nation', Benedict Anderson gives in his work *Imagined Communities* the following definition: "it is an imagined political community — and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign".[46] Anderson calls nations imagined, because there is no way for a person in a nation to know all other citizens. Yet, he also argues that a nation is a community, because the people in a nation still feel connected to one another through the idea of the nation.[47] So, for a young nation such as Italy in the nineteenth century, creating this imagined community of the nation was the way to unite both the north and south of the peninsula.

History was one of many tools – alongside for example language – that was used to create the idea of a nation in the nineteenth century.[48] During the *Risorgimento* in Italy, it was the Roman past that acted as a binding factor for all of Italy, in the form of *romanità*. In other words, they wanted to invoke a sense of 'Roman-ness'. Guiseppe Mazzini – one of the main revolutionaries backing the *Risorgimento* – saw the Roman empire as a symbol for unity. It is unsurprising that the Roman empire was chosen as model for the Italian nation, as it was the last time that the entire peninsula was ruled as a whole by one ruler. The capture of Rome on the 10th of September 1870 aided in the use of the Roman past as a

[44] Cesenari, *Italy's lost Greece*, 2, 4.
[45] De Haan, 'Passato Remoto', 54, 56-57.
[46] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2nd edition, London 2006) 6.
[47] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6-7.
[48] Ibidem, 67-93, 194-206.

common history, and in the 1870's and thereafter large sums of money were put into archaeological excavations and other research into Italy's ancient Roman past.[49]

However, the attention for the history of southern Italy was still minimal, as the Greek history of this region was still a cause of unease. Often, scholars and other authors tried downplaying the Greek history of Italy as much as possible, while uplifting the Italic peoples. It is illustrated well in the work of Giuseppe Micali (1768-1844), who portrayed the Greeks as violent invaders and conquerors, attributing the hate the Italians had for the Greeks to this period in history. Ettore Pais (1856-1939) saw the Greeks in a different light. He saw them as bringers of culture and politics, which the Romans would later adopt. By arguing this, he created a continuity between the Greeks in the Italian peninsula and the Romans. However, Pais was an exception. By far most of the research on Magna Graecia after 1870 was done by foreigners and for many Italians, the history of the south remained unfamiliar. The prejudice against the south was persistent, which did not help either.[50] It is safe to say that Micali's way of thinking about Magna Graecia was the most common during and just after the *Risorgimento*.

The feeling of unease regarding the ancient Greek colonies was further amplified by the fact that young Italy itself wanted to be an imperial power too, like other countries in Europe. Around the turn of the 20th century, the meaning of *romanità* had changed too. While at first it was used for uniting Italy, the term was now had an increasingly nationalist and imperialist character. It was also in this time that the idea of the *Mare Nostrum* began to sprout, the idea that Italy had a right to conquer around the Mediterranean, because these regions had once been Roman territory.[51]

Between roughly the 8th and 2nd centuries BC, ancient Greek colonies were present along the coasts of Sicily and the southern Italian peninsula. This history was an uneasy topic for a lot of Italian writers form the Renaissance onwards, as these colonies did not fit into the image of a strong Italic people. Some tried to argue that it was these Italic people that actually brought civilisation to the Greeks, or that the region was called Magna Graecia because the Greeks in Italy were better than those in Greece itself, though most authors still found it an uncomfortable topic. However, the use of Roman history for Italian national pride increased ever more, with the idea of *romanità* being fervently used by Mussolini and the Italian fascist party between the First and Second World War. Their use of *romanità* is what will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 2: Mussolini, *romanità* and Italian fascist appropriation of ancient history

A newspaper article from September 6th, 1933, in *The Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs Gazette* (Australia) details the account of a Mr. R. A. Shaw, who had studied abroad in Florence for a

[49] De Haan, 'Passato Remoto', 60-61; Lupi, 'Eine Nation, "Una di Memoire, di Sangue e di Cor"?, 283-284.
[50] De Haan, 'Passato Remoto', 62-63; 'Eine Nation, "Una di Memoire, di Sangue e di Cor"?, 286, 289-291, 293-294.
[51] De Haan, 'Passato Remoto', 62-63.

couple of years. Upon his return, Mr. Shaw told his view on the aims of the fascist regime, which he summarised as follows: "The ultimate aim of Fascism is to bring back to Italy the culture and traditions of ancient Rome".[52] It was from the very beginning of his regime that Mussolini wanted to promote *romanità* by drawing upon Roman antiquity, which can be seen already during the March on Rome (28 October 1922), were Mussolini wanted to evoke the image of Caesar crossing the Rubicon in 49 BC, coming to claim Rome for himself, just as Caesar had done.[53]

Before discussing the ways in which Mussolini and his regime used *romanità* as propaganda, it is important to know how Mussolini was able seize power. For that, the political situation in Italy before the First World War needs to be discussed. The book *The Seizure of Power* by Adrian Lyttelton goes in-depth on how fascism came to power in Italy.[54] A quote from Lyttelton summarizes well what the main reason was: "Italy entered the war divided and unprepared."[55] Many Italians saw the *Risorgimento* as a failure, as other countries had overtaken them in development and prosperity. This resulted in political unrest and division, which only grew stronger during the First World War, and continued to rise after the War had ended. Italy had promised territorial expansion as a way to gain domestic support for participating in the war. These expansions, however, were denied during the Paris Peace Conference (1919-1920). It was in this climate that Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) and the *fasci* rose in popularity, with support coming from countryside communities and (former) members of the army. These groups were drawn towards fascism, because of their discontent towards the outcome of World War I and because fascism positioned itself as a movement of action, which many felt lacked from other political groups. The post-war crisis in career options, high inflation and loss of savings also contributed to a lot of – predominantly young – Italians joining the fascist party.[56]

This support did not mean that the fascist party automatically came to power. Still, they did claim the power to rule for themselves with the March on Rome on the 28th of October 1922. Dissatisfaction with the leadership of Prime Minister Luigi Facta once again sparked political unrest, which lead to the creation of the March. At first, this was meant as a mass protest against the government. However, Mussolini's wish for a *coup d'état* was already present in the weeks leading up to the March. During the March, Mussolini and his party were joined by thousands of fascists. Facta had resigned in the night leading up to the 28th, and the Italian king felt forced to hand over the power to Mussolini, who wanted to prevent a civil war.[57]

From the very beginning of the fascist movement, Mussolini was drawn to the ancient Roman

[52] 'The Aims of Fascism', *The Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs Gazette* (06-09-1933).
[53] Jan Nelis, 'Fascist Modernity, Religion, and the Myth of Rome', in: Helene Roche and Kyriakos Demetriou eds., *Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Leiden 2017) 133-156, there 135.
[54] Adrian Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power. Fascism in Italy 1919-1929* (New York 1973).
[55] Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power*, 25.
[56] Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power*, 15, 18-20, 29-30, 39, 52, 77; Adrian Lyttelton, "The 'Crisis of Bourgeois Society' and the Origins of Fascism" in: Richard Bessel ed., *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge 1996) 12-22, there 16-18, 20; McKay, J. P., B. D. Hill, J. Buckler, C. H. Crowston, M. E. Wiesner-Hanks en J. Perry, *A History of Western Society* (12e editie; Boston-New York 2016) 915.
[57] Lyttelton, *The Seizure of Power*, 85-93.

past as a model. Ancient Rome provided a way to install certain ideals, like Roman values of fortitude and bravery, but also a romanticised image of ruralism, to justify the reorganisation of cityscapes and to strengthen fascist hierarchies.[58] However, in order to truly revive the Roman spirit, or *romanità*, these ideas needed to be spread to the citizens as well. This spread of *romanità* was done in as much ways as possible. Discourse around Roman history was ideologized by the regime and this history was then introduced into public life. Examples of this include the introduction of the 'Roman salute', imagery of the *fasces* and new holidays such as the *Natale di Roma* (the founding of Rome) on April 21st. Latin literature had a revival during the *ventennio fascista* (the two decades of fascist rule) with school texts in Latin being promoted and odes to Mussolini written in Latin.[59] The aforementioned newspaper article detailing the account of Mr. Shaw references this revival of the Latin language, telling that town names were changed back to their Latin names, for example Paestum, which was officially called Pesto until 1926.[60]

Mass gatherings, political rallies and festivals became common occurrences under the regime.[61] One of the most important places for mass gatherings became the Via dell'Impero (now Via dei Fori Imperiali) that Mussolini had constructed along the Forum Romanum, stretching from the Colosseum to the Palazzo Venezia, which was seat of government for the fascist party. On the Via dell'Impero, parades were being held regularly, with the Roman ruins as a backdrop for these gatherings.[62] This kind of imagery was supposed to awaken awe for the people in the audience, who would be able to see the modern – often military – parades taking place on and near this ever-important historic Roman site.

The importance of mass media for spreading propaganda was understood well by fascist Italy. During the 1930's, most households in both countries owned a radio, making this one of the ways in which propaganda could be spread. Films were also widespread in Italy in the 1920's and 30's. It was an accessible form of entertainment for many Italians, as an increasing number of cinemas were opening during these decades and the entry prices were low. However, unlike in nazi Germany, where feature-length films, such as Leni Riefenstahl's productions, were loaded with propaganda, Italy only knows one feature-length film that was clearly made with propaganda in mind: *Scipione l'Africano* (1937). This film revolved around the Second Punic war, with an emphasis on the Roman general, Scipio Africanus. The film furthermore contained deliberate comparisons between fascist Italy and Republican

[58] Roche, '"Distant Models"?', 5-7.
[59] Nelis, 'Fascist Modernity, Religion, and the Myth of Rome', 135-136, 140; Brian Brennan, 'Amedeo Maiuri: Herculaneum, Archaeology and Fascist Propaganda', *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* 30:1 (2020) 1-13, there 3. DOI: https://doi.org/10.5334/bha-625; Roche, '"Distant Models"?', 5-7.
[60] 'The Aims of Fascism', *The Toowoomba Chronicle and Darling Downs Gazette* (06-09-1933); CilentoTop, https://www.cilentotop.it/1926-regio-decreto-modifica-denominazione-pesto-in-paestum (accessed 05-06-2025).
This last document is a decree signed by Vittorio Emanuele III, king of Italy, which states that the official name for then Pesto should be changed into Paestum. The king at this point already acted as a puppet for Mussolini's government, see also: De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 121.
[61] Jeffrey T. Schnapp, 'Fascist Mass Spectacle', *Representation* 43 (1993), 89-125, there 93, 97.
[62] Nelis, 'Fascist Modernity, Religion, and the Myth of Rome', 136-137; Brennan, 'Amedeo Maiuri', 10.

Rome.[63]

Nevertheless, the cinemas still played a very important role in the spread of fascist propaganda. Newsreels and short documentaries were shown in cinemas prior to the featured film. The effect and importance of the short documentaries was seen very soon after the regime established itself. A 'clean' version of the March on Rome was made in 1923 by Umberto Paradisi, called *A Noi* (join us).[64] The very title of this documentary is already propaganda, as it urges people to join the fascist party. The documentary itself does not show the violence during the March and the Blackshirts were portrayed as a disciplined group that moved together towards one goal: a *coup d'état*.[65]

Because Italy's fascist regime understood the power of mass media in regard to propaganda, the *L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa* (LUCE) was created in 1924. Mussolini supported LUCE, as he had called cinema "the strongest weapon", regarding mass media.[66] The aim of LUCE was to spread newsreels loaded with propaganda, which would show a unified and modern Italy. From 1926 onwards, cinemas were required by law to show newsreels produced by LUCE. In the 1920's, the main focus of the newsreels was to show the development of poor, countryside communities. In the early 1930's Italy was shown as a well-developed and unified nation, while from the middle of the 1930's the newsreels got a more militaristic message, showing an Italy that was ready to follow in the footsteps of the Roman empire, ready to create their own colonial empire.[67] How active LUCE was with spreading newsreels around all kinds of topics, including those concerning *romanità*, will become apparent in the next few topics.

Another important – and for this research: especially relevant – way in which the fascist regime in Italy wanted to promote *romanità* was through the excavation of numerous ancient Roman sites. Especially through the exhumation of important and loaded monuments the idea of resurrecting the greatness of the Roman empire could awakened in the Italian population. These excavations and restorations were supposed to provoke reverence for the ancient Romans. During the entirety of the regime, archaeological work took place in sites around Rome, Ostia, Pompeii, Herculaneum, Paestum and other places.[68]

Some well-respected Italian archaeologists worked on these projects. Amedeo Maiuri for

[63] Arthur J. Pomeroy, 'Classical Antiquity, Cinema and Propaganda', in: Helene Roche and Kyriakos Demetriou eds., *Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Leiden 2017) 264-285, there 264, 266-268, 274, 282. Since it is not the focus of this chapter or research, further discussion on *Scipione l'Africano* is omitted here. See the rest of this article for more information on the film.
[64] Pomeroy, 'Classical Antiquity, Cinema and Propaganda', 265.
[65] Ibidem, 265.
[66] Flavia Marcello, 'Building the Image of Power: Images of *Romanità* in the Civic Architecture of Fascist Italy', in: Helene Roche and Kyriakos Demetriou eds., *Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Leiden 2017) 325-369, there 349; Pomeroy, 'Classical Antiquity, Cinema and Propaganda', 265.
[67] Pomeroy, 'Classical Antiquity, Cinema and Propaganda', 265-266.
[68] De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing', 107; Marcello, 'Building the Image of Power', 334; Brennan, 'Amedeo Maiuri', 8; Nelis, 'Fascist Modernity, Religion, and the Myth of Rome', 136; Fausto Longo, "Archeologia e Fascismo a Paestum", in: Chiara Lambert and Felice Pastore eds., *Miti e Popoli del Mediterraneo Antico. Scritti in Onore di Gabriella d'Henry* (Salerno 2014) 121-136, there 122.

example was appointed by Mussolini as the *soprintendente* (superintendent) of Pompeii and Herculaneum and was responsible for many excavations, including the one at Herculaneum. Maiuri often described the unearthing as the reawakening of the Roman spirit, arguing that one could experience *romanità* there, as he did in the book *Ercolano* (1932), which was meant for the broader Italian public. The book fell in line with the archaeological propaganda of the regime, as the excavations were described as a battle of man against nature and the superiority of modern excavation techniques were celebrated.[69] Modernity and Roman antiquity went hand in hand to form propaganda for the regime. LUCE was present during some stages of the archaeological process in order to make newsreels about the progress. During the 1930's, more than 225 newsreels were aired that involved archaeology, many of which also showed the excavations at Herculaneum. The hard labour that was required to remove the tuff at Herculaneum was often shown in these recordings[70]

Most of the archaeological work carried out by the fascist regime were unsurprisingly done at ancient Roman sites, as these excavations would fit into the idea of reviving the Roman spirit. There were some sites that had Greek origins that were excavated as well. However, what these Greek sites had in common was that they had been Roman cities as well. Paestum was one such site, which – as mentioned in the previous chapter – had also been a Roman town for around 700 years.[71] In the late 1920's, the regime instructed for the dredging of marshes in Campania and for the excavation of ruins in the same area, because they wanted to invest in tourism. The aforementioned Maiuri was likewise involved with these excavations and restorations and granted money to help further the project. It was Maiuri named one of the temples at Paestum the *Tempio della Vittoria*, as it had been dated to a time when the Lucians had taken over the rule in Paestum. This temple, according to Maiuri, was illustrative of the strength of the Italic people, who were seen as the ancestors of Romans and had been able to subdue the Greeks.[72] This was an obvious tactic for promoting Italian superiority in this age of fascism in Italy and was similar to the ways Italians had dealt with their Greek past in previous time periods. Fascist propaganda furthermore helped spread the interest for this soon-to-be attraction. During and after these restorations, performances of Greek tragedies were held in Paestum as well, with the temples serving as background and podium. For these performances, a semi-circular seating arrangement was also constructed in the archaeological site itself, reminiscent of ancient theatres.[73] While the regime did not carry out any archaeological research on exclusively Greek sites, the *Società Magna Grecia* was supporting independent research on Greek sites.[74] More on this topic is discussed in the following

[69] Brennan, 'Amedeo Maiuri', 1, 3-4.
[70] Ibidem, 3, 6, 8-9.
[71] Gates and Goldman, *Ancient Cities*, 345-349; Longo, "Archeologia e Fascismo a Paestum", 121-123. Some other examples of Greek colonies that were later Roman towns, that were also excavated during Mussolini's regime, are Velia and Cumae.
[72] Longo, "Archeologia e Fascismo a Paestum", 121-123.
[73] Sara Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum (1928-1938). From Performances of Ancient Drama to the Re-enactment of Myths and Rituals in Archaeological Sites', *Fascism* 12 (2023) 142-164, there 158-160; Longo, "Archeologia e Fascismo a Paestum", 121, 126-130.
[74] De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 117-118.

chapter.

Romanità was furthermore present in daily life through the use of architecture. The excavations of ancient sites throughout Italy were a great source of inspiration for incorporating classical elements into architecture. However, fascist architectural aesthetics were also heavily influenced by more stylized movements, such as modernism and art deco. To fit in, forms were simplified and materials like glass and steel were used. Combinations of these elements could be seen in all kinds of buildings. Some examples that are mentioned in Flavia Marcello's 'Building the Image of Power' include post-offices by renowned architect Angiolo Mazzoni, who used stylised arches and pillars for their designs.[75]

For important exhibitions, parts buildings were (temporarily) reshaped in order to evoke a more classical, Roman, but ultimately also fascist feeling. Two examples of this are the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* (MFR, 1932-1934) and the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (1937-1938), both of which were held in the *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* in Rome. The MFR was held to commemorate the ten-year rule of fascism in Italy, for which the façade was transformed in order to show four enormous *fasces* and two red X's – the Roman numeral for ten. The *Mostra Augustea* was held in order to celebrate the *bimillenario*, Augustus' 2000th birthday. Once again, the façade of the *Palazzo* was changed, this time in the form of a stylised triumphal arch, which included quotes from ancient Roman authors – such as Virgil – in Italian, in order to make them legible for a broader audience.[76]

The *Mostra Augustea* was an exhibitions on Roman society and consisted of three floors in which 'Roman-ness' was shown to the public. The aim of this exhibition was to convince visitors that the Roman spirit was reincarnated and that the Italian people were the rightful heirs of this *romanità*. In this exhibition, both the grandeur and everyday life of the early Roman empire was shown, the latter of which was used as a way to make the Italian public feel more connected to their past, as these visitors could identify similarities between them and their (presumed) ancestors.[77] In the same exhibition, clear parallels were drawn between Augustus and Mussolini, because *Il Duce* wanted to portray himself like this emperor. Both leaders came to power in times of political unrest, they both carried out 'Roman revolutions' and most importantly, both leaders implemented transformations of the nation, while at the same time turning towards tradition.[78] Mussolini utilized this comparison as a strategic tool in order to legitimize his power.

Besides a tool for domestic political education – read: indoctrination – it was also an instrument for international cultural diplomacy, as the *Mostra Augustea* was supposed to remind Westerners that their civilisations started in Rome. To popularise this event, the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (National

[75] Marcello, 'Building the Image of Power', 325, 327, 329, 331, 337, 344.
[76] Marcello, 'Building the Image of Power', 352-353; Joshua Arthurs, 'Bathing in the Spirit of Eternal Rome: The Mostra Augustea della Romanità', in: Helene Roche and Kyriakos Demetriou eds., *Brill's Companion to the Classics, Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Leiden 2017) 157-177, there 161.
[77] Arthurs, 'Bathing in the Spirit of Eternal Rome', 157-158, 160, 166-167.
[78] Roche, '"Distant Models"?', 7, 8; Arthurs, 'Bathing in the Spirit of Eternal Rome', 166-167.

Afterwork Club) provided discount on train tickets for Italians who wanted to visit the exhibition.[79] Once again, the LUCE was present at many important moments surrounding the *Mostra Augustea* to make newsreels, spreading the publicity of this event even further. Recordings were made surrounding the opening of the exhibition, but also during the visit of important individuals, such as both of Hitler's visits to the exhibition during his time in Rome in May of 1937.[80]

In this chapter, the origin of the fascist regime in Italy was briefly discussed, as well as one of their main goals: portraying themselves as the rightful heirs of the Romans. This idea was spread by evoking feelings of *romanità*, or 'Roman-ness', through a great scale of means. This chapter has provided context to why some activities and events surrounding the temples of Agrigento and Paestum might have been frowned upon by the fascist regime – or not.

Chapter 3: Magna Graecia during Mussolini's regime

This chapter deals with three case studies surrounding the archaeological sites of Agrigento and Paestum. All three are different in character, which will allow for a broader analysis of why the fascist regime took on certain positions in regards to these case studies and ultimately help answer the question posed for this research. The first case study is about theatre performances of Greek dramas and modern plays in both Agrigento and Paestum and therefore will deal with both archaeological sites. The organisation of these events will be touched upon, as well as the involvement of the regime in these performances, both through Mussolini's direct support and recordings by LUCE. The second case study analyses two books on Agrigento written by archaeologist Pirro Marconi. The aims and intended audiences of these books are the most important factor in understanding the stance of the fascist regime towards the publication of these books. The third case study considers the activities of Umberto Zanotti-Bianco and the *Società Magna Grecia*. Out of the three case studies, this is the only one in which the fascist regime had a clear negative reaction to their activities. Why this was the case will be discussed in this chapter.

Theatres and temples

In 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum (1928-1938)', Sara Troiani wrote a comparative study on the theatrical performances at the temples of Agrigento and Paestum and the involvement of the fascist regime. Troiani illustrates that the practice of performing classical dramas at old Greek and Roman sites was a phenomenon that arose in Europe in the late 19th century, with the first of such performances being in 1888, when Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* was performed in the Roman theatre of Orange (France). The aim was to create a new aesthetic, but to make the performances feel more naturalistic as well and to attract a broader public for these ancient drama's, as up until that point,

[79] Arthurs, 'Bathing in the Spirit of Eternal Rome', 157-158, 160-163, 166-168.
[80] Marcello, 'Building the Image of Power', 353.

it was mostly the elite who went to theatrical performances.[81] The success of this form of theatre was seen by many and had managed to pique the interest of the fascist parties in both Germany and Italy. They saw it as another tool for creating a new common identity, by reappropriation of – respectively – Greek and Roman history.[82] As mentioned before, mass gatherings formed an important everyday tool in spreading the fascist propaganda, and some scholars argue that Mussolini himself was a poet and a playwright. Regardless, he was a supporter of the use of theatre, as it would aid in spreading fascist ideology, as well as serve a didactic function for the Italian citizens.[83]

The performance of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* directed by Gustavo Salvini on April 20th 1911 in the Roman theatre of Fiesole (near Florence) marked the first time a Greek drama was performed in an ancient theatre in Italy. During the Fourth Congress of Italian classicists by the *Società per la Diffusione e l'Incoraggiamento degli Studi Classici 'Atene e Roma'*, attention was given to the aforementioned adaptation of *Oedipus Rex*. Since the aim of this Society was to introduce Greek and Roman culture to a wider audience, many of the attendants were enthusiastic about the performance. During the same congress, the philologist and professor of Greek literature Etorre Romagnoli (1871-1938) introduced a plan for bringing Greek culture to the audiences – for example through plays. Romagnoli himself began organising these kinds of performances. He would change the format of the plays as to attract interest from a larger audience. Romagnoli used Italian translations, he would only choose certain parts of Greek tragedies to be played out and he used the ancient sites as a backdrop and stage for the plays. Romagnoli's changes had great effect, as an increasing number of scholars started making translations of ancient texts for a broader public, which in turn resulted in more Greek and Roman plays being performed in Italy. Together with the *Drammatica Compagnia di Roma*, Romagnoli worked on Euripides' *Bacchae*. From 1914 until 1927 he was the official translator and artistic director for classical performances at the Greek theatre of Syracuse, where in 1914, the first performance was held, with an adaptation of *Agamemnon*. This performance was a success both nationally and internationally and as a result, the format for plays at ancient sites was set.[84]

In 1924, Romagnoli was involved in organizing two plays at Syracuse, *Seven against Thebes* and *Antigone*, which would be attended by Mussolini. Therefore, these theatres at Syracuse had the opportunity to earn national recognition. As a result of this and with the aid of Romagnoli's friend Pietro Fedele, who was the Minister of Education, the local Committee that organized these performances was formalized in 1925 into an *ente morale* (a non-profit) called the *Istituto Nazionale del Dramma Antico*

[81] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 142-143. It was Richard Wagner (1813-1883) who first successfully managed to make a theatre for a broader public, by departing from traditional opera and creating a new sort of lyric drama, in which music, drama and visual arts were linked together, as 'total works of art'. Wagner furthermore helped popularize Greek dramas again. For more information, see: Pantelis Michelakis, 'Theater Festivals, Total Works of Art, and the Revival of Greek Tragedy on the Modern Stage', *Cultural Critique* 74 (2010) 149-163, there 151-152.
[82] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 142-143.
[83] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 144, 151-152; Pomeroy, 'Classical Antiquity, Cinema and Propaganda', 271; Schnapp, 'Fascist Mass Spectacle', 93, 97.
[84] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 143-148.

(INDA). In 1927, the INDA was entrusted with the responsibility of organizing all performances at ancient sites and until 1928 these plays were organised by Romagnoli. The INDA greatly increased its activity and Romagnoli's productions previously displayed at Syracuse were now also being shown in Ostia, in Pompeii new productions were shown and in the Greek theatre of Taormina the play *Julius Caesar*, written by fascist senator Enrico Corradini, was performed.[85]

In the beginning of 1927, a new law – Law no. 320 – was passed that was misinterpreted by members of the INDA, which caused a division. Some of the members of the Committee thought that the law gave them exclusive right to approve or reject any performances at archaeological sites, while Romagnoli had interpreted it as only him having the right to do so. This conflict resulted in Romagnoli ending his collaboration with the INDA. He went on to coordinate events at archaeological sites himself, with the first one being the 1928 *Primavera classica ai Templi di Agrigento*, which was a novelty, as for the first time a play was not performed at an ancient theatre, but at temples.[86]

Even thought the cooperation with INDA had ended, Romagnoli was still supported by Mussolini directly, as can be seen in the poster on page 150 of Troiani's text. This poster was made to advertise the event in Agrigento, and the third line on this poster – before it is said who is directing the play – indicates the patronage of Mussolini for this event. Mussolini's patronage can be explained because of a preference for the regime for supporting existing institutes, as they were easier to control and check, which in turn would minimize anti-fascist propaganda. Additionally, these plays stood in line with the aim of theatres in the 1920's. During this period, a focus was laid on the didactic element of the Greek dramas. Troiani argues that the location of the play in Agrigento allowed the public to feel more involved, which stood in line with Mussolini's ideas on *Teatro di massa* and the role of theatre in education and fascist propaganda.[87]

The plays were performed near the Temple of Concordia in Agrigento, which is one of the best-preserved Doric temples in the world.[88] Having this as setting for an ancient play must already have been very imposing for the people attending. The play that was performed in 1928 was *Il mistero di Persefone*, which was an interpretation by Romagnoli on how the mystery cults were staged in ancient Greece. For this play, Romagnoli picked important moments from the myth of Persephone being abducted by Hades, which he divided in seven scenes. One of the reasons for choosing this myth, is because it is thought that the abduction of Persephone took place on Sicily, near Enna.[89]

LUCE recorded one of the performances of *Il mistero di Persefone*. This recording by LUCE was made in Agrigento in 1931. Out of the seven scenes of this performance, only the fourth and fifth

[85] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 147-149.
[86] Ibidem, 149, 151.
[87] Ibidem, 149-152, 163.
[88] Roy R. Holloway, Archaeology *of Ancient Sicily* (London 2002) 116-117; Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 152.
[89] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 152-153. Enna is about an hour away from Agrigento by car.

are missing.[90] The recording is a silent film in black and white and has a playtime of around 11 minutes. Inter-titles are used to explain and describe to the audience what is happening in each scene.[91] In the third scene of the recording, the Temple of Concordia appears for the first time in the film, with Demeter wandering around the Temple in search of her daughter, who had been taken away by Hades in the previous scene. Throughout the rest of the short film, the Temple remains a central part of the story, serving as a stage for the actors.[92] While no clear propagandistic elements are shown in this short film, the recording does illustrate the importance of the didactic element well, something that was seen as important for the ancient plays in the 1920's. As mentioned, the inter-titles give the audience of the LUCE-recording context to what is happening in the play. This information is in line with what is still considered the core myth of the abduction of Persephone.[93] *Il mistero di Persefone* by Ettore Romagnoli is therefore a perfect example of didactic theatre in the 1920's centred around an ancient Greek story.

In the 1930's, the main focus of the ancient plays was to attract both national and international tourists. On the fourth and fifth of May 1935 once again a theatre was staged at the Temple of Concordia in Agrigento, this time lead by Biagio Pace, who was a fascist parliamentarian and president of the INDA since 1929. This performance consisted of scenes from multiple different stories, such as Homer's *Nausicaa and the Wave* and Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*. Once again, these plays used the environment of the Temple of Concordia as stage.[94]

The focus on tourism in this period can be found in newspapers. In *De Telegraaf* from 29-08-1937, Herman van den Bergh writes a piece on his travels through Sicily, with a focus on Agrigento.[95] In the article 'Dorisch Sicilië: of het evenement van het Licht', he is praising the ancient Greek architecture, clearly conveying how impressed he was with what he saw. The last paragraph of the text is devoted to the Temple of Concordia, where Van den Bergh mentions the plays that are performed here. During his visit, the actors were rehearsing, which he likewise writes about.[96] It is unsurprising that Van den Bergh has written an article on this topic, as he was a correspondent for *De Telegraaf* in Paris and Rome during his career. Furthermore, he travelled a lot, for instance in southeastern Europe.[97] This article seems to be just one example of his travel accounts and could have inspired others to undertake the journey to Agrigento as well.

Paestum was one of the ancient sites that Mussolini's regime wanted to restore in an effort to increase tourism in and to Italy. INDA was asked to perform some of their plays at Paestum in 1932,

[90] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 153; Cinecitta, LUCE Archivo, inv.no. M008210, Il mistero di Persefone, 1931.
[91] Cinecitta, LUCE Archivo, inv.no. M008210, Il mistero di Persefone, 1931.
[92] Cinecitta, LUCE Archivo, inv.no. M008210, Il mistero di Persefone, 1931.
[93] Sarah Iles Johnston, 'Mysteries', in: Idem, *Religions of the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England 2004) 98-111, there 99-101.
[94] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 156-157.
[95] H. van den Bergh, 'Dorisch Sicilië: of het evenement van het Licht', *De Telegraaf* (29-08-1937).
[96] H. van den Bergh, 'Dorisch Sicilië: of het evenement van het Licht', *De Telegraaf* (29-08-1937).
[97] Joodse Bibliotheek – Herman van den Bergh https://joodsebibliotheek.nl/auteur/dEo/Herman-van-den-Bergh/ (accessed 12-06-2025).

1936 and 1938. For these performances, a half-circle *cavea* was constructed in between the Temple of Neptune and the Basilica. In 1938, *Mistero Dionisiaco* was performed, which was inspired by Euripides' *Bacchae*. But it was the 1936 performances inspired by the Panathenaea that took on an unprecedented scale. This play was prepared and carried out by philologist Raffaele Cantarella, artist Duilio Cambellotti, Ildebrando Pizzetti and Vincenzo Bonajuto. They aimed to recreate the ancient procession dedicated to the deliverance of a new garb to the goddess Athena. This performance was the one that most closely reflected political rallies of the fascists, as there were nearly 400 participants in this play, including thirty-five *butteri* (cattlemen on horseback), fourteen professional dancers and 143 extra's. The parade ended in front of the Basilica, which acted as the backdrop of the final scenes.[98] Previously, the importance of mass gatherings and parades during Mussolini's regime was discussed. The parade that was part of the performance at Paestum was supposed to resemble such fascist parades, while on the other hand, the parades of the regime were also intended to take after ancient triumphal processions. So, the parades held by the fascist regime were meant to invoke *romanità*, while this feeling of *romanità* was simultaneously being upheld by the performances of ancient processions.

The news of these performances at Paestum was spread through newspaper articles, with multiple appearing in Dutch newspapers. In both De Sumatra Post and the Soerabaijasch Handelsblad, respectively on September 29th and September 9th, articles appeared with the title "Klassieke dansen in een klassieke omgeving". Both of these newspapers were Dutch colonial newspapers. The article in De Sumatra Post consists of a page-wide spread, containing mostly with pictures taken from the performance of the Panathenaea in Paestum, with a brief text on the bottom right corner. The newspaper article from the Soerabaijasch Handelsblad contains the same images as the article from De Sumatra Post, although here, they are smaller and positioned at the top of the page. The text is the same in both articles, but the author is unknown. The author writes how the temples at Paestum had been revived by the new excavations and the plays that were possible because of the restorations – which was exactly the message the fascist regime wanted to spread with the renovations and the spread of *romanità*. The author of the text furthermore emphasises the effect that the temples had on the audience – which, as seen from the pictures in this newspaper, once again were used as backdrop and a stage for the play.[99] These newspaper articles, while meant for international audiences, still carried some fascist messages in them, such as using the word 'revived' when speaking of ancient site of Paestum, which, while originally Greek, had been a Roman town for around 700 years. However, the focus on 'revival' was in line with the idea of *romanità*, which was used to revive a sense of 'Roman-ness' during the Italian fascist regime.

There are certain points that explain why the regime supported these plays, predominantly

[98] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 159-160, 163.
[99] 'Klassieke dansen in klassieke omgeving', *De Sumatra Post* (26-09-1936); 'Klassieke dansen in klassieke omgeving', *Soerabaijasch Handelsblad* (09-09-1936).

inspired by Greek dramas and festivals, at the temples of Agrigento and Paestum. Staging a Greek play at an ancient site was something that already existed before the fascists came to power. However, seeing as the performances at Paestum and Agrigento were in settings that were not meant to be used as theatres, they were exploited by the fascist regime to promote Italian cultural heritage. Furthermore, the Greek plays during the fascist regime mainly dealt with mythology. Roman and Greek mythology overlapped greatly, so the regime might have allowed these plays because of this reason. Mussolini saw it as a way of educating – but more importantly: indoctrinating – citizens. Concerning Romagnoli himself, although it is not clear if he was a fascist himself, he was friends with the Minister of Education, which might indicate at least some positive feelings towards the regime. This might have also aided in the approval of his projects by the fascist regime.

Writing about ruins: Pirro Marconi

While the fascist regime directed most of their attention to ancient Roman sites, there were still people and organisation concerning themselves with Greek sites. One of these people was Pirro Marconi (1897-1938). He studied in Rome at the *Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia*, although he interrupted his studies to serve in the First World War. In July 1920 he completed his studies and followed these up with another course at the *Scuola italiana di archeologia di Roma*, where he became qualified to teach archaeology. Marconi went on to work for the *soprintendente* of Eastern Veneto and later at the National Museum of Palermo. In 1929, he became the director of this museum. This position is also referred to in his work *Agrigento. Topografia ed Arte*.[100] Once at the head of this museum, Marconi was responsible for archaeological research in Palermo, Trapani and Agrigento and greatly increased the archaeological fieldwork carried out in these regions. In Agrigento, this effectively meant that attention was given to the urban layout of the site and the architecture of both public and domestic buildings, as well as excavations of various sanctuaries. Unsurprisingly, these activities resulted in a number of works concerning the archaeological site of Agrigento. This was only a small part of his extensive list of works, of which most revolved around both Greek and Roman architecture and art.[101]

After Marconi's time in Sicily, he became the *soprintendente* in Marche from 1931 until 1933, when he was appointed as associate professor in archaeology at the University of Cagliari. In 1935 he would also take on this position at the University of Naples. In this period, he mainly focussed on Roman art, most likely influenced by the fascist regime's ambition of promoting Roman culture. In late 1936, Marconi was selected as head of the Italian archaeological programme in Albania, where he was active

[100] Treccani – Marconi, Pirro http://156.54.191.165/enciclopedia/pirro-marconi_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed 22-04-2025); Pirro Marconi, *Agrigento. Topografia ed Arte* (Florence 1929) 3; Silvia Bruni, *Dizionario Biografico dei Soprintendenti Archeologi* (1904-1974) (Bologna 2012) 468-470.
[101] Treccani – Marconi, Pirro http://156.54.191.165/enciclopedia/pirro-marconi_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed 15-04-2025); Bruni, *Dizionario Biografico dei Soprintendenti Archeologi*, 469-471.

in the Butrint region.[102] The origin of this Italian archaeological project lies with the formation of an official relationship between Mussolini and Albania's new self-proclaimed king Zog I (Ahmed Muhtar Zogolli). In 1925, permission was given to the Italian government to start archaeological research as part of the new diplomatic alliance. Archaeologist Luigi Maria Ugolini was the first head of this program and was the first person to lead systematic excavations in Albania, which resulted in finds of Roman origin around the town of Phoinice. In 1928, excavations diverted to Butrint, because it was believed that Aeneas had passed by this location on his journey to the Italian peninsula. In 1928, the 2000th birthday of Virgil, author of the *Aeneid*, was celebrated by the regime, so the excavations at Butrint fell nicely together with this anniversary. Ugolini passed away due to health issues in 1936, after which Marconi took over the excavations. A request was made to compose a handbook for tourists visiting Butrint. Unfortunately, this book remained unfinished, as Marconi died in April 1938 in a plane crash.[103] The 'Gazeta Shqiptare' (Albanian Newspaper) wrote an article in memory of Marconi, where he is remembered fondly and is called one of the pioneers of archaeology in Albania, along with his predecessor Ugolini.[104]

What is of most interest to this research in regards to Marconi's activities, is his period in Sicily and the publications on Agrigento he made. Two of these works are discussed here. Both are (originally) written within a span of four years from one another, but differ greatly in intended audiences. The first of these books is called *Agrigento. Topografia ed Arte* and was published in 1929. This work is of scholarly nature, as Marconi himself also expresses. In the introduction of this book, he states that his study is based on the research of predecessors, which is reflected in the references to these works in the main body of the text. In the introduction, Marconi furthermore mentions that he is aware that his work is not conclusive, and that there is more research to be done on the history of Agrigento.[105]

The book is made up of 283 pages of A4-format and includes numerous pictures and illustrations, which support Marconi's in-depth analysis of Agrigento. The work is split into two parts, each containing chapters with different themes. The first part of the book mostly concerns the history of the site, which starts at the time before the Greeks arrived here and includes a discussion on – as Marconi had dubbed it – the '*periodo dell'Arte*', after the many elaborate temples being constructed during the fifth century BC. Marconi furthermore discusses Agrigento during the Roman period. The second part of this book revolves around the art in Agrigento. Here, Marconi discusses the architecture of the different periods in Agrigento, once again beginning before the arrival of the Greeks and also including the architecture from the Roman period, but the focus lies mostly on Greek architecture and art. He additionally discusses statues found at this site, as well as ceramics and coins and the images on these

[102] Treccani – Marconi, Pirro http://156.54.191.165/enciclopedia/pirro-marconi_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ (accessed 15-04-2025).
[103] Lida Miraj, 'The Italian Archaeological Mission in Albania before and during World War II', *Economicus* 18:2 (2019) 32-45, there 32-36, 40-41.
[104] Sterjo Spasse, 'Marconi ishte pionieri i arkeologjisë sonë, pas ugolinit', *Gazeta Shqiptare* (03-05-1938).
[105] Marconi, *Agrigento. Topografia ed Arte,* 4, 7-9, 13-15.

objects.[106]

All in all, Marconi's research is thorough in its discussion on the site of Agrigento, providing detailed analyses of the finds here, including images and illustrations for the objects at hand. His analysis is chronological and he goes into great detail when discussing architecture and art. In this work, there are no references to the fascist regime. The book is dedicated to archaeologist and classicist Paolo Orsi, who had spurred on Marconi to undertake this project. Thanks are also given to the British Captain Alexander Hardcastle for his financial support to the project.[107] Mussolini is not named in this book however, even though it was becoming common practice at this time to declare support to Mussolini and the regime in scholarly publications.[108] It was more common in the 1930's to show support in this way, so the omission of this in Marconi's work might be because it was published in 1929. The omission of direct support does however not automatically mean that Marconi did not support the fascists. As mentioned above, he was involved with an archaeological project set up by the government and was even personally selected for this position. There is simply not enough information to clearly state what his political affiliations were. The publication of this scientific work, which for the most part was based on a Greek site, could have been seen as tolerable by the regime because of its inclusion of Roman history, art and architecture in Agrigento as well. This part of the research would have fit in with the cult of *romanità*. Furthermore, because of the scientific nature of this publication, it meant that the intended audience was relatively small. The fascist regime might therefore not have cared too much about the information on Magna Graecia the book possessed.

Marconi's other book is *Agrigento (47 Illustrazioni)* and was made for a different purpose. While the first edition appeared in 1933, during Marconi's own lifetime, the edition used in this research was published in 1949.[109] I was unable to find a book of the first edition. Therefore, it is not clear if there have been any changes made in the second edition. It is entirely plausible that references were made to Mussolini and his regime in the first edition of this book, which were later omitted in the 1949 reprint. However, this cannot be said for certain. Further research would be needed to get a concluding answer to this lacuna.

What is immediately noticeable, is the size of this book. It measures 12 by 17,5 cm and contains 53 pages, of which the latter half (pages 25 to 52) are made up of photographs of Agrigento's archaeological site. The back cover contains a height map of the site, which includes marks for the

[106] Marconi, *Agrigento. Topografia ed Arte*, 48-49, 50-98, 237-238.
[107] Marconi, *Agrigento. Topografia ed Arte*, 5, 7-8. Unfortunately, not much is written on Captain Alexander Hardcastle, which has led me to omit further discussion on him in my main text. Some information is given in the introduction of Marconi's work. He was an Englishman, of which Marconi said that he was '*straniero di nascita ma agrigentino di elezione*' (stranger by birth, but Agrigentini by choice). He sponsored archaeological research in Agrigento, and even helped with them himself. His patronage is still remembered to this day, with his former home 'Villa Aurea' now being the representative office of the Agrigento archaeological park. A street in Agrigento itself is also named after Hardcastle. Enjoy Sicilia – Aurea Villa in Agrigento https://www.enjoysicilia.it/en/agrigento-valle-dei-templi/valle-dei-templi/villa-aurea-agrigento/ (accessed 22-04-2025).
[108] De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 123.
[109] Pirro Marconi, *Agrigento (47 Illustrazioni)* (2nd edition, Rome 1949), 1.

locations of the temples, city gates and city wall.[110] So, this book is a lot different in appearance compared to *Agrigento. Topografia ed Arte*. This is the case because the book is a guidebook for Agrigento. It is the 26th part of a series: *Itinerari dei Musei e Monumenti d'Italia*. This series was the initiative of the *Ministerio della Educazione Nazionale*, which was established by the regime in 1929 by adding together different departments regarding education, research and art.[111] The series *Itinerari dei Musei e Monumenti d'Italia*, is about, as the title suggest, museums and monuments in Italy. The first publication of this series was published in in 1931 and was about Ostia.[112] With this beginning date, it is safe to say that the initiative for this series lay with the fascist regime and that it was part of the regime's aim to increase tourism in the 1930's – along with the plays in Agrigento and Paestum.[113]

The purpose of *Agrigento (47 Illustrazioni)* is furthermore reflected in the way the text has been structured. As mentioned above, more than half of the pages contain photographs of the site. The other half contains a short history of Sicily, Magna Graecia and Agrigento itself. The various places of interest within Agrigento (the temples, city gates and city walls) have short descriptions written about them, containing their history and what can be seen at the locations. The text is deliberately structured in such a way that it forms a route across the entire site, with a starting point and clear indications on how the reader was supposed to walk from one location to the next. Noteworthy is that nearly the entire text is focussed on the Greek history of Agrigento and what remains visible from this period.[114] As most of the remains are Greek, the emphasis on this part of Agrigento's history makes sense, but it is still peculiar, as the fascist regime was mostly preoccupied with promoting ancient Roman history.

The route mentioned in the text is another indication that this book was intended as a guide through Agrigento. The written route begins in the chapter talking about the visible antiquities of the site, where Marconi has written that the best place to start is at the north-east side of the archaeological site: "La visita comincia dal lato settentrionale".[115] The instructions for following the route can be seen at the start of the discussion of each new place. The text discussing 'la collina dei templi' has another good example of directions being given to the reader, with this part beginning with "procendendo lungo le mura"[116] (proceeding along the wall).

This book by Marconi, then, was quite possibly requested by the fascist regime to be written, as it would aid in promoting tourism in Italy. With the *Ministerio della Educazione Nazionale* being formed in 1929, the first book of the series *Itinerari dei Musei e Monumenti d'Italia* published in 1931 and Marconi's *Agrigento (47 Illustrazioni)*, the 26th book of the series, being published in 1933, it is very clear that the *Ministerio* was actively working on promoting museums and heritage sites to tourists.

[110] Marconi, *Agrigento (47 Illustrazioni)*.
[111] Archivio Centrale dello Stato – Archivi Degli Organi di Governo e Amministrativi dello Stato https://search.acs.beniculturali.it/OpacACS/guida/IT-ACS-AS0001-0002270# (accessed 09-06-2025).
[112] Guido Calza, *Ostia* (Rome 1931).
[113] Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 142, 158, 163.
[114] Marconi, *Agrigento (47 Illustrazioni)*, 8-24.
[115] Marconi, *Agrigento (47 Illustrazioni)* 13.
[116] Marconi, *Agrigento (47 Illustrazioni)* 15.

Additionally, the size of the book made it easy to carry around as a tourist and the photographs that made up the second part of the book could act as a keepsake, reminding the owner of the book of their time spent at Agrigento.

The books on Agrigento written by Marconi differ greatly in both size and contents. While the fascist regime was busy promoting the cult of *romanità* to its citizens, both of these books were published during this time. As mentioned, the book *Agrigento. Topografia ed Arte* did contain parts about the Roman history, art and architecture in Agrigento. Besides, it was meant for an academic public, which might mean that the contents were seen as less problematic for the regime. Marconi's *Agrigento (47 Illustrazioni)* on the other hand was a product of the regime itself, as part of the series of guidebooks for museums and monuments to visit in Italy.

Umberto Zanotti-Bianco and the Sociètа Magna Grecia

When talking about Magna Graecia during the 1920's and '30's, one cannot avoid talking about the *Sociètа Magna Grecia* and its founder: Umberto Zanotti-Bianco (1889-1963). Zanotti-Bianco was a very active man with an extensive social network. He was born in Chania, Crete, to count and diplomat Gustavo Zanotti-Bianco and a Scottish-Swedish mother. He was taught at a prestigious school in Turin, *Reale Collegio Carlo Alberto*, which was dedicated to educating the children of the nobility of Piedmont, were his family hailed from. Later, Zanotti-Bianco studied law in Turin, though he was more interested in Italian and Easter European literature, in particular in the works of Antonio Fogazzaro. When Zanotti-Bianco got introduced to the social circle of this writer, he met Tommaso Gallareti Scotti and Giovanni Malvezzi, who became his good friends. It was Fogazzaro who encouraged the three friends to go to Sicily and Calabria in 1909, as these regions had suffered from an earthquake. It was Zanotti-Bianco's first time in the south of Italy and it was here that he discovered his true passion: helping others. In late 1909 Zanotti-Bianco and Malvezzi returned to the south to conduct a survey regarding the economic and social situation in this region, of which the results revealed great inequality in this part of Italy. As a result, the three friends founded ANIMI (*Associazione Nazionale per gli Interessi del Mezzogiorno d'Italia*) in 1910, which was mainly focussed on education and stimulating literacy, as they saw education as a means of emancipating the people.[117]

At the same time, Zanotti-Bianco wrote about the importance of democracy and the rights of oppressed peoples in the book series *La Giovine Europa*, of which he also was an editor. He volunteered during World War I and got seriously injured in 1916. It took a year for him to recover from this, but in this period he began a new project, the magazine *La Voce dei Popoli*, in which he brought attention to oppressed groups in the Balkan region. After his recovery he became the head of ANIMI and in 1922 he went to Russia as a member of the Italian Relief Committee to establish a village for Armenian

[117] De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing', 98-100.

refugees.[118] So, it is very clear that Zanotti-Bianco was an active benefactor who stood for the rights of people and for democracy.

It might not come as much as a surprise then, that Zanotti-Bianco was an anti-fascist and opposed Mussolini's rule. Around 1920 he founded the *Società Magna Grecia* with the archaeologist Paolo Orsi, who at that moment was the *soprintendente* of Sicily and Calabria. The aim of the *Società* was to raise money for archaeological projects and restorations of Greek and Byzantine monuments in the south of Italy. Quintino Quagliati – the *soprintendente* of Apulia – and Orsi became the directors of this organisation.[119] To raise money, the *Società Magna Grecia* organised lectures and art-fairs, they distributed brochures asking to donate money or to become a member of the organisation. People could also get a subscription on their magazine, *Atti e Memorie della Società Magna Grecia*. Money was mostly collected from individuals, companies and other institutions. A number of individuals donated a great sum of money just after the establishment of the *Società* and a member list from 1931 reveals that members of the royal family and other aristocrats were supporters of the cause, as well as several banks, scholars and other individuals from both Italy and abroad. Noteworthy is that the *Confederazione Nazionale Fascista del Commercio* from Rome was a member, as well as the *Federazione Provinciale Fascista del Commercio Napoli*. De Haan argues that this shows Zanotti-Bianco's pragmatism, that he was prepared to accept support from or work together with fascists – the ideology he personally opposed – in order to further his own projects.[120]

The money collected by the *Società* was spent on research, excavations and on publications selected by the *Società*. Projects at the sites of Himera, Syracuse, Taranto, Hipponium and more were sponsored in this way. While the *Società* was not an archaeological organisation, the funds the organisation provided made it the first time that research into the Greek past in the south of Italy was done on such a scale. Furthermore, the results from the research conducted were published in newspapers and magazines, which made the information accessible and visible for a larger audience.[121]

While Zanotti-Bianco was one of the founders of the *Società Magna Grecia*, he remained largely out of the picture until his leave at ANIMI. He tried to keep ANIMI out of fascists hands after they came to power in Italy. This was done successful, until he published a report on the Italian village of Africo. In this document, Zanotti-Bianco described the immense poverty in the village. This report was not the first by ANIMI that showed the destitution in southern Italy. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the fascist regime did try to combat impoverishment and spread newsreels about these activities through cinemas in the 1920's. The reports by Zanotti-Bianco directly contradicted the fascist newsreels. For the regime, this – along with, among other things, his openly anti-fascist stance – reached its limit regarding Zanotti-Bianco, which led to him being permanently followed by the military police from 1928 onward.

[118] Ibidem, 100-101.
[119] De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing', 101; De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 116, 121.
[120] De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing', 106; De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 117-118.
[121] De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 117-118.

To preserve ANIMI, Zanotti-Bianco made the decision to step down as director of this organisation in 1930.[122] This decision did increase his activity at the *Società*.

While Zanotti-Bianco did not have any experience as an archaeologist, he started getting involved in excavations more and even gained field experience in 1929, when he helped the previously discussed archaeologist Pirro Marconi with excavations in Himera. Zanotti-Bianco also became more careful with expressing his political views and tried to keep this separated from his work, so that he could continue his projects. His name did not appear in publications in order to erase suspicion and to minimize his official role. In 1926, the newspaper *Gazetta di Messina* portrayed the *Società* as an anti-fascist organisation. As response, Zanotti-Bianco stated that the S*ocietà* did not have any political implications. Additionally, Paolo Orsi, one of the two directors of the *Società*, had been appointed as *senatore a vita* by the king just two years prior, who at that point was already a puppet of Mussolini.[123] This does imply that Orsi was a fascist – or at least supported the regime to some extent – and once again shows that Zanotti-Bianco was prepared to overcome his personal beliefs to further his goals.

Around 1932, the *Società Magna Grecia* began facing more hardships, as the fascist regime became more aggressive and *romanità* was seen as increasingly important. During the ten-year anniversary of the *Società* in 1932-1933, an exhibition was organised surrounding the traditional costumes of southern Italy. Press attended the opening of this exhibition, but either did not mention the *Società*, or portrayed the organisation as having a "proto-fascist" character. De Haan argues that the results of the *Società* regarding research into the ancient Greek past were up until that point still tolerated, because they could still fit into the ideas of the cult of *romanità*. However, this would change. The society's magazine *Atti e Memorie* was not allowed to be published after 1932 and, most importantly for this research, there were great difficulties surrounding an excavation just outside of Paestum.[124]

Zanotti-Bianco worked on this excavation with Paola Zancani Montuoro (1901-1987). Zancani Montuoro was born in Naples and studied Classical Archaeology at the University of Naples. She had been active at the *Società* as secretary of the Naples Section. The excavations near Paestum at Foce de Sele were suggested by Zancani Montuoro to Zanotti-Bianco and together they worked on this project in the early 1930's. Despite hindrance by the military police, Zancani Montuoro's and Zanotti-Bianco's work at Foce de Sele revealed the Heraion, a Hera-sanctuary from the archaic period, which was still in excellent condition and contained well-preserved metopes. The news of this discovery was immediately spread widely, in, for example, both national and international newspapers, meaning it reached a broad audience. This also tied in with how the *Società* worked. Zanotti-Bianco liked to keep close ties with journalists and other people working for the media, so that scientific research – in this case concerning

[122] De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 120-121; Pomeroy, 'Classical Antiquity, Cinema and Propaganda', 265.
[123] De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 121.
[124] Ibidem, 121-122.

archaeological research in the south of Italy – could be spread to a wider public as soon as possible.[125]

The circulation of news on the discovery of the Heraion was fast and wide. As mentioned in the introduction, this spread will be highlighted here in the form of newspaper articles, one of the many ways of mass-media in this time. While some countries, like the Netherlands and Great Britain, have centralized databases for digitalized newspapers, this is unfortunately not the case in Italy. However, Italian newspaper *La Stampa* does have an only database, which unfortunately does not contain any articles that speak of Zanotti-Bianco, Zancani Montuoro or the finds at Foce de Sele.[126] This could be a coincidence, though it is very likely that the fascist regime was actively using censorship in order to silence voices and stories that were seen as hindrances by the regime, like this discovery.

On November 27th, 1934, an article appeared in the Australian newspaper *Johnstone River Advocate and Innisfail News*. The discovery is praised and Zancani Montuoro is mentioned as the one leading the operation. However, the article also mentions that she is working for and with the *Società*. The article describes how she was able to find this site, by illustrating her search along the river Sele. The unnamed author of this article furthermore briefly mentions the origin of Paestum, highlighting that it was founded as a Greek colony.[127] Any discussion of Paestum's Roman past is omitted in this article.

The news of the rediscovery can similarly be found in the short newspaper article by prof. P. Kersbergen in Dutch colonial newspaper *De Indische Courant*, called 'De Argonautentempel' (the Argonaut Temple), from March 9th, 1935, long after the *Società* was disbanded. Only Zancani Montuoro is named in this article, which makes sense, since she was the leading archaeologist of this excavation. The text of this newspaper article talks about the discovery of the temple and what was found there – remains of the temple itself, as well as a second building with a lot of votives for Hera. Speculations are also made about the origin of the temple, here thought to have been constructed by the Argonauts.[128] The Argonauts stem from the myth of the Golden Fleece, under leadership of Jason, who was tasked with retrieving this golden fleece.[129]

In British newspaper *The East African Standard* of 20 October 1934, most of the text talking about the finds at Foce de Sele is dedicated to what was found at this site. The title of this article is referring to Jason and the Argonauts as well, but here it is clarified why the connection to this myth is made, as among the finds a relief was discovered on which Jason and Medea can be seen. Because of this find, the assumption had been made that the Argonauts had constructed the temple. The rest of the text goes on to describe the other finds, clearly stressing that all these finds indicate the temple was devoted to Hera. It is in the last sentence only that Zanotti-Bianco and Zancani Montuoro are named as

[125] De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 118, 122-123; De Haan, 'Passato Remoto', 63-64; De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing', 106-107.
[126] La Stampa – Archivio Storico dal 1867 http://www.archiviolastampa.it/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/ (accessed 08-06-2025).
[127] 'Digging up the Past. Twenty-Five Century Old Temple Discovered in Italy', *Johnstone River Advocate and Innisfail News* (27-11-1934).
[128] Prof. P. Kersbergen, 'De Argonautentempel. Succes van vrouwelijke geleerde', *De Indische Courant* (09-03-1935).
[129] Jenny March, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (2nd edition; Oxford-Philadelphia 2014) 71.

leaders of this operation.[130]

Another article in an Australian newspaper can be found talking about this discovery. *The Advertiser* from the 11th of August 1934 contains an article with the title 'Jason's Temple has been Discovered', which is a significant statement, as Jason was a well-known mythological figure. This newspaper article is very brief, but does name both Zancani Montuoro and 'the director of the Magna Grecia Society', referring to Zanotti-Bianco.[131] This article does not give any further context or information, which is striking, since the title is making quite the statement. Perhaps there was only room for a certain amount of text for discussing this find.

It is in most of the newspaper articles found and discussed here that the Heraion is connected to the mythological figure Jason. As most of the texts of these newspaper are similar, it could be an indication that Zanotti-Bianco and Zancani Montuoro themselves spread a report to the news agencies, so that these agencies would distribute similar information. There are also signs that some newspapers got their information from other newspapers, as is the case with the article from *The East African Standard*, who at the end of the article say that they got the information about the people leading the excavation from the *Daily Telegraph*.[132] What is striking, is that the discussed newspaper articles were all published at different times, sometimes resulting in the same news being spread months later. The reason for this is unclear, but it might have to do with available room in the newspapers. Most newspaper articles mention Zancani Montuoro, which is unsurprising, as she is the leading archaeologist of this excavation. Additionally, Zanotti-Bianco wanted to remain on the background of activities after what happened with ANIMI, so it is unsurprising that he would only be mentioned in passing. However, it is still clear that Mussolini's regime did not appreciate him or the *Società* being named in these newspaper article, because whereas the earlier discussed newspaper articles about the performances at Agrigento and Paestum – which were officially approved by the regime, these activities were outside of the control of the fascists.

There is one more newspaper article – the earliest one used in this research – that talks about the discoveries at Foce de Sele. It is from British newspaper the *Tuesday Express* of April 24th, 1934, titled 'Woman finds Lost Temple'. In the text, the unnamed author again describes what was found, where it was found and who was responsible for this find. The *Societa* is mentioned, about which the author says that this organisation provided funds for the excavation, thereby excluding fascist involvement at this site. At the end of the text, it is said that the excavations would be continued.[133] However, the fascist regime had other plans.

The spread of the news of this discovery was not appreciated by the Mussolini's regime. As

[130] 'Greek Temples Discovered. Light on the Legend of Jason. How he Carried of Medea' *East African Standard* (20-10-1934).
[131] 'Jason's Temple has been Uncovered', *The Advertiser* (11-08-1934).
[132] 'Greek Temples Discovered. Light on the Legend of Jason. How he Carried of Medea' *East African Standard* (20-10-1934).
[133] 'Woman finds Lost Temple', *Tuesday Express* (24-04-1934).

mentioned in the previous chapter, excavations into Roman site were taking place all throughout Italy at this time, including in Paestum itself. The publication of this find by Zanotti-Bianco and Zancani Montuoro was seen as a possible distraction from the hard work that the regime was putting in their own excavations. Research into Magna Graecia was also scrutinized, as it was seen as a threat to *romanità*, which the regime was promoting ever stronger during the 1930's. The Greek heritage of Italy was especially ignored, since this history was one of Italy being colonized, which did not fit in with Mussolini's colonial ambitions. All of this contributed to the *Società Magna Grecia* being officially dissolved on the 21st of August 1934 by the Prefect or Rome.[134]

The main arguments of the regime for this decision were that they themselves had enough money to fund these excavations themselves. However, it can be easily argued that Zanotti-Bianco's anti-fascist stance played a role in the decision to dissolve the *Società*. Besides, as mentioned in the first case study, the regime preferred to have some degree of control over institutions, so that they would be able to combat anti-fascist sentiments.[135] With the excavation at Foce de Sele now out of the hands of Zanotti-Bianco, such a threat seemed to have disappeared for the fascist regime.

However, Zanotti-Bianco and Zancani Montuoro did continue the excavations here, under a new name: the *Società Paolo Orsi*. The regime did put a lot of restrictions on the project, but De Haan argues that the fact that these same individuals were able to carry on the excavation and research on the same site shows that within the regime there were a lot of inconsistencies. This time, however, the excavations were paid with their own money, though they were supported by friends, such as crown princess Marie-José of Belgium. *Soprintendente* Amedeo Maiuri also supported the excavations in 1939. He was familiar with the *Società*, as he had gotten money from them for excavations at for example Cumae. In Juli of 1934 – just before the dissolvement of the *Società* – he had argued in a letter that the excavations at Foce de Sele should be placed under his supervision. This was because he himself, although a supporter of the regime, was greatly interested in the developments of the excavations of the Heraion. By placing these under his control, the progress would not be lost. So, Maiuri used his position within the regime as *soprintendente* to support the archaeological work at Foce de Sele as much as he could.[136] This shows that even though Mussolini liked to portray his party and nation as consentient, there were still quite a few people – even in the official regime itself – that had their own interest, such as the Greek heritage in Italy.

In 1941, Zanotti-Bianco was arrested and put in internal exile (*confine*) and the excavations were halted, also due to the Second World War. After allied forces started liberating Italy, Zanotti-Bianco returned to Rome to help out during this period of hardship. He became the president of the Italian Red Cross in 1944. After the war he started working for ANIMI again and in 1952 he was awarded the title

[134] De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing', 106-107; De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 123-125.
[135] De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing', 106-107; De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 123; Troiani, 'The Classical Performances at the Temples of Agrigento and Paestum', 152.
[136] De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing', 101, 107; De Haan, 'The "Società Magna Grecia" in Fascist Italy', 124-125.

of *senatore a vita*, a position which he would use to protect cultural and natural heritage. Because of this, he was furthermore asked to become the president of the in 1955 founded *Italia Nostra*, which likewise aimed to protect heritage in Italy.[137]

However, most importantly, it was in the 1950's that Umberto Zanotti-Bianco and Paola Zancani Montuoro were finally able to publish the finished results of their excavations at Foce de Sele. They published their results in a two-part work, called *Heraion alla Foce del Sele.*[138] As mentioned in the introduction of this research, the final publication of these results by Zanotti-Bianco and Zancani Montuoro sparked a greater interest in Magna Graecia, resulting in more and more research being done into this topic.

To conclude, the reasons for scrutiny against the excavations at Foce de Sele by Umberto Zanotti-Bianco and Paola Zancani Montuoro were twofold. Zanotti-Bianco was a known anti-fascist, who had been shadowed by the military police for nearly five years by the time the *Società* was dissolved, because of his earlier investigations into inequality and poverty in southern Italy. Zanotti-Bianco was definitely not on good term with the fascist regime. Furthermore, the fascist regime was promoting the idea of *romanità* on a large scale and was carrying out their own excavations at Roman sites, including at Paestum. Therefore, international newspapers talking about a great find of a Greek sanctuary near Paestum was less than desirable for the ambitions of Mussolini's regime.

To summarize the findings in this chapter, the first two case studies were both to some extent approved directly by the fascist regime, aw they were seen as beneficial to the regime. For the performances at the temples, this was done in two ways. In the 1920's, these performances fell in line with the didactic focus the regime had during this period, so while the plays were sometimes based on Greek mythology and performed at Greek sites, importance of the educational element outweighed the Greek heritage of the sites. In the 1930's, an increasing focus was put on attracting tourists to Italy. It was in this spirit that plays were performed as well, this time among the ruins of Paestum, which was just one among many archaeological projects of the fascist regime. The second case study also partially revolved around tourism. The intended audience for the first of Marconi's books were scholars. The impact of this work was smaller than, let us say, a newspaper article, therefore the book was probably not seen as problematic by the regime. The second book was likely commissioned by the fascist regime directly, as it belonged to a greater series of travel guides to Italian museums and heritage sites. Once again, this fell in line with the aim of the regime in the 1930's to increase tourism to the country. The discovery by Zanotti-Bianco on the other hand did not fit in at all with the regime. Not only was he a known anti-fascist, who already was being followed by the military police at the time of the discovery of the Heraion, the *Società Magna Grecia* also operated outside of the realm of the fascist regime. Because of this, the regime could not

[137] De Haan, 'Wheeling and Dealing', 101, 107.
[138] Zancani Montuoro and Zanotti-Bianco, *Heraion alla Foce del Sele* I; Zancani Montuoro and Zanotti-Bianco, *Heraion alla Foce del Sele* II.

enact control upon the *Società*. Therefore, it can be concluded that it was not necessarily the locations of what had once been Greek colonies that caused negative reactions from the regime, but their ability to control what was being done with this heritage.

Conclusion

In this thesis, attention has been given to the archaeological sites of Agrigento and Paestum. Both of these sites are on the UNESCO World Heritage list, but apart from their ancient Greek history, no other time periods are discussed by the UNESCO on their website. Still, this does not mean that between ancient Greek times and now nothing has happened at or surrounding these sites. Therefore, the question that was posed for this essay, was: How did Mussolini's fascist regime react to the ways in which the ancient Greek past and the archaeological sites of Paestum and Agrigento were used and appropriated between 1922 and 1943?

In order to answer this question, the essay was divided in three chapters. The goal of the first chapter was to provide context on the history of Magna Graecia – with a special focus on Agrigento and Paestum. This chapter also discussed the ways in which this Greek heritage of Italy had been perceived from the Renaissance up until the late eighteenth century. The second chapter gave context to the use of ancient history during the fascist regime. Here, it became clear that it was Roman history that played a big role during the regime, in the form of *romanità*. There was barely any attention for Magna Graecia and all archaeological research carried out in Italy during this time were focussed on the Roman history of these sites, even if they had a Greek history.

The third chapter considered three case studies, all revolving around Agrigento and Paestum. These three case studies were all different in character. The first one discussed theatre performances around the temples of Agrigento and Paestum. The second analysed two books on Agrigento written by archaeologist Pirro Marconi, both intended for different audiences: one for a smaller, scientific group, the other intended for tourists. The last case study talked about Umberto Zanotti-Bianco, the *Società Magna Grecia* and the Heraion at Foce de Sele. Out of the three case studies, this was the only one to which the Italian fascist regime reacted negatively. The reason for this, is because the *Società* was not controlled by the fascists, while the other two case studies were controlled by the regime to some extent. Besides that, Zanotti-Bianco was a known anti-fascist, which had already led to problems with ANIMI. Most of all though, the fascist regime did not appreciate the news of the discovery at Foce de Sele being spread on such a large scale, as they saw it as a threat to *romanità*. While the other two case studies also revolved around ancient Greek sites, the fascist had control over these projects to some extent. While these Greek sites were used, they were appropriated in such a way that the regime could agree with it, as they could shape the message of these activities themselves, be it plays or books. It was therefore not the sites and their Greek heritage themselves that were the problem for the fascist regime, but the amount of control they could exert over the activities at these places.

This research was by no means conclusive, as there are a lot of interesting developments regarding ancient sites during the fascist period in Italy. In the case study on Pirro Marconi, the book series *Itinerari dei Musei e Monumenti d'Italia* was briefly discussed. However, no extensive studies have been done on the origin of this series. Therefore, it would make a good topic for further research. Captain Alexander Hardcastle was mentioned briefly in this research. He was involved in archaeology in Sicily in the 1920's, but there is still little written about him. It would definitely make a good case study on foreign involvement in archaeology in the south of Italy.

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