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Slovenian Architect France Tomažič (1899-1968). "Out of the Foggy Mists of Parnassus into Real Life"

The research examines the mostly unknown life, education and work of the Slovenian architect France Tomažič (1899–1968), the first assistant of the influential Slovenian professor and architect Jože Plečnik (1872–1957) at the Faculty of Architecture in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Firstly, the study analyses Tomažič's formal education of architecture under the mentorship of Jože Plečnik in the so called »Plečnik school«, his early works as the assistant of Plečnik and their complex relationship, but also Tomažič's later independent projects in the 1930s and influences which were important in creating his own unique style. A sharp turning point in Tomažič's career was precisely his departure from academia – ending his working and personal relationship with his professor (which he calls »Parnassus« in relation to Professor's astonishingly high reputation among patrons of arts and the public) and stepping out into private sector (»real life«). Thus, the study conveys Plečnik and Tomažič's contrast and similarities in styles. The former is known for his eclectic style, which derived from a combination of many historical styles, whilst Tomažič's interests laid in more functional architecture. Henceforth, the research outlines the socio-economical changes in the 1920's and the 1930's, which exerted a high impact on the development of new architectural movements and transformed the perception of architecture's role in society of that particular period. From this perspective, Tomažič's work of the thirties is explained, analysing technically precise and stylistically progressive architectural works which are shown within the Slovenian, Yugoslavian and a wider European context. The study tries to shed light on the influences which affected the architect's individual artistic expression, when he designed some of the most important functionalist villas in Slovenia. Nowadays, Tomažič's functionalist architecture is, one can argue, undervalued in the national prism and is, as are many buildings of that time in Slovenia, slowly decaying with time. This leads us to the contemporary problem of his overlooked cultural heritage, which is slowly being unveiled in the current years. His works show us that Slovenian architects were in step with the novelties in design, structure and engineering in the so called »Western world«. He was among the first architects in Slovenia who started changing the narrative about the use of architecture as a basic human need and was of the persuasion that architecture must be functional and subordinate to the people and not the other way around.

His architectural projects, articles and worldview were mirroring the progressive era between the two world wars. This research will try to answer the question of his role and

contributions he made to the Modern Slovenian architecture and ultimately try to show that his role was more meaningful than he was credited for.

His *oeuvre*, as of many of his colleagues from that period, was not yet researched thoroughly. Starting with browsing and analysing primary and secondary sources from many Slovenian archives where his projects are archived, through examining his correspondence with Jože Plečnik and his fellow colleague Dušan Grabrijan, but also studying the general and more specific scientific literature about his works and those of his mentor, Plečnik's school and the Slovenian and worldwide architecture of that period, important part were also Tomažič's authored articles in the thirties. Furthermore, conducting interviews with several architectural scholars of Slovenian architecture, helped me to get a more rounded knowledge about Tomažič which was not yet published in the scientific literature.

Key words: France Tomažič, Slovene architecture, Yugoslavia, villas, Functionalism, 1930's