

TRAIL Spotlight

Larayne Dallas

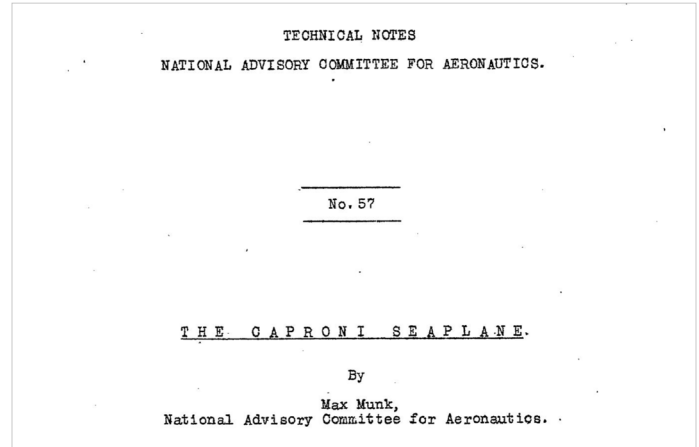
This document brings together three notable topics: NACA, Max M. Munk, and the Caproni Seaplane. The report is NACA Technical Note No. 57, written by NACA researcher Munk on the failed design of the Caproni Company's 1921 Seaplane.

Before NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), there was NACA, the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. Soon after its establishment in 1915, the agency was sponsoring aviation research and issuing monographs describing the work. Max M. Munk, recruited from post-war Germany for his wind tunnel expertise, joined NACA in 1920. Munk's influence as a scientist was positive but personal conflict led to his departure from the agency in 1929.

Thanks to: Roger E. Bilstein. *Orders of Magnitude: A History of the NACA and NASA, 1915–1990*, 1989.
<https://history.nasa.gov/SP-4406/chap1.html>

In the report, we read, “The Caproni Company recently built a seaplane of unusual design . . . At one of the first flights the seaplane fell into a lake, nose down, and was destroyed . . . We wish to show in this paper that this failure could have been predicted.” Munk presents calculations leading to a conclusion which he excused as being “roughly made” but nevertheless against the success of the plane. “Experience has shown, however, that an airplane can be allowed to be only slightly unstable . . . the Caproni Seaplane was exceedingly unstable.”

Quoted text and summary from Max Munk's comments in the document:
<http://www.technicalreports.org/trail/detail/130333/>



Cover of NACA Technical Note 57

Plus, there is a Youtube video: *A Monmouth of the Air*, from British Pathé showing the remarkable plane as it waits flight:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQBxgtP5IMw>

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