studia universitatis hereditati

studia

hereditati

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Vsebina
Contents
Contenuti

hereditati

Editorial
Uvodnik
Editoriale

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Discussing heritage and memory, together or separately, has been a central topic over the last two decades in humanities, the social sciences and elsewhere. To the point that it has almost become a buzz word. While memory studies experienced a first boom about two decades ago (see Berliner 2005), interest in heritage first experienced a boom in the 1980s (Lowenthal 1995; Harrison 2013). However, in the last decade or so there has been an impressive global growth in interest, including from other disciplines such as the natural sciences (see Wienberg 2021). Currently, different fields are addressing topical issues. In heritage studies, scholarship is engaging in topics centred on climate change and the Anthropocene. Likewise, the field of memory studies has been expanding with interstitial subjects. For example, environmental history has developed concepts such as "slow memory" (Wüstenberg 2023). At the same time, an established and flourishing perspective in the field of anthropology of memory deals with absence and silence (Trouillot 2015; Baussant 2002; Baussant 2021b; Hrobat Virloget 2023). The latter intersects with topical issues in the field of critical heritage studies, namely that of affect and emotion (Smith, Wetherell and Campbell 2018), along with issues concerning the trajectories of (mis)recognition in heritage discourses. Meanwhile, a recent branch of critical heritage studies is focusing on conceptualising the heritage-border and border-straddling (Harvey 2023), with a call for the reconceptualization of both

core concepts, and also of the role of liminalities, bordering practices, transnationalism and the agonism. These broad themes set the framework for thematic issue 2023/II of the Studia Universitatis Hereditati Scientific Journal.

The issue gathers together seven papers prepared by colleagues from different fields (anthropology, political sciences, geography, history, architectural history) who participated in a bilateral project of the Proteus research programme named *Pasts without history and displaced histories of people without traces*, led by leading scholars in the field of anthropology of memory, Michèle Baussant and Katja Hrobat Virloget. The project dealt with the effects of mass depopulations and repopulations, and the consequent radical socio-economic and political transformations. As the project leaders underscored, the intent was to shed light on "the crossed and parallel social constructions of the presence and absence of the other and, therefore, the self" (Baussant 2021a). Since the existing displacement of population analyses were often confined to epistemologies of single disciplines, the Proteus project tried to grasp them together through concepts such as landscape, lived space, home-making, history, objects, practices, and language, this way challenging binary national identities. A transversal concept that emerges from the interstices of memory, places, and heritage is that of borders and borderlands, mobile, liquid, imagined, or simply newly-made through bordering processes.

The project included the organisation of several symposia (Prague, June 2021; Paris, March 2022; Koper/Capodistria, October 2022, etc.) and two webinars. One webinar was dedicated to memory, heritage and the built environment, entitled "Walking through spaces/traces of the past(s)" (guests included the sociologist Olga Sezneva and the architect Gruia Badescu), and the other was dedicated to the issue of the Roma holocaust in the Czech republic, entitled "Space(s) and politics of memory: the Roma holocaust in the Czech Republic" (with guests Yasar Abu Ghosh, Alenka Janko Spreizer and Nina Ludlová). The webinars were organised by the junior researchers in the project team. It was the work of this group of emerging professionals that led to this thematic issue being proposed. There was the wish to record some of the research that had been carried out related to the project and that had not yet been published, as well as to promote established research beyond solely national frameworks.

The first article, by the anthropologist Michèle Baussant, is the result of an autoethnographic reflection of several years of research on the absent and/or silenced memory of displaced people, namely the French-speaking inhabitants expelled from Algeria after the independence war in 1959, and especially of their descendants. The article unveils personal and family attachments to lost places in the "hometown" of Algiers in Algeria, through the use of "broken language" and inherited attachment and perception of toponymy and sense of place. The imaginary presences, as felt by the second generation, are investigated mainly through the combination of French and Arabic, as well as through the use of local denominations of places from Algeria, transposed to France. By revisiting the linguistic, spatial and temporal cartography of attachments and detachments among displaced people, the article illustrates the role of rupture and reinvented continuity.

The anthropologist Maria Kokkinou presents a forgotten chapter from Europe's history, as she deals with the memory, memorialisation and heritageisation of the temporary presence (or passage, or crossing) of Greek refugees in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s and 1960s. After the Greek Civil War, alliances within the communist parties enabled the refugees from Greece to find refuge in different countries of the Eastern Bloc and other Soviet-influenced countries. In some countries, this temporary presence is now acknowledged and heritageised, while in others it is not. This is the case of the present-day Czech Republic and the town of Těchonín, a site of former barracks transformed into a temporary convalescent home for 600 Greek refugees. A particularity of this research lies in the fact that it was conducted in 2021, during the COVID pandemic. The fact that only one interlocutor was found indicates that memorial discourse about this historical phenomenon is absent. As a result, the interlocutor's personal photographs turn out to be the only monuments that serve as a reminder of this past presence.

Greece, its contested northern border with Albania and the related memorialisation and heritageisation processes, are the focus of the paper by the geographer Pierre Sintès. The paper presents the region called Thesprotia in Greece and Chameria in Albania, marked by historical turmoil, population change, and the consequent polarisation of national discourses. Particular attention is paid to the different trajectories of these discourses within the border society and its many groups, namely that of the Chams, the large Albanian-speaking community, which disappeared from the western section of the Greek-Albanian border after WWII, but has been reactivated as a central memory politics topic since the fall of the communist regime in Albania and the daily migration of Albanian workers to Greece. A particular theme that emerges from the analysis is the role of past violence and its impact on the structuring of memory narratives. The paper derives from years-long research and fieldwork since the early 2010s, presented here in an ex-post outlook.

Catherine Perron, an expert in political sciences, presents a complex reflection on the

permanent exhibition of the recently inaugurated Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation in Berlin by focusing on the approaches and discourses presenting the issue of the "flight and expulsion of the Germans". It then compares different types of museums (*Heimatmuseum, Landesmuseum*), not from a museological perspective, but through the lens of political history and anthropology. By looking at which objects are presented and how, it addresses the question of presenting loss, absence and violence, and their roles within the different narratives. It concludes with a double critical thought, first by challenging the format of such space between memorial, museum, archive, and meeting place. Secondly, it questions the aim and effect of such new interpretations of difficult history and silenced memories that raise awareness about the issue in an empathic way within the wider society, but do so at the expense of shedding light on the specificities of the flight and expulsion processes.

The last three papers are dedicated to issues of historic and current memorialisation narratives in the contested region of Istra/Istria, on the border between Slovenia and Italy. The historian Petra Kavrečič reflects on the impact of the bordering process on people's everyday lives. She focuses on the early post-WWII period in Istria, by analysing the effects of a new Yugoslav-Italian border – established after 1945 and again in 1954 – on everyday life, as well as the economic and social interactions among local inhabitants. From the perspective of social history, she analyses the process of "bordering" and the new political division that affected the northern Istrian territory. Key attention is placed on how past interconnections and relations changed radically and were interrupted after the establishment of the new, previously non-existing border. It reveals especially how communication, cooperation and exchange of goods were able to continue when the border caused a strong territorial division.

The historian Aleksej Kalc and the architectural historian Neža Čebron Lipovec present an interdisciplinary case study about the role of the school, as an institution and as architecture, in the framework of the post-WWII establishment of the Slovene state, within the Yugoslav federation, in the historically multicultural and contested borderland region of Istria, between Italy and Slovenia. Two primary schools in the city of Koper/Capodistria are at the core of the analysis. The older of the two schools was built in 1951 and was the first post-war school that initially hosted pupils of both Slovene and Italian mother tongues, and was promoted as a symbol of the brotherhood of the two cohabiting ethnicities, under the aegis of the communist ideology. Yet, since the educational system was a primary tool for re-establishing the region's Slovene identity, after the final integration of the region into Slovenia and Yugoslavia in 1954, the school became a central space for (re)creating the Slovene and Yugoslav identity of the northern Istrian urban space. The article ends with a reflection on the heritage significance of these buildings and the institution itself, especially since both of the two first post-war schools were torn down 15 years ago.

The last paper is provided by a young researcher from the field of history, Leon Vrtovec, whose contribution comes from outside the aforementioned Proteus project. The paper is dedicated to elucidating the circumstances and factors that contributed to the erection of the monument to Nazario Sauro in Koper/Capodistria in the 1930s, during the Kingdom of Italy. Nazario Sauro was a sailor and a soldier, an active Italian irredentist who was born in Koper/Capodistria under Austria and was hanged by the Austrian authorities for having deserted the army. As a result, he was considered a martyr and became a central symbol of the Italian national struggle in Istria. The analysis provides a detailed account of the central personalities of the fascist regime, from Rome to the local authorities who influenced the decision about the site and symbolism of this central landmark in the ethnically contested region of Istria, perceived during fascism as the "finally redeemed Italian

land". The erection of this monumental marker of space also performed several interventions in the historic tissue, adjusting the public space to the representational needs of the fascist regime.

The seven contributions reflect the variety of disciplines involved and their related epistemologies and methodologies, in analysing the interlinks between memory and heritage. A particularity that occurs in most of these texts, however, is that they tackle cases of displaced populations or re-settled areas, leading to the question of what and when was memorialised and heritageised, and which trajectories of (mis)recognition these processes imply? In other words, what was chosen to be remembered, and what concealed, forgotten, silenced, and therefore which sites, objects, material traces or practices were claimed as heritage and by whom. Hence, the analyses presented here invite the reader to reflect upon the large span of concepts (and the cases that illustrate them) between contested, dissonant, silenced and erased memories and heritages, and on different scales – from local to global. The issues raised by all the papers finally converge in questioning the role of borders, their mobility and (in)visibility.

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'Between Myself and Myself Lies my True Country': Exploring the Dissonant Legacy of Colonial Worlds as a Researcher and as an Heiress

● *»Med mano in menoj leži moja resnična dežela«: raziskovanje disonantne zapuščine kolonialnih svetov kot raziskovalka in dedinja*

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Abstract

This article focuses on the linguistic, spatial and temporal cartography of attachments among displaced people and how it shaped my research interests. Based on experience and several fieldworks, I retrace the legacy of this cartography through the broken tongues - the different languages they inhabit, and use as a means of preserving their imaginary presence in their native country or countries of origin - that carry the ghosts of several languages, place names, daily ritual and commemorative practices, objects, senses and sensations. By emphasising the malleability of languages, spaces and material things, I aim to explore how temporality can be traversed, stopped, restarted, turned back and projected forward through places. This exploration leads me to address the diversity of populations and their history of previous displacements – a heterogeneity that images of exiles from Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, or Morocco tend to relegate to the background. This emphasis allows for better understanding of how each border crossing has redrawn the cartography of attachments and detachments, displacements and the crystallisation of social boundaries, and how each rupture has reinvented continuity.

Keywords: broken tongue, temporality, cartography of attachments, displacement, colonial worlds

Izvleček

Članek se osredotoča na jezikovno, prostorsko in časovno kartiranje navezanosti med razseljenimi osebami ter na to, kako je to oblikovalo moja raziskovalna zanimanja. Na podlagi izkušenj in številnih terenov ponovno beležim dediščino teh kartiranj skozi »zlomljene jezike« – skozi različne jezike, ki jih razseljene osebe uporabljajo kot sredstvo, s katerim si prizadevajo ohraniti zamišljeno prisotnost v svoji domovini ali domovinah, ki nosijo duhove različnih jezikov, krajevnih imen, dnevnih obrednih in spominskih praks, predmetov, čutov ter občutkov. Skozi poudarek na prožnosti jezikov, prostorov in materialnih stvari raziskujem, kako začasnost prečiti, jo ustaviti, ponovno zagnati, obrniti nazaj in projicirati naprej skozi kraje. Skozi to raziskovanje obravnavam raznolikost prebivalstev in zgodovino njihovih preteklih razselitev – heterogenosti, ki jo podobe izgnancev iz Alžirije, Egipta, Tunizije ali Maroka običajno potisnejo v ozadje. Ta poudarek omogoča, da bolje razumemo, kako je vsako prehajanje meje na novo zarisalo zemljevide navezanosti in odtujitev, premikov ter kristalizacije družbenih meja in kako je vsak prelom ponovno ustvaril kontinuiteto.

Ključne besede: zlomljen jezik, časovnost, zemljevidi navezanosti, premiki prebivalstva, kolonialni svetovi

We are in the square in front of the building where I grew up, in the south-eastern suburbs of Paris, in a neighbourhood called Mont-Mesly. This neighbourhood expanded at the same time as the arrival in France of various populations resulting from colonisation and decolonisation. However, I remember that my grandmother, who lived one floor below us, used to call the trip across the street to the square 'going to Foum Tataouine'. The few-metre walk seemed like an expedition to a place named after another place in Tunisia, which, when my family lived in Algeria, was a metaphor for travelling to a faraway place. I spent part of my childhood in Foum Tatouine without ever going there. I grew up with the image of a dual space and a divided consciousness passed on to me by the adults. They carried images, smells, sounds and ways of doing things so powerful that these marks were not erased decades after they had to rebuild their lives elsewhere (Benvenisti 2002), totally separated from Algeria.

I could not share the meaning of their loss. I could not exchange memories about a country I never lived in. However, Algeria was like a shadow over the conversations, the tears and the laughter, intertwined with a sense of disarray, alienation and loneliness. It was always there, twisting the meaning of words, the so-called naturalness of practices, the evidence of distances between places, the existence of borders be-

Figure 1: An afternoon in 'Foum Tataouine', Algiers, 1974, 1975? (source: Michele Baussant Personal Archive)

tween spaces and things that die in time. It reminded us of a time independent of space.

This article[1] aims to highlight this linguistic, spatial and temporal cartography of attachments, how it shaped my understanding of the world and my research interests as a descendant of specific displaced people: people who have nothing to do with persecuted romantic heroes,

[1]   This article takes up part of an article published in French (Baussant 2023), but develops it considerably in thought and content. It is based on a research financially supported by the CNRS Convergences MIGRATIONS Institute, reference ANR-17-CONV-0001.

with refugees representing a just cause. They belonged to a 'prosaic' mass of people expelled or asked to leave because of their active or passive association with the colonial system. Without pretending to be exhaustive, I would like to retrace the experience and legacy of this cartography through the words that carry the ghosts or corpses of several languages (Mauthner, quoted in Ravy 1996, 447), place names, daily, ritual and commemorative practices, objects, senses and sensations. By emphasising the malleability of languages, spaces and material things, I would like to explore how temporality can be traversed, stopped, restarted, turned back and projected forward through places. This exploration leads me to address the diversity of populations and their history of previous displacements – a heterogeneity that images of exiles from Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia or Morocco tend to relegate to the background. This emphasis allows an understanding of how each border crossing has redrawn the cartography of attachments and detachments, displacements and the crystallisation of social boundaries, and how each rupture has reinvented continuity.

'To Begin Where I am'[2]

My article stems from a long research experience based on multiple fieldwork - from France to Algeria, Egypt and the Israeli-Palestinian areas, the United States and several European countries, addressing dynamics of diasporisation, de-diasporisation et re-diasporisation (Trier 1996) among specific displaced minorities, such as European of Algeria and Egyptian Jews[3]. These populations share several migrations – towards or within colonised territories, between empires, and finally, outside them-, their internal heter-

2 I borrow this subtitle from the title of Czesław Miłosz's book.

3 For Europeans of Algeria with fieldwork in France from 1996 to 2001, and in Algeria in 2003- and for Egyptian Jews, with fieldwork in France, Egypt, Israel, United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Italy and Switzerland, from 2008 until now. These fieldworks are rooted in a classic ethnographic methodology combining in-depth qualitative interviews, participant observation, and archival work.

ogeneity and, in some cases, their liminal position as 'subalterns' identified with the colonial empires.

This work, initiated in the early 1990s, encompasses two research fields – memory[4] and massive population displacements. It addresses a paradoxical observation concerning those defined by researchers as privileged or co-ethnic migration[5] (Čapo Žmegač 2010): although everything that refers to their past became not relevant, even disqualified - from the most personal and ordinary moments to major historical and political events – and rarely exchanged except within close relational circles, it still sticks to the present through languages, emotions and practices. I worked on and with people who, for a long time, felt that they were forbidden to talk about their past, that nobody was listening to them. It nurtured their sense of being out of History to the point where, 'in the end, some could no longer remember what they did or did not have to say about it' (Milosz 2001, 13). I tried to understand the impacts of a morally problematic condition of an exile not socially recognized as such, undermining their solidarity and isolating

4 It falls today under the umbrella of memory studies. This field did not exist when I began my research which draws on the cumulative knowledge on memory issues forged through approaches both complementary and distinct and from disciplines such as History, sociology, anthropology and the social sciences of politics. These disciplines all played their part in gradually developing knowledge and a shared understanding of the concept. They produced a range of definitions (Lavabre 2000), strengthening its increasingly metaphorical character and the tendency to speak of 'memories' as subjects, acting, thinking, travelling, fragmenting, multi-directional, communicative, transcultural, traumatic, giving second place to the actors who produce and carry them. As for me, I opted for the pioneering work of Maurice Halbwachs (1939; 1941; 1994; 1997) and the extensive analysis of memory provided by Marie-Claire Lavabre (1994; 2000), which circumscribed the collective memory as the homogenisation of representations of the past or the reduction of the diversity of memories that occurs when a shared experience is recounted within a group, a family, a party, or an association, in the present.

5 This term is particularly problematic when used to describe heterogeneous minorities that underwent numerous internal or external displacements to countries colonized by European powers in the 19th and 20th centuries and then dispersed outside these countries following their independence.

them. And still... I observed not the content of what they said or didn't say, but their way of mixing and using language as a means of preserving their imagined presence in the country or countries from where they came. They lived around several centres, built several 'over there' from different 'here' that coalesced, reordered temporalities and reintroduced continuity in fragmentation and disruption.

Research experience may be understood in terms of a journey: 'we leave from home, we cross the world, and we return home, even if it's a different home than the one we left behind, because the departure, the original split, gave it its meaning' (Magris 2001, 13–14).

> I imagine this article as a kind of suitcase, a travel kit, which (pp. 9–10) is part of the journey: on departure, when you pack the few things you think you'll need, always forgetting something essential; on the way, when you pack what you want to take home; on the way back, when you open your luggage and no longer find the things you thought were important, and things appear that you didn't remember you'd packed. The same thing happens with writing; something that, while we were travelling and living, seemed fundamental has vanished, on paper, it's no longer there, while something that, in life - in the journey of life - we had hardly noticed takes shape imperiously and imposes itself as essential.

Still, every journey has a point of departure. What was mine? My research grew out of hybrid spaces between different places, people and fieldwork, languages and countries, my incapacity to put down roots anywhere, in a liminal experience of encounters and openings that made me at home and a stranger to each place wherever I lived. These crossroads, intersections and hybrid spaces gave rise to this unconventional writing style for attempting to convey the profound non-linearity, uncertain and fragmentary nature of my work's premise – my embodied experience and my 'perceptual knowledge' (Mac-

Dougall 2006, 5) of the displaced – layers of (in)visibility in discursive and non-verbalized forms of the presence of the past. It begins with sounds and languages as a way to highlight the key role of fragments of worlds, memories, places, times and practices and the qualitative relationships between these fragments, however dissonant: not as a puzzle or a whole to be completed but as so many pieces adding new layers of meaning.

The Broken Tongue: Worlds Within Us

I grew up among displaced people[6] before growing up to study them. I experienced a dissonant world where the spectres of past worlds and all the absent things and people were exceeded in all parts of the social and material space surrounding me. I first associate this absence and dissonance with an expression: 'To have a broken tongue'. This expression remained enigmatic for a long time in my mind. Brodsky, in particular, summed up the link between exile and language in a few illuminating words (Brodsky 1995, quoted in Heller-Roazen 2008, 49):

> To be an exiled is like being a dog or a man hurtled into outer space in a capsule (more like a dog, of course, than a man, because they will never retrieve you). And your capsule is your language. To finish the metaphor off, it must be added that before long, the capsule's passenger discovers that it gravitates not earthward but outward.

This capsule contained the language of the exiled, their broken tongue.

6   This term was discussed by many scholars in different countries that experienced massive fluxes of populations due to decolonisation, as evidenced by Pamela Ballinger, Michele Baussant, Jasna Čapo Žmegač and Andrea Smith. Such people's departure was often portrayed as inevitable (a consequence of decolonisation, their alleged lack of attachment to Algeria, or, for Jews, their association with the colonial power), not forced, and as a quasi-internal displacement. Moreover, the trajectories of some of them are marked by multiple displacements throughout several generations and are sometimes ignored or marginalised in analyses that long tended to consider them as homogeneous populations with the same roots and a shared sense of belonging. See Ballinger (2012), Baussant (2002), Čapo Žmegač (2010), and Smith (2003; 2009).

What could a broken tongue mean? As a child, I imagined people's tongues were broken. Later, I wondered how French or Arabic, like an object, breaks. I remember Françoise, who left Egypt in 1967 and her 'broken Arabic'; Yves, who 'broke' in a continuous stream of French, Hebrew, English and Arabic, all spoken fluently but always with errors and a hesitation that never left him; Jacob, who in French avoided using letters unpronounceable for him, because they 'broke' his language and revealed his foreignness, like this librarian, quoted by C. Naggar: 'I have the accent of a language I don't know, Arabic. The accumulation of rs sometimes prevents people from understanding me. To avoid repeating myself, I choose words without r's: *café au lait* instead of *café crème*' (Naggar 2007, 119); Carole broke the thread of our exchanges by mixing languages because such an object could only be said in Arabic, and such and such food could only be expressed in French. Not that they were all the same. Not that she could not translate them in either language, attribute the same meaning to a word from one language to another, but simply that each thing had its value in a specific language that could not be the same in another. Translating it into another language would always be a failure.

This broken language was a singular, unique language, an idiom for each of us, and always more than a language, sometimes drawing unpredictable trajectories of meaning and interrupted histories, spaces and journeys. It was an everyday, trivial world, made up of words and phrases expressed in French but which came from elsewhere, with mysterious meanings for those outside this world, where to say that a woman was 'in position' meant that she was pregnant, where one could have la *scoumoune*[7] and where peppers were called piments.

Several languages – Arabic, Spanish, Italian, Greek, Hebrew, German, and English –

7   A term designating bad luck, associated in France with Arabic, but probably popularised by the Italians who settled in Algeria and then by the Europeans in Algeria and coming from the Italian *scomunica*, which itself comes from the Latin *excomunicatio*.

melded into one, mainly French, always insufficient for expressing pictures, sounds, odours, colours, objects, food, values, landscapes, situations, and practices. Those most used could sometimes be the mutest, breaking into exchanges, marking gaps. This broken tongue both echoed what linguists call a 'substrate' – 'the persistent remainder of one tongue within another, the forgotten element secretly retained in the apparently seamless passage from one language to the next', 'superstrates' – the changes brought upon the tongue of one people through its adoption by another – and 'adstrates'– changes in one language due to the proximity of its speakers to another idiom to which it is related (Heller-Roazen 2008, 78–79).

Thus, to have a broken tongue covered several meanings: to speak different languages without feeling that one knew any one of them 'correctly'; to possess no language of one's own, no language that one masters; to break, to damage the language by incomplete knowledge of it; to mark a language used in everyday life with syntaxes, pronunciations, turns of phrase which revealed other languages, sometimes silent, sometimes resurgent; to not be able to produce a well-crafted narrative in a language one had mastered; to consistently fail to speak about something and to say at the same time that which was unspeakable; maintaining a difference, preserving the stranger within (Derrida 1993); to carry in the body the mark of a rupture, of an absence, a kind of 'ghostly matter'. This mark also exists among the descendants: 'The words of the language I don't know,' writes Carole Naggar, 'are dead people attached to my living ankles'; they make her 'feel like a stranger in France, in this country whose language I speak without an accent' (Naggar 2007, 94), reminding us that words, like languages, cannot be a shelter, a home nor even less a homeland (Cassin 2013).

The broken language also meant the ability of the people around me to transform or not the timbre of their voice, using different languages and different words. All year round, my parents seemed to go inside themselves, except for one

month in the summer when they would meet up with their friends from Algeria in the South of France. Even in their homes' privacy and dealings with neighbours, they were careful to speak as neutral French as possible, not to have an accent and to use the 'right' words. Rare were the moments, usually of anger or emotion, when an expression, a turn of phrase, a sentence in Arabic or an accent came out. In the summer, they suddenly began to speak a different language, to inhabit other gestures. It was as if they were rediscovering their naturalness and, with it, their *joie de vivre*.

They could not belong to either Algeria or France, so they strove to appear to be from 'nowhere', 'no time', and 'no country'. Their mother tongue was not 'the only possession that could not be taken from them' as an indestructible part of identity, a home and a homeland (Cassin 2013). They had no mother tongue, or several which coexisted and constantly acted as smugglers behind each other: they were 'all exiles, like transhumants who have burnt their ships'. They '[would] never again find [their] past intact, any more than the mythical bell towers of [their] childhood, the splendid charm of drowsy synagogues or the cry of the muezzin calling the faithful to prayer at dawn. [They were] from here and there. Indefectibly' (Hassoun 1993, 66–67).

This concomitance of languages was not only the lasting mark of exile but also the imprint of a past of linguistic coexistence made up of mixing, division and a desire for separation. The complexity of this phenomenon has been exacerbated by the interference, in some cases, of religious affiliations and by a colonial political context that has created a conflictual and emotional relationship with languages. The predominance of French reflected this phenomenon of linguistic hierarchy, which served as a norm for social divisions and sheltered external antagonisms. But as the most culturally valued language by many of these displaced persons, French was in a situation of insularity: both with the demographic majority, Arabic-speaking and/or Berber-speaking, depending on the

country, and with the linguistic community in France. This sense of insularity, the feeling of belonging and being excluded, followed people into exile, with their 'broken tongue': it pointed not to a hyphenated identity but a mark of their othernesses, their double or triple unbelonging and a cultivated feeling of division. As they reflected in their language, they could not choose between their different allegiances: or rather, they choose one or the other, and neither the one nor the other.

From Home, Other Worlds Beyond Sight

People went into exile either from Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, or Egypt; with them, their languages and memories. What does it mean for languages to be in exile? How do we grasp exile in language and retrace a biography of the strata of tongues like we can build a biography of individuals? Furthermore, what to do with blank pages, particularly those concerning the presence of other languages that a priori have nothing to do with the political and cultural context of the countries in question and their use in naming places and objects? How did they become part of these countries' past?

Just as I learnt the broken tongues of the people I grew up with, I shared their lost landscapes, absent relatives, and blank pages as a part of myself. It was a legacy from an era of history that just cannot be eradicated, the era of colonisations and decolonisations. But at the same time, these broken tongues as post signs of memory also bore the mark of silence surrounding my family's life in Algeria. However, silence does not mean oblivion; it encompasses different ways of dealing with the past – 'don't remember, don't talk about, don't know, and don't care.' It is not a 'complete absence of sound. Rather, it refers to the absence of certain discourses about the past' (Xu 2022, 69).

Algeria was present in the exchanges and expressions, inhabiting the memories and shaping the memories of inhabiting. In the social housing estates of the grey suburb of eastern Paris where I was born, disintegrated colonial worlds consti-

Figure 2: 'What we saw was doubled by what we did not see': a double cartography of my childhood building (sketch by Michele Baussant 2023)

tuted the background of most inhabitants: especially Algerian Jews, Algerians transformed into 'foreigners' once Algeria was independent,[8] as well as Europeans of Algeria. The latter formed a rather heterogeneous mix of 'settlers' and 'arriving' populations (Byrd 2011), mainly from the European shores of the Mediterranean, labelled *pieds-noirs* during the Algerian War – 'invisible migrants' (Smith 2003) – with whom Algeria no longer wanted to deal and whom France had to integrate while imagining that their history was not entirely its history. Other populations, exiles from other Maghreb or Mashrek countries, were also present.

These buildings of the housing estate, most people said, had been built for them. They formed a landscape without a past where Algeria was rarely mentioned. With little or no reference to it, perhaps most of their inhabitants had come to believe they had never lived in Algeria. Colonisation was an officially closed history, relegated to a past 'irrelevant to the present' (Barnes 1990, 28). However, it sealed their destinies and

8   After independence, Algerians with civil status under local law lost their French nationality, except for those who subscribed to the declaration of recognition of French nationality before 22 March 1967 (order of 21 July 1962).

expectations. And it persisted, despite its selective and generalised disavowal, in France, in the society to which they had been transposed. Sometimes, a remnant, a faint trace, or a tenacious 'presence' (Stoler and Cooper 2013) in the negative, its complex experience translated into a living, multiform presence, something that is and yet is not (Trouillot 1995). This 'visible' invisible occupied a substantial place, sometimes expanded, sometimes constricted.

What we saw was doubled by what we did not see: from the outside, buildings of identical design and appearance and streets named after famous French places or people, with discreet markers (shops, synagogues or prayer halls); inside the buildings, markers based on family names, religious, local and sometimes national references, and multiple ritual temporalities. This marking reshaped borders, hierarchies and encounter zones. All at once, palimpsest and heteroglossia (Bakhtine 1970), sedimentations of time and places were revealed there, symbols and images, separate and dispersed pieces, lacunar, mourning memory, 'where the part is worth the whole and more than the whole that it exceeds' (Derrida 1988, 54).

This space was never for putting down roots, even less so for all those who lived there with a sense of not being where they should be. It was 'a doubt' (Perec 1974), from which the other places of these 'interrupted' lives were reflected, 'cracks', 'friction points', a 'hiatus'. In discovering France, they realised that Algeria imagined and lived as a contiguous extension of the 'French nation', was, in fact, another land. It was enough to walk a few hundred metres in the old historic district of this suburb to feel that 'que ça se coince quelque part, ou que ça éclate, ou que ça se cogne' ('that it sticks somewhere, that it bursts, or that it knocks') (Perec 1974). Haunting modifies the experience of being in time and how we sequence the past, present and past, present and future (Gordon 2008). These spectres are neither invisible nor excess: their whole essence 'resides in the fact that they possess 'a real presence that claims its due and demands your attention'. The

Figure 3: Next to or under the copper tray, the Trolard Street in Algiers (source: Photomontage by Michele Baussant 2023)
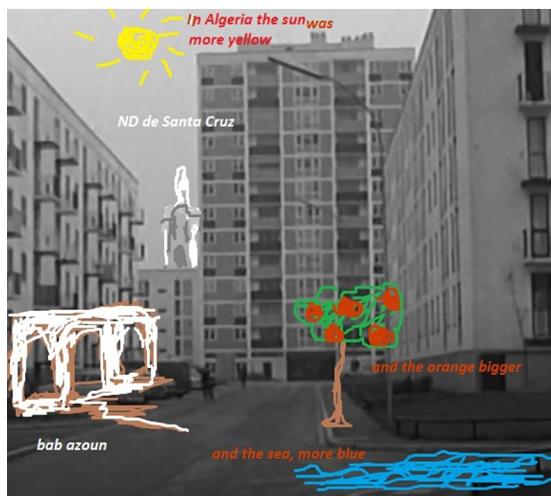
Figure 4: Algiers in Créteil (sketch by Michele Baussant 2023)

haunting, 'unlike trauma, has the particularity of producing a something-to-be-done. It corresponds precisely to that moment (which can last a long time) when things are no longer in their place, where cracks are revealed, and where disturbed feelings can no longer be put aside' (Gordon 2008, 18).

This doubt allowed neither blindness nor the anaesthesia of daily life. Other consciousness strata took shape between the apartments' walls (Benvenisti 2002) without real spatial attachment in the here and now. Few or no images fed the imagination, only names, objects that engaged the senses, encapsulated spaces engraved with the memory of the intimacy of homes, daily

exchanges, shared places and dichotomous environments, 'white spots' on the physical and mental maps of the colonial lived space.

Next to the copper tray, one of the few objects my family brought back from Algeria, was the street of Dr. Trolard in Algier, where my father used to live; from the living room table, the street Michelet, not far from the flat where my father's family stayed; from the stove, we found the street of Bab Azoun, a place my paternal grandmother often mentioned, asking me if I remembered it too, even though I wasn't born in Algeria. Near the painting of the great-uncle, stood Bab el Oued, where my mother grew up; in the bathroom, we were at La Marine, a working-class district of Oran; and with the smell of oranges, revived La Redoute, the last neighbourhood my family lived in before leaving. More rarely, to evoke a distant expedition, in the sand garden just in front of the building, Tizi Ouzou, Foum Tataouine, towns in Algeria that were regarded as very remote. I could see that neither the *rue de Bab Azoun* nor the *rue du Docteur Trolard* were there, but I could see that they were invisible, that they were not there, and at the same time, that they were a real presence that partly shaped our daily space and our exchanges. The objects, buildings, squares and shops that made up the new landscape grew out of the home. They participated in the production of time spaces put into perspective, reshaped by an *entre-soi*, relationships that made it possible to read the new world in which they had to rebuild everything again.

Mirrored Time And Space

Something was broken definitively in Algeria and continued simultaneously in France over there. Everyone left Algeria, and Algeria left everyone. And through this double movement, they all found themselves in the middle of the Mediterranean, leaving and seeing themselves left. The Mediterranean became an elastic space, the point from which my interlocutors

moved and connected their Algeria to Marseille, Carnoux, La Ciotat, Créteil, Lyon or Alicante, transformed into synecdochal places (Baussant 2002). Here, in Nîmes, a shrine dedicated to the Virgin of Santa Cruz, the sanctuary, which duplicates the first sanctuary in Oran while adapting its architectural forms to the context of exile and France, symbolised Oran, Oranie and Algeria; a Saint Michael's Day procession in the streets of La Ciotat 'revived' the village of Mers el Kebir, where the same procession once took place on Saint Michael's Day, and was a copy of the one that was held on Procida, an island in the Bay of Naples.

They also reinscribed alternative histories and multiple topographies produced by and within the colonial framework. The diversity of the people living in this framework and who reshaped the landscape according to their needs, partially erasing or superimposing themselves on previous landscapes, inspired them. I learned about people's attachment to crossing the visible and invisible frontiers of these sedimented topographies of places and times. I experienced it before understanding later how their memories of exile in Algeria or Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt covered up the experiences of other exiles and referred to other absent people and places. For those born in Algeria, their relationship with the country was not just one of living there and being uprooted from it. It was also the story of other journeys, those of their ancestors, to Algeria, of different times and places they brought with them and anchored in that country. The particularity of these cartographies of time and space shaping daily life also lay in this succession of multiple mobilities over the midterm, whether integral parts of a life project or forced upon them. It blurred the relationship between here and elsewhere, at once the place of settlement, the cultural homeland, the land of birth, the land of ancestors, the land of passage, in a temporality and a relationship to space that produced translations but never the possibility or the projection of a return. Each departure,

Fig. 5: In the middle of the Mediterranean, somewhere between Algiers and Marseille or Marseille and Algier? Year unknown, before 1962 (source: Michele Baussant Personal Archive)

each installation, was a new origin, a new filiation, without erasing the previous strata.

By moving to Algeria and back in trans-colonial and trans-imperial spaces during the colonial period, their ancestors had imagined here their substitute lands for Spain, Italy, Malta and their sometimes completely displaced villages: in Oran, the tutelary figure of Nuestra Señora d'El Salud, better known as Our Lady of Santa Cruz, symbolised an 'eternal' portion of Toledo[9] and Spain at the same time as it became a relay point with French shrines such as Notre Dame de la Garde in Marseille. In Aïn-Tedelès, a village in Oranie, a new plantation of a grove of Aleppo pines became a Bois de Boulogne to recall France and Paris, which also existed in Algiers, while in Mers el Kebir, the villagers of Procida 'gathered' around the statue of Saint Michael.

Multiple strata, therefore, linked long and short temporalities, distinct places, people and objects, landscapes, values and heterogeneous resources: Procida recomposed in Mers el Kebir, then Mers el Kebir and Procida in La Ciotat, and Mers el Kebir and La Ciotat in Procida. Material artefacts brought back from Spain, Italy and Malta to Algeria, then from Algeria to France, Spain, Italy or Malta, duplicated, recreated, tak-

9   In 1509, the Cardinal of Toledo, Ximénès de Cisneros, acquired the spiritual administration of the city of Oran and its territory, which were attached in perpetuity to the archiepiscopal see of Toledo.

Figure 6: *'Ici c'est là-bas'* (meaning 'Here is down there'), Oranîmes, 1996 (source: Michele Baussant Personal Archive)

ing root, circulating, linking transposed landscapes, extraterritorial,[10] duplicated, sedimented. The transmitted practices make them live in the heart of memory environments; places and their names symbolise districts, then cities that appear to be regions that refer to countries, which are enlarged to metropolises and former colonial spaces, operating unequally between the different territories. The particularity of these cartographies of time and space that shaped daily life also lay in this succession of multiple mobilities over the medium term, whether integral parts of a life project or imposed by force. It blurred the relationship between here and elsewhere, at once a place of settlement, a cultural homeland, the land of birth, the land of ancestors, a land of passage (Ragaru 2010), in a temporality and a relationship to space operating translations but never the possibility or the projection of a return. There was nowhere to return to. Even if they could dream of being 'retrieved', this dream takes the form of a disavowal, as Brodsky notes, as 'they will never retrieve you' (Brodsky 1995, quoted in Heller-Roazen 2008, 50).

These different strata of consciousness and their multidimensional spaces have taught me to question the evidence of a shared past with fixed and assured content, and the elasticity of tem-

porality. This latter could also take many forms. Every year at the same time, on the same Ascension Day, in 'Oranîmes', 'here became there,' and 'yesterday, now', a ritual time that can be performed in any space. Each year, the same event began again without being an exact repetition of the previous one. This event is in preparation throughout the year and organises the ordinary year to return to this gathering day.

While evoking their fulfilment and a better life in France compared to Algeria or Egypt, these displaced people mobilised the present situation of these countries. However, each time they expressed their current difficulties of life in France, they used as a point of comparison yesterday's Algeria or Egypt, the present here and the past there becoming contemporary (Ragaru 2010, 58).

Trips back are the yardstick for gauging a stop in time for the countries they left behind while they have continued to evolve elsewhere:

> We left Algeria with people we knew, and then when we go back, we do not know anyone! [...] I went back to the courtyard where I used to live [...]. It moved me. Where my parents used to live, an Arab was living there, a Moroccan who let me in. My mother's furniture was still there, they kept it, even the picture frames. [Interlocutor François][11]

For François and others, displacement is a posteriori, a pause in time and a bifurcation of time: that of the people in Algeria, trapped in 'an immobile, regressive temporality' (Ragaru 2010, 57), and that of the displaced people, who have remade their lives elsewhere.

Nevertheless, this perception sometimes coexists with an opposite feeling, the impression that they have remained frozen in time and space, out of place, out of time, without place or time, as is typical of those who are absent. As Daniel Heller-Roazen stressed (2021), there are many ways to be absent and then many categories of absentees who compose, in fact, a multitude: they could be the missing persons, per-

10   Like the castle of Julhans in Roquefort la Bédoule, which would symbolise an extraterritorial past Algeria.

11   François, born in Oran in 1934, lives in Nîmes. Former civil servant. Interviewed in Nîmes, in 1997.

sons who became non-persons in their societies of departure and come into being through unexplained disappearances; the diminished individual, physically present in the societies yet whose rights and prerogatives are reduced; or the deceased, 'a person who ceases to be someone, without, for that matter, becoming any ordinary thing' (Heller-Roazen 2021, 6).

A displaced person covers some of all these categories, transforming the dead left behind, those who flee and do not return, those who stay and keep the furniture and frames, those who become exiles who are not expected, not wanted, into absentees, and ghosts, as pointed out by Pascal Bouaziz (2021) in his song 'Algeria':

> When we went to Oran in 2004 with my little family of fake Jews who had disappeared inside themselves on pilgrimage, there was no doubt Algeria. You gave us that, Algeria. You gave us that, Algeria, along with the fear, the unease and the anguish of walking through your ghostly streets. But we were the ghosts walking through a ghost country. We were the only tourists. The town was full of people who seemed to be alive, who looked at us like ghosts but didn't say a word to us. [...] We were like the ghost town, Oran, which hadn't moved for decades. We walked as Jewish ghosts, Jewish ghosts in a ghost town. And we walked into the old Jewish quarter that had disappeared, we Jews who had disappeared from themselves. We walked into the Jewish quarter that had disappeared. We walked like living ghosts from another country. We hardly dared to be there. We whispered like ghosts. We hardly dared to make a sound. And we arrived at Grandpa's bakery. And we went into Grandpa's bakery. And I saw that the boss knew who we were. And I saw that the boss did not want to know who we were. And I saw that Algeria was still afraid of us coming back. But there is no need to be afraid, Algeria. There is no need to be afraid. Who still dreams? Who still dreams of returning?'

Who Still Dreams?

I grew up in a dissonant world with no correspondence between words and images, where everything I saw hid invisible worlds, past times sticking to the present, exotic and out of place, both literally and figuratively: a past that tells of the 'disappeared' people, places and objects among which I grew up. But where had they disappeared to, since I could point to these places on a map, to see on current photos that they still existed, to touch the copper tray in the living room and talk about it with the people who had brought it back from Algeria? Something about them could no longer be seen even when they were there. They were out of sight. But for those who remembered them, it was at the same time as if, paradoxically, in a strange blindness, they were still there and continued to exist. I discovered and experienced them like a short-sighted person, covered by a veil where I could only make out the outlines without ever being able to avoid their presence.

This dissonance shaped my research and my quest to see. I may have thought that I had discovered by chance the Mas de Mingue neighbourhood in Nîmes and its pilgrimage to the Virgin of Santa Cruz, transposed from Oran (Algeria), to which I dedicated my Ph.D. in anthropology. While some people decried the event and the memories exchanged between Europeans from Algeria as a nostalgia - for some dubious - for the colonial world, I learned something else: a place of reunion and mourning, a space of devotion or a third space linking divided and hierarchical times, places and identifications. The sedimentation, superimposition, discordance of the traces of memory, and the evocations and groups that carried them created a breach, opening in the now and the here in different places and times, beyond even Algeria and France. They reflected multiple interpretations of spatialities and historicities, dense and loose points of identification (Rossetto 2018) and relationships, even conflictual ones, to different territories beyond Algeria and France. The horizon of existences did not align with state borders: their relevant territories

resided in relationships, not in 'being here', but in being together.

Materiality and place remain a central theme in the social sciences and works on exile. Objects, places, and buildings are often viewed as points of stability and memory frames, as a form of continuity to an interrupted human life, assuming that 'living matter and its history bestow on the object a presence, which activates its entire surroundings' (Borcherdt 2021). The places and objects left behind became powerful attachment forms of memory and belonging, as Halbwachs (1941) pointed out. However, this focus on materiality is likely because it is easier to know what one does with space than to know what one does with time (Heschel 1951). There has never been an easy answer for me on what to do with space. Of course, like many other researchers, I have long focused on the things and people that occupy space and how they inhabit it. However, the different sedimentations of languages, places and names in which I lived made me doubt that material things give meaning to the temporality of individuals. Instead, the opposite, temporality, gives meaning to the material world.

During my childhood, I observed not an architecture of places but an architecture of the time, a palace in time (Heschel 1951) that reshaped filiations and affiliations, linking them in continuity beyond the loss of places that broke them. A palace built from practices, memories, names, languages, sounds, smells, and invisible objects made visible that we can feel, understand, and touch without ever knowing them. Not a dream of return, a transmission: I, the child of exiles, explore the halls of this palace of time, my home, with all the living and the dead I recognise as mine.

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Summary

This article focuses on the linguistic, spatial and temporal cartography of attachments among displaced people from the colonial worlds and how it shaped my research interests. These displaced have nothing to do with romantic heroes persecuted, with refugees representing a just cause. They belonged to a 'prosaic' mass of people expelled or asked to leave because of their active or passive association with the colonial systems. Without pretending to be exhaustive, I retrace the experience and legacy of this cartography through the words that carry the ghosts or corpses of several languages, place names, daily, ritual and commemorative practices, objects, senses and sensations. This exploration leads me to address the diversity of populations and their history of previous displacements – a heterogeneity that images of exiles from Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia or Morocco tend to relegate to the background. I explore how each border crossing has redrawn cartography of attachments and detachments, displacements and the crystallisation of social boundaries, and how each rupture has reinvented continuity. Through the malleability of languages, spaces and material things, I am interested in how temporality is traversed, stopped, restarted, turned back and projected forward through places. This focus leads me to question materiality and place as points of stability and memory frames, as a form of continuity to an interrupted human life and to give priority to temporality and time in our understanding of the material world: a time that reshapes filiations and affiliations, linking them in continuity beyond the loss of places. This reflection on time and materiality is finally a way to better understand the issue of absentees and non-persons related to displacement, transforming the dead left behind: those who flee and do not return, who stay and keep the furniture and frames, who become exiles, who are not expected, not wanted, into absentees, and ghosts.

Povzetek

Članek se osredotoča na jezikovno, prostorsko in časovno kartiranje navezanosti med razseljenimi osebami iz kolonialnih svetov in na to, kako je to oblikovalo moja raziskovalna zanimanja. Razseljene osebe nimajo zveze z romantičnimi preganjanimi junaki, upravičenimi begunci. Te osebe so pripadale »prozaični« množici ljudi, ki so bili izgnani ali pozvani, da odidejo zaradi svoje ak-

tivne ali pasivne povezanosti s kolonialnimi sistemi. Ne da bi se pretvarjala, da sem izčrpna, ponovno beležim izkušnje in dediščino te kartografije skozi besede, ki nosijo duhove ali trupla več jezikov, imen krajev, dnevnih, obrednih in spominskih praks, predmetov, čutov ter občutkov. Skozi to raziskovanje obravnavam raznolikost prebivalstev in zgodovino njihovih preteklih razselitev – heterogenosti, ki jo podobe izgnancev iz Alžirije, Egipta, Tunizije ali Maroka običajno potisnejo v ozadje. Raziskujem, kako je vsako prehajanje meje na novo zarisalo zemljevide navezanosti in odtujitev, premikov in kristalizacije družbenih meja ter kako je vsak prelom ponovno ustvaril kontinuiteto. Skozi poudarek na prožnosti jezikov, prostorov in materialnih stvari raziskujem, kako začasnost prečiti, jo ustaviti, ponovno zagnati, obrniti nazaj in projicirati naprej skozi kraje. Na osnovi tega poudarka podvomim o materialnosti in kraju kot točkah stabilnosti ter spominskih okvirih kot obliki, ki daje kontinuiteto prekinjenemu človeškemu življenju, in v našem razumevanju materialnega sveta dajem prednost začasnosti ter času: času, ki preoblikuje sorodstva in pripadnosti, ki jih povezuje v kontinuiteti onkraj izgube krajev. Ta razmislek o času in materialnosti je končno način za boljše razumevanje vprašanja odsotnih in ne-oseb, povezanih z razseljevanjem, ki preoblikuje mrtve, ki so ostali za nami, tiste, ki bežijo in se ne vrnejo, tiste, ki ostanejo in obdržijo pohištvo ter slike, ki postanejo izgnanci, ki niso pričakovani, ki so nezaželeni, v odsotne in duhove.

Remembering the Former Eastern Bloc: Who Owns the Legacy – the Case of Těchonín
Spomin na nekdanji vzhodni blok: kdo je lastnik zapuščine – primer Těchonín

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Abstract

This article explores the recent history and heritage significance of Těchonín, a site former barracks turned into a convalescent home between 1950 and 1962. In this period, the facility hosted 600 refugees of the Greek civil war (1946–49) who were sheltered in Czechoslovakia. The article aims at exploring what long-lasting legacy the minorities have established and what formal recognition ought to be attributed to them in commemorative monuments. The analysis of the issue is based on first-hand accounts from a refugee as well as on other private photographic archives of the refugee families in Těchonín.

Keywords: legacy of minorities, monuments, Greek civil war refugees, Czechoslovakia, photographs

Izvleček

Članek je posvečen polpretekli zgodovini in pomenu dediščine Těchonína, mesta nekdanje vojašnice, med letoma 1950 in 1962 spremenjene v okrevališče. V tem obdobju je objekt gostil 600 beguncev iz grške državljanske vojne (1946–1949), ki so bili na Češkoslovaškem dobili zatočišče. Članek raziskuje, kakšno dolgotrajno zapuščino so ustvarile manjšine in kakšno formalno priznanje bi jim morali pripisati v javnih spomenikih. Analiza teh vprašanj temelji na prvoosebnem pričevanju begunca ter na gradivu iz drugih zasebnih fotografskih arhivov begunskih družin v Těchonínu.

Ključne besede: dediščina manjšin, spomeniki, begunci grške državljanske vojne, Češkoslovaška, fotografije

Introduction

What do the tombs of Greek refugees (photo 1) in a Czech cemetery opposite a military barracks in the North Moravia region of Silesia, in the village of Těchonín in the Czech Republic, tell us?

Apart from showing us the (ultimate) passing away from life to death for refugees, these tombs announce, through the declared absence that the annihilated body engenders, a presence that preceded it. And when we speak of the dead body of a refugee, we are also speaking of a 'displaced' body. These are the remains of a passage, perhaps, the passing vestiges that the refugees in Těchonín have left us. As a final trace, these tomb crosses open up a breach in the personal and collective experience of refugees in Eastern Europe, which lies between their previous existence and their definitive disappearance, inviting us to link the past with the present. In their book entitled *Dissonant Heritage*, Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996, 189–190) ask 'what durable heritage the minorities are creating, and what recognition should be granted them in formal monuments'. In this paper, I investigate long-lasting legacy that the rather unknown minority of Greeks in Czechoslovakia has established and the forms

Figure 1: Athina M. in front of E.M.'s tomb in Těchonín, around 1958. (source: Personal archive of Savas)

of formal recognition that ought to be attributed to it in commemorative monuments.

Between 1950 and 1962, the military barracks in question, located in the village of Těchonín, were converted into a place to live and care for refugees from the Greek civil war (1946–1949) who were seriously injured, disabled (blind, paraplegic, etc.) and/or unable to work. During this period, they housed around 600 of the almost 12,000 refugees who came to Czechoslovakia. The latter were part of the 55,000 refugees scattered across Eastern Europe following the Greek civil war and were accepted as such by the People's Democracies for a period of almost thirty years (see table 1).

The Greek civil war that unfolded in 1946–1949 between two opponents, the Communist Party of Greece (in Greek Kommounis-tiko Komma Elladas, KKE) and its military branch, the Greek Democratic Army, (in Greek Dimocratikos Stratos Elladas, DSE) on the one side and on the other the national army of the Greek state, assisted initially by the British and then the American army, as the two political opponents claim to establish two different political visions; one from a socialist perspective, as the communists of that period understood socialism end, on the other hand a conservative/liberal, or the remaining of Greece in the western pole of influence. Greek civil war, is not only part of a national (Greek) history, but of a European one, as it is the first episode of the Cold War to be fought in Europe, involving Western powers with those of the Eastern Bloc both geographically and politically.

Most of the military operations of the civil war were conducted in the northern part of the country and forced both DSE fighters and the civilian population to flee the country through neighbouring countries, i.e., Albania, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslavia. With the term refugees, the Greek and foreign-language literature describes the DSE fighters and civilians, i.e., women, men, elderly, and children, both Greek and Slavic speaking population who fled Greece during the war. Even before the end of the civil war, the KKE had come to an understanding with the fraternal communist parties of the so-called Est bloc asking them to host the refugees. Thus, during the war and when the war was over, in August 1949, the refugee population was distributed among the countries of the former eastern bloc, a small part remained in the former Yugoslavia, mostly Slavic-speaking refugees, and a smaller part in Albania, unlike to Bulgaria which hosted almost 3 thousand people.[1]

[1]   The literature, from a historical point of view, on the Greek Civil War is extremely rich. However, the issue of the refugees of the civil war and their stay in the countries of eastern Europe has been studied by anthropologists, historians and sociologists. Although the majority of the literature is mostly in Greek, there are nevertheless English-language sources, indicatively for the civil war, e.g.: Carabott and Sfikas (2017); Panourgiá (2009); Baerentzen, Iatrides, and Smith (1987); Danforth and Van Boeschoten (2012).

Table 1: Population of refugee numbers by country

Country and population in 1950 -	Children					Adults			
	0-7		8-17		Total	18-55		+55	
HUNGARY	7.253	472	6,6 %	2.465	33,9%	2907	4.316	59,5%	?
BULGARIA	3.021	86	2,9%	586	19,4%	672	2.349	77,1%	?
ROUMANIA	9.100	225	2,4%	4.959	54,5%	5184	3.916	43,1%	?
POLAND	11.458	274	2,1%	2.875	24,8%	3149	8.409	73,1	?
GDR	1.128	193	17,1%	935	82,9%	1128	-		-
CZECHOSLOV.	11.941	846	7,1%	3.436	28,8%	4282	7.659	64, 1	?
USSR	11.980	-	-	-	33,9%	-	11.980		
TOTAL	**55.881**	**2 096**		**15.256**			**38.629**		

Source: Central Committee of the KKE 2010, 329

Refugees from the civil war, proved to be Greeks by origin,[2] were allowed to return to Greece in 1982; some of them had already returned in 1975 after the fall of the military dictature which lasted 7 years, 1967–1974 (Anastassakis and Lagos 2021). Despite the repatriation of most of them, another part of them decided to settle permanently in the host countries.

In ex-Eastern Europe, the former refugee population is no longer associated with refugee status; on the other hand, in some countries, this population has been granted national minority status by the state, as is the case in Hungary and the Czech Republic (Sarikoudi 2014, 237; Yupsanis 2019, 14). This allows them to claim a 'lasting' Greek presence in the country.

I argue that although refugees of the Greek civil war have remained in host countries for more than 30 years their life in former Eastern Europe was characterized by a condition of *to*

cross (*passer* in French); I suggest that *to cross* oscillates between move away, which becomes *absence* – most of the refugees were repatriated – and *presence*, for those who definitely decided to stay in the ex-host countries, but altered presences, because those refugees who remained are no longer recognized as such but designated under another status (Greeks from…)[3]. I use the verb 'to cross', or 'crossing', in the spatial sense of the term, (to cross the borders, such as lands, walls, seas, etc.) in the case of refugees from the civil war, to move from northern Greece to neighbouring countries, then to cross one Eastern country to another, but also *to cross*, in the opposite direction, from the host country to the country of origin. I also use to cross in the political and social sense (Van Gennep 1981; Dubet 2018); from banishment living to Greece, because refugees were considered enemies of the nation by the Greek state, to be hosted as refugee by Eastern countries; I understand *to cross* as a movement towards different social attributes and legal status; from stateless and undocumented – because the refugees from Greece had been

2   The law on repatriation (Joint Decision no. 106841/29.12.1982 of the Ministers of the Interior and of Public Order 1982) had a double effect: on the one hand, it allowed the return to Greece of a large part of the refugees as Greek citizens, and, on the other hand, the same law placed outside the national body, and consequently outside the nation-state, another part of refugee–the 'non-Greeks of origin' –, in this case the Slavic speaking, or Macedonian refugees, who were Greek citizens but, as they belonged to a linguistic minority that spoke other languages, they were not considered to be Greeks by origin.

3   In the former host countries, the refugees who remained after 1982 set up Greek associations. Such associations can be found in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Poland, etc.

Figure 2: The tobacco factory, in Hungarian Dohánygyár, where some of the refugees were received when they arrived in Budapest (photo: Kokkinou, 2021)

stripped of their nationality - to nationals, foreigners or minorities.

To cross then conjugates the social and political space of refugees in time, that of the past and that of the present, where, in particular, *to cross,* which has since passed, has left few traces and claims to be recognized.

It is this pasted *crossing*, which leaves few traces that is also indicated by the commemorative plaques on the former living quarters of the refugees, installed by those refugees who remained still in the countries of reception. What lasting legacy does the minority of Greek refugees in eastern Europe, and more particularly in Czechoslovakia, have the right to claim in this condition of *crossing* sited between presence and absence?

These plaques, which are not 'relict physical survival from the past' (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996,1), affirm the crossing of the Greek in Hungary. How can we speak of a lasting legacy,

and especially what legacy is that of the crossing of Greek refugees in Eastern Europe in general, and in the specific case of Těchonín in particular? From this arises the central research question of the present paper: What are the trajectories of memorialisation, or even heritageisation, of this movement of the Greek minority in today's Czech Republic? And, consequently, what could be the forms of formal recognition that ought to be attributed to it in commemorative monuments?

State of the Art on the Issue

Anthropological work on refugees from the Greek Civil War in Northern Macedonia, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria (Monova 2002; Fokasz 2013; Sarikoudi 2014; Kokkinou 2019) respectively, and historical work (Lambatos 2001; Daskalov 2008; Tsekou 2010; Tsivos 2019; Semczyszyn 2016) on refugees in Tash-
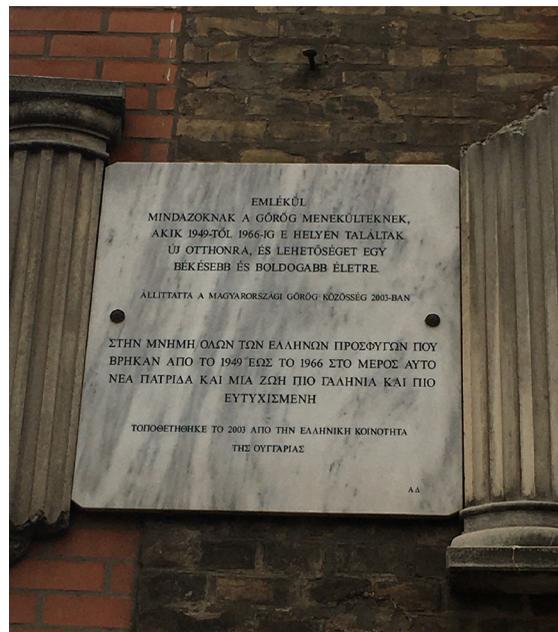
Figure 3: A commemorative plaque placed by the refugees on the front wall of Dohánygyár which states (in Greek): 'In memory of all the Greek refugees who found from 1949 to 1966 in this place a new homeland and a peaceful and happier life'; placed in 2003 by the Greek community in Hungary (photo: Kokkinou, 2021)

kent, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Poland often multi-sited – combining ethnographic fieldwork and archival sources located in Greece and post–socialist Europe have one thing in common: they examine the lives of refugees and their descendants *such as it is (tel quel)*. Using life histories and archival sources, they analyse, on the one hand, the memories and experiences of the war and, on the other, the collective life of the different generations of refugees during the period of exile, bringing to light common/contiguous issues relating to nationality, citizenship and national and local belonging, in particular, in the case of Slave-speaking population; the violence they have suffered and then to forms of political, even communist instruction, and finally to the imaginary of return. While these various studies make it possible to draw links and analogies between the lives of refugees in the different host countries, they remain compartmentalized into case studies, often focusing on the refugee population.

Methodology

In order to identify the different trajectories of memorialisation, or even heritageisation process (Harvey 2001; Harrison 2013) of Greeks in Czechoslovakian, I use ethnographic data which were collected during the Covid-19 pandemic. Although I was living in Prague during this period, travel restrictions did not allow fieldwork in the site of Těchonín, while the interview with the interlocutor was conducted online using the photo elicitation method.

The only interlocutor in this ethnographic research is Savas, born in 1952 and aged 69 in 2021 when the interview was conducted. Savas is a second-generation refugee, born in the Czech Republic from refugee parents and who, being a child of the period in question, bears the memory of his life there, from 1954 to 1962, when his family left Těchonín. According to him, it's impossible to find any other interlocuters about Těchonín since the other tenants were at the period already adults and the most of them have passed away.

That being said, and from a disciplinary point of view, this ethnographic research is characterized by *incompleteness;* there is no saturation of information, and this is explained by the fact that the interlocutor in question is a *witness* and may be the only one that I could find. To what extent does the testimony of a single person describe a social reality? 'Testimony', notes Annette Wieviorka 'especially when it is part of a mass movement, expresses, as much as individual experience, the discourse or discourses that society holds, at the moment when the witness is telling his story, on the events that the witness has lived through' (Wieviorka 1998, 13). Savas' desire to speak out, to make the history of Těchonín known, even knowable, reflects what the refugees' commemorated plaques in tobacco factory, Dohánygyár, located on Budapest have done: to leave a trace that attests to their presence in the country.

The Presence of Greek Refugees in Eastern Europe: Multiple Legacies at Stake

The case of Těchonín, is a representative example of the issue of multiple inheritance. However, what remains of the period when the refugees were received in the military barracks, are their photographs *in situ,* in their private collections, Savas collection, which represent part of their lives. Another, central source is the testimony of Savas.

Can the memory of the use of the building, which no longer bears any trace of its former function, photographs of life *in situ*, and the graves of its former 'tenants', build a 'lasting heritage' (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996) about the reception of refugees? Is this reception, embodied in places of coexistence and habitation dotted around Eastern Europe, as in the case of the Těchonín, a legacy to be preserved, and if so, for whom?

Images stimulate the evocation of memory alongside the mental images that subjects call upon in their narratives. Using photographs, the actors in the case of Těchonín, 'do not only elaborate other narratives', as Maurice Bloch (1995,

64) suggests, the photographs also allow us both, interlocutors and researchers, to escape from our own representations of the period in question but also to understand, through the narratives of the refugees in their photographs, the socialist period in which these images were taken. For the people involved, they are also a way of preserving their memory before they disappear.

The narrative(s) on the reception of Greek refugees in Eastern Europe is, therefore, on the verge of writing another narrative that becomes a multiple heritage issue, because it contains the memory of the foreigners and defeated of the Greek civil war during the socialist period in the countries of Eastern Europe. In these two pasts, the narratives that form a link between Eastern and Western Europe, passing through the local to the national, encourage us to revisit the socialist past (and its 'vestiges') from the point of view of refugees.

The Arrival of Refugees in Eastern Europe: a Three-stage Installation

After the defeat of the DSE in 1949, a forced exodus of refugees from Greece took place. The agreements concluded earlier between KKE and East European Communist Parties resulted in the dispersal of refugees throughout the so-called Eastern bloc: from Bulgaria to the distant city of Tashkent in Uzbekistan.

The adult refugee population, composed of men and women (partisans and civilians) and elderly people, were initially provided with temporary accommodation in places such as camps: in Berkovitsa in Bulgaria (Kokkinou 2019, 37), in Mikulov, Lešany and Svatobořice in the Czech Republic (Sarikoudi 2014, 99), or at factories such as Dohánygyár in Budapest, (Fokasz 2013), while children who arrived at the host countries before the end of the war, particularly in 1948, were accommodated in places specifically prepared for them, a kind of boarding school, or in Greek, *pedikos stathmos* (Danforth and Van Boeschoten 2012).

The return of the refugees to Greece was not as immediate as had been estimated, and the set-

tlement of the refugees, although intended to be temporary for them, quickly became necessary for the host countries. So, as soon as 1950, a second redistribution of refugees, ordered according to labour needs, was put in place, this time within the country, sending them to different towns and villages with, in parallel, the process of reuniting families, whose members had been scattered across different countries. This process lasted almost 10 years, and it also led to a further displacement of refugees within the bloc.

In the Czech Republic, healthy and able-bodied refugees were scattered throughout the Moravia region; in Krnov and Jesenik (Sarikoudi 2014, 100). Some of them also found themselves in the Silesia region, where the village of Těchonín was also located, living in forcibly emptied houses belonging to Czechs of German origin who had been expelled from Czechoslovak territory following the end of the Second World War.

However, as Sarikoudi (2014, 100–101) notes,

> it soon became clear [to the authorities] that these regions were unable to offer work to all the refugees who were sent there. Many industries had closed before the war, and even those that were open were remote, which, combined with the poor transport network, meant that Greeks could not be employed there. The Czechoslovak CP, (*Komunistická strana* Československa, KSČ), therefore decided to promote these new workers in the industrial sector, particularly in the textile industry. From the spring of 1950, the refugees began to leave their original homes and were sent to villages such as Zláte Hory, Rejviz, Jindřichov, Janornik, Žulová and Buková, in the Jesenik prefecture. Heavy industry workers also travelled to neighboring regions such as Šumperk and Dvůr Králové.

The Case of the reception Centre in Těchonín

The military barracks in Těchonín were used by the Czechoslovak Red Cross and re-

Figure 4: Savas' family: his parents and his two half-brothers, he and his sister in the barracks, n.d. around 1957 (source: Savas' personal archive)

named *Domov* ČSČK (in the Czech language *Dům* Červeného *kříže - Centrum péče* Československého červeného *kříže*), Red Cross House - Care Centre of the Czechoslovak Red Cross as a convalescent home for refugees from 1950–1951 until 1962, when the barracks returned to their original use, and refugees unfit for work moved on to other towns. Among the tenants of *Domov* ČSČK was the family of Savas, who lived there between the ages of two and seven (born in 1952), and today bears witness to this place. In his unpublished memories dedicated to this period of his life in Těchonín, entitled 'Těchonín, Memories of', Savas (n.d.) notes that:

> I wanted to write a few words about Těchonín (Tiechonín) because very little is known about it and I have found almost nothing written about this place, which for

Figure 5: Civilians from barracks, picking flax in the cooperative, n.d. around 1958 (source: Savas' personal archive)

> several years took in sick and injured political refugees and their families.[4]

Těchonín is not unique; such places also existed in other countries, such as the town of Bankia in Bulgaria (Kokkinou 2019, 122). What is the interlocutor claiming through his text on Těchonín other than to produce a trace of a residue of the refugees' crossing through the Eastern bloc, that is none other than memories and photographs?

If for Savas leaving a 'remnant' in Těchonín is synonymous with producing part of the history of refugees in socialist countries, for us the debris of this passage allows us to retrace, through testimony and photographs, part of the life of refugees in the countries of Eastern Europe and a glimpse of their reception in so-called socialist Europe.

On Site: Snapshots of Community Life[5]

In Techonin, the refugees were housed in the soldiers' dormitories, most of the them were there alone, while those who were there with their families had their own flats. This was the case of Savas' family, who lived with his parents and sister in an equipped flat, the family of the

4   Unpublished article, written in Czech, sent to me by the contact person.

5   The photographs and the account of the collective life of refugees on the spot are taken from Savas's.

Figure 6: Workers at the textile mill, n.d. around 1954 (source: Savas' personal archive)

person in charge of *Domov* ČSČK, another refugee family, and so on.

Apart from the Czech staff in charge, some refugees also worked in the barracks: Savas' father as a translator, while at the same time being responsible for reuniting the families of the refugees;[6] his mother in the kitchen, like another refugee; or even outside the barracks: in cooperatives (photo 5), in forestry work and field work, hoeing beetroot and cabbage, harvesting flax, cereals, chamomile, etc.

Lastly, some women worked in the village textile factory (Figure 6). Life in the barracks was punctuated by meals, medical visits, and communal life; Savas recounts that some of the refugees played musical instruments (Figure 7), another had created his own garden, and some were busy repairing old cars that were abandoned next to the barracks outpost. He ends his text 'Těchonín, Memories of' by writing that:

> I would like to mention here that the Greeks were very disciplined throughout their stay in the barracks and that they got on very well with the Czech inhabitants of the village, even in terms of friendship and cooperation, and I don't remember seeing the slightest conflict.

6   According to Savas, Těchonín was 'a gathering point for children in Czechoslovakia who had parents in other socialist countries to whom they went to join them'.

From Testimonial to Archive: or Additions and Gaps

Although most refugees from the civil war were of rural origin, they did not form a homogeneous group, either ethnically – among the refugees there were Slavic speaking refugees, who identified themselves as Macedonians and who, although Greek citizens, constituted a linguistic minority with its own identity – or politically; not all the refugees were communists, and among those who were, we find ideological differences, both then and now, to which I shall return (Kokkinou 2019).

It was during the exile the first crisis within Greek Communist Party - KKE broke out, also in relation to the living conditions of the refugees there and the reasons for its defeat. Known as the 'Tashkent events', which took place in August-September 1955, in the wake of de-Stalinization, the party crisis arose in the same year as the 20th Congress of the Soviet Union Communist Party (CPSU), in the city of the of Tashkent. Here 12.000 refugees, mainly supporters of the DSE, were taken in, half of them members of KKE. This crisis was characterized by violent incidents culminating in bloody clashes among communists, sparked by the dismissal of the party's former general secretary, N. Zahariadis, on the one hand, and the election of K. Koligianis in his place on the other, which divided KKE members into supporters of one or other of the party's general secretaries (Kokkinou 2019, 213). Following the dismissal of the former secretary, the new leadership proceeded to expel party members who were supporters of Zahariadis and to intensify ideological control of communist refugees in all host countries.

In this context of political and ideological upheaval within KKE, the position of the Communist refugees in the face of the Soviet army's invasion of Budapest in November 1956 provoked intense political conflicts which, however, were not openly expressed (Fokas 2016). What is more, the archives we have do not mention any involvement of Communist refugees in the events in Budapest, still less on the side of the

'counter-revolutionaries'. However, as the historian K. Tsivos, mentions, a rumour spread that the refugees supported the Soviet intervention, a rumour – unfounded – that was also spread by the radio station Free Europe (Tsivos 2022, 72). Among the incidents against refugees, mentioned in the KKE archives, are threats to employees and residents of a *pedikos stathmos* in Ballaton Kenese by Hungarian demonstrators, and the death of a 17-year-old refugee in the Stalin-Varos region (Tsivos 2022, 72–73). As a result of this situation, the historian continues, the refugees asked to leave the country, a proposal that was adopted both by the head of KKE in Hungary and by the Hungarian Communist Party, which asked for refugees to be sent to other socialist countries. In December 1956, 800 of them arrived in Těchonín. However, the behaviour of these refugees was completely different from that of the tenants of the barracks. In his report, the director of Těchonín (Tsivos 2022, 72) noted that:

> With the Greeks from Hungary, we were confronted with phenomena of extreme nationalism, Western mores and attitudes, particularly among young people, hostile attitudes towards the Soviet Union and its army, while, according to some complaints, certain political refugees should not have come here because they sided with the counter-revolution at the time of the events [in Budapest].

Savas, who recalls the arrival of refugees from Hungary at Těchonín, does not comment on the context of their departure or the divergence of positions within KKE at the time. However, in his interview about Těchonín and its importance for the lives of refugees in Czechoslovakia, he notes that:

> for me it is important and it was important this system, this socialist system showed me that at the time, at the beginning of popular democracy, [that] it could help people, that is to say those who were in a difficult situation [...].

Figure 7: Těchonín's musicians tenants, n.d. around 1957 (source: Savas' personal archive)

Often, but not always, refugees' accounts of their time in the host countries, especially those who remained loyal to KKE even after the end of exile, play down the tensions that arose within the refugee population and/or between KKE executives on the spot and the refugees. They also often avoid commenting on the unfavourable conditions in which some refugees found themselves because of their ideological differences, although in some cases this was an open secret. Their accounts presented the refugee communities as a coherent whole, without antagonisms and closely linked to the Party. This practice of embellishing refugee communities with regard to outsiders, i.e. those who are not our communist comrades, can be explained, on one hand, by the polemics created about the history of the civil war and its memory in Greek society, and particularly in Greek historiography, and on the other hand, by the widespread anti-communism in Eastern Europe on the other (Blaive 2020), which have produced within refugee communi-

ties a form of 'protective' narration of their history and their past.

Back to Těchonín or the Paradox of Images?

The 'Hungarian Greeks' did not stay in Těchonín for very long; soon after their arrival, in March of the following year, they were sent to industrial towns near the German-Polish border (Tsivos 2022, 74). In this way, the barracks, which had (for a short time) also been transformed into a place of shelter, returned to their original use as military barracks.

We have not found photographic record of the *crossing* of the 'Greeks from Hungary' to Těchonín, and paradoxical as it may seem, among the photographs of Savas, there are no photographs showing sick people convalescing in the barracks. Savas personal photographic archive from Těchonín do, in fact, show us *a life around* this place of care, to such an extent that, looking at them, one wonders whether they can be associated with the place where they were taken, since none of the clues, apart from the background showing buildings which, however, bear no sign of a health care establishment, or of the Red Cross, provide any indication of a specific place, located either in a town or in a city (and therefore in a country). Is it possible, moreover, that these photographs could have been taken not in a convalescent home but in other places, located in the towns or villages where the refugees lived and who, on one occasion or another, found themselves together? Didi Huberman (2003, 49–49) writes about the four photographs of Auschwitz: 'The images are nothing but torn shreds, bits of film. They are therefore inadequate: what we see [...] is still little compared to what we know.'

Savas' photographs of refugee life in Těchonín represent a piece of refugee life in exile; Looking at these photographs, we realize that we do not know who took the photos, who the people in the photos are – with a few exceptions – or on what occasion they were taken. Yet, despite these gaps, these photographs make us aware of certain aspects of refugee life beyond Těchonín.

The first thing that the Savas photographs on refugees reveal is the place of the family in life in exile. Their family photographs immortalize the repair of family ties severed by the exodus, a primary preoccupation of refugees in exile. In addition to their use as souvenirs of this reunion, which can be found today in the photo boxes of its members, the family photos served another purpose: they were both the message and the herald of this reunion, which their dispatch to the countries of the Eastern Bloc and to Greece heralded. Family portraits – well-dressed and carefully presented, prepared to take the photo – were a widespread communication practice among refugees scattered across different host countries and those who remained in Greece. They are photographs that migrate, migrant-photographs, in the form of postcards of families that circulate among refugees. Among these photographs we find unplanned snapshots, taken at random, but also just the opposite, photographs taken carefully, by people who have taken the time and care to prepare themselves, *with a view to being seen*. In both cases, these photographs convey the message of a reunion (occasional or permanent) between members of the same family in one country, or the fact that the refugees pictured were living well where they were, thanks to their appearance – well-dressed in the host country.

Savas' photographs on Těchonin also show what would come to characterize the lives of refugees in exile: their proletarianization. Although the refugees initially settled in rural areas, most of them being of rural origin, the introduction of heavy industrialization by the countries of Eastern Europe soon transformed this population from farmers into workers.

Finally, the life of the refugees in the countries of Eastern Europe included socialization among themselves, part of which was the creation of musical groups and choirs created by the refugees, which were a way of linking them together. Involving people of all ages, older and

younger, these groups encouraged the transmission of language and national sounds from older to younger generations. The participation of these groups in festivals held in other towns and then in other countries – a strong incentive to take part – created encounters and friendships between refugees living in other countries, and links with 'our own' people who, like them, were refugees elsewhere

A sort of prelude about the social life of refugees on the host countries also gives, musician's photography (Figure 7). Savas remembers during his interview:

> I saw that they were coming and I wished they would, and I expected it, there were too many young people coming, young children with suitcases, they were coming to see their parents who lived there (in Těchonín), but they were also coming for another reason, there was, let's say, not a festival, but choirs from different towns would gather there, because this continued after the '50s, when the refugees started to organize themselves here, i.e. in every big town, there was a dance and singing choir and they existed (everywhere) in the Czech Republic, [...] there was one in Jeseník, in Ostrava, in Krnov, [...] they used to get together in Jeseník to hold a festival, they used to come a lot in the summer, all afternoon, [I'd see] expeditions with suitcases, young children, let's say 18 to 30 years old, [they] used to come there, and I always listened to the rehearsals in the summer, from morning to night [...]. I would listen to the accordion, the mandolins [...] they would give a performance or a program to those who were there, but the important thing was to establish a sort of link with the other Greeks.

The most important element that Savas Těchonín's photographs highlight is the fact that the refugees from Greece made up a 'collective being', in the sense that A. Piette notes: 'What is a collective being, if it is not in a situation the liaison of human beings? We would say that it is support, associated with a set of rules and points of reference' (Piette 2010, 361). Forged by common experience of war and displacement, albeit varied according to age, and place within the war: partisans, civilians, adults, and children, the sub-categories of this 'collective being', such as children, able-bodied adults and disabled people, lived together in the new frameworks of life in exile assigned to them by their host socialist countries. This form of living collectively, among their own people, alongside their life with the natives has enabled refugees, during exile, to build their lives, and gradually to adapt to the host societies.

By Way of Epilogue

What do the photographs of refugees tell us about *the crossing* of refugees through Eastern Europe in the past, and what can they reveal to us today? According to Sanjay Subrahmanyam (2014, 14–15),

> to better comprehend how a global history is created, both currently and in the past, we must highlight a fact that may seem apparent: history is an egocentric narrative. The concept of the 'self' in history progresses from one's family, clan, and ethnic group, to their city, homeland, or region, and ultimately to the nation-state, beginning in the eighteenth century and continuing onwards. Despite this egoistic tendency in historical narratives, it is imperative to acknowledge the existence of others?

In line with this thought, the experience of the crossing 'Czechoslovak Greeks of Tehonin' recounts the history of post-war Greece, as well as of Communist Czechoslovakia. The reception of refugees from Greece in Czechoslovakia, as elsewhere throughout Eastern Europe, reflects the polarity of the post-World War II world, on the one hand, and on the other, a conception of the reception of refugees collectively, in terms of a group, unlike the post-1989 period where this reception policy is becoming more of a case-by-case examination. Today, in a unified Europe

Photo 8: The director of the Těchonín and partners of the Red Cross, around 1960 (source: Savas' personal archive)

Photo 9: Savas's sister with a Czech nurse in Těchonín, around 1958 (source: Savas' personal archive)

During interviews with Savas, I enquired about his fascination with the Těchonín case. Aside from its history as a convalescent haven that saved 600 refugees, Savas emphasized the significance of Těchonín as the foundation for his family's existence: 'Without Těchonín, we wouldn't be here today.'

Savas's recollection of Těchonín illuminates a familial history rooted in refuge, not only for himself, but also for others. This history also underpins a sense of welcome and gratitude in Eastern countries. Consequently, the family's historical memory intertwines with a collective history of refugees from the Greek Civil War, spanning beyond Czechoslovakia (Figures 8 & 9).

As Halbwachs observes (1997, 63), this is a shared connection:

> It is insufficient to piece together the image of a past event in order to form a memory. The reconstruction must rely on communal data or ideas held by both us and others, as these continually exchange from one person to another and vice versa. This type of sharing is only achievable if we are all part of the same society.

While the history of Savas is collective, it may not necessarily be deemed as a lasting heritage produced by its subjects. The testimony of Savas is the sole source available to us of the period in question. Nonetheless, the photographs of the location expand upon his testimony. Images of refugees represent more than solely an individual, and their tangibility permits us to understand and visualize the collective hardships endured, that have been manifested in places of refuge. These captured images of life reveal a historical narrative that spans generations – those featured in the photograph, the one who holds it and the one who will inherit it.

During the interview, Savas emphasized the importance of documenting the history of Těchonín, stressing the need for wider recognition beyond the former refugees in Czechoslovakia, many of whom are not acquainted with it. He ended the interview by expressing his desire for proving the existence of Těchonín's by help of research, stating: 'I am currently 68–69 years old and unsure of my longevity. I am likely one of the last individuals with such a connection [with the Techonin site] and therefore hope evidence of its existence will be proven.'

The written trace is essential to keeping the history of refugees in Těchonín alive. Who should claim ownership of the history stemming from the refugees' traces, and via which criteria do countries within the former Eastern bloc regard these refugee traces as heritage worth preserving? Savas (n.d.) in 'Těchonín, Memories of' concludes by highlighting that:

a monument was erected, with the assistance of Těchonín's municipality, near the village cemetery, where 104 Greeks were laid to rest, back in 1979. The monument comprises a large stone sourced from a nearby stream, on which a marble plaque has been affixed. The plaque bears the inscription: 'With this monument, we honour the memory of deceased Greek citizens who resided in the Czech Republic from 1949. May their memory endure'.

The monument in Těchonín commemorates a chapter in the history of the transit, the crossing of refugees to Eastern Europe, prompting queries on the selection of this site for unwell refugees. It speaks of an 'antagonistic' memorialisation, since it is situated between those who want to remember their time in the so-called communist countries and those who want to forget the so-called communist past. In this sense, the presence of the refugees materialises the question posed by P. Lagrou is it 'possible for Europe to become an area of shared memory' (Lagrou 2011, 281–288). The refugee monuments erected by and for refugees demand the voices of refugees to be comprehended, including their testimonies and photographs. Although not comprehensive, these traces allow insight into the history of refugees in Eastern Europe, shedding light on this part of the region's past. These traces allow us to understand the passage of refugees in Eastern Europe while highlighting what past the present wants to remember.

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Archives

Savas, Personal archive of photographs.

Summary

Following the Greek civil war (1946–49), around 55.000 people were dispersed to Eastern Europe, which accepted them as refugees. This population, composed of men and women, old people and children, Greek-speakers and Slav-speakers, Communists and non-Communists, was prevented from returning to Greece for over thirty years. Although most of the refugees returned to Greece once the Greek state had given them permission to do so, another part of them decided to stay in their former host countries for good. The obligatory stay of refugees in the former Eastern Bloc countries is today dotted with traces of their presence, as evidenced by commemorative plaques and monuments attesting to their passage to the socialist countries. Based on the

example of Techonín, a village in Silesia in the Czech Republic where military barracks were transformed into a convalescent home for sick and severely disabled refugees in the period 1950–1962, this article aims to discuss the relationship between minority, heritage and memory by attempting to answer what lasting legacy the minority of Greek refugees in Eastern Europe, and more particularly in Czechoslovakia, is entitled to claim in this condition of former welcome? What are the trajectories of memorialisation, or even heritageisation, of this movement of the Greek minority and what forms of formal recognition should be attributed to it in commemorative monuments, are some of the questions that this article poses and attempts to provide some food for thought. Based on an ethnographic research carried out under exceptional conditions, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, and using the photo elicitation method, we present the testimony of a former refugee on the case of Techonín, trying to understand how individual memory leads to collective heritage.

Povzetek

Po grški državljanski vojni (1946–1949) se je okoli 55.000 Grkov porazgubilo po vzhodni Evropi, ki jih je sprejela kot begunce. Temu prebivalstvu, moškim in ženskam, starejšim in otrokom, grško govorečim in govorcem slovanskih jezikov, komunistom in nekomunistom, je bila več kot trideset let preprečena vrnitev v Grčijo. Čeprav se je večina beguncev vrnila v Grčijo, ko jim je grška država to končno dovolila, se je del teh oseb odločilo za vedno ostati v nekdanjih državah gostiteljicah. Prisilno bivanje beguncev v državah nekdanjega vzhodnega bloka je danes zabeleženo v sledovih njihove prisotnosti, o čemer pričajo spominske plošče in spomeniki, ki pripovedujejo o njihovem prehodu v socialistične države. V pričujočem članku ob primeru šlezijske vasi Těchonín na Češkem, kjer so v obdobju 1950–1962 nekdanje vojašnice spremenili v okrevališča za bolne in hudo invalidne begunce, razmišljam o razmerju med manjšino, dediščino in spominom ter poskušam odgovoriti na vprašanje, kakšno trajno zapuščino ima manjšina grških beguncev v vzhodni Evropi, zlasti na Češkoslovaškem, pravico zahtevati glede na preteklo bivanje v tej državi. Kakšne so poti memorializacije ali celo dediščinjenja tega premika grške manjšine in kakšne oblike uradnega priznanja bi mu bilo treba posvetiti v spomenikih? To so nekatera od vprašanj, ki jih preizprašuje ta članek in poskuša ponuditi nekaj gradiva za razmišljanje. Na podlagi etnografske raziskave, izvedene v izjemnih razmerah, v času pandemije covida-19, in z uporabo metode fotoelicitacije predstavljam pričevanje nekdanjega begunca o primeru Těchonín ter poskušam razumeti, kako individualni spomin vodi do kolektivne dediščine.

Tales from the Greek-Albanian Borderland:
Memory of Violence and Displacement in Western Epirus
Zgodbe z grško-albanskega obmejnega območja:
spomin na nasilje in razseljenost v zahodnem Epiru

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Abstract:
The border between Greece and Albania has a chequered history. Its establishment in 1913 ceded to Albania a territory conquered by Greece during the Balkan wars and left outside Albania a large part of the territories claimed by Albanian nationalists since the League of Prizren in 1878. This is the case of a small region of Greece, that is presented in this text, called Thesprotia in Greece and Chameria in Albania, where the historical turmoil has not been without effect on its population, massively affected by the powerful polarization movements resulting from the application of national discourses on the field. Throughout this period and until now, the heterogenous groups that formed the border society had to position themselves according to political turbulences, sometimes despite other long-term realities, and their discourses of belonging were gradually reshaped by these changes. What is more, these transformations have had important consequences for the presence of several communities whose fate has been turned on end by the new realities of this contested border, like the Chams, a large Albanian-speaking community, which disappeared from the Western section of the Greek-Albanian border in the aftermath of the Second World War in circumstances that are still debated. In the last decades, the reactivation of cross-border relations following the fall of the Albanian communist regime, and the intense migration of Albanian workers to Greece, has questioned their memory within local society, in sometimes surprising ways.
Keywords: Albania, Greece, border, landscape, memory

Izvleček:
Meja med Grčijo in Albanijo ima pestro zgodovino. Z njeno vzpostavitvijo leta 1913 je bilo Albaniji dodeljeno ozemlje, ki ga je Grčija osvojila med balkanskimi vojnami, zunaj Albanije pa je ostal velik del ozemelj, ki so jih albanski nacionalisti zahtevali od Prizrenske lige leta 1878. Tak primer je tudi v tem besedilu predstavljena majhna grška regija, ki se v Grčiji imenuje Thesprotia, v Albaniji pa Čamerija, kjer zgodovinski pretresi niso ostali brez vpliva na prebivalstvo. Izjemno so ga prizadela močna polarizacijska gibanja kot posledica uporabe nacionalnih diskurzov. Vse do danes so se heterogene skupine, ki so tvorile obmejno družbo, morale pozicionirati v skladu s političnimi turbulencami, včasih kljub drugim dolgoročnim realnostim, njihovi diskurzi pripadnosti pa so se zaradi teh sprememb postopoma preoblikovali. Še več, te spremembe so imele pomembne posledice za prisotnost več skupnosti, katerih usoda se je zaradi novih razmer na sporni meji obrnila na glavo, npr. Čamov, velike albansko govoreče skupnosti, ki je po drugi svetovni vojni izginila z zahodnega dela grško-albanske meje v okoliščinah, o katerih se še vedno razpravlja. Ponovna oživitev čezmejnih odnosov po padcu albanskega komunističnega režima in

intenzivno priseljevanje albanskih delavcev v Grčijo sta v zadnjih desetletjih na včasih presenetljive načine postavila pod vprašaj njihov spomin v lokalni družbi.
Ključne besede: Albanija, Grčija, meja, pokrajina, spomini

This text is dedicated to the memory of Michalis Pasiakos (1959-2023), a wonderful person, a free thinker, an open mind and a researcher of the nooks and crannies of the history of his region, Thesprotia, which he knew better than anyone, the most generous person who never hesitated to share with me his knowledge with as much warmth and kindness as he offered hospitality at his home in Sagiada, food from his garden and a meal at his table. The contents of this text owe much to his erudition, like a precious gift he would have entrusted to a visiting outsider.

May his name never be forgotten.

זכר צדיק לברכה

Introduction

The border between Greece and Albania has a chequered history. Two hundred and eighty-two kilometres long, it was fixed by the European "Great Powers" with the signing of the Treaty of Florence in 1913, a codicil to the Treaty of London. However, between the two states, the delineation of this border seems to raise several questions. The treaty ceded to Albania a territory claimed and conquered by Greece during the Balkan wars, Northern Epirus, but some Christian Epirotes rejected this international decision and formed an autonomous government calling for it to be attached to the Greek state. At the same time, voices were raised in Albania to claim certain regions that had remained in Greece, inspiring the irredentist and nationalist idea of a "Greater Albania". In fact, the establishment of the borders of the new Albanian state left outside them a large part of the Albanian-populated territories that had been claimed by Albanian nationalists since the League of Prizren in 1878: within Greek territory, these were the Chameria region, from the border to the town of Preveza, and part of Macedonia around the towns of Kastoria and Florina (De Rapper 1998, 621–624). This latent dispute between these two states has been present for a long time in people's imaginaries today, as can be seen from the streets dedicated to "Northern Epirus" in many Greek towns, or to "Chameria" in Albanian towns.

This issue became one the main sources of tension between the two countries in the first decade of the post-Cold War era. In the spring of 1993, the expulsion by Albanian authorities of Archimandrite Chrysostomos, accused of preaching *enosis* (unification) between Southern Albania ("Northern Epirus" in Greek nationalist vocabulary) and the Greek "motherland", led to violent incidents against Greek-speaking minority groups and, in response, to the mass expulsion of Albanian migrants who lived and worked in Greece. The following year, violent actions were even carried out by a group that took the same name as the Greek-speaking resistance in Albania during World War II: MAVI for *Μέτωπο Απελευθέρωσης Βορείου Ηπείρου* (Front for the Liberation of Northern Epirus). In addition to the car bomb attack that killed the Albanian ambassador in Athens in 1984, this group claimed responsibility for an attack on an Albanian border post, which resulted in the deaths of two Albanian soldiers near the village of Peshkëpi in 1994, in the Gjirokastër region. While Greek domestic security quickly put an end to the activities of this group, some ecclesiastical authorities expressed support for it, demonstrating the sympathy that this type of stance could garner among some segments of Greek public opinion (Michas 2000). After this period of high tension, the period that began in 1995 appears to be one of normalization, likely a consequence of the isolation that these diplomatic positions had led Greece into regarding the Yugoslav wars. Furthermore, starting with the sign-

ing of the Dayton Accords, conditions were created for the establishment of bilateral relations between Greece and Balkan countries, provided that any sensitive issues were resolved. In 1995, the visit to Albania by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Karolos Papoulias, as well as the release of the leaders of the Greek Party of Albania suspected of covering the activities of MAVI in the country, showed signs of easing tensions between the two neighbours. During the tenure of Konstantinos Simitis (1996-2004), Greece even defined a new political doctrine in the region, presenting itself as the advocate of regional stability through the use of the capabilities provided by its status as an EU member. Diplomatically, this led the Greek government to adopt a more consensus-based approach during the Kosovo crisis, providing logistical support during the military operations in 1999, and especially participating in KFOR and post-war reconstruction programs in Serbia thereafter.

However, simultaneously with the development of the economic crisis in Greece from 2008, tensions have been rekindled between Greece and its neighbouring countries, demonstrating how these geopolitical border issues are also sensitive to the broader context of regional stability. In April 2009, Greece and Albania signed an agreement on the delimitation of their territorial waters, in which Albania pledged to cede 225 square kilometres of continental shelf to Greece. This agreement was annulled in January 2010 by the Albanian Constitutional Court because it was deemed contrary to the nation's interests due to the alleged presence of hydrocarbon deposits in the area ceded to Greece. Despite this, Greece did not oppose Albania's integration into NATO in 2008 or the signing of an ASA with the European Union in April 2009. Nevertheless, the renegotiation of this agreement could add fuel to the fire between Athens and Tirana, and Albanian authorities seem to be pressuring Athens to renegotiate or seek international arbitration. In 2014, tensions escalated when Greek authorities opened up maritime exploration in the Ionian Sea, which, according to

Albanian media, included the area that Albania had previously ceded to Greece. On March 22, 2016, during a meeting in Athens aimed at opening negotiations to end the state of war still in effet since 1940 in certain aspects between the two countries, the foreign ministers of both countries identified the issue of territorial waters as one of the obstacles to progress in the dialogue. On June 6, 2016, during a joint conference in Tirana, these same ministers listed the points of tension between their countries: (1) the ongoing state of war, (2) the issue of territorial waters, (3) Athens' accusation of discrimination against the Greek-speaking minority in Southern Albania, and (4) the fate of Albanian Muslim Albanians (the Chams) expelled from Greece in 1944-45 on charges of collaborating with the Italian and German occupation armies.

The latter issue is perhaps one of the most tangible reasons for the continuation of the state of war, as there is no longer an agreement between the two countries regarding the fate of their properties or the possible compensation for the refugees. Since 2011, a party (the PDIU of Shpetim Idrizi, which has had 4 seats in the Albanian parliament since 2013) has been advocating for the recognition of the wrongs committed by Greece against this group and demanding reparations. These activists march to the Greek border every year to demonstrate their support for a resolution by the Albanian parliament on this matter. The resurgence of this issue on the international agenda even led to a statement by European Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn, who in September 2016 identified the fate of Albanian speakers in Greece as one of the unresolved issues between the two countries, triggering anger in Athens, which considers the matter closed, occasionally accusing Albania of irredentism on these borderlands. In the years that followed, tensions continued to escalate, to the point that in May 2023, Greece even threatened Albania with complicating its accession to the European Union if this issue was not quickly resolved.

On the Greek side, the massive investment in the Northern Epirus theme by the neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn, which has seen numerous electoral successes since the start of the financial crisis, has also led to protests in the border region. In September 2013, a Greek neo-Nazi MP, Christos Papas, declared during a blockade of the Kakavia border post between the two countries: "We have come to this artificial border to affirm our struggle for the liberation of Northern Epirus" (i.e., Southern Albania). In 2013, members of this same party tried to establish a branch of their movement in the city of Himara in Southern Albania, where the presence of a Greek minority is subject to debate, sparking a strong reaction from the population and the police. On all of these points, solutions do not seem to have been found yet, and public opinion appears to be increasingly sensitive to them. This same distrust is reflected on the border from the start of the migrant crisis in the summer of 2015 since, starting from March 20, 2016, and at the request of the authorities in Tirana, Italian police officers came to reinforce their Albanian counterparts on the country's southern border due to the anticipated uncontrolled flow of migrants from the Greek-Macedonian border to Italy through Albania. Although these transfers did not materialize, largely due to the significant reduction in entries into Greece, this Italian-Albanian collaboration is indicative of the tension with Greece on the border issue.

Research Problem

Obviously, these historical developments have not been without effect on the populations living in the regions around the Greek-Albanian border. They have been massively affected by the powerful polarization movements implied locally by the application of national discourses. In this perspective, the Greco-Albanian borderland is an illustrative case of what Michel Roux (2001) calls "identity capture", i.e. the alignment of local particularities through the simplification/ structuring of discourses of belonging around binary oppositions between nations. Through-

out this period, the heterogeneous groups that formed frontier society had to position themselves according to political turbulences, sometimes despite other long-term realities, and their sense of belonging was gradually reshaped by dominant simplifying discourses. What is more, these transformations have had numerous consequences for the presence of several communities whose fate has been upturned by the new political realities of this contested border. This is the case, for example, of various Albanian-speaking groups from Epirus who found themselves in Greek territory from 1912 onwards, and whose stories will be discussed in this text. In this way, this Greco-Albanian example was a good illustration of a "world of sovereign states [...] divided by boundaries" (Taylor 1993, 164), where states play a dominant role in the territory homogeneity, and borders are a key medium for exercising territoriality, practicing sovereignty, and maintaining socio-spatial control (Agnew 2009). Furthermore, the border serves as a powerful tool for the process of "spatial socialization" (Paasi 1996), meaning the imposition of identity discourses as it is a crucial element of state territory. From this standpoint, the border landscape is the instrument and expression of the territoriality used to govern state spaces (Paasi 2012), reinforcing the national community as a distinct and enclosed entity.

However, nowadays, the development of cross-border and transnational processes that are increasingly significant questions the links between national spaces and people's identities (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). As Massey (1995) stated, borders are more and more crossed in the current world characterized by connections. This perspective suggests that borders are not anymore to be found only in border areas, but they are located in broader social practices and societies, and increasingly even in the global space (Amilhat Szary and Fourny 2006; Häkli and Kaplan 2002; Newman and Paasi 1998; Popescu 2011; Wastl-Walter 2012; Wilson and Donnan 2012). But, on a local level, people who live in relation to borders are highly determined by

elements related to them. The hypothesis I make here is that the phase of border opening (*debordering*), which is seen as the first consequence of this new world of connections, is accompanied by a renegotiation of boundaries between groups, often relying on the reinterpretation of discourses on the past. For this reason, the Greco-Albanian border could be a referential case for the current issues of identity and memory politics, and the related appropriations and re-alignments, presented in contested border areas.

Methodology

The text presented here is the result of a fieldwork carried out in Greece on the western side of this border, in the administrative region of Thesprotia, north of the town of Igoumenitsa, in 2010 and 2011. At that time, relations between Greece and Albania seemed to have best improved. Although the end of the state of war had only been partially signed between the two countries in 1987, their good relations had been confirmed a few years earlier by the signing in 1996 of a "Friendship, Cooperation, Good Neighbourliness and Security Agreement". In this region, the appeasement manifested itself in 2004 with the opening of a new border crossing point at Mavromati (in Greek) or Qafë Botë (in Albanian), which facilitated contact between the two sides of the border. However, this region remained a special case, the subject of a long-term geopolitical controversy surrounding the presence in Greece of a large Albanian-speaking community, which disappeared in the aftermath of the Second World War in circumstances that are still debated. But, since that date, this region found itself back in the diplomatic spotlight, as it became one of the main points of contention between the two countries. This current situation leads to a renewed polarization of positions that was not yet noticeable a decade ago, during my stay. The return to the situation of the 2010s that I propose in this text is a way to present when it was most visible the modalities of the resumption of cross-border relations and the various challenges that this resumption presented

locally in terms of identification for the different groups living in the region.

The present contribution reports the results of a fieldwork that involved a total of two months spent in the region. During this period, I conducted 73 interviews, with most of them being semi-structured due to the sensitive nature of the questions. Out of these, 45 interviews were conducted *impromptu*, mostly in the villages of Sagiada, Kastri, Smerto, Asprokklisi, and more broadly in the region of Filiates and Igoumenitsa in Greece, as well as in Konispol, Albania. The interviewees primarily included individuals involved or interested in the preservation of memory, local authorities, as well as ordinary residents who were eager to share their perspectives on the historical transformations in their region. Notably, a significant portion of the interviewees were survivors of World War II, serving as witnesses to the events during and after the war, which significantly influenced their perceptions and reflections. The primary objective of the fieldwork was to identify the discourse surrounding memory and the dynamics of identity transformation and realignment in response to changes in this border region.

Landscapes and Memories of Violence in Thesprotia

The region described in this text surrounds the lower valley of the river Kalama and its delta (see Figure 1). Today, the population is concentrated in large villages that make their living from commercial mandarin farming (such as Asprokklyssi and Sagiada), while the mountains that rise further east, separating Thesprotia from the rest of Epirus, have largely been emptied by emigration abroad. The settlement dynamics observed in this region often refer to the period of the Second World War and the Greek Civil War, which largely explain the current population distributions and the formation of today's human landscapes. During this period, large-scale population movements took place, leading to the abandonment of many villages and the founding of new ones. In detail, these situations are quite
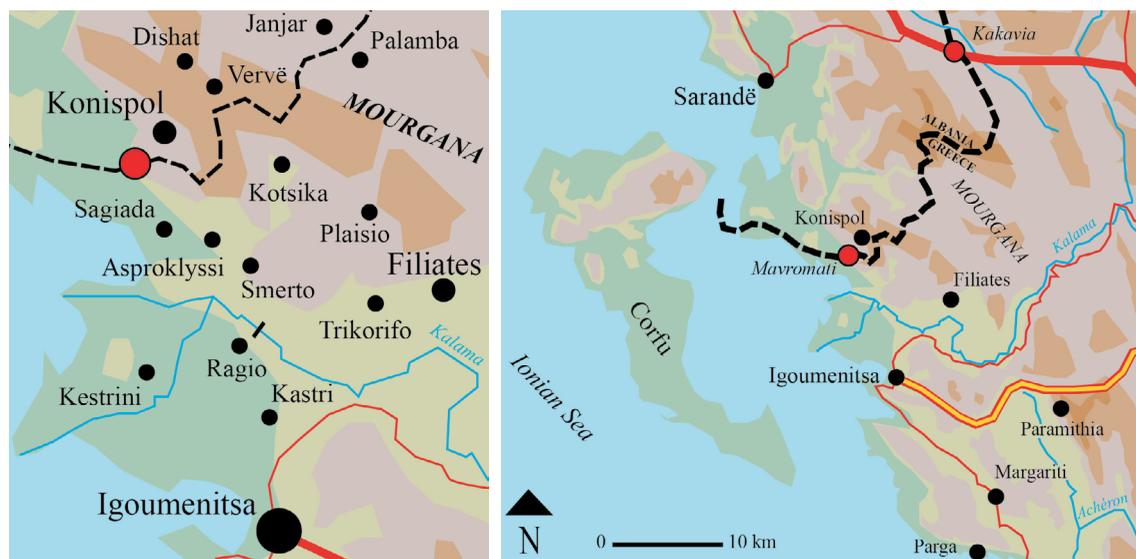
Figure 1: Location map of places mentioned in text
(source: Sintès (2019))

varied, but they all led to a classic movement in the Mediterranean context: the conquest and the intensive exploitation of the plains, and the abandonment of mountain areas and traditional farming methods.

A society Shaken by War

Most of these displacements were the direct result of the violence of the 1940s. In Sagiada, for example, it was the partial destruction of the village by the Germans on 23 August 1943 that led the population to abandon the village. The inhabitants then crossed the border en masse to take refuge in neighbouring Albanian villages, where the strength of the resistance kept the Germans away. When they returned in the winter of 1943, they were confronted with the last turmoil of the war and the beginnings of the civil war. In January 1948, a raid by partisans who wanted to forcibly conscript young men from the village prompted the inhabitants to take refuge on the shore. The authorities sent them to the island of Corfu, from where they did not return until the very early 1950s (between 1952 and 1953) to set up the new village of Sagiada, between the plain and the shore (Tsogas 2009). These move-

ments reveal the key factors that determined both the departures and the relocations of the populations: the violence that drove the inhabitants from their villages of origin, but also the intervention of the State, which sought to control those who might willingly or unwillingly reinforce the Communist troops during the civil war. This objective of controlling populations through relocation can be found even more explicitly in the neighbouring village of Asprokklisi, where a large proportion of the inhabitants, sometimes coming from very distant areas, were settled during the civil war in order to limit the movements of groups that were still very mobile until the 1940s: the Kalatzidès (χαλατζήδες) of Murgana (tinsmiths with itinerant work) or the Sarakatsani or Aromanian Vlachs, pastoralists from Pindus. These stories indicate a desire on the part of the authorities to control the mountain populations and keep them away from areas of conflict where they could provide aid to the communist army.

These relocations took the inhabitants through different phases, ranging from spontaneous settlements in temporary dwellings to the erection of permanent houses and participation

in the planned conquest of the surrounding agricultural land. The domestication of this new territory involved a development project orchestrated by the public authorities, for which progress seemed to be the main driving force. If we take the example of Sagiada, the people returning from Corfu initially settled in huts, mostly on the beach, with no running water, surrounded by livestock. The public authorities then organized the stabilization of these low-lying areas with the construction of houses and roads, the arrival of water and electricity, and finally the building of the Kalama dam in 1962. This kind of project was a clear statement of the need to modernize by rationalizing land development and farming. All this was complemented by the gradual opening of the region. These coastal areas of the lower valley, which had previously been related mainly to Corfu, from where seasonal workers came during the agricultural seasons, were in a way linked to the mainland, but above all to the rest of the country, by the construction of the dam, as the Kalama River had previously been an impassable obstacle.

But the interpretation given locally to these major transformations almost never refers to the great modernization movement that seized the plain after the war. Instead, today's residents systematically refer to the resolution of a violent conflict that had plagued the region's society since the inter-war period. The redistribution of land in the 1960s is presented as a kind of restitution to the Greeks of the property they had lost during the Ottoman period, and which had then been appropriated by Muslim groups - here entirely Albanian-speaking - referred to locally as Turks (*Τούρκοι*), but also more regularly as Chams (*Τσάμηδες*), or Albano-Chams (*Αλβανοτσάμηδες*) or Turko-Chams (*Τούρκοτσάμηδες*) (Baltsiotis and Embirikos 2007). During the war, these Muslims are said to have sided with the Italians and Germans to regain the dominant position that the region's attachment to Greece in 1913 was causing them to lose (Margaritis 2005; Manta 2004). Such a stance was fatal for them as, like all Mus-

lims in the region (see Table 1), they were driven out by the nationalist forces of Napoleon Zervas or, at the very least, left after learning of the violences committed against their co-religionists in the towns of Filiatès and Paramithia (Meyer 2007; Péchoux 2002; Péchoux and Sivignon 1989).

Table 1. Albanian-speaking groups in Epirus in the 1940 and 1951 Greek censuses

	Orthodox		Muslims		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	No.
1940	32,712	65	16,890	25	49,632
1951	22,207	98	487	2	22,736

Source: National Statistical Service of Greece (1946; 1958)

Numerous sources attest to the inter-community violence that bloodied the region in the broadest sense, claiming many victims, especially between 1942 and 1945. Books published in Greece by witnesses, activists, improvised historians, and academics relate these events to a greater or lesser extent. However, they all agree on the same version of the story. These Chams Muslims were said to have sided with the occupying troops, going so far as to wear their uniforms. They committed atrocities against Christian populations in preparation for the attachment they wanted for Chameria (Çamëria/Τσαμουριά), i.e. present-day Thesprotia, to Albanian territory. Some authors went so far as to draw up an exhaustive list of their victims. This is the case of Giorgos Sarra's (2001) work, *Mnimes tis tragikis periodou 1936–1945*, which mentions for the eparchy of Igoumenitsa alone, more than 80 murders perpetrated by Chams during this period. It provides the most detailed circumstances of these murders, based on accounts gathered in the field. Without going into such a detailed account, due to the fragility of the sources on this subject, the historian Eleftheria Manta (2004, 137) describes in a monograph on this issue, based on Italian and especially Greek diplomatic archives, the uncertainties that gov-

erned the lives of the inhabitants at that time. She also gives a detailed account of the destruction and atrocities committed during the occupation of Thesprotia.

In the villages affected, the memory of these violences is vivid and the various generations are still able to recount them easily and in great detail, often revealing the circumstances of the murders as well as the identity of the murderers: "During the war, after the Italian offensive but especially during the German occupation, the main leaders of the Muslim villages in the region, former landowners whose advantages had been threatened by the annexation to Greece in 1913, carried out atrocities against the Christian population" (interview 1), explains a local historian living in Sagiada. Moved by stronger passions and resentment, the other testimonies describe horrific crimes that are inexcusable in the eyes of those who recount them: "My uncle was shot dead in front of his house. His body was dragged by a horse around the village before being thrown into the Kalama" (interview 2 in Smerto), or "The Muslims raped a young girl in the village and killed her" (interview 3 in Ragio) and again "I lost my father at the time. It was a 'Turk' called Hassan from the neighbouring village who beat him and threw him into the river with his hands tied. His name is now inscribed on the monument in front of the church" (interview 4 in Kestrini). These various testimonies clearly reveal the permanence of this memory among the inhabitants.

While these various murders are classically presented as the result of age-old hatred between antagonistic religious communities present in the region for centuries, various interviews also seem to show the extent to which the Second World War was a key moment in the polarization of local society, to some extent completing the structuring of this society into national communities on the basis of faith-based differences. This period seems to be a kind of culmination of the transition that began at the time of annexation by Greece, which led to the gradual transformation of social relations but also to a radi-

cal change in the dominant ethnic structures. Even if other lines of force ran through this society (social differences, political trajectories), they would all have disappeared in favour of a single polarity opposing Christians and Muslims, Greeks and Albanians. The burning of the old village of Sagiada mentioned above is a revealing example of this. In local memories, it is the Muslim inhabitants of the neighbouring village of Liopsi who are identified as having played an active part in this destruction, rather than just the German troops. From then on, they became irreconcilable enemies. A resident of Sagiada remembers his relations with them, whom he still calls the "Turks", but also the events surrounding the burning of the village (interview 5):

Did we have a good relationship with the Turks from Liopsi? Relations were very much like ... enemies. Not with all of them, of course. It was their leaders who were against us. There were a lot of *Agas* who made life hard for us. But it was during the war that the relationship deteriorated even more because their leaders sided with the Germans. Of course, we're not talking about all the inhabitants. We can't say that they were all bad, but their leaders ... The Germans burnt down the village in 1943 and at that point the Turks helped them. They took everything they could from our houses. They loaded it onto the animals. They brought it back to their village. They came up behind the Germans and took everything. We saw them from the mountains where we had fled. The Turko-Chams arrived with the Germans and took everything. Even when the Germans left, they carried weapons and did what they wanted. They even killed people in Sagiada at the time. But after the German army retreated from Greece, they left too. They no longer felt safe. They feared retaliation from the Greeks here. On the other hand, you can't say that the partisans [*Αντάρτες*] of Servas didn't drive them away, so they were right to be afraid. When there's hatred, anything

can happen. Then their village fell into ruins. Now it's more than ruins.

This disturbing impression of civil war is even more present in this account (interview 6):

One morning, we were all ready to go and work in the fields when we heard cannon fire from the village of Smerto towards Sagiada. Then the Germans arrived, followed by Chams from here, Liopsi and other villages in the region. The Germans arrived in the village and burnt down the houses. And what did the Chams do, the local Muslims [οι ντόπιοι μουσουλμάνοι]? They took everything they could from our houses. The Germans only burnt a dozen houses. But they took horses, donkeys, and anything else they could get their hands on. I saw them from a distance. They had found a wedding dress and they dressed up a guy, a simple shepherd, and sang him Sagiada wedding songs to make fun of it. When they returned to their village, an old Muslim man said to them: "Where are you from? Did you burn down Sagiada? You wretches! You burnt down your own houses!"

It seems, however, that these neighbours were not so unanimously hostile during the previous period. As an old lady in Sagiada told me, "Some were good, others were not." (interview 7) Even so, one resident recalls distant relations with the children of Liopsi: "We met them sometimes. We were children and we used to meet their kids when they came to Sagiada to do their shopping. But we didn't have any friends there, we lived separately" (interview 8), while another, more used to working in the neighbouring village, says, "They were Turks of course, but we like each other" (ήμασταν όλοι αγαπημένοι). He concedes, however, that the war was a powerful moment of polarization (interview 9):

After they took part in the burning of the village, there was no question of going to work for them. Ten days or a week after they burnt down the village, the Chams killed my father-in-law because he had some sheep

that he had hidden by taking them to Albania. They went to Sopik and found him. They killed him and stole his animals to eat.

Another confirms this rapid transformation (interview 10):

Before the war, relations with the people of Liopsi were very good. The inhabitants of Sagiada were traders, while those of Liopsi were agricultural producers. They didn't compete. But it was with the war that relations deteriorated. People from the Tchapouni family had already killed 2 or 3 people from Sagiada in the fields and then helped to set fire to the village. That's when we broke off for good.

He added:

It's a good thing that the EDES came afterwards to drive them out, otherwise we would have had a minority here like there is in Thrace.

A border Narrative Embedded in Places and Landscapes

These stories of violence are echoed today by the presence of singular monuments (see Figures 2–5), which highlight the way in which this history has left its mark on the construction and symbolic appropriation of the territory, and how this in turn feeds memories. These monuments were erected at the very scenes of the crimes (crossroads, roadsides) or in symbolic places (in front of a building where the victim worked, such as the former prefecture of Igoumenitsa, or on the peribolos of a church, as in Kestrini). These are steles commemorating the dead by name, but often also by age and sometimes by nickname. These people are not presented as having been killed by the regular armies of the occupying Italians or Germans, or by the belligerents in the civil war, but rather by their hostile neighbours. The aggressors are clearly identified in explicit terms reported on the monuments: they are "people of another religion" (Αλλόθρησκοι), therefore non-Chris-

Figure 2: Memorial to the victims of intercommunity violence of the 1940s, in Igoumenitsa, Greece. (photo: Pierre Sintès, 2011)

Figure 3: Memorial to the victims of intercommunity violence of the 1940s, in Kestrini, Greece. (photo: Pierre Sintès, 2010)

tian, as the headstones often bear a cross, or else Albano-chams (*Αλβανοτσάμιδες*) or Albanians (*Αλβανοί*). This terminology clearly identifies the murderers as the Muslim Chams who inhabited the region until 1945.

Compared with the more official monuments commemorating the victims of the various conflicts, erected in public squares or cemeteries in Greece, these small steles mentioning the specific violence perpetrated by Muslims in the region tell the local story in their own way. They bear witness to the painful memories of the families affected by the murders. Certain elements make them appear to be private monuments: they bear signs of closeness to the deceased, such as the names of the orphans left behind or the nickname used during their lifetime. Sometimes, the names of those who commissioned the stele appear on its base, confirming the family origin of the initiative. These features bring them closer to the private chapels or small

structures that commemorate the death of a person in a road accident in the region today. But by their very presence and the details they provide about the murder, these monuments also seem intended to carry a message beyond the victim's family circle. Indeed, while the space is thus invested with a private sentiment, it also becomes the public medium for remembering what may appear to be a sacrifice that grieves the whole community, which may feel that it has been targeted because of its religion or nationality. These steles can therefore also be presented as the material component of the oral testimonies mentioned above which, by explicitly identifying the murderers, also convey a political and national message, in the broadest sense of the term, about these past events.

By their very presence, these small commemorative monuments also fulfil the expected role of marking the national territory. They establish places of remembrance and help to make

Figure 4: Memorial to the victims of intercommunity violence of the 1940s, in Mavromati, Greece, on the border with Albania. (photo: Pierre Sintès, 2010)

Figure 5: Memorial to the victims of intercommunity violence of the 1940s, in Kastri, Greece. (photo: Pierre Sintès, 2011)

the whole of Thesprotia a "region of remembrance". What's more, by recalling the atrocities of a group closely associated with neighbouring Albania (such as Albano-Chams), these monuments designate the Albanians as enemies of the Orthodox Greeks. In this way, they bear witness to the long-standing hostility between the two countries, feeding present-day resentments with the violence of the past. On a regional scale, they also help to explain the reasons for the disappearance of the Muslim populations of Thesprotia after the Second World War. The murderers certainly had to fear retaliation, but they would also have had to answer for their many crimes, which is why they chose to leave. Furthermore, the murders of which the Muslim populations are accused would now justify that they must no longer claim their rights to these lands, that they abandon any claim to Thesprotia because of their many crimes. Such a position echoes the words of some of the inhabitants of the places where the murders were recorded: "Now they [the Chams] are over there in Albania, and they are crying. They say they want to come back here, but if they hadn't stolen and killed so much, they could come back" (interview 11 in Asprokklisi), or, "it's better that the Muslims have left, because religion always causes problems, as we saw in Cyprus" (interview 12 in Filiatès). The threat of a possible Albanian claim to the coastal regions of Southern Epirus is countered in these discourses by the recall of the murders committed by these Muslims in the 1940s. More than the transmission of a tragic memory, the discourse underlying these steles is projected into the present (or even the future) to counter what are seen as hostile intentions on the part of Albanian neighbours.

But these monuments also reflect a univocal treatment of public space. It is striking to note that some localities in Thesprotia, reputed to have been important centres for Muslim populations, no longer bear any trace of this former presence, nor any monuments. The "memoricide" mentioned by Bénédicte Tratnjek (2011) is evident here in the steles that collectively designate them as murderers. The same is true of the

entire Muslim villages that have been abandoned since the departure of their inhabitants in 1944-45, which are present on old maps and whose ruins are still visible in the landscape, but which are, on the contrary, completely absent in recent signage or cartography (see Figure 4 and 5). For example, while the former Orthodox village of Sagiada is indicated by a makeshift sign, the nearby abandoned Muslim village of Liopsi are not mentioned in the signage; other villages that are still populated have been renamed, leaving only Greek-sounding names. If "history is written by the victor", as the bookseller in the small town of Paramithia placidly told me during the survey, he also writes the names of the places and selects the victims to be commemorated. To find a different version of this story, it is necessary to cross the border. Just a few kilometres away, in the central square of the small Albanian town of Konispol, stands another monument, built in the 1990s. It bears no name, just the words *Memoriali i kushtohet martirizimit të shqiptarëve të çamërisë prej gjenocidit të shovinizmit grek* ("Memorial dedicated to the martyrdom of the Albanians of Chameria whose genocide was perpetrated by Greek chauvinism"). Unlike the stelae described on the Greek side, this monument serves as a memorial to a group of anonymous victims: those of the "Cham genocide" as officially recognized by the Albanian state since 1994. However, as it stands in the last Albanian town before the border, it also acts as a landmark, activating the representation of a space crossed by a front line. The decorations that flank it also tell stories of victims: the stylization of a traditional female headdress characteristic of the Chameria and stuck to the top of the monument, or the representation of a woman lying next to her child on a bas-relief, take up the stories of murders that are found in descriptions of the massacres of the Muslim populations of Thesprotia in 1944-45 (Kretsi 2007). This monument goes hand in hand with the introduction in Albania in 1997 of a day of commemoration of the memory of the Chams every 27 June. Its discourse contrasts with that of Greece's neigh-

bouring region and is undoubtedly a witness of the transmission of a still disputed memory.

Changing Narratives in Tune With Our Times

The key features of these narratives, and the marks they leave on the territories, are the product of an eventful history. They were forged at key moments, when antagonisms were asserted, or when they were revealed. They have been transmitted from generation to generation through family histories and official narratives. However, the form of these narratives should not be seen as inert material, frozen from the moments when the events took place. It must also be understood in relation to the dynamics of the present and the characteristics of the moments when these memories are expressed. This is why it seems important to examine them in the light of the general context of this survey, and the trajectory of a region undergoing rapid transformation at the beginning of the 21st century.

The Border and the Issues of the 2000s

When discussing relations between Greece and Albania in the 2000s, it is impossible not to mention the strong migratory flows that have linked the two countries since the early 1990s. Having long been a country of departure, Greece has gradually become a host country for many international migrants. At the time of the 2001 population census, international migrants accounted for more than 760,000 people, or 7% of the country's total population, compared with less than 1.5% in 1991. Such a figure is enough to understand that this period marked the beginning of a new phase in the country's history. It was the fall of the Eastern European regimes in the early 1990s that was the main cause of Greece's transformation into a land of immigration. Large groups of migrants from Eastern Europe came to Greece. Albanians are by far the most numerous foreigners in the country (over 57%), followed by Bulgarians (5%) and Romanians (2.9%). These migratory flows affect every region of Greece, from the smallest village in Crete or Argoli-

da to the suburbs of the major cities of Athens and Thessaloniki. Their presence has also fuelled several debates about the possible dangers they pose to national identity, rekindling fears of Albanian irredentism or an existential threat to uncertain national cohesion. Such concerns are perceived at all levels, from the feeling of dispossession of the localities where Albanian migrants have settled *en masse*, to the more global vision of a massive and worrying presence in the whole country. These debates, and the various fantasies about their (inevitably) huge numbers, are fuelled by the irregular nature of migration in the early years, since the first mass regularization campaigns only began in 1997. Subsequently, part of this flow remained irregular because of the slowness of the Greek administration, which was poorly adapted to this type of circulatory mobility (Sintès 2010), but also because of the massive need for irregular workers to sustain Greek growth in the decades that followed. These illegal migrants often cross the border on foot, risking their lives (mountain borders are increasingly guarded). This is why, due to its easy topography, the coastal section of the border in the Thesprotia region has been particularly affected by illegal crossings by Albanian migrants since 1990. At that time, the villages of Kalama were in the front line in receiving migrants who went to the bus station at Igoumenitsa to continue their journey to other towns in Greece, or who stayed in the region for a while to take up daily agricultural jobs.

Another important factor in understanding the situation of this region is that new geopolitical concerns also arose in the early 2010s. After several decades in Albania, the descendants of the Chams are now making their voices heard. For several years, the fate of the region's Muslims had been perceived in Albania as an injustice that had a lasting effect on relations with Greece. According to some, the violence of the 1940s even tore a piece of "Albanian land" from the country, and today more and more activists are demanding that Albania return Chameria to the national territory. They have even come to-

Figure 6: Kotsikas: ruins of ancient Muslim village in northern Thesprotia (source: Sintès (2010))

gether in a political party, the PDIU (Party for Justice, Integration and Unity), founded in 2011, whose ideas are now also defended by the Aleanca Kuq e Zi (Red and Black Alliance), founded in 2012, which is calling (among other things) for a referendum on the union of Kosovo with Albania, and campaigning for an ethnic Albania that would extend "from Pristina to Preveza". Every 27 June, the anniversary of the commemoration of the "Cham genocide", as recognized by the Albanian government, they take the opportunity to demonstrate in Tirana and the towns of southern Albania to reiterate their vision of this page in Greek-Albanian history. Since 2011, there has even been a march near the Greek border and the Mavromati border crossing. In such a context, it is easy to imagine the fear of seeing a new Albanian/Albanian-speaking presence emerge in the border region for the Greek authorities, given the high level of political activity concerning this issue in Albania. These various

Figure 7: Liopsi: ruins of ancient Muslim village in northern Thesprotia (source: Sintès (2010))

movements have regularly influenced relations between the two states. In 2005, the President of the Hellenic Republic, Karolos Papoulias, had to cancel a meeting with his counterpart Alfred Moisiu in the Albanian town of Sarandë because of hostile demonstrations by people demanding that the Cham issue be re-examined. During his term in power, Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha even went so far as to declare, during festivities to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Albania in November 2012, that the area of Albanian settlement extended "as far as Preveza", provoking strong reactions from the Greek authorities, although his cabinet immediately corrected itself: "The Prime Minister's words should be seen in the historical context of the declaration of independence. Today, Albania has no territorial claims on its neighbours to the south, east or north." A few years later, in November 2016, it was the turn of his successor, Edi Rama, to give a lengthy interview on Greek public television, in which he devoted a long and controversial section to the issue of these Muslim groups from Thesprotia. Edi Rama spoke about the human situation in which the Chams find it impossible to cross the border:

> How is it possible that 80-year-old women and men who were forced to leave their homes don't have the right to go there again? How is it possible that these Albanians are

not allowed to cross the border of a neighbour, a big European country like Greece?

But he was also questioned about the arrest in Greece of two drivers from the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs who had been commissioned to distribute Albanian school books to Albanian children living in Greece, giving rise to suspicions of irredentist activities on the part of the Albanian government itself:

> I don't think it is irredentist to tell children that there was an area called Chameria where Albanians lived [...] I challenge you by stating that there is no map of Greater Albania in any Albanian schoolbooks.

The increasing visibility of this issue in relations between the two states therefore seems to be linked to the gradual rise of the PDIU in Albanian political life (5 seats in parliament since 2013, 3 since 2017, a member of Edi Rama's governing coalition since 2015). However, other factors must also be taken into account to understand the resurgence of the Cham issue in Albania in the first decades of the 21st century: These include migration, which has brought Greeks and Albanians into contact once again; the economic crisis in Greece since 2009, which has led to the return of many migrants to Albania and the dissemination of an image of Greece that is not always very positive; and, finally, the role of movements that are notorious for accompanying globalization, such as the primordialism evoked by Arjun Appadurai (2005), which seems to encourage references in social and political discourse to more radical identities that may stem from a history that is sometimes conflictual.

Ghosts of the Past ... and Their Heirs

In the field, being aware of such a context makes it possible to understand some of the elements observed in relation to the memory of these cross-border disputes. For example, if we look again at the war memorials, those in the villages and cemeteries all seem to have been built in the immediate post-war period, whereas

those commemorating the victims of violence perpetrated by Chams are much more recent. Some even bear dates of construction in the 1990s or 2000s. This characteristic raises further questions about the function of such monuments, since the period in which they were built is marked by the strength of the migratory flow described above. Alongside the Albanian workers crossing the border in Thesprotia, there are also reports of the arrival of descendants of the Chams who were curious to find out about their family's places of origin. Visits to ghost villages even seem to have become a recurring motif for the inhabitants of this region over the last few decades. They have no difficulty in recounting the visits of Albanians in search of their ancestors' homes, and even the exchanges they have had with them. One of the new inhabitants of the border village of Kotsikas explains, "In the village, some old Albanians came and cried when they saw their house. I took them in and they stayed for 10 days. It was easy to talk to them because they knew Greek. They had come from Fier in central Albania to see their old homes!" He also met an Albanian from Kotsikas who lives in Italy and comes to Greece for all his vacations "because he feels at home here" (interview 13). But not all these returns go so smoothly. An Albanian from Konispol recounts how one day, while visiting the village where his father was born in Greece, he was told: "This is your home, but we're going to get you out of here." (interview 14)

It is true that sometimes these visitors can cause the Greek inhabitants a deep anxiety, as Christos, an inhabitant of Sagiada, expressed to me (interview 5). His parents and grandparents were born there, as were previous generations. They even owned fields there, whereas people like him (Orthodox) often worked for Muslim landowners until the region was annexed to Greece in 1913 and, more importantly, the Second World War and the eviction of the latter. However, in the early 1990s, two "Turko-Chams" from Albania came across him in his field and told him: "this field is ours."

I told them "You're wrong, it's been in my family for several generations, my father's and my grandfathers before him. The village above is yours, but not this field."

He continued:

It all points to a certain state of mind ... they think everything here is theirs! Is that a big problem or a small one? I don't know ... I think it's a big problem. And it's true that they had a lot more property here than we did. But why did they have them? How did they get it? It wasn't the result of their work. They didn't have them because they had worked hard like us. We've been here for so many years, what are we going to say to them? Come and take everything! Take the fields! Even though they were a minority here, they had the best fields. It's not right. They say we chased them away, but it's also because they were afraid of what they'd done to us. It's certain that they couldn't have stayed because our relations had seriously deteriorated during the war.

What better way to affirm the Hellenic character of the grounds to visitors from Albania than to remind them of the antagonism between Greeks and Albanians? One of the steles pictured above is right on the border, between the two customs posts (figure 4). It welcomes migrants as they enter Greece, reminding them of the sacrifices made by the Greeks to protect themselves from Albanian irredentism. As for the other steles in Thesprotia, they all point towards Albania, where the alleged murderers fled ... but where the migrants now come from, too.

But there is another hypothesis to consider, one that can be constructed in the light of the social and identity dynamics of the 2000s: that such monuments are also addressed to the local inhabitants themselves, to remind them of the contours of their common belonging. It is true that the history of these regions is at the root of the very heterogeneous nature of the populations that have settled there since the Second

World War. This diversity could also be identified as one of the elements presiding over the functioning of these spatial markers. Until the last few years, the various groups, whether indigenous or settled by the authorities after the war, formed very closed, endogamous social entities where "everyone stayed in their own group" (ο καθένας στο σόι του, as heard in Asprokklisi, Interview 11). These inhabitants (Aroumanians, Arvanitès, Gypsies, Greki), while they are all now Orthodox since the departure of the Muslim Chams, are not necessarily speakers of modern Greek in their domestic practices, even if they recognize themselves without any hesitation in this national identity. Recalling the crimes of the Muslims by means of these monuments would thus serve to distance them once and for all from the Albanians, to strengthen the ties that unite them as inhabitants of the same place, by linking them with the fate of the Greek nation. The assignment produced by such monuments would thus be turned towards the viewer, anchoring in their mind the difference that separates them from the murderers as well as the links that unite them to the victim. These steles would therefore be part of a twofold movement of assigning identities, national by default, when the reality is much more labile, especially since linguistic (and even ethnic) borders have been called into question once again since the reopening of the border in 1990 and the reactivation of old relations.

These narratives have become more complex because of the Albanian migration that has taken place throughout the region since 1990, which has led to the reactivation of various lines of tension that ran through border society before the war, and which the national narratives had not completely erased. As noted elsewhere (Sintès 2008), the Aromanian Vlachs of Asprokklisi, who were moved to the plain by the authorities in the 1950s, were able to reunite with relatives or friends who had remained in Albania after the war. But what is most original here is the way in which migration or the new "life on the border" can now be based on memories of the coex-

istence of the inter-war years. For example, the traditional "good relationships" between the Sagiadini and the inhabitants of the neighbouring Albanian town of Konispol were revived in 1990. It is even said that in the early days of migration, when the Greek police were pushing back illegal immigrants, the people of Sagiada intervened to ensure that the migrants from Konispol were left in peace in the name of the friendship that tied their ancestors together. Even today, in addition to the many cross-border commuters who travel across the border every day to work in Greece throughout the year, the winter period of intense work on the mandarin trees sees most of the working-age inhabitants descend from Konispol to the Greek villages of the Kalama valley. On this occasion, they cross the border and work every day on the plain, in the name of the trust that has traditionally been placed in them.

But, more generally, older people still remember the close relationships or mutual aid that may have united members of different religious or linguistic communities now located on either side of the border, and which could potentially be reactivated today. These links can take many forms: family relations resulting from inter-community marriages, cultural relations based on a linguistic community, memories of old neighbourly relations interrupted in the 1940s. The cross-border links that can be mobilized are also based on interpersonal relationships. This is the case, for example, of an octogenarian woman from Sagiada who, since 1990, has been reunited with her parents' Albanian-speaking Muslim shepherd, who had been expelled from the neighbouring village of Liopsi at the end of the war (interview 7). Their old friendship continued until his death in 2010. They visited each other regularly and supported each other through the trials of life, such as the death of their spouses.

This kind octogenarian told me how she had so enjoyed going to Albania since 1990:

> You know, I had friends on the other side of the border, an old man of my age who died this year. We met when we were young. He

was 16 and was my parents' shepherd. We have always been friends. He came from the 'Turkish' village next to ours and my father took him on as a shepherd. He fled after the war, when the people of our village went to burn down his village. They took everything they could, but I only took two hens.

When they found each other after 1990, she said to him: "The two hens I took from you, my friend, will be replaced a hundredfold." The first time, he came on horseback through the mountains. He found his friends again, even though he had not seen or contacted them since the 1940s.

My husband took him to the store and gave him everything he could, everything that the horse could carry back to Albania. Since that time, we saw each other constantly. He came to visit us and we went to Albania. His house consisted of two small rooms and a lounge with a fireplace. He had taken nothing from his former village in Greece when he fled. He was only a shepherd and had a very simple life. After 1990, we saw each other every Easter. Initially he would come over here, but later we had to meet up at the border as he did not have the papers he needed to cross into Greece. I always prepared some brioches [κουλουράκια], sweets [γλυκά] and lots of clothes for him at Easter, and he brought us a lamb. We used to call each other and meet up at the border crossing-point to pass on clothes to his children that our children no longer wore. He could no longer come here for lack of papers. In 2002, my husband died. My friend found out about it and came over. Anyway, he stayed all night long with his forehead resting on his friend, crying while softly speaking words in Albanian to him. He took part in all aspects of the funeral even though he was 'Turkish'. He went to the church and sat down with us at the meal that is prepared for the dead.

From then on until he died in 2010, they met at the border crossing-point twice a year:

at Christmas and Easter. Once a border guard asked him: "Do you want us to let you pass and take you to your old village so you can see your house again?" He replied that he did not: "The past is the past. I do not want to have a heart attack. Now only stones remain, nothing else [πέτρες να μείνουν]! Let me just see this lady. I ate bread in her house for several years and we 'Turks' do not forget when we eat bread in another's house."

This account helps us to understand the fluid nature of ethnic designations, which is also reflected in the many ways in which the groups that make up the frontier society refer to themselves, no doubt reflecting the adaptation of pre-national affiliations to the dominant discourses of the following period. Leonidas Embirikos and Lambros Baltsiotis have clearly shown how the term "Cham" can be highly significant in this respect, as it is used to designate realities that are sometimes quite diverse (Baltsiotis and Embirikos 2007). Similarly, the recent adoption of the term "Arvanitès" (Αρβανίτες), rather than "Cham", to designate the Albanian-speaking Christians still living in what is now Thesprotia speaks volumes. Usually used to designate Albanian-speaking Orthodox groups from old Greece who have been present in Attica or the Peloponnese for centuries, this term seems to be used here to neutralize the question of linguistic otherness in this border region, by turning it from a transnational issue in relation to Albania into an internal Greek question. The linguistic group of Albanian speakers in Thesprotia is therefore split in two as a result of these distinct names: on the one hand, the "Arvanitès", i.e. Albanian-speaking Orthodox with a Greek national consciousness, and on the other, the "Turco-chams" or "Albano-chams", who are understood to be Muslim Albanians who are historically linked to the Albanian nation-building process.

In the field, this dissociation is operated and endorsed by the radicality of the memorials. In Kestrini, it is a person "of another religion" (Αλλόθρησκος), therefore someone who is responsible for the death of the person honoured.

The most explicit monument on the identity of the murderers is the one in the village of Kastri, which mentions "murdered by Alvano-Cham" (δολοφονηθέντων από Αλβανοτσάμηδες). It is perhaps interesting to note that the two cases mentioned here, which are the two most explicit designations of the ethnic identity of the murderers, were found in villages where there are many Orthodox Albanian speakers, confirming that these monuments are part of a desire to "invisibilize" the linguistic difference or, at the very least, an exit-strategy to separate and distinguish these Orthodox Albanian-speaking groups still living in Thesprotia from the "Chams", understood here as Muslims hostile to Hellenism. However, the term "Cham" was sometimes presented to me in more unexpected ways, going well beyond the simple designation of the Albanian-speaking Muslims. In private, a Sagiadini tells me that he is "Cham" to designate his regional belonging "to Thesprotia, which is a recent name for a region that everyone here knows by its other name ... Chamouria [Τσαμουριά] of course!" This terminology, that cannot be used in all circumstances, has proved to be accepted at times as an autonym by all the inhabitants of the region. These inflections around place names and linguistic, religious, and regional affiliations are of great interest. They mark the places, engramming them with a paradoxical mechanism that highlights the distortions between the plural reality of border society and the discourses constructed by nation-states on the past and space.

This is how today, and on various occasions, the inhabitants of Thesprotia sometimes make their differences heard once again, for example when it comes to establishing the legitimacy of each having been allocated land on the plain in the 1950s and 1960s. On this occasion, the Sagiadini can point to their ancient presence and their complete loyalty to the canons of Hellenism: orthodoxy and Hellenophony, which is why they are referred to by the other inhabitants as Gréki. The inhabitants of Smerto or Kestrini, descendants of the tenant farmers who sometimes came from Agios Vlasios or Kastri near

Igoumenitsa, are reputed in the region to speak an Albanian-speaking dialect, called arvanitika or alvanika, depending on the context, as well as being Orthodox - which means that they are sometimes referred to as Greeks (Έλληνες), while others refer to them by their skin colour: black (μαύροι) or gypsies (γύφτοι), giving them an ethnonym that speaks volumes about their supposed origins (Egypt, according to some). The current inhabitants of Asprokklisi, on the former lands of the village of Liopsi (the ruins of which can be seen from the road leading to the Mavromati border post), are divided into three distinct groups: Gréki, who came from a village called Asprokklisi in the mountains of Mourgana and are thought to have been displaced during the civil war; Aromanian Vlachs, who used to winter on the land they rented from the Agas of Liopsi; and Sarakatsani, whose transhumance lands were located quite far from coastal Thesprotia (Grevena and central Thessaly) but whom the Greek state had decided to settle in the region. The issues of land redistribution, the recomposing and repopulation of villages, therefore provide an opportunity to express a kind of hierarchy between different groups that made up the society of these border areas. Nevertheless, other dividing lines run more discreetly through it, such as those activated during the civil war between the nationalists and the communists, even if we noticed during our interviews that they were adapted to the already existing compositions by opposing sedentary and transhumant, villages in the hills and villages in the plains, and so on.

Conclusion: Towards a (Re)Fragmentation of Border Society?

These few examples from the Greek-Albanian border illustrate the extent to which the population of this small border region continues to be crisscrossed by lines of tension demarcating different categories of inhabitants. This reality has recently been put to the test by the mass migration of Albanian citizens to Greece, which has undoubtedly helped to update the different

registers of identification that had been incompletely erased by the dominant discourse of nation states since the post-war period. This process has taken place more generally by confronting the topicality of cross-border relations with the permanence of the conflicting memories that are present. In fact, despite the great diversity of the accounts gathered, it seemed that the position of each of the inhabitants in the interplay of local affiliations led them to look at the new Albanian migrants differently, depending on their experiences of the border. Some people, for example, were able to express a great closeness to the descendants of Chams who left after the war while indicating that one day, with the economic crisis that has been raging in Greece since 2009, it would not be out of the question for migrants from the 1990s to help them find work in Albania. This surprising inversion suggests a certain relativity, or even reversibility, in the discourse of belonging, which has been subject to powerful logics since the region became part of Greece in 1912.

Although it cannot be said that migration is the sole factor in the (re)fragmentation of local society, it does seem to have played this role in terms of certain discourses and practices of some of the region's inhabitants. At the same time, however, the reactivation of cross-border relations is today affected by the return to the diplomatic agenda of the inter-state dispute over the historical legitimacy of this border, making it difficult to conduct fieldwork on the complex dynamics of belonging in the region. It is this context of diplomatic and migratory tensions that led to the suspension of my investigations in the region in 2011. The many questions about cross-border experiences that I asked my interlocutors did not always leave the people I met indifferent, and some ended up preferring not to see me again, or no longer responding to my requests. During my last investigation in July-August 2011, it was two young men claiming to be police officers who, after having stopped my car on the side of a mountain road, politely suggested that I spend the end of the summer at the beach rather than continuing my investigations in the border villages. Such was my success that I was photographed by many strangers whenever I went into public places. I decided that I did not want my presence to disturb the developing processes any longer, so I decided, for a while, to leave my investigation on the fragmentation of border societies in this very special region.

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Table of the interviews quoted in the text

Interview number	Date of birth	Date of interview	Metting place
1	1959	06/08/2010	Sagiada
2	1940	11/07/2010	Smerto
3	1952	14/07/2010	Ragio
4	1924	5/08/2010	Kestini
5	1935	06/08/2010	Sagiada
6	1924	14/07/2010	Sagiada
7	1928	06/08/2010	Sagiada
8	1930	12/07/2011	Sagiada
9	1923	13/07/2011	Sagiada
10	1916	14/07/2011	Sagiada
11	1925	07/08/2010	Asprokklisi
12	1943	08/08/2010	Filiatès
13	1937	07/08/2010	Filiatès
14	1982	09/08/2010	Konispol

Summary

The border between Greece and Albania has a chequered history. Its establishment in 1913 ceded to Albania a territory conquered by Greece during the Balkan wars and left outside Albania a large part of the territories claimed by Albanian nationalists since the League of Prizren in 1878. This is the case of a small region of Greece, that is presented in this text, called Thesprotia in Greek and Chameria in Albanian, where the historical turmoil has not been without effect on its population, massively affected by the powerful polarization movements resulting from the application of national discourses on the field. Throughout this period and until now, the heterogenous groups that formed the border society had to position themselves according to political turbulences, sometimes despite other long-term realities, and their discourses of belonging were gradually reshaped by these changes. These transformations have had important consequences for the presence of several communities whose fate has been turned on end by the new realities of this contested border, like the Chams, a large Albanian-speaking community, which disappeared from the Western section of the Greek-Albanian border in circumstances that are still debated.

Nowadays, the interpretation given locally to these major social and ethnic transformations always refers to the resolution of a violent conflict that had plagued the region's society since the inter-war period. In the villages affected, the memory of these atrocities is vivid, and the various generations are still able to recount them easily and in great detail, often revealing the circumstances of the murders as well as the identity of the murderers. These stories of violence are echoed today by the presence in the Greek side of the border of singular monuments, which highlight the way in which this history has left its mark on the construction and symbolic appropriation of the territory, and how this in turn feeds memories. By recalling the atrocities of a group closely associated with neighboring Albania, these monuments designate the Albanians as enemies of the Orthodox Greeks, and bear witness to the long-standing hostility between the two countries, feeding present-day resentments with the violence of the past. On the other side of the border, around the small Albanian town of Konispol, stands a number of monuments commemorating the victims of the "Cham genocide", officially recognized by the Albanian state since 1994. These various monuments on the other side of the border also act as landmarks, activating the representation of a space

crossed by a front line and go hand in hand with the introduction in Albania in 1997 of a day of commemoration of the memory of the Chams every 27 June. Its discourse contrasts with that of Greece's neighboring region and is undoubtedly a witness of the transmission of a still disputed memory. But, if the key features of these narratives, and the marks they leave on the territories, are the product of an eventful history, the form of these narratives must also be understood in relation to the dynamics of the present and the characteristics of the moments when these memories are expressed. However, other factors must also be taken into account to understand the resurgence of the Cham issue in the first decades of the 21st century (migration and geopolitic issues). But locally in this new context, the reactivation of cross-border relations following the fall of the Albanian communist regime, and the intense migration of Albanian workers to Greece, has questioned the memory in this border region, in sometimes surprising ways. It illustrates the extent to which the population of this small region continues to be crisscrossed by lines of tension demarcating different categories of inhabitant. This reality has been put to the test by the mass migration of Albanian citizens to Greece, which has helped to update the different registers of identification that had been incompletely erased by the dominant discourse of nation states since the post-war period. This process has taken place more generally by confronting the topicality of cross-border relations with the permanence of the conflicting memories that are present. At the same time, however, the reactivation of cross-border relations is today affected by the return to the diplomatic agenda of the inter-state dispute over the historical legitimacy of this border, making it sometimes difficult to do fieldwork on the complex dynamics of belonging in the region.

Povzetek

Meja med Grčijo in Albanijo ima pestro zgodovino. Z njeno vzpostavitvijo leta 1913 je bilo Albaniji dodeljeno ozemlje, ki ga je Grčija osvojila med balkanskimi vojnami, zunaj Albanije pa je ostal velik del ozemelj, ki so jih albanski nacionalisti zahtevali od Prizrenske lige leta 1878. Tak primer je tudi v tem besedilu predstavljena majhna grška regija, ki se v Grčiji imenuje Thesprotia, v Albaniji pa Čamerija, kjer zgodovinski pretresi niso os-

tali brez vpliva na prebivalstvo. Izjemno so ga prizadela močna polarizacijska gibanja kot posledica uporabe nacionalnih diskurzov. Vse do danes so se heterogene skupine, ki so tvorile obmejno družbo, morale pozicionirati v skladu s političnimi turbulencami, včasih kljub drugim dolgoročnim realnostim, njihovi diskurzi pripadnosti pa so se zaradi teh sprememb postopoma preoblikovali. Še več, te spremembe so imele pomembne posledice za prisotnost več skupnosti, katerih usoda se je zaradi novih razmer na sporni meji obrnila na glavo, npr. Čamov, velike albansko govoreče skupnosti, ki je po drugi svetovni vojni izginila z zahodnega dela grško-albanske meje v okoliščinah, o katerih se še vedno razpravlja. Dandanes se lokalna razlaga teh velikih družbenih in etničnih preobrazb vedno nanaša na rešitev nasilnega konflikta, ki je družbo v regiji pestil od obdobja med vojnama. V prizadetih vaseh je spomin na ta grozodejstva živ in različne generacije o njih še vedno zlahka ter zelo podrobno pripovedujejo, pri čemer pogosto razkrijejo okoliščine umorov in tudi identiteto morilcev. Zgodbe o nasilju danes se odslikavajo v edinstvenih spomenikih na grški strani meje, ki poudarjajo, kako je ta zgodovina zaznamovala izgradnjo in simbolno prilastitev ozemlja ter kako to posledično napaja spomine. Z opominjanjem na grozodejstva skupine, ki je tesno povezana s sosednjo Albanijo, ti spomeniki Albance označujejo za sovražnike pravoslavnih Grkov in pričajo o dolgotrajni sovražnosti med državama, ki današnje zamere napaja z nasiljem iz preteklosti. Na drugi strani meje, v okolici majhnega albanskega mesta Konispol, stojijo številni spomeniki v spomin na žrtve »genocida nad Čami«, ki jih albanska država uradno priznava od leta 1994. Ti različni spomeniki na drugi strani meje delujejo tudi kot mejniki, saj aktivirajo reprezentacijo prostora, ki ga preči frontna črta, in gredo z roko v roki z uvedbo dneva spomina na Čame v Albaniji leta 1997, ki se obeležuje vsakega 27. junija. Njihov diskurz je v nasprotju z diskurzom v sosednji grški regiji in nedvomno priča o prenosu še vedno spornega spomina. Če pa so ključne značilnosti teh pripovedi in sledi, ki jih puščajo na ozemljih, produkt pestre zgodovine, je treba obliko teh pripovedi razumeti tudi v povezavi s sedanjimi dinamikami in pa z značilnostmi trenutkov, ko so ti spomini izraženi. Da bi razumeli ponovno oživitev čamskega vprašanja v prvih desetletjih 21. stoletja (migracijska in geopolitična vprašanja), je treba upoštevati tudi druge dejavnike. V tem

kontekstu sta na lokalni ravni pomembni ponovna ak-
tivacija čezmejnih odnosov po padcu albanskega ko-
munističnega režima in intenzivna migracija albanskih
delavcev v Grčijo, ki včasih na presenetljive načine pos-
tavljata pod vprašaj spomin v tej obmejni regiji. V tem
prepoznamo, v kolikšni meri je prebivalstvo te majhne
regije še vedno prepredeno s silnicami napetosti, ki loču-
jejo različne kategorije prebivalcev. Ta realnost je bila na
preizkušnji ob množični migraciji albanskih državljanov
v Grčijo, ki je pripomogla, da so se posodobili različni
identifikacijski registri, ki jih prevladujoči diskurz naci-
onalnih držav od povojnega obdobja ni v celoti izbrisal.
Ta proces se je odvil skozi soočenje aktualnosti čezmej-
nih odnosov s trajno prisotnimi konfliktnimi spomini.
Obenem pa na oživitev čezmejnih odnosov danes vpli-
va vračanje meddržavnega spora o zgodovinski legiti-
mnosti te meje na diplomatski dnevni red, zaradi česar
je včasih težko izvajati terensko delo v zvezi s komple-
ksno dinamiko pripadnosti v regiji.

A Visible Sign with a "Quiet Gesture"? The Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation in Berlin
Vidni znak s »tiho gesto«? Dokumentacijski center za razseljenost, izgon in spravo v Berlinu

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Abstract
Starting from the analysis of the permanent exhibition of the newly opened Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, this paper sets out to understand to what extent the Documentation Centre succeeds in offering a new approach to the place of remembrance "Flight and Expulsion of the Germans", within the federal German museum landscape and in the museum landscape around flight and expulsion of Germans. Finally, I suggest that the diverse and contradictory expectations placed on the Documentation Centre results in a permanent exhibition that meets the wishes of the memory milieu (expellees and their descendants) to address their suffering and responds to the government's mandate to anchor the topic in the centre of society (also outside the memory milieu) and to create a space of reconciliation, between memorial, museum, archive, and meeting place; although at the expense of understanding the specificity of the flight and expulsion processes.
Keywords: Germany, forced migrations, violence, memory, exhibition

Izvleček:
Izhajajoč iz analize stalne razstave novoodprtega Dokumentacijskega centra za razseljevanje, izgon, spravo si v prispevku prizadevam osvetliti, v kolikšni meri ta nova institucija uspe ponuditi nov pristop h kraju spomina na »beg in izgon Nemcev« v kontekstu nemških zveznih muzejev ter muzejev, posvečenih begu in izgonu Nemcev. V sklepu ugotovim, da raznolika in protislovna pričakovanja Dokumentacijskega centra rezultirajo v stalni razstavi, ki izpolnjuje želje spominskega miljeja (izgnancev in njihovih potomcev), saj naslavlja njihovo trpljenje in se odziva na nalogo vlade, da temo zasidra v središču družbe (tudi zunaj spominskega miljeja). Na ta način se oblikuje prostor sprave, ki je hkrati spomenik, muzej, arhiv in kraj srečevanja, čeprav to doseže na račun razumevanja specifičnosti procesov bega in izgona.
Ključne besede: Nemčija, prisilne migracije, nasilje, spomin, razstava

On 21 June 2021, the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation (*Dokumentationszentrum, Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung*) was ceremoniously opened in Berlin. That this was out of the ordinary was shown by the prominent line-up at the opening ceremony: despite Coronavirus, the ambassadors of Germany's neighbouring countries to the East, the Federal President Joachim Gauck, members of parliament, the Chairman of the Federation of Expellees (*Bund der Vetriebenen - BdV*), Bernd Fabritius, and the Minister of State for Culture and the Media, Monika Grütters, (CDU) were present and Chancellor Merkel also joined in online.[1]

But it was not only the guest list that reflected the special nature of the occasion; the long and controversial history of the founding of this institution that preceded this opening also made this event special. Minister of State for Culture and the Media, Grütters, recalled in her speech:

> For many years, there were struggles and sometimes bitter disputes about an appropriate form of remembrance, not least between the political camps. And that is why today I am filled with gratitude on today's opening day, that, as the saying goes, a visible sign against flight and expulsion has been set, for which the aged victims and their descendants [...] have waited so long. [Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung 2021]

And she also underlines its necessity:

> With today's opening of the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion and Reconciliation, Germany is facing up to a historical truth that I believe has long been too little recognised: the immeasurable and millionfold suffering as a result of flight and expulsion in and after the Second World War unleashed by Germany. It is a truth that is unwieldy and politically uncomfortable and that for a long time had no place in col-

lective memory and remembrance. [Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung 2021]

A little later, Chancellor Merkel, in her address announced: "Today's opening of the Documentation Centre marks a new chapter in our politics of remembrance" (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 2021).

On the basis of these assertive statements by politicians, and from a political science point of view, I would like to devote this article to the question of the extent to which the newly established Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation actually offers a new approach to the site of remembrance (*lieu de mémoire*) "Flight and Expulsion of the Germans"[2] (*Flucht und Vertreibung der Deutschen*), as announced by Chancellor Merkel, and link this to the politically charged and sensitive question: how to remember and exhibit negativity (violence and "immeasurable and millionfold suffering" – as mentioned by Ms Grütters)? Is it possible to remember the suffering experienced by displaced persons without having to fear feeding the spiral of violence that is already a feature of population transfers? Would not forgetting be more appropriate to break the role reversal between victims and perpetrators that marks the history of forced migration (Gerlach 2011; Schwartz 2013, 637–638; Gross 2022)? How to tackle the question of violence, especially since the legality of the expulsions remains unresolved to this day (Schwartz 2013, 624)?[3]

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1   The inauguration took place during the pandemic at a time when meetings were only authorised in very small numbers. The video was live-streamed the same day.

2   *Flucht und Vertreibung* (Flight and Expulsion) is an established formula that refers primarily to a traumatising historical event, when millions of Germans were forced to leave their homelands in the East at the end of WWII (to keep it as general as possible). But the expression also entails in a more metaphorical way a spatial dimension (Lotz 2007, 2) and refers implicitly to the lost homelands in the East and in doing so, to the territorial but also to the cultural losses. It is at once a reference to an event and to a space.

3   In his conclusion, Michael Schwartz (2013, 624) remarks, "the legality of the expulsion of the Germans in 1945 remains an unresolved issue to this day". He also points at "the ambiguous position of international law with regard to 'population transfers' as the *ultima ratio* in cases of intractable conflicts". He highlights the contradictions of attitudes towards forced migrations yesterday and today, but also the fact that forced migrations do not necessarily al-

Historically, forced migrations such as the German "flight and expulsion" belong both to the history of migration (population movements) and to the history of mass violence.[4] They are also characterised by their proximity to genocide from which, however, they are categorically to be differentiated (Mann 2005, 7–8; Ther 2011; 8–9, Schwartz 2013, 2–3; Bazin Perron 2018, 17–18). These three thematic complexes which all (have) produced negativity, albeit to a different extent, are thematised in different institutions whose histories, aims and exhibition practices differ from one another: monuments and memorials, contemporary history museums, local and regional history or ethnographic museums, documentation, or memorial sites, etc. All follow the same functions which are conventionally patrimonialisation and identity building (Poulot 2009, 4) but also political and historical education, democratic self-assurance, acknowledging crimes, fighting against oblivion, repression, and trivialisation and, finally, honouring the victims (Wagner 2022, 12). However, they weight them differently and have different ways of handling the relations between negativity, remembrance, and knowledge, proposing different answers to the questions formulated by Sophie Wahnich: "what traces does (this) negativity leave that could find a place in a museum?" "How can they [those traces] be treated?" and "What do they imply in terms of the process of recognition?" (Wahnich 2017, 119).

Monuments and memorials first and foremost aim at patrimonialising the violence, mostly through an aesthetic form that thematises it in an indirect way (Koselleck 2002, 31–32), honouring the victims and maintaining both in national memory. Their mourning function takes precedence over the transmission of knowledge. For museums the weighting is the other way round. These institutions usually find it difficult to deal with negativity, which is contrary to their heritage function, generally understood to be to generating positive identification. History and ethnographic museums usually cover a longer period of time (exceeding the sole violent episode) and have a strong identity component. They primarily target knowledge and education (historical as well as political), violence being mediated through museal staging schemes and narration. Documentation centres[5] and memorial sites combine aspects of both; they have a salient memorial aspect, usually linked to the task of patrimonialising sites/places where (mostly Nazi) crimes have been committed, and at the same time, they aim at documenting the latter (diffusing knowledge) through the preservation of traces. Here, violence is the most unmediated.

The positioning of the Documentation Centre in this field appears to be, if not ambiguous, then at least complex. Not only does it have to position itself in relation to the numerous museum-type institutions, scattered over the whole of Germany, that already exist in the very crowded field linked to "flight and expulsion": the hundreds of small *Heimatstuben* (Local history rooms), *Heimatmuseen* (local history museums) (Eisler 2015), and medium-size museums dedicated to the lost homelands, villages, cities and regions, the oldest of which date back

ways originate from autocratic regimes and their dictatorial leaders, but must be understood as a phenomenon of modernity and are not alien even to democracies, that the flight and expulsion of the Germans cannot be explained without Nazi rule and violence, but that there were also other reasons that went further back in time. He underlines the importance of the economic redistribution and also the interaction and entanglement of different deportations.

4   Christian Gerlach defines mass violence as "widespread physical violence against non-combatants, that is outside of immediate fighting between military or paramilitary personnel. Mass violence includes killings, but also forced removal or expulsion, enforced hunger or undersupply, forced labor, collective rape, strategic bombing, and excessive imprisonment – for many strings connect these to outright murder and these should not be severed analytically" (Gerlach 2010, 1; also Semelin (2000, 143–145)).

5   The term Documentation Centre is specific to the German context. It is often used for memorial sites (mostly former Nazi-concentration camps, but not only) where the history of National-Socialism is documented in an authentic place, to which elements of information and documentation are added in order to make the site decipherable for future generations.

to the 1950s,[6] and to the dozens of more professionalised and institutionalised "§96 regional museums"[7] dedicated to wider areas of expulsion (Vertreibungsgebiete) like Silesia, Eastern Prussia, and Western Prussia, and to the settlement areas of Germans from Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, of Transylvanian Saxon, of Danube Swabian, of Russian-German, etc., which display historical, as well as cultural and ethnographic, material, that have been created or expanded in the last decades (Perron 2016). The Documentation Centre must also position itself in the more general museal and memorial landscape of the Federal republic.

The term "Documentation Centre", which was chosen by the federal government instead of "museum" or "memorial" to name the new institution, deserves a closer look. According to the director, Gundula Bavendamm, its mandate goes well beyond creating an exhibition (Möck 2021). Thus, choosing this name is first and foremost a way to stress the educational and research goals of the institution, which is presented as "a unique place of learning and remembrance".[8] Yet, this denomination has several further implications in the realm of memory politics, like the fact that it strongly echoes the neighbouring Topography of Terror Documentation Centre, (*Dokumentationszentrum Topographie des Ter-*

rors),[9] one of the most influential[10] memory sites linked to the Nazi Regime. In fact, in Germany this term is mainly used by institutions dedicated to the documentation of the crimes of both totalitarianism of the twentieth century on German soil, that were created in the end of the 1980s and in the 1990s, a time the exhibitions dedicated to the national-socialist past started being strongly criticised for their praxis of "reducing the NS past to fright and repugnance without knowledge basis" (Knigge 2002, 384) and where there was a wish to get rid of the heavily ideologised memorial practice of the GDR in the new Länder. At the time and based on the *Beutelsbach Consensus*[11] which was achieved a decade earlier in the realm of political education, there was an attempt to move away from emotionalising exhibition practices that aimed less at informing and stimulating critical thinking than at purifying German society from possible remains of national socialist ideology.

In fact, the "Documentation Centre" principle, which is born out of the museography of national socialist crimes, hints at a particular way of exhibiting violence marked by a specific equilibrium between narration and objects. It implies a specific way of conceiving the exhibitions of institutions dedicated to violent episodes, following a documentational principle (*dokumentierendes Prinzip*) (Knigge 2002, 384–387; Wagner 2022, 11–12) which has been developed in opposition to narrative presentations. If a narrative can be defined as "a chronological-semantic entity preceding the exhibits, which regulates the arrangement of the exhibits in the

6 If the form of the *Heimatstube/Heimatmuseum* dates back to the late nineteenth century, after World War II the ones dedicated to the lost homelands in the East were a new phenomenon. They were set up by the refugees and expellees (with the active support of their Homeland associations) to mourn the loss, cultivate the memory of the lost homeland, collect cultural artefacts but also everyday objects from those areas, and as a place to meet. Their collections were made of a range of disparate items, sometimes originals, often recreations recalling the flight or the expulsion (Eisler 2011).

7 Those are funded by the *Länder* and the federation by means of the §96 of the law on expellees of 1953, and often display exhibitions that are a mixture of history and ethnography. Their collections are made of historical and cultural objects and artefacts, pieces of art and ethnographic material.

8 As announced on the homepage of its website: "a unique place of learning and remembrance on displacement, expulsion and forced migrations in history and in the present" (Dokumentationszentrum Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung n.d.a).

9 Both memorial institutions lie a few metres away from each other in the very centre of Berlin.

10 The Topography of Terror Documentation Centre initiated what can be considered one of the most important memorial civic initiatives that took place in Berlin at the end of the 1980s. It was dedicated to securing the traces of the headquarters of the Gestapo and the SS and of the *Reichsicherheitshauptamt* on the area of Prinz Albrecht Strasse, where they were located. It was transformed it into a site dedicated to documenting the perpetrators' side of the national socialist terror regime (Wüstenberg 2020).

11 The main of the three points of the *Beutelsbach consensus* was "a prohibition against overwhelming the pupil" (Landeszentrale für politische Bildung n.d.).

sense of a meta-message" (Knigge 2002, 385), the idea behind the documentational principle is to avoid imposing such a (potentially ideologically loaded) meta-message, and more so, a judgment for the visitor, by following a "quasi forensic" approach (Wagner 2022, 11), in which objects, documents and traces are conceived of as testimonies (of the crime). This form of exhibition puts the visitors in an active position. They are offered "the possibility to form their own opinion about history by being presented with an exhibits landscape open to multiple perspectives and as large interpretations as possible" (p. 12). The approach relies on the belief in the aura of objects which are not only treated as visual aids to illustrate the narrative, but as "documentary evidence of the criminal action" (Wagner 2022, 12; Knigge 2002, 378–379). As such they serve to prevent against negationist tendencies in society. The "documentation principle" is usually used on authentic sites of violence - like camps for example – (documenting the side of the victims) or on sites that are intimately connected to the perpetration of violence (documenting the side of the perpetrators) – like the Central commandment of the Gestapo, the SS, at the Topography of Terror Documentation Centre in Berlin. Using this denomination is thus a way to inscribe the memory of "flight and expulsion" in the nexus of the commemoration practices of genocide and mass crimes, and can also be understood as a reaction to the fact that "flight and expulsion" had been kept out of the official federal Memorial Conception (*Gedenkstättenkonzeption*)[12] adopted by the Bundestag in 1999 (Unterrichtung durch die Bundesregierung: Konzeption der künftigen Gedenkstättenförderung des Bundes und Bericht der Bundesregierung über die Beteiligung des Bundes an Gedenkstätten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland) and of its Update (*Fortschreibung*) adopted in 2008 (Unter-

12 The *Gedenkstättenkonzeption* is a central document dedicated to the politics of history and memory of the unified FRG, adopted by the Bundestag in 1999, that recognised the federal responsibility for the legacies and traces of the sites of terror of the Nazi regime and the need for a federal financing of those - especially of the ones located in the former GDR.

richtung durch den Beauftragten der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien: Fortschreibung der Gedenkstättenkonzeption des Bundes; Verantwortung wahrnehmen, Aufarbeitung verstärken, Gedenken vertiefen).

As Gundula Bavendamm explains:

Well, I think we are just filling a gap on the national level, [...] until recently, [...] such a place of remembrance, whose founding idea revolved around the topic of the flight and expulsion of the Germans, did not exist. In this respect, we are definitely on the same level as the Topography of Terror, as the Memorial to the Murdered Jews, and in the future perhaps as the Exile Museum diagonally opposite to us at the Anhalter Bahnhof [...] and we see ourselves in this circle of institutions that refer in very different ways to the deep ambivalences of contemporary German history and illuminate the different aspects that are part of it. I think we can say quite confidently that this is how we were founded, that we are now part of it. And from our perspective, with our founding mission, we want to keep this topic alive. [Möck 2021]

Drawing on the reflections on the musealisation of negative pasts (Knigge 2002; Koselleck 2002; Becker and Debary 2012; Bechtel and Jurgenson 2016; Wahnich 2011; 2017; Wagner 2022), I will now examine to what extent the "documentation principle", as described above, is appropriate for the musealisation of "flight and expulsion" and used in the new institution. In doing this I will first consider the political dimensions of the announced mode of exhibition (documenting the crime, preventing negationist tendencies and oblivion) by looking at the missions assigned to the Documentation Centre. I will then examine whether this form of exhibition is appropriate for an institution located on a site that has only a very weak direct historical connection with what it is documenting. I will thus investigate whether and with what means a public institution like the Documentation Cen-

tre exhibits the violence and suffering/negativity linked to displacement and expulsion, but also which sufferings are, or rather can be, exhibited. With what traces, respectively objects, does the exhibition work? What is the status given to the collection and the objects displayed and how do they relate to the narrative? And finally, I will question what goal a documentation centre dedicated to "flight and expulsion" of Germans can have in Germany today?

The Mission of the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation: Squaring the Circle

As stressed by minister Monika Grütters during the opening, the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, and Reconciliation is the result of decades of bitter disputes. The initiative goes back to the newly elected President of the Federation of expellees Erika Steinbach,[13] when she expressed the wish in 1999 to "create in Berlin a 'Centre of the 15 million'"[14] ('Wir brauchen in Berlin ein "Zentrum der 15 Millionen": Ein weißer Fleck muß aufgearbeitet werden' 1999, 5) which became one year later, on 6 September 2000, the Foundation Centre against Expulsions (*Stiftung Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen*).[15] In Steinbach's opinion, "Germany need[ed ...] for this dramatic and incisive part of pan-German history a central information, documentation, archival and meeting site in Berlin, with permanent and changing exhibitions, about the way of sorrow of the 15 million victims

of expulsion" ('Wir brauchen in Berlin ein "Zentrum der 15 Millionen": Ein weißer Fleck muß aufgearbeitet werden'1999, 5).[16]

At the time, the initiative was welcomed by politicians first and foremost of the conservative CDU/CSU in power, but also by some SPD MPs of the Bundestag (such as Peter Glotz).[17] It happened against the backdrop of an increased focus on the German victims of World War II in public debates and a discourse about the lack of national recognition of their sufferings in German national memory in the media, but also among writers and essayists (Rauschenbach 2008, 180). In the context of the approaching eastern enlargement of the EU, however, the activities of Federation of expellees and its Foundation Centre against expulsions were closely followed by Germany's eastern neighbours (the expelling countries). They soon took a highly contentious turn and started seriously threatening the government's commitment to pacifying

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13 Erika Steinbach, who was the head of the federation of expellees (*Bund der Vertriebenen – BdV*) from 1998 to 2014, was also a member of the conservative wing of the CDU (Christian Democratic Union), and an MP at the Bundestag between 1990 and 2017 when she resigned from the CDU fraction. After 2017 she did not run anymore but supported the AfD in the federal elections.

14 A provocative way of calling the BdV's project because of the implicit reference to the six millions Jews that were killed by the Nazi (Dakowska 2003) which was soon abandoned for the more neutral Foundation Centre against Expulsions.

15 A name that was less polemic for an institution whose creation can be seen as a reaction to the adoption by the Bundestag of a resolution on the creation of a central memorial to the murdered European Jews (called *Holocaust Mahnmal*) on 24 June 1999.

16 Motion adopted by the Federal executive board and the Praesidium of the Federation of expellees on 20 March 1999 ('Wir brauchen in Berlin ein "Zentrum der 15 Millionen": Ein weißer Fleck muß aufgearbeitet werden' 1999, 5). In fact, Steinbach reactivated a claim made a decade earlier by Hartmut Koschyk, the Secretary general of the BdV, to transform the Berlin memorial to "Flight and expulsion" into a "Central memorial to the remembrance of the 14 million victims of the flights and expulsions ... where more than 2 million people died", as well as to commemorate "the unicity of the crime against humanity". If Koschyk did not specify at the time how this transformation should occur and what it concretely meant, he nevertheless wanted to add to this central memorial the creation of a commission of historians which was supposed "to deal with the reappraisal of the expulsions" ('Koschyk fordert zentrale Gedenkstätte' 1990, 2).
Apart from the fact that there had already been such an officially appointed commission, headed by the historian Theodor Schieder, that had published a series of volumes of documentation about the crimes of expulsions (Beer 1998), this statement is not only highly problematic because of the qualification of expulsion as a unique crime against humanity which puts it on a level with the Holocaust – a rhetoric typical of the Expellees associations – but also in in the numbers cited. (About the numbers see the very precise counting by Hahn and Hahn (2010, 698–705).)

17 Whereas the first ones claimed it was necessary to remedy a "blind spot" of history, an old anthem of the federation of expellees and of Steinbachs, the social democrats insist more on the disinterest, the cold heartedness and lack of empathy of the leftists towards the Expellees and their sufferings. Cf. ,Rede vom Bundesinnenminister Otto Schily, am 29 Mai 1999 im Berliner Dom' (1999).

the bilateral relations with the East, especially with Poland and the Czech Republic (Dakowska 2007). What was at stake as well in the domestic debates and in the disputes with the eastern neighbours was how to weight and to put in relation the commemoration of the victims of the German National Socialist terror regime to the German victims of the Second World War (Salzborn 2003, 1124). The question was whether the recognition and the place given to the German sufferings linked to the expulsions in German official commemorations would lead to a "completion or [to] a revision of history" (Assmann 2007, 11; see also Hahn and Hahn (2008, 39–40)).

Hoping to put an end to the polemics (Perron 2015) and silence the more or less openly revisionist stances[18] of the Federation of Expellees, the German government (the grand coalition CDU/CSU-SPD), under the auspices of the CDU/CSU, took over the project in 2008,[19] initiating the creation by the Bundestag of a dependent Foundation placed under the control of the Foundation *Deutsches Historisches Museum*.[20] The purpose of this new institution, which was a hundred percent a creation of the German federation and as such also funded to a hundred percent by the federation,[21] was " – in the spirit of reconciliation – to keep alive the remem-

brance and commemoration of flight and expulsion in the 20th century in the historical context of the Second World War and of the National Socialist expansion and extermination policies and their consequences."[22]

These fights over the politics of history impacted the conception[23] and the legal purpose of the Foundation[24] drafted by the federal government in 2008. It laid down a decidedly complex and contradictory task, that is formulated unusually precisely and directly.[25] On the one hand, the remembrance policy dimension is very clear. It is a matter of setting a "visible sign" in Berlin, in a time marked by the disappearance of the generation of witnesses; in other words, of transforming a communicational memory into a cultural memory – to use Jan and Aleida Assmann's terms – in order to meet the political demands of the associations of expellees to commemorate the sufferings endured in the newly reclaimed capital and more so, in the core of the commemoration landscape of unified Germany. On the other hand, however, the Bundestag

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18 As shown by the resentful comments in the Visitor's Book of the exhibition *Erzwungene Wege*, that was opened in August 2006 in the Berlin Kronprinzenpalais, organised by Steinbach's Stiftung Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen (Assmann 2007, 11).

19 The intent to create a "visible sign" in Berlin was laid down in the Coalition contract in 2005.

20 On December 21, the Bundestag adopted a law establishing a Deutsches Historisches Museum Foundation, in which the creation of a dependent *Stiftung Flucht Vertreibung Versöhnung*, was mentioned in Paragraph 2. The supporting organisation of the Documentation Centre is the Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, which was established by the German Bundestag in December 2008 as a non-party, dependent foundation under public law. It is funded by the State Minister for Culture and the Media (Dokumentationszentrum Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung n.d.a).

21 As such it was taken out of the direct control of the Federation of expellees. Very few cultural institutions are mandated and controlled by the Federation since culture lies in the exclusive domain of responsibility of the Länder.

22 See purpose of the Foundation in Section 2, paragraph 16 of the "Law on the establishment of a Foundation 'Deutsches Historisches Museum'" (Beauftragter der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien, 2008)

23 See Dokumentationszentrum Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung (n.d.e).

24 Act on the Establishment of a Foundation "German Historical Museum" of 21 December 2008, Section 2 Independent Foundation "Foundation Flight Expulsion Reconciliation", § 16 Purpose of the Foundation "The purpose of the dependent foundation is – in the spirit of reconciliation – to keep alive the remembrance and commemoration of flight and expulsion in the 20th century in the historical context of the Second World War and of the National Socialist expansion and extermination policies and their consequences" (Bundesamt für Justiz n.d.b).

25 The Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation is to my knowledge the sole German Museum to which politics tells how to tell history as precisely. This scope of intervention from politics in the realm of historiography is the more astonishing for those who remember the controversies that accompanied Chancellor Kohl's initiative to build a House of the History of the FRG (*Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*) in Bonn in the middle of the 1980s). At the time, the sole fact that it was a governmental initiative to build such historical museums was contested (François 1992; Werner, 2016). In the case of the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, and Reconciliation, the political interference goes much further and determines the frame of the historical narration.

raises the claim of working through a complex past and sets a very narrow historical framing, which contradicts the usual narrative of the associations of expellees. The remembrance and commemoration of "flight and expulsion" must take place "in the historical context of the Second World War and the National Socialist policy of expansion and extermination and its consequences" and "in the spirit of reconciliation". And finally, the topic has also "to be anchored in the centre of society", outside of the remembrance milieu and transferred into a publicly accessible memory form.

If the explicit wish expressed by politics for memorialisation of this historical episode is in accordance with the documentation principle, the necessity to fight negationist tendencies or, to use the words of the association of expellees, its "tabooisation", is very questionable (Hahn and Hahn 2010; Beer 2011, 135). Neither are flight and expulsion contested, nor their violence negated. The sufferings and crimes related to this mass violence have been extensively documented by the West German State authorities (Beer 1998) and the episode has always been present in (West-) German politics, historiography, and memory. Further the very tight historical frame laid down in the statuses of the Foundation Flight, Expulsion and Reconciliation by the Federal Government seems to contradict the documentation principle, in that it heavily constrains the scope of interpretation of the historical episode, obliges to a narrative and more so directs this narrative. "Flight and expulsion" must be presented as a consequence of World War II and not – as the federation of expellees and the heads of expellee organisations have done so often – treated as an independent historical event, that happened because of circumstances that were out of the control of the individuals. And indeed, this has been practically implemented on the second floor of the Documentation Centre, dedicated to "the displacement and expulsions of the Germans". The visitor is obliged to start the tour with a module about the "German expansionist policy and the Second World War"

which cannot be sidestepped, before accessing the spaces dedicated to the expulsions and the new post war order.

The Aporias of the Musealisation of the Negative

In order to determine now how concretely this museumification project is located in the German public memory and museum landscape, in which tradition(s) and to which practice of museum representation it belongs, I will start to consider three seemingly very simple questions[26] posed by Reinhard Koselleck (2002, 26) in his reflections on the "forms and traditions of negative memory" which help highlight the complexity of the project.

"Who is to be remembered?" Through this question, Koselleck aimed at reflecting on the aporias of the memorialisation of Nazi crimes to which the newly unified German State had committed itself.[27] Since reunification, an official state-led negative memory culture, that put the Shoah and the crimes committed by Germans in the centre of Germany's national commemorations, had become mainstream (as symbolised by the erection of the memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe and its location in the heart of the new capital in 2005). In this context, Koselleck pleaded among other things for a memorialisation not only of the victims (as the Holocaust memorial does) but also of the crimes and their perpetrators. In fact, Germany's official memory landscape contains institutions dedicated to both: commemorating the victims and documenting the crimes and the perpetratorship of the Germans. Yet, the roles are clear cut. A clear distinction is made between both victims and

26 Who is to be remembered? What is to be remembered? How is it to be remembered?

27 First and foremost, he shows the impossibility of making sense of those crimes. Contrary to previous memorialisation of defeats that turned the dead into heroes and used the negativity for nationalistic positive aims, such as group unity and identification, in this case, according to Koselleck, the remembrance of the suffering cannot be transformed into such a thing as a collective memory nor be used to lay the foundation of a collective identity. Quite the opposite (Koselleck 2002, 24).

perpetrators and commemoration takes place from the univocal perspective of the perpetrator.

Answering Koselleck's second question: "what is to be remembered?", there is no doubt that adding the commemoration of "flight and expulsion" to that negative memory breaks with this univocity and adds a layer of complexity to German official memory. In this case, the group of perpetrators and the group of victims overlap. The challenge thus lies in the question of the compatibility of the memory of suffering and guilt, and in the fact that the victims cannot be commemorated only as such. It is thus not possible to focus solely on the German sufferings.

At the same time, including the numerous other experiences of expulsion does not solve the problem since the juxtaposition of several different cases of forced migrations[28] confers to the Germans a special status in regard to the sheer numbers of German expellees[29] because the narrative underlying this kind of presentation is that the history of the twentieth century in Europe was one of forced migrations[30] driven by the desire to create ethnically homogenous nation-states, of which Nazism was ultimately only the most extreme incarnation. In this respect, commemorating "flight and expulsion" (only) from the victims' point of view leads to a revision of Germany's history by putting into ques-

28 Muslims from the Balkans, Armenians, Turks, Greeks, Jews, Poles, Germans, Finns, Italians etc.

29 This was the narrative behind the exhibition "Erzwungene Wege" that was organised in 2006 in the Kronprinzepalais in Berlin by the *Zentrum gegen Vertreibungen*, the Foundation of the BdV, and this was also the narrative behind the first exhibition "Gewaltmigration Erinnern" that led to a political scandal and to relieving Manfred Kittel, the first director of the Foundation Fight, Expulsion, Reconciliation from his duties by the Foundation Council.

30 This is the title given to the exhibition on the first floor in the *Konzept für die Dauerausstellung, Stiftung Flucht Vertreibung Versöhnung* (Bavendamm et al. 2017), published by the Foundation. This title is not to be found anymore in today's exhibition. The first floor is not named, and the conception of the exhibition has changed from a chronological approach whose aim was "to give an [historical] overview over the enormous and the hitherto unknown extent of forced population displacements of millions of people in the Europe of the long XX century" (p. 14) to a more thematic one, centered around the individual experiences of forced migrations, that includes today's migrations.

tion the exceptionality of the Holocaust. To prevent this, the Foundation Act of the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation refers to the indispensable historical contextualisation, expecting that this would thus prevent the norm of German national memory (the overarching framework of remembrance of guilt as Assmann calls it (2006, 188) that has applied at the latest since the *Historikerstreit*[31]) from being put into question.

Finally, if the way of remembering the victims of "flight and expulsion" not only as victims is a moral challenge and a challenge to national memory culture, the remembrance of the perpetrators and the criminal dimension of "flight and expulsion" are challenges to knowledge and understanding (Piotr Cywinski, quoted in Wahnich 2011, 59). Indeed, a sole focus on the victims does not permit grasping historical events in their full dimension. To be able to ask the historically essential questions, to understand the causal chains to give the moral commandment of "never again" (which is at the origin of the efforts of patrimonialisation of the negative – Wahnich (2011, 48)) a concrete content, one has to bring to light the perpetrators' side. But the remembrance of the perpetrators and those responsible for the crimes is as complex from a memory and historical point of view as it is politically delicate. It might stand in the way of the desired reconciliation (and more so since reconciliation is part of the name of the Documentation Centre) with the neighbouring states to the east, which were both perpetrators *and* victims of the Germans.

Coming to the third question, "how is it to be remembered?",[32] a first indication can be found in the location of the Documentation

31 The Historikerstreit was a debate among historians of the present, that took place in 1986/87, about the place of the Shoah in German history and its uniqueness.

32 Koselleck (2002, 29–31) notes in relation to the Holocaust four possible interconnected modes: (1) through a moral judgment (that is necessary but insufficient to understand what happened), (2) though science that completes the moral judgment and helps understanding, (3) though a religious memorial cult (that does not reach everyone), and, because all those three ways are insufficient, he adds (4) the aesthetic one.

Figure 1 : The monumental concrete staircase leading to the first floor (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)
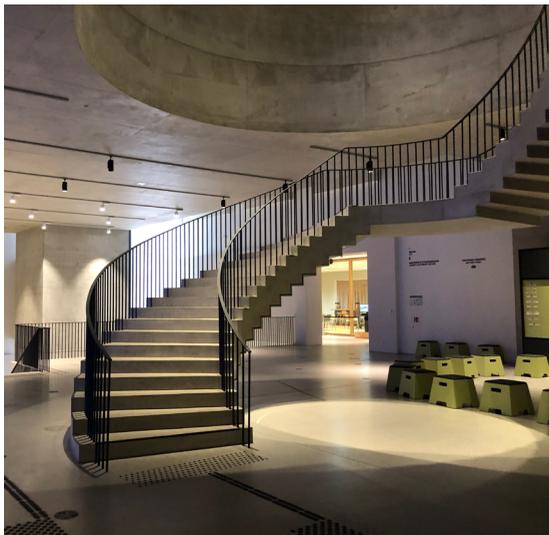
Figure 2: Staircase leading to the second floor (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

Centre in the core of the German capital in the immediate vicinity of the most important NS memorial sites of the Federal Republic, as well as in the monumental (interior) architecture of the *Deutschlandhaus*. Both create a monument which is in itself a "visible sign" and give it, independently of the exhibition's content, the status of a memorial. They constitute a political statement about the legitimacy and status given to "flight and expulsion" in official German commemorations, this official legitimation of the memory of "flight and expulsion" being reinforced by the musealisation mandate and funding by the federation.

We now need to explore how the latter has been implemented, and how the permanent exhibition tackles the above-mentioned contradictions.

Loss as the Guiding Line of the Permanent Exhibition

Given the choice of naming the institution Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, and given the political and cultural discourses about the necessity to commemorate the victims' suffering that had accompanied its creation, one would expect the exhibition to be centred around the violence of that process. Yet, the focus is on the dimension of loss (of home – *Heimat*)[33] – a very abstract notion. Violence and injustice are addressed, but only marginally.

It is noteworthy that even though the director Gundula Bavendamm denies it,[34] this choice brings the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation close to the nexus of museums devoted to migration[35] (a high-

33   Cf. interview conducted by the author with one of the main curators online, on 14 September 2022. See also the homepage of the Documentation Centre, which explains, under the tab "Our topic", "understand what loss means" (Dokumentationszentrum Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung n.d.d).

34   In an interview with Evangelische Zeitung, a protestant weekly magazine, she says "we do not see ourselves as a new variety of a migration museum" (Philippi 2021).

35   The curators of the main exhibition (interviewed by the author in December 2021 and in September 2022) admit that the arrival of hundreds of thousands of refugees in Ger-

ly topical theme in a Germany that increasingly sees itself as a post-migration society). As the curators explain,[36] migrations were the elephant in the room at the time the permanent exhibition was drafted, the time of the massive arrival of refugees on German soil in the mid 2010s. Migrations as a topic was pervasive in German society and the historical parallelism with flight and expulsion after World War II was a frequent trope in German media and culture (Perron 2021). To gain some credibility, the Documentation Centre could not avoid the topic.

As a result, the universal dimensions of the experience of migrating were included in the exhibition on the first floor, which was initially thought to be dedicated to the European history of forced migrations.[37] Aspects such as Nations and Nationalism but also War and Violence, Rights and Responsibility, Loss and New Beginnings, Routes and Camps, Memory and Controversy are treated as the main stations of an open tour. However, numerous references to present migrations are to be found, in the texts as well as in the objects displayed. An orange life jacket used for crossing the Mediterranean, a damaged smartphone of a Syrian refugee, a reference to the Dublin III regulations of the EU, figures of the world-wide number of refugees in 2019, the description of current asylum procedures in Germany, refugee law and refugee aid, etc. The parallelism drawn with "flight and expulsion" is reinforced by the fact that some of these objects of today's refugees that are displayed replicate

Figure 3: Key to a lost home in Northern Cyprus, shown in the first floor of the exhibition
(photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

Figure 4: The life jacket of a migrant that crossed the Mediterranean (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

the iconic objects of "flight and expulsion" with which they are mixed: a refugee agency kitchen set, a key to a lost home, a rucksack, ration/cash cards, images of refugee camps… pointing to the universal aspects of this experience.

The museumisation of loss raised complex questions, starting with the fact that it may seem paradoxical and challenging to make the loss present by means of material artefacts. As mentioned above, on the first floor, loss is initially staged as one of the fundamental experiences of refugees. Here, the universal dimension is first brought to the fore through the filmed testimony of nine people. Three of them are portrayed

many in 2015 gave the exhibition a new conceptual thrust. Museums dedicated to migrations are very much up and coming in these years. Before 2015 the projects were mainly local and the exhibitions temporary. Afterwards, some bigger institutions like the *Deutsches Auswandererhaus* dedicated new exhibitions to the subject. Projects like the DOMID in Cologne, and the Exile Museum in Berlin appeared, and numerous exhibitions dedicated to "flight and expulsion" or the German expellees were prolonged to encompass the theme of migrations (Fuchs and Kolb 2017, 291).

36   Interviews conducted by the author with two of the main curators in December 2021 and September 2022.

37   And more so the fact that on the website the overall title of the exhibition is "the century of flight", flight being something different than expulsion (Dokumentationszentrum Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung n.d.b)!

Figure 5: In the area of 'Loss and new beginnings' on the first floor of the permanent exhibition, life-size portraits of people who fled and settled in Germany are shown. Their memories can be heard in the audio guide (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

almost life-size. They have different regions of origin (Vietnam, former Yugoslavia and the former German Reich and settlement areas). In the short audio sequences that accompany the pictures, the visitor discovers that what links these seemingly very different people is the fact that they all had to leave their homeland involuntarily and that they settled in Germany.

This individualising approach is a conscious choice of the curators. It runs through the entire exhibition (Möck 2021) and is taken up again in the second part (2nd floor),[38] which deals specifically with the "flight and expulsion" of the Ger-

mans.[39] As the director explains, the idea was to make history become concrete through human destinies, not to present one history but "a multitude of histories, as diverse and complex as the subject", depending on the age at which flight and expulsion have been experienced, whether male or female, from where to where, if one has experienced violence or not, and how integration functioned (Möck 2021). This diversity is encapsulated in the numerous green biography flaps that accompany each historical episode and exposed object on the second floor. Once

38   In contrast to the first floor, the second floor works in a chronological way, starting with the "German Expansion policy and World War II".

39   This approach is echoing the one of the "Information centre under the field of stelae" that is underneath the neighbouring Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe, where after a scientific introduction the exhibition works with biographical perspectives.

Figure 6: A biography Flap dedicated to the Ukrainian Family Kocur, which was sent to forced labour to Germany after the German occupation of Eastern Poland in 1941. Second floor of the exhibition, panel dedicated to the evacuation of the Eastern front.
(photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)
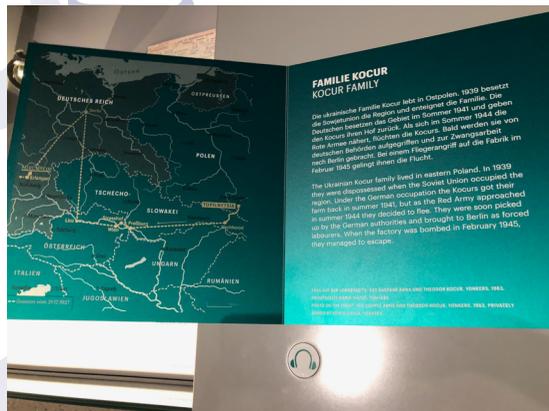
Figure 7: An opened Biography-Flap and the audioguide button on the second floor of the permanent exhibition, illustrating the fate of the Kocur Family
(photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

Figure 8: Green biographical Flap depicting the biography and the itinerary of the Viennese hat maker Paula Laufer
(photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

opened, those outline a short biography and the specific trajectory of one individual. They comprise a photograph of that person or family, a map showing where the person came from, sometimes his or her route and a very short text notice, all of which is further detailed in the audio-guide linked to each biography flap.

This individual approach creates a pluralisation of perspectives that makes it possible to reflect the complexity and multi-layeredness of the topic as intended by the curators. More than often, it works with testimonials collected in the 2010s, thus from individuals who were very young at the time. If this children's perspective, which is dominant in the exhibition, is effective in denouncing forced migrations (which is the very purpose of the Documentation Centre) by pointing to its injustice and the sufferings it causes, this approach, however, also nourishes the impression of "absolute victimhood" (Chu 2022, 592), due to the innocence of the witnesses/victims and the fact that their family histories in the interwar and war period (such as the relations to or involvement in the third Reich, its administration, its military and/or police forces and even less so in possible mass violence committed by the Nazis) are seldom or only very vaguely mentioned. As Winson Chu argues, there is a "segregation of macrolevel collec-

tive guilt from microlevel victimization", which echoes Harald Welzer's, Sabine Moller's and Karoline Tschuggnall's findings about the gap between historical knowledge and successful reconnaissance of German guilt and perpetratorship among young Germans on the one hand, and on the other hand its paradoxical correlation with representations of the family past that are mostly that of the moral integrity of grandparents portrayed as victims or heroes (Welzer et al. 2002, 53).[40]

In addition, choosing an individual approach can also be explained by the fact that loss is easier to grasp at the individual level than at the group level, where it is much more difficult to clearly define who has lost what. For what exactly this "loss of home" is, what belonged to whom and who belonged where, is more ambiguous and politically much more controversial at the group level, as Eva and Hans Henning Hahn (2018, 37) have stressed. Contentious collective aspects of loss (such as territorial loss or the border issues that point to the theme of injustice) and their collective relevance (for the nation) are present in the exhibition, but they are only addressed indirectly (e.g. through maps, through political posters of the 1950s or through the recording of later Bundestag debates) in the last part of the exhibition. Yet, even on the individual level the questions of property loss and transfer are only touched. As Chu (2002, 591) observes, "more could have been done in the exhibition with how German and 'Volksdeutsche' property, often itself 'aryanized', played a role in the expulsions on a national and local level". Thus, "the process character" and the mutual in-

fluence between mass violence and social crisis, a very central element to the understanding mass violence such as population displacements (Gerlach 2011, 265), are missing.

But maybe the most striking feature of the permanent exhibition of the Documentation Centre is that it is not about cultural loss, as one could have expected. It is noteworthy that in contrast to the state museums financed by the federal and state governments under so-called *Kulturparagraf* of the Federal Expellees Act (§96 BFVG – *Bundesvertriebenengesetz*),[41] the Documentation Centre is not dedicated to presenting the historical East German provinces or the settlement areas of the Germans in Eastern Europe. According to the curators, this was consciously avoided.[42] If no culturally outstanding artefacts are exhibited (such as can be found in the pre-existing §96 Regional Museums[43] and expellees *Heimatstuben* and museums) which testify to the cultural accomplishments of the Germans in their respective settlement areas and by which one could measure the loss; and if no attempt is made to display the history of the lost territories nor of the very diverse territories of settlement of German minorities in the east, it might also be because cultural loss has been a central trope in the German discourse about the East and more so in expellees associations' discourses and practices (Lotz 2007). Loss was instrumentalised to legitimise discourses about historical injustice and the non-recognition of the new borders in the interwar period until the

40 In this respect an analysis of the testimonies collected in the frame of the contemporary witness project Zeitzeugenproject of the Documentation Centre would be of interest. This *Zeitzeugenarchive* (collection of personal reports about the flight) goes hand in hand with the exhibition. "Contemporary witnesses" are supposed to "convey particularly vividly how forced migrations affect the individual" (Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung 2018, 3–4) as well as families and societies. Their testimonies provided the content of the green biography flaps. However, all of them must have been children at the time of flight and expulsion. The victimhood bias might thus have been reinforced.

41 Preserving "the cultural assets of the expellee territories in the awareness of the expellees and refugees, of the German people as a whole and of foreign countries …" is the official reason for the federal funding via the §96 BFVG (Weber 2012). This funding dates back to 1953 and is financing the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation but also the numerous other regional museums dedicated to "the lost territories of the Reich and to the territories of expulsion" (Bundesamt für Justiz n.d.a.).

42 Interview conducted by the author with one of the main curators of the permanent exhibition inDecember 2021.

43 Such as the Silesian Museum in Görlitz, the Pomeranian State Museum in Greifswald or the East Prussian State Museum in Lüneburg, the Danube-Swabian Central Museum in Ulm, the Transylvanian-Saxon Museum in Gundelsheim and many others.

mid-1950's.[44] It was thus important to distance the new institution from this kind of discourse and from a museography (that of *Heimatstuben* and other museum institutions of the expellees) that was based since the 1950s on the attempt of reconstructing the lost homeland, offering idealised and biased visions of the latter, free of crisis or conflicts (Eisler 2011; Beer, Fendl, and Hampe 2012, 7–15; Reinsch et al. 2023, 233). It was also a way to prevent any competition with the §96 Regional Museums dedicated to the lost German Reichs- and settlement areas, even though the existence of the latter was never mentioned in official discourses about the necessity to commemorate "flight and expulsion". Some of them had expressed the concern that their funding might be reduced after the Foundation Flight, Expulsion, Reconciliation was added to the list of the §96 BVFG funded institutions.

The Collection: Objects as Carriers of Histories and of Negativity

To analyse further the approach to loss of the Documentation Centre, it is necessary to look both at the collection and at the way the objects that comprise it are dealt with, as well as at the exhibition practice. In the first place it is important to recall that the Documentation Centre, with its library, its testimony archive and its room of stillness understands itself as something more than a museum in the classical sense of the word, "a unique place of learning and remembrance" as announced on the website (Dokumentationszentrum Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung n.d.c). The main focus of the Documentation Centre is on the exhibition and no

44 Here it is important to note that the trope of the cultural loss originates well before the expulsions that followed World War II, in the defeat of the First World War and the will to regain the lost territories, to "not forget" and to reclaim supposedly lost German heritage (Weger 2015, 388–389). For instance, as shown by Tobias Weger, this was done though the diffusion of well-known visual motifs, like the city hall of Thorn/Torun, the St. Mary's Church in Dazing/Gdansk, etc. that stood in the "lost territories", on post-cards or stamps.

longer on the collection,[45] as the status of the latter shows. In fact, the legislator has not given the Foundation a collection mandate that goes beyond the creation of an exhibition, and there is significantly no planned funding to take care of such a collection. Like many of the §96 Regional Museums that were founded as the result of a political decision, the objects of the permanent exhibition do not originate from a pre-existing collection (as most national museums or local history museums exhibitions do). However, neither were they acquired on the art market, or taken from the holdings of other museums (such as those of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum), nor are they on loan from the federal government, as is the case in the §96 Regional Museums. The exhibits mostly come from private sources and were collected through public appeals for donations from expellees or their descendants over the past ten years (Möck 2021).

As in museums dedicated to migrations, but also to the (Nazi) memorials, the collection is characterised by the fact that most of the objects displayed are everyday things: artefacts, photos, documents, posters, etc. Their value is not the one of masterpieces in the artistic or historical sense, but it derives from their ability to bear witness as a legacy, to tell a story, to be seen as fleeting traces, as a testimony to and a symptom of exile (Alexandre-Garner and Galitzine-Loumpet 2020). These objects are both realia (remains) and relics.[46] Despite their apparent banality, their task is to provide proof and to be able to say something about the "experiential dimension" (Wagner 2022, 11) of forced migrations and its violence to the visitor.

> Accounts of experiences, life stories and objects with a biographical reference illustrate the range of possible experiences and pro-

45 As in many museums of the second modernity (Beier-de Haan 2005, 220–230) to which the §96 Regional Museums belong.

46 Volkhard Knigge writes (2002, 380): "Realia are the basic material of every exhibition. Relics, on the other hand, are not exhibited but recovered, preserved, and presented in special consecration rooms that shield them from any profanation."

Figure 9: The iconic objects of 'Flight and expulsion', like the ladder truck and the chest, are to be seen in the permanent exhibition on the second floor (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

vide an understanding of which experiences can be understood as universal and substantial in the context of forced migrations. [Bavendamm et al., 2017, 25]

Hence, their function is more than the reconstruction of what has been lost. They aim neither at supporting historic reconstructions, as in the §96 Regional Museums, nor to embody an imagined past, as in the *Heimatmuseen*. Their function is, according to the concept of the permanent exhibition, the "presentation of individual fates and the presentation of biographical narrative strands against a general historical background" (Bavendamm et al. 2017, 25). If they speak for themselves through their intrinsic "quality, haptics, aesthetics, aura, authenticity, and emotionality", because of their sheer everydayness as Wagner (2011, 11) argues, their sign content is only fragmentary and needs to be re-contextualised. This happens in two ways: first through the life stories and accounts of experience that complement them (they are briefly touched upon in the attached biography flaps and can be found in more detail in the audio narratives, each of which can be activated). Second, through the historical-scientific narrative that determines the overall narration perspective of the exhibition, and the way in which they are arranged.

A Source Critical Approach: The Disentanglement of the Real and the Relic

It is in the relationship between the objects and the stories that the specificity of the approach of

Figure 10: Projection of shadows of people on the wall behind the showcases that can be made visible when the audio-guides are activated (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

the Documentation Centre (in comparison to the *Heimatmuseum*, the oldest and most widespread form of musealisation of this past) is best understood. At first glance, none of the visual icons of "flight and expulsion" are missing in the Documentation Centre: ladder trucks, keys, fur coats, chests, suitcases, armbands, traditional costumes, etc. are all on display.

Yet their handling differs from that in the *Heimatmuseen*, where they are mostly used as decontextualised symbols. In the Documentation Centre, the curators paid great attention to object histories: the objects' lore, provenance, etc. are stored in object databases and narratives related to these objects are specifically queried and documented. The use of artefacts, images and films in the exhibition is characterised by a source-critical and multi-perspective approach whose goal is, as Volkhard Knigge (2002, 388) writes about the Nazi memorials, the "disentanglement of the realia and the relic through the suspension of respect for the relics in the careful handling of the realia". Here the influence of memorial collecting and exhibition practice of the curators, many of whom had previously worked in Berlin's Memorials, cannot be overlooked. All in all, the exhibition does refrain from using the
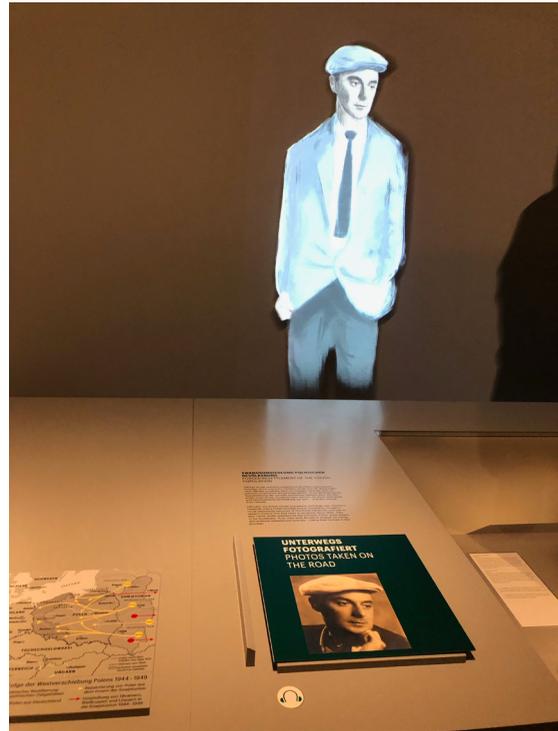
Figure 11: The projection on the wall of a shadow that has transformed itself in a graphic novel type image, inspired by a real photography (to be seen on the green biographical Flap) , of young polish man, who documented the forced resettlement of the polish population with his camera. (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)
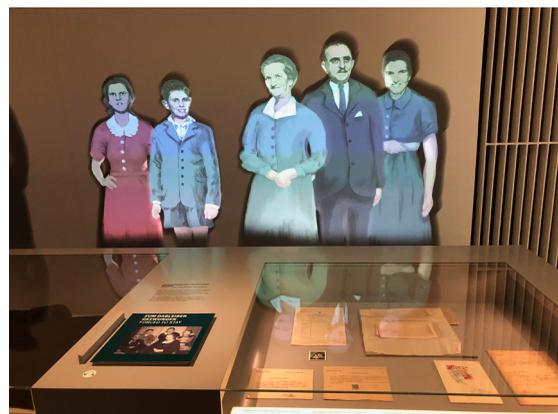
Figure 12: A projection on the wall in the graphic novel style of several members of a German family forced to stay in Poland. The original image is to be seen on the green biographical flap next to the showcase (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

full range of modern exhibition tools and consciously avoids too obvious staging. No emotionalisation effects are sought. The rooms are sober and restrained. They are equipped with simple table showcases and are mainly animated by lighting effects.

Particularly significant in this context are the wall projections of people that enliven the exhibition. Initially, the idea was to evoke the great mass of people who suffered the fate of expulsion by projecting numerous silhouettes behind the showcases. However, this was discarded because of its similarity to Holocaust iconography. The scenographic solution that was ultimately chosen shows the outlines of individual people or small groups that can be made visible through the activation of the audio guides. They are sketched in the style of the popular genre of the graphic novel. The projected images originate from the available and exhibited source material and is intended to be comprehensible. No additions to the images are made. In general, there is no unreflected adoption of photography, as it is the case in many *Heimatstuben* and museums. For example, pictures of the winter escape from East Prussia, which usually stand for "flight and expulsion", are not to be found. The motif of the trek is even critically examined and deconstructed by using iconic example pictures to prove that they show something other than what is usually attributed to them. The fact that the iconography from the flight left far more powerful traces in the collective memory than the one from the expulsion is mentioned and questioned. Photographs are predominantly left in their original format (e.g. as passport photos) and not exhibited larger than life. The reduction to suffering and victims is also avoided, as it is not the primary aim of the exhibition to emotionalise.

A Visible Sign, But With a Quiet Gesture?

In summary, it can be said that the way the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation deals with negativity is strongly influenced by the debates about the means with which to present violence and negativity of the

national socialist (and communist) pasts and the practice of and debates about memorial exhibitions (like the prohibition of overwhelming the visitors), but without adopting their aesthetics.[47] This approach is not least due to the curators' experiences and training with memorial pedagogics and didactics, and to the interim directorship of Uwe Neumarker, the director of the Memorial for the murdered Jews of Europe, at the time the exhibition was drafted (2015/2016) and stands in stark contrast to the monumentality of the architecture and the grand announcements of a "visible sign" by politics. As Gundula Bavendamm, director of the foundation, explains in an interview podcast with the Kulturstiftung der Länder (Möck 2021), in dealing with the themes of suffering and loss, the gesture of her institution is a "quiet gesture, a withdrawn gesture" that makes it possible to remember violence without feeding the spiral of violence that is so typical of population transfers. However, violence and injustice are neither euphemised nor avoided. For it is precisely this conscious renunciation of a striking treatment of suffering and emotionalisation that makes it possible to exhibit and thematise them. This is done directly on the first floor in the areas of "Flight from War", "Cleansing, Deportation and Expulsion", "Sexual Violence" and "Genocidal Violence". But on the one hand these topics are dealt with there in general terms and on the other hand the exhibits are presented by means of a wall of cabinets whose drawers have to be opened, i.e., which are initially concealed. The negative experiences of the German refugees and expellees are in turn clearly mentioned in the audio accounts of contemporary witnesses on the 2nd floor.

In the restraint and care of its permanent exhibition, the Documentation Centre forms a new approach to the memory of "flight and ex-

47 The tradition and museum practice linked to the Holocaust was certainly the most fertile and productive in the realm of reflections on how to exhibit negativity. It had a great influence on the staff of the Documentation Centre, who were trained in it. However, one could point to the lack of reflections on what this specific negative past characterized by displacement/movement would require as a museography.

Figure 13: A wall cabinet dedicated to war and violence on the first floor of the permanent exhibition (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

Figure 14: An opened drawer of the wall cabinet dedicated to sexual violence. In the way of a trigger warning, the drawers have to be opened before acceding to the depiction of violence (photo: Catherine Perron, 2015)

pulsion". With its withdrawn gesture and its treatment of the objects, it in fact comes close to the documentation principle, typical for the exhibitions in the memorials dedicated to the National Socialist crimes in Germany. However, its historically very constraining narrative framework stands in contradiction to it.

This new approach has nevertheless the potential to transfer the topic from German communicative memory to cultural memory and to level the "fissured landscape of memory" in relation to flight and expulsion (to use the words of historians Eva and Hans Henning Hahn (2002)). In this way, the goal of memorialisation and reconciliation, namely that of the Germans with themselves, could be achieved. This said, one must mention that it is much less certain that this Documentation Centre contributes a great deal to the historical understanding of the phenomenon of forced migration in general and German forced migration in particular. The existence of the §96 Regional museums has been completely overlooked in the discussion about the necessity to erect "a visible sign" in Berlin. Of course, their location in Greifswald, Ulm, Görlitz, Lüneburg, etc. does not ensure the same media exposure as the location at the Anhalter Bahnhof in Berlin and their focus is much broader than the sole episode of "flight and ex-

pulsion". However, precisely because they are not focused solely on the flight and expulsion process, and because their approach is rooted in the long-term history of a particular territory with its different population groups, they are in a better position to give an account of the complexity of the process and provide a more detailed understanding of the mechanism that led to the expulsions.

In fact, it is the very idea of a single place in Berlin dedicated to a historical grand narrative about "flight and expulsion" in general that is biased. As historians around Martin Schulze Wessel (2010) had already argued in their counter project to the exhibition in 2010, "flight and expulsion" cannot be grasped outside a precise national, geographical, and historical context. They argue that "History takes place in concrete places" and advocate a topographical narrative principle rooted, for instance, in places like Breslau/Wroclaw, or Usti Nad Labem/Aussig and der Elbe, or Vilius/Wilna/Wilno/Wilne, which "could be used to show exactly how interwoven the numerous migration processes were in the 20th century within a small area" (see also Völkering, 2011). It is at the local level and in the long-term view that the complex histories of ethnic identifications, assignments, coexistence and conflict can be grasped. Thus, at its present lo-

cation and with its current narrative, the Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation is clearly a political project whose first and foremost aim is creating a memorial to satisfy the claims of the associations of expellees. That said, it might obtain social relevance in that its over-generalising approach through addressing the individual experience of loss, permits tying in with the currently highly relevant topic of migrations.

Disclaimer

This contribution is an extended and modified version, based on upgrading of the research, of the article "Negativität ausstellen. Status und Funktion der Objekte und der Sammlung in der ständigen Ausstellung des Dokumentationszentrums Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung", published in German in Natalie Reinsch, Frauke Geyken, Cornelia Eisler, Thomas Overdick eds., *Herkunft, Heimat, Heute. Musealisierung von Heimatstuben und Heimatsammlungen der Flüchtlinge Vertriebenen und Aussiedlerinnen*, Museumsverband Niedersachsen und Bremen e.v., 2023.

All translations into English are mine.

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Summary

Starting from the analysis of the permanent exhibition of the newly opened Documentation Centre for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, this paper sets out to understand to what extent the Documentation Centre succeeds in offering a new approach to the place of remembrance "Flight and Expulsion of the Germans" and to situate it both in the federal German museum landscape and in the museum landscape around flight and expulsion (between the discontinued model *Heimatmuseum* and the newly founded §96 *Landesmuseen*).

It does so by examining the role of objects of the collection of the Documentation Centre, whose name already indicates a distancing from the classical museum - be it historical or ethnological. The analysis focusses on the special challenges that have arisen in the creation of the collection on the topic of forced migration: Can the loss be made visible? Can and should the experience of violence be portrayed? And if so, by what means and to what end? What status do the exhibited objects have and how are they incorporated into the exhibition narrative?

I suggest that the diverse and contradictory expectations placed on the Documentation Centre results in a permanent exhibition that meets the wishes of the memory milieu (expellees and their descendants) to address their suffering and responds to the government's mandate to anchor the topic in the centre of society (also outside the memory milieu) and to create a space of reconciliation between memorial, museum, archive, and meeting place. However, this comes at the expense of understanding the specificity of the German flight and expulsion processes.

Povzetek

Izhajajoč iz analize stalne razstave novoodprtega Dokumentacijskega centra za razseljevanje, izgon, spravo si v prispevku prizadevam razumeti, v kolikšni meri ta nova institucija uspe ponuditi nov pristop h kraju spomina na »beg in izgon Nemcev« in ga umestiti tako v kontekst nemških zveznih muzejev kot muzejev, posvečenih begu in izgonu (med ukinjenim modelom *Heimatmuseum* in novoustanovljenim §96 *Landesmuseen*). Analiziram vloge predmetov zbirke Dokumentacijskega centra, katerega že ime nakazuje distanciranje od klasičnega muzeja – naj bo zgodovinskega ali etnološkega. Analiza se osredotoča na posebne izzive, ki so se pojavili pri nastajanju zbirke na temo prisilnih migracij: Ali je mogoče izgubo narediti vidno? Ali je mogoče in ali je treba prikazati izkušnjo nasilja? In če da, na kakšen način in s kakšnim namenom? Kakšen status imajo razstavljeni predmeti in kako so vključeni v razstavno pripoved? V sklepu ugotovim, da raznolika in protislovna pričakovanja Dokumentacijskega centra rezultirajo v stalni razstavi, ki izpolnjuje želje spominskega miljeja (izgnancev in njihovih potomcev), saj naslavlja njihovo trpljenje in se odziva na nalogo vlade, da to temo zasidra v središču družbe (tudi zunaj spominskega miljeja) ter tako ustvari prostor sprave, ki je hkrati spomenik, muzej, arhiv in prostor srečevanja. A to gre na račun razumevanja specifičnosti procesov bega in izgona Nemcev.

Everyday Life in the Borderland Area Between Yugoslavia and Italy After WWII, the Case of Northern Istria
Vsakdanje življenje v obmejnem prostoru med Jugoslavijo in Italijo po drugi svetovni vojni, primer severne Istre

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Abstract:
The article studies the effects that the new border had on the territory. The main question is how the abrupt absence in a territory caused by the creation of a new state border influenced its inhabitants. The focus will be on the case of the formation of the Yugoslav-Italian border after the end of World War II. My interest is to present how the process of 'bordering' affected the studied territory. The aim is to study how the process of bordering and the new border reality after the end of World War II, but especially after 1954, affected the population, its everyday life and economic and social interactions. The studied territory presents an interesting case of adaptation to the new political circumstances (with new states and state borders) affecting the population living near the new border, which did not exist in the past or at least not for almost a hundred and fifty years.

My aim is to research how the past interconnections and relations changed radically and were interrupted after the border was established. The question is how communication, cooperation and the exchange of goods were able to continue when the border caused a strong territorial division.
Keywords: border area after WWII, Yugoslavia, Italy, Istria, everyday life

Izvleček:
Članek preučuje učinke nove meje na ozemlje. Glavno vprašanje raziskuje, kako je nenadna odsotnost na nekem ozemlju zaradi nastanka nove državne meje vplivala na njegove prebivalce. Poudarek bo na primeru oblikovanja jugoslovansko-italijanske meje po koncu druge svetovne vojne. Zanima me, kako je »spreminjanje« oz. proces »obmejevanja« vplival na preučevano ozemlje. Analiziram, kako sta proces razmejevanja in nova mejna realnost po koncu druge svetovne vojne, predvsem pa po letu 1954, vplivala na prebivalstvo, njegovo vsakdanje življenje, ekonomske in socialne interakcije. Preučevano ozemlje predstavlja zanimiv primer prilagajanja novim političnim okoliščinam (z novimi državami in državnimi mejami), ki so vplivale na prebivalstvo ob novi meji, ki je v preteklosti ali vsaj skoraj sto petdeset let ni bilo. Raziskujem, kako so se pretekle medsebojne povezave in odnosi po vzpostavitvi meje korenito spremenili in prekinili. Postavlja se vprašanje, kako so se komunikacija, sodelovanje in izmenjava dobrin obdržali v času (močne) ozemeljske razdeljenosti.
Ključne besede: mejno območje po 2. svetovni vojni, Jugoslavija, Italija, Istra, vsakdanje življenje

Introduction

The article[1] studies the effects that the new border had on the territory. The main question is how the abrupt absence in a territory caused by the creation of a new state border influenced its inhabitants. The focus will be on the case of the formation of the Yugoslav-Italian border after the end of World War II. My interest is to present how the process of 'bordering' affected the studied territory. The process of 'bordering' or marking the borderline is very important, as the two opposing political sides tried to acquire as much territory as they could. Their claims were mostly opposed. However, this process represents only one part, or 'one side' of history. On the 'other side', as the historian Peter Sahlins explains in his book 'Boundaries', from 1989 (in which he primarily studied the case of France and Spain in the Pyrenees), it is important to understand how the negotiation of border 'identity' takes place. It is the capacity of the population living in the border region to modify the status quo of the state frontier, according to their needs and interests (Verginella 2021, 33). Therefore, the decision to take part or declare to be on one or other side of the border depends not only on political centres of power, but also on communities living in the border region (Walter and Verginella 2021, 33).

In the studied ase, the research is going to focus on the border region of Northern Istria (part of Yugoslavia, and Slovenia after 1991), where difficult and lengthy diplomatic debates took place. As has already been said, the aim is to study how the process of bordering and the new border reality after the end of World War II, and especially after 1954, affected the population, its everyday life, and economic and social interactions. The studied territory represents an interesting case of adaptation to new political circumstances (with new states and state bor-

ders), affecting the population living on the new border, which did not exist in the past or at least not for a hundred and fifty years. This was also a common occurrence in other European countries, however, the case of Northern Istria with the focus on everyday life and capability of adjustment has not yet been fully addressed.

In this paper I am interested in studying the history of everyday life, focusing on history from below (people's history), on the daily experiences and survival strategies that people living along the border adopted to cope with the newly emerging political situation. The central question is how the border line (either the temporary demarcation line or the subsequent border), which divided the space both physically and ideologically, affected the local population along the Yugoslav-Italian border in Istria. The focus is on the adaptation to the new realities of life in socialist Yugoslavia. Not only did the political situation change, but family and business ties were severed in a territory that had belonged to one state (Austrian Empire/Austro-Hungary, Kingdom of Italy) since the beginning of the 19th century.

My aim is to research how the past interconnections and relations changed radically and were interrupted after the border was established. The question is how communication, cooperation and the exchange of goods were able to continue when the border caused a strong territorial division.

Methodology

The paper is based on the study and analysis of historical sources dealing with the post-war period in northern Istria and Yugoslavia in general. The central methodological approach consists of oral (history) interviews with people who lived (still live) in the border area. Sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted as part of the research. However, interviews with individuals who had been interviewed as part of other research, but who had also raised topics relevant to the present paper, were also included. It was envisaged that the interviews would be primar-

ily with people who were born in the inter-war period, but in the end most of them were born after the war. Thus, different generations were involved in the research: there were those who witnessed the post-war demarcation processes, but most interviewees were of the generation that experienced the post-war reality and that of the border as children and adolescents (and through their parents' narratives). Interviewing members of different generations is a methodological approach that allows a broader understanding of post-war life in a border region and reveals different perspectives. People who lived on the 'east side' of the border were my main interlocutors, and I questioned them about their experiences living close to the border. As the Slovene anthropologist Polona Sitar has already written, such an approach allows us to see 'through a generational perspective, which, on the one hand, illuminates possible generational discontinuities, and on the other hand, also common understandings' (Sitar 2021, 146). I was particularly interested in the personal experiences of everyday life at the border, people's feelings when crossing the border, and their encounters and impressions when visiting Italy (especially Trieste) and returning home. What visiting a city in another country meant to them, what the purchased goods meant to them and above all how they remember border controls and surveillance.

The website of the project 'My Story from Silence' (Moja zgodba iz tišine 2022) published a story that meaningfully recounts and recalls the moments of crossing the Yugoslav-Italian border. The story tells of a visit to relatives in Rijeka (now Croatia), where the narrator's family from Trieste often went (Moja zgodba iz tišine 2022).[2] It recounts the traumatic experience of a female traveller in the 1980s, a time when the war had been or was supposed to have been long forgotten; a time that followed the conclusion of international and bilateral agreements between Yugoslavia and Italy. Even if the story is very short and represents only a brief encounter it is very

eloquent. The journey to Yugoslavia was one of many undertaken by the narrator. However, on this specific occasion, crossing the border affected her deeply. As her border pass (in Italian *Lasciapassare*, in Slovenian *prepustnica*) was damaged, the border guard stopped the car. After a moment of tension and fear, the officer advised her to get a new pass and let them go. The episode itself did not have a negative outcome, however, crossing the border was always a tense moment.

Given the treaties and the improved relations between the two countries, one would have expected a more 'relaxed' border crossing, but in the case of the above account, as well as in the conversations with my interlocutors, this was not necessarily the case. This narrative shows a multilayered and diverse experience of the *border* and the experience of crossing it.

Bordering, Agreements and Treaties

Before we consider the impact of the new border and the resulting discontinuity on a territory, which was politically, economically and socially interconnected for more than one hundred years, we need to briefly explain the circumstances that led to this reality. The border 'question' in the studied region (wider than just Northern Istria) existed for a long historical period (Marušič 2004; Panjek 2015) during which different political actors (especially the Republic of Venice and the Habsburg Monarchy) manifested their interests in the territory. After the collapse of the Republic of Venice and the transitory period of Austrian and French governance, the territory was assigned to the Habsburgs in 1814. The Austrian crown land named the *Austrian Littoral*,[3] which included the Margraviate of Istria, Gorizia and Gradisca and the Imperial Free City of Trieste was established (Kavrečič 2017; Marušič 2004, 59). The name *Littoral* was a 'strategic' decision made by Vienna to emphasize Trieste's role as a port city. In reality, only a small part of the crown land was on the coast

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2 The project's aim was to collect 'stories from silence' about the experiences of people in the post-war period in Istria, the Karst and Trieste.

3 The name also had other variants: Österreichisch-illyrische Küstenland / Litorale austro-illirico / Avstrijsko-ilirsko primorje

(Marušič 2004, 59). The name was translated into Slovene as *Avstrijsko primorje*, and this is why the region came to be known as *Primorska*. This name is still used today to refer to the western part of Slovenia. On the other hand, the territory in question also acquired the Italian name of *Venezia Giulia*. This was how it was referred to after 1863 by the Italian nationalists who considered this territory to be historically Italian (Kavrečič 2020, 115).[4] This paper will partly present the period following World War I, however, the main focus will be on the period after the end of World War II. After 1918, the region of *Primorska* (the former *Austrian Littoral* and partly *Venezia Giulia*) was subject to political negotiations. As Italy was actively involved in the war and was on the side of 'the winners', the promised territories were assigned to the state. After diplomatic negotiations with the Kingdom of Serbs (also allies), Croats and Slovenes, the territory formally passed to Italy in 1920 (Treaty of Rapallo). The former *Austrian Littoral* officially acquired the name *Venezia Giulia*. *Venezia Giulia*, known in Slovene as *Julijska Krajina* (also *Julijska Benečija*) and *Julian March* in English, became a universally accepted name during the negotitations for border delineation in the period following World War II.

After the end of World War II, the political power positions changed. Post-war Yugoslavia – part of the anti-fascist and anti-nazi alliance during the war – claimed the territories that it believed were unfairly assigned to Italy after World War I. The disputed border in this region was not only the process of bordering between two countries, but also between two opposite political systems.

Negotiating where to draw a demarcation line and reaching a consensus or agreement on the border between all parties involved is a complex process that has taken place in different historical periods and circumstances. The drawing

4   Also, in the context of the irredentist movement: in the Italian perception, especially political, this region represented the 'redemption' of the provinces that had been associated with the long Venetian presence. Its heritage had been used as justification for Italian territorial appetites since the 19th century.

or establishment of demarcation lines and new borders has a profound impact on all aspects of life. In addition to the political relations between the countries or lands involved, it affects the living conditions of people who find themselves in new border contexts, in new realities. When new borders are established, especially in areas that have been the subject of conflict for many years, life changes drastically. New borders also create new relationships and conditions for living and coexisting. Adapting to a new reality always requires much effort and ingenuity. If we focus on the question of the delimitation of the border between Yugoslavia and Italy in the northern Adriatic after the end of World War II, we can see that the resolution of this issue was complex and protracted. In order to understand the dynamics and relations manifested between the two countries and other powers involved, it is necessary to explain the process of border creation itself. The area subject to demarcation that is discussed in this paper was ethnically diverse and no clear dividing line could be drawn based on 'national' affiliation. In addition, the future Yugoslav-Italian border was also the site of an ideological struggle between two political-social-economic systems. It is therefore not surprising that international powers became involved in the process of bordering through their diplomatic representatives.

The Long Process to a New Border, the Case of Istria

As an interlocutor explained:

> Most of Istria, including us, remained under Yugoslavia... so, for us the change was like going out of the frying pan into the fire. They were not much more... zone A was far up north, zone B was still there anyway, they could cross with passes every day, the rest of us [outside the zones, note P.K.] once a month, and even then we were checked 'to the bone'... if we wanted to buy one kilo of rice, or one kilo of pasta, or two bananas for the child, then washing powder or soap, you had to have lire. And if we got these lire, we

The processes of 'Creating, maintaining, re-using'[5] borders are long-term processes that have formed the political, economic, cultural and social status and relations in society (state). In order to understand all these phenomena it is crucial to be familiar with the background and motivations that have influenced the creation of new borderlines, their maintenance and re-use or adaptation in specific historical circumstances. The creation of a demarcation line between two countries in this area disrupted the existing contacts in the economic, social and cultural spheres. When taking into consideration only the northern part of Istria, it should be considered that the territory was part of a single state entity for many centuries: the Republic of Venice until the end of the 18th century, the short French presence at the beginning of the 19th century, the Austrian Empire/Austro-Hungarian Empire from 1814 until the end of World War I and the Kingdom of Italy from 1920 until 1943. The newly created border in the period following World War II had drastic consequences on both eastern and western sides. The long-standing links between the urban centre (Trieste) and the rural periphery (Istria) were severed, and an area that had been part of a single state structure for more than a hundred years found itself in two countries that stood on opposite 'sides' in terms of political, ideological and economic doctrines. The new reality radically affected the daily life of the area's inhabitants.

In order to understand the process of bordering, it is necessary to briefly explain the events and circumstances that led to its creation.

Focusing only on the period after 1918, greater changes affected the former *Austrian Littoral*. The territory became the subject of political negotiations between the successors of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (in this case the State of SCS, which merged with the Kingdom of Serbia and Montenegro to form the Kingdom of SCS on December 1st 1918) and the Kingdom of Italy. The latter entered the war in 1915 on the side of the Entente Powers, which emerged victorious. In the negotiations before it entered the war, Italy was promised territory in the event of victory, including the Crown Land of the *Austrian Littoral*. The Kingdom of SCS and the Kingdom of Italy signed the already mentioned Treaty of Rapallo on 12 November 1920, which meant Italy acquired the territory of the former Crown Land and parts of Carniola, Carinthia, and Dalmatia. The intergration into the new country was strongly marked by the Italian inter-war fascist regime, which officially came to power in 1922. This totalitarian political regime, which lasted more than twenty years and was strongly committed to the 'ethnic bonification' of the newly acquired territories, drastically affected the area (Troha 2018, 165–167).[6]

After the end of World War II, the situation was even more complicated. This time, the position of 'power' was at least partially reversed and new political dynamics came to the surface. The victorious new post-war socialist Yugoslavia made clear its demands for the Rapallo border to be corrected. Yugoslavia was a member of the Allied Powers in the war and, as one of the victorious countries, expressed its demands for the redemarcation of the area and the creation of a new frontier.[7] The political discourse, or rather the question of the influence of the blocs that emerged after the war (the Eastern communist Bloc and the Western capitalist Bloc), also came to the fore in the redrafting of the border between Yugoslavia and Italy (Italy joined

the Allies after surrendering in 1943). As in other European countries, the disputed territory was ethnically inhomogeneous. It was a region where both the Slavic (Slovenes and Croats) and the Roman (Italians) ethnic communities were living.

In 1945 the demarcation line, named after the British general and negotiator Sir William Duthie Morgan, divided the disputed territory of the region called the Julian March / *Julijska Krajina / Venezia Giulia* (Sporazum o Julijskoj krajini 1945, 19).[8] After the demarcation line was drawn, the Anglo-American forces abandoned their plans to occupy the whole region and agreed to divide it into two areas. However, they insisted that Trieste remained in their zone. The compromise solution that resulted from the negotiations was also formalised. General Jovanović and General Morgan signed an agreement – the 'Belgrade Agreement' – on 9 June 1945. The Julian March was divided into two occupation zones, Zone A under Allied military administration and Zone B under Yugoslav military administration (Sporazum o Julijskoj krajini 1945, 19).[9] The second agreement between the two sides was signed in Duino (Italy) on 20 June 1945, and included 'military concessions on the part of the Belgrade Agreement' (Milkić 2014). The agreements on the division of the zones of interest were signed after long and difficult negotiations between the powers involved (the former Allies) (Nećak 1998; Cunja 2004).[10]

The demarcation line between the two military administrations was perceived as temporary by both sides. The area – the subject of the dispute between Yugoslavia and Italy – was also problematic due to the possibility of new military confrontations breaking out. The border

8   The division of the Julian March: the area west of the demarcation line included Trst/Trieste with rail and road links to Gorica/Gorizia, Kobarid/Caporetto, Trbiž/Tarvisio, and the region of Pulj/Pola as well as the ports on the west coast of Istria.

9   The signatories of the Belgrade Agreement were the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, Dr Ivan Šubašić, the British Ambassador, R.C. Skrine Stevenson, and the US Ambassador, Richard C. Petterson.

10   See also note 6.

issue was partially solved by the 1947 Treaty of Paris (signed on 10 February, entered into force on 15 September). The Treaty was signed by the Allied powers and their associates on one side and Italy on the other (Treaty of Peace with Italy 1950). The Paris Peace Treaty delineated the border between Yugoslavia and Italy in the northern part of the area, while at the same time establishing the 'Free Territory of Trieste' (FTT) in Article 21. It also delineated the border between Italy and the FTT, and between Yugoslavia and the FTT. Article 5 specified that the exact border line was to be determined 'on the spot' by the Boundary Commission, which was to be composed of members of the governments of the two parties concerned, and which was to complete its work in no later than six months. It was important that the members of the Boundary Commission set the boundary in accordance with local geographical and economic conditions, meaning that no village or town with more than 500 inhabitants, or important transport (rail or road) links and water pipelines were outside the already established boundary line or subject to change (Treaty of Peace with Italy 1950). However, the reality turned out to be different. As two interlocutors said, the members of the commission came and placed the stakes '*Se veni una mattina e mola i picchetti...*' [translation from dialect, meaning 'They came one morning and left the stakes], without talking to the local population (Interlocutors 12 and 13).

The Treaty was a solution for only part of the disputed border between Yugoslavia and Italy, while the still 'problematic' southern territory resulted in the formation of the FTT as a new independent, sovereign State. This territory was divided, similarly to the Julian March, into two administration zones (Zone A, under an Allied Military Government and Zone B under a Yugoslav Military Government). In 1954, the signing of the London Memorandum or Memorandum of Understanding meant both military governments handed over their mandates to the Governments of Italy and Yugoslavia (Memorandum of Understanding 1956, 100):

Figure 1: Annex 1 To the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governemnts of Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Yugoslavia regarding the Free Territory of Trieste, initialled in London on 5 October 1954

The Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States will withdraw their military forces from the area north of the new boundary and will relinquish the administration of that area to the Italian Government. The Italian and Yugoslav Governments will forthwith extend their civil administration over the area for which they will have responsibility.

The Treaty also included boundary adjustments. This meant the villages of Plavje/Plavie, Spodnje Škofije/Albaro Vescovà, Elerji/Elleri and Hrvatini/Crevatini were transferred to the administration of the Yugoslav Government and annexed to Yugoslavia. After the signing of the Memorandum, the two governments were obliged to 'appoint a Boundary Commission to effect a more precise demarcation of the boundary in accordance with the map at Annex I' (Memorandum of Understanding 1956; Troha 1999).

However, the border issue was not completely resolved. Yugoslavia recognized the Memorandum and the border as definitive by ratifying it, while Italy considered it to be a demarcation line – an inconclusive, temporary border. Italoy never submitted the Memorandum to Parliament for ratification to highlight the Memorandum's temporarity (Škorjanec 2006, 44). As Škorjanec explained in her research into the process of Italo-Yugoslav border negotiations, the debates and proposals lasted for twenty years. There were (secret) discussions among commissions and ministries during this period. The main actors in the process were the foreign ministers and the so-called 'group of 4'. After negotiations between special political agents and a meeting at Strmol Castle (Slovenia), followed by meetings in Dubrovnik (Croatia) and Strunjan (Slovenia), and after the formal initialling in Belgrade, the diplomatic solution was reached in Osimo (Škorjanec 2006). With the final signing of the Osimo treaties on 10 November 1975, the border between the two states was finalized. Article 7 determined that: 'On the date when this

Treaty enters into force, the Memorandum of Understanding signed in London on 5 October 1954 and its annexes shall cease to have effect in relations between the Republic of Italy and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia' (Treaty on the Delimitation of the Frontier 1987; Drašček 2005).

One of my interlocutors who was involved in the negotiations for the Treaty of Osimo recalled: 'Slovenia had the main word in these negotiations... it was the most interested party, especially due to the question of the minority...the relations with Italy were friendly, but when there was a strain in relations...the minority was the most affected... this is why our aim was to have good relations' (Interlocutor 15).

The signing of the Treaty of Osimo brought the long frontier negotiaitons to an end and a political agreement was finally reached. All the international treaties enabled the development of better relations and cooperation between the two states. How these arrangements affected the everyday reality of the border population will be addressed in the following paragraphs.

Life '*al konfin*' [On the Border]

In the present paper, the principal interest is in the inhabitants of Northern Istria living on the eastern side of the new border. Life after the war was still challenging for people living on the border/demarcation line. As an interlocutor remembers:

> After 1954 it changed a little bit and then the conflict between individuals started. When the milestones were set, some people were irritated, rightly so. Because it happened that the little land they had was now on two sides... in Zone B and in Yugoslavia... and of course it was not pleasant because they needed border passes so they could work on their fields [the interlocutor is referring to the border line between Yugoslavia and zone B of the FTT, note PK]. So, on the other side... they started to move the stakes as they wished. There was a lot of trouble because they were accusing each oth-

er, they were also fighting, and the police came to make peace. Until they [the states involved, note PK] agreed on the border and established the national borders according to the law.... so, with these stakes... the house was right on the border line... here was the border where the house was and the yard... they tried to divide the yard and the house in half... it was all hypocrisy and bad neighbours... and this poor poor man was so tormented that he went at night to move the stakes, so his house would be left with the whole yard. But the best fields still remained under Yugoslavia on the other side, in Gabrovica [village in Northern Istria, note PK]. And that man needed a permit every time he went to work on his land, and that was the dispute that remained for years and years, even after the border was settled... that hate remained until death... [Interlocutor 14]

However, different experiences show different points of view. For some people who were only children when the demarcation line was set, the memories may be different and not that 'traumatic': 'I don't remember when they were fixing... [the demarcation line, note PK], but they were giving chocolate, they were giving chocolate to children... there were Americans and English living next door, the Scottish were marching through the village singing with bagpipes until 1953, the Trieste crisis' (Interlocutor 15).

These examples clearly reflect the 'reality' of living in the area, which was divided by the 'newly' established border. Considering the treaties mentioned in the previous paragraph, the 'other side of history' is becoming more comprehensible. The official side, consisting of political agreements, provides only a part of the overall circumstances. As explained by the political scientist Bastian Sendhardt (2013, 25–26):

For a long time, the study of borders was focused on state borders as static ontological entities with predominantly physical features, but the past two decades have seen a sea change in the study of borders. During the recent history of border studies, there has been a shift from the consideration of borders as mere geographical demarcations to a perspective that emphasizes the changing meaning of borders, different types of borders with different functions, and the social construction of borders.

In this perspective I am not interested in studying the post-war political circumstances, disputes, antagonisms, negotiations and demonstrations of political power, but how people living on the newly established border – which abruptly interrupted 'traditional' interconnections and interdependence in the area – managed to adjust to the new reality. What significantly characterized the second half of the previous century, especially the first decades after the war, was the sudden absence of the 'other side' of the territory, a territorial discontinuity. As one of my interlocutors explained: 'My mother used to say there was a big of change... before, before there was fascism, before there was Austro-Hungary, there was one state, Italy was one country and all of a sudden there was a border' (Interlocutor 7).

Economic, social and family ties between the city (Trieste) and its rural hinterland were severed. As my interlocutors pointed out, 'Back then it was one country, there were no problems, people went to Istria for goods, and women went to Trieste to sell goods... lived with each other... men went to work... and then, once they cut it off... you run out of everything...' (Interlocutor 8).

Of course, there was Italy and no one knew the border. Then, when the border came it was a disaster for the nation [in the sense of the people, the population, note PK] to get used to it... Then they drew the line and the other system came and there it was. They were just used to it anyway, they went to Italian schools at that time too, the ones who were nationally aware, Yugoslavia, Italy... Because yesterday there was no such thing, it was like cutting this table in half. It bothered

them terribly; they needed some time to be… The one who could not do that, left. [Interlocutor 6]

It was therefore a two-way situation with the urban areas dependent on labour and agricultural products, and the rural areas on trade and jobs. In the years and decades following the end of World War II, the urban centre lost its rural supply of goods for trade and its workforce. The other side, the rural area, lost the centre where people sold their products and migrated for work, and which enabled them to carry out their principal economic activity and increase their income (Verginella 2021; Kalc 2008; Panjek and Lazarević 2018). It is important to emphasize that the interconnections or interrelations existed on both sides and this new reality caused an 'absence' on both sides of the border, causing a drastic loss of income and a possible fall in living standards.Suddenly divided by a new state border, the population reacted in different ways. The main goal was to maintain economic ties with Trieste. The historian Marta Verginella explains that most of the population in the rural areas, regardless of their political, ideological or national affiliation, continued to cross the border and work in Trieste. In 1947, for example, around 2,000 workers and people who sold their products in Trieste went there every day. The Yugoslav communist authorities in zone B tried to obstruct mobility across the demarcation line, as they considered this practice of going to work in the capitalist 'other' side a bad example. It was an ideologically controversial activity. The Yugoslav authorities implemented several direct or indirect sanctions to prevent this transit (Verginella 2021). We need to understand that in the period after the end of World War II, the town of Koper and its hinterland were still 'underdeveloped' and unindustrialized (Žitko et al. 1992). Most of the inhabitants 'made their livelihoods by fishing, seafaring, salt farming, agriculture, retail trade and crafts'. An important work activity involved daily migration to Trieste but the war and the post-war demarcation aggravated the situation (Kralj and Rener 2019). One interlocutor

(Interlocutor 2) also emphasized this new reality. He remembers his mother's experience during the FTT years:

My mum and her friends smuggled goods across the border. It was not really to break the law, but to survive. It was a need because there were goods you could not find in zone B… All the women in the village were smuggling… My mum got caught once by the *graničarji* [border guards], smuggling eggs… my dad told me this story later, she was ashamed and didn't want to talk about it… she went to prison for a few days…controls were very strict… but 90% of people smuggled to have a better life.

Our mothers also went; my mother went in the evening. They used to take eggs, *trapa*, wine, and then there was the border, there was a fence, and they had to crawl under the fence to sell the robes the next morning… yes, at night, because they carried a bit more. I remember our aunt Ema from Šantoma [near Koper, note PK], my father Victor's sister; she and our mother and all the women together brought 200 eggs. My aunt came once a week to collect the money. [Interlocutor 7]

These examples show that since the early modern period, it was women in particular who travelled to the urban areas to sell the surplus of their agricultural products. For example, women purchased grain in Trieste, used it to make bread and then sold it back to the city. This type of activity also enabled a better economic standard as well as women's economic independence and an important role in decision-making in the family (Verginella 2021).

As has been mentioned, in the years 1947 to 1954, crossing over to zone A of the FTT was limited by the Yugoslav military government. Severe restrictions and regulations were introduced to limit transit between the zones. The problem was that qualified workers who were needed in zone B were working in Trieste instead of in the communist zone. Even former

partisans migrated to Trieste daily for work and members of the communist party were involved in retail trade. The new socialist political leaders found this outrageous. However, any impediment to transit fomented hostility so the communists were forced to adopt forms of indirect pressure, such as engaging mostly younger men in youth work actions or confiscating transit permits to zone A (Verginella 2021).

My interlocutors also explained that zone B was mainly a rural area without industry and was seriously affected by the interrupted connection with Trieste: 'We received some help, there was no industry, only agriculture…in that period we lost our connection with Trieste… and crossing to zone A was not allowed… so people smuggled' (Interlocutor 2) or: 'It was not allowed to cross the zone, only those with permits' (Interlocutor 15). Another added:

> People were inventive here; they went to Trieste to sell things, one to smuggle, to get along, because it was Istria. I won't say fifty percent of the population lived off, I won't say 'šverc' [smuggling, note PK], and they carried butter, meat, drinks, wine, and schnapps. Because that wasn't allowed. It was at the borders, I don't know, a kilo of meat, everybody had their own way. [Interlocutor 6]

As the Yugoslav authorities could not really stop this trade, they did not take serious restrictive actions against it. It was considered an embarrassment, but the authorities were aware that any strict restrictions would cause discontent especially among the poorest population in zone B, and could cause a political fracture in the zone they wanted to annex to Yugoslavia. The local population was also very disturbed by the fact that local communist party secretaries were the ones who approved the permits for travel to zone A. Nonetheless, the relations that were disrupted by the reality of the new border could not be stopped and after the final border resolution in 1954 (or 1975), the states of Yugoslavia and Ita-

ly started introducing special cross-border agreements (Verginella 2021).

If we reconsider Sendhardt's statements, we can agree that 'the traditional view of borders as static structures made room for a new theoretical understanding of borders as 'historically contingent' processes (Newman and Paasi 1998), an understanding that includes in the definition of borders their ready potential to change' (Sendhardt 2013).

Ties With Family and Friends

> Immediately after the war, a lot of people moved out, somewhere around 1947 or 1948, and it was pretty empty [the village by the border where the interlocutor is from, note PK]. Problems are problems, we didn't have a problem because we had these passes. We used to go, sometimes it was 4 times a year, 4 times a month. [Interlocutor 6]

Crossing the border was important for economic survival, but also to keep in touch with relatives, friends and/or clients on the other side (Kralj and Rener 2019). A state border suddenly divided members of the same family. In line with the international treaties, people in the former military zones could also decide to move from one zone to the other, or to the other country. The inhabitants of both states tried to keep in touch with those on the other side and to help each other. There were families who did not see each other for long periods of time: 'When we first went to Trieste with the *prepustnica* [pass, note P.K.], I saw my mum's sister for the first time… my mum had not seen her for a long time either' (Interlocutor 16).

People moved for different reasons, such as political disagreement with the new regime, economic motives, fear, propaganda and family:

> We were terribly sorry when they left [neighbours in Koper, note PK] because they were really nice people. Their relatives, some of them still live here and they were, they had a farm here on the old Šmarska road [near Koper, note PK] and it's a pity they left be-

cause they were really nice people. At that time there was such a climate, propaganda, they mainly went because many people went over [left for Italy, note PK], so they went over there too. I remember my late father-in-law, he was from Marezige... when we were chatting, I asked him, okay, why did some of them go over? Whole villages emptied out too. He said, it was because... now let's leave propaganda... each village had someone who was the informal, he was not the mayor, who was respected by everybody. If he and his family moved away, the whole village went. Or almost the whole village. If he didn't go, then no one else went. That was one example. [Interlocutor 9]

Our people thought of them [emigrants, note PK] as poor, they left, and most of the migration was political... there was the West... Yes, Škofije [a village on the former Morgan line, note PK] was empty. There were very few of us in Škofije. Most of those who went stayed [in Italy, note PK]. The first place they went was here, just over the border, there were barracks. There's like this centre now [shopping, note PK], the service centre... and everybody could settle there and then you got a job there. There were elderly people living in Italy, in Italy, they took somebody, some family, they signed them over [their property, note PK] ... even instead of going to the army, they ran away to Italy and then they got their parents and sisters, and they got an old farm and they settled there. [Interlocutor 6]

After settling down in Italy (Trieste), some people (re)established ties with family and friends 'on the other side'. However, there were families and friends that lived in the city even before the war. They moved there for work. There were also cases when people moved from Trieste during the war or after it:

My mother is originally from the Brkini hills, and my father was a sailor who worked as a waiter on cruise ships. Then, in 1941, he disembarked and moved his family, me and my brother who was one year older than me, also born in Trieste, to Slivje, in the Brkini, to my mother's home. Because it was easier to survive; they had already started to bomb the city. [Interlocutor 9]

No, we didn't buy much... but we brought to Trieste meat, cigarettes, for example, and we also had family in Trieste on my mother's side. You also brought them cigarettes, there was an aunt... just Drava without filters, the most awful ones, but a strong cigarette. [Interlocutor 9]

What to Sell and What to Buy

When the political situation changed and the Iron Curtain border 'opened' in the early 1960s, Trieste became a popular destination for cheap purchases for the people of Yugoslavia. However, for the population living in the border area, Trieste was a centre where they mainly purchased goods in shops. In order to buy these goods, they came to the city with their own products to sell, mainly agricultural products such as prosciutto, wine, schnapps, poultry, etc. (Nećak 2000, 302).

The goods that were mostly purchased in Trieste included pasta, coffee, soap and washing powder, tights, slippers and clothing, later also construction material and technical equipment. 'There was this one world in Trieste... I would drool over some ... I did not see them [goods, note PK] anywhere else. [Interlocutor 16]

People did not purchase luxurious goods but mostly essential needs: 'washing powder... we didn't even have enough of it to wash one handkerchief... well, we didn't even have a handkerchief... and soap, you hadn't seen it unless you'd brought it from Trieste... so this is what we bought, for the poor' (Interlocutor 14).

And there was something else here, mostly elderly people, they had Italian pensions too because then they all worked under Italy and every two months they had an Italian pen-

sion, not like here because every month they went to get their pensions and they bought rice, washing powder, pasta and candy. Here there were very few sweets, there weren't as many sweets as nowadays when we have hundreds of different kinds of sweets. [Interlocutor 6]

During my interviews, the aspect of interdependce and relations among people in the area emerged. Like in the past, despite the border control and restrictions, communication, exchange of goods and commerce was 'revitalized' or resurfaced. This means not only people from Yugoslavia went to Italy to sell and buy goods, but also people from the nearby border area in Italy came to Yugoslavia to purchase goods. As an interlocutor pointed out: 'Cross-border trade was flourishing...' (Interlocutor 15).

There was also interdependence, and as one interlocutor mentioned, the situation changed in the sixties and the seventies:

They [Italians, note PK] were coming to buy meat, petrol, dairy products... they were highly appreciated... it was a situation of mutual benefit... in Lokev [village on the Slovene Karst, note PK] there were three, four butcheries, it all worked well... not only on paper.
We were more equal...they were coming to our taverns...for them it was the hinterland, to come here and have a good time... they also went to the farmers to buy produce. [Interlocutor 16]

Since the 19th century the Istrian peninsula and the Karst (with their respective rural communities) had strong economic ties with the urban centre of Trieste. The towns in the hinterland of Trieste and Istria and the rural surroundings developed important interrelations with the port city. As pointed out by the historian Dušan Nećak, Trieste was known as the 'centre of gravity' of the Slovene hinterland (Nećak 2000). In this regard, one interlocutor said his mum told him that before the war 'they earned their living by selling their produce... turnip,

carrots, potatoes...which they took down [to Trieste] ... also wood... there was poverty... in the winter men took [the goods] by *karjola* [wheelbarrow]' (Interlocutor 4).

As asserted by the historian Vida Rožac Darovec, the economic relations and exchange took place until the middle of the 20th century, when the establishment of new borders meant the Istrian [her study is about the case of Istria, note PK] population was separated from its most important economic centre (Rožac-Darovec 2006). However, although the border between Yugoslavia and Italy marked the border between two 'opposing' political and economic systems, socialism and democracy, the exchange of goods and relations continued:

We sold only meat, later, after the war...there was no interest for other...we had to hide the *lira* [Italian currency], they did not allow... we were lucky to have some relatives down there [in Trieste] and we left them there or they brought them [*lira*] here. [Interlocutor 4]
My mother used to collect milk in the villages, as much as 200 litres of milk... we had a carriage at home, and a mule, and at half past one in the morning she would collect it... then deliver the milk to all the houses, even just half a litre... she would take it up to the 8th floor. [Interlocutor 7]

It was common to buy rice, pasta, washing powder, but also fruits, which were not easily available in Yugoslavia at the time like oranges, bananas, strawberries and mandarins. As the author Silvio Pecchiari Pečarič recalls (2020), he first saw bananas in Trieste:

I like going to Zone A because many things are not available in Zone B. The shops sell things I have never seen before, even some yellow fruits I have never seen before in our garden that I would like to try. They explain to me that they do not grow here and that they are called bananas.

References to goods that could not be found in Yugoslavia were common in my interviews. Sometimes articles that were not essential for life but simply improved people's lifestyles were also mentioned, for example table tennis (Interlocutor 15), Christmas lights (Interlocutor 6), watches (Interlocutor 15) or purses (Interlocutor 10). Later, during the seventies and eighties, it was common to buy technical ecquipment and construction material:

> We were working on this house, which was an old ruin, nothing, old stones, there was nothing to buy then under Yugoslavia, all these building materials, everything, for everything you had to go to Trieste, there was a lot of smuggling, even the politicians were smuggling, all citizens were smuggling. Then, with these passes, we transported everything from cement to bricks, tiles, radiators. [Interlocutor 10]

> When I went to buy a rotovator, the one I have now, I hid 3 million lire and put them in the first aid [kit]. I had a *fičo* [car – Zastava 750] and I took my mother with me. And we got to the border and then the customs officer: 'Good afternoon, where are you going'? To Milje [Muggia, Italy], to the marketplace. And it was Thursday [the day of the market, note PK] … 'What do you have to declare? What do you have in your first aid kit'? My mother blushed immediately. 'Show me what you have in your *fičo*' … and then three others came up behind, I think they were some mates. 'Go on, go on'. [Interlocutor 6]

> We crossed the border in cars, *fičos* and *stoenkas* [cars made by the Yugoslav automobile company Zastava, note PK]. We borrowed passes, five or six people went. It was doable, but it wasn't easy… Iron on the roof of the car. That car barely started, but little by little it was possible, one pass, two or three… [Interlocutor 8]

Border Controls and Experiences

Due to restrictions, only limited amounts of products were allowed to be brought to Italy, like 'half a kilogramme of meat, half a litre of schnapps, cigarettes…some clothes, slippers, coffee' (Interlocutor 15). In order for the trip to Italy to be worth the effort, people had to hide what they were bringing back in different ways, as they usually took more than was allowed:

> So, what did you take there… because they checked you… down there [probably meant at the border crossing, note PK] there was one customs officer [woman]… she even looked under [the skirt, dress, note PK] … the men were different, she was evil [*žleht*]… and they asked us 'what else have you hidden'… if they didn't get anything, just what was legal, they were very disappointed… because if they uncovered something, they immediately got a stripe on their sleeve, like they were real customs officers. [Interlocutor 14]

> Butter, cigarettes… Cigarettes no problem, but butter that all melted… and there was one from Sveti Anton [village near Koper, note P.K.] … she always had her trench coat buttoned up… even in the summer… it smelled so bad… of course, she had meat [in her trench coat]… she brought a whole cow… they made packages. I don't know what the meat was like, but within a week she brought a whole cow or a calf… and nobody approached her because of the smell. [Interlocutor 6]

After the war, crossing the border was made easier for the residents of border areas. In 1949, the first agreement between Yugoslavia and Italy, known as the First Udine Agreement, was signed. It covered the territory north of Trieste and referred only to people who owned land on both sides of the border, allowing them to cultivate land on the other side of the border. The London Memorandum of 1954 obliged Italy and Yugoslavia to conclude an agreement on small-scale border traffic as soon as possible. The agree-

ment signed on 20 August 1955 (in Udine) was valid for a ten kilometer strip along the entire border (Nećak 2000; Hrabar 2016). Article 7 of the Memorandum declared (Memorandum of Understanding 1956; Čepič 2018):

The Italian and Yugoslav Governments agree to enter into negotiations within a period of two months from the date of initialling of this Memorandum of Understanding with a view to concluding promptly an agreement regulating local border traffic, including facilities for the movement of the residents of border areas by land and by sea over the boundary for normal commercial and other activities, and for transport and communications. This agreement shall cover Trieste and the area bordering it. Pending the conclusion of such an agreement, the competent authorities will take, each within their respective competence, appropriate measures in order to facilitate local border traffic.

The introduction of *prepustnice* or passes was very important for the local inhabitants as it made it easier for them to cross the border. At first, people were allowed to cross the border four times a month. This meant farmers from Yugoslavia could legally sell their produce in the ten kilometer strip along the border. It was predominately women who sold the produce, but they also took some 'illegal' goods to the other side (Verginella 2021), or took more than was permitted.

Before cars became widespread, people used public transportation – mostly boats, buses and trains. Crossing the border was a crucial part of the trip and was characterised by specific dynamics. As stated by the social scientist Breda Luthar: 'The domination that is established through communication is an integral part of the trip to Trieste ... a series of communicative interactions where the positions of superiority and subordination, power and weakness, of ethnic and class differences were established'

(Luthar 2004). These interactions were an integral part of the border crossings.

I went to Trieste with my mum, by *vaporetto* [boat] or by bus. We had to get off the bus at the Škofije border crossing and pass through the customs inspection on foot... the bus was waiting for us on the other side of the border... When we went to Italy the Yugoslav customs officers usually checked our documents... My father was a butcher, not many butchers or meat then... so I went with my mum to Trieste to sell meat, or eggs, cigarettes. [Interlocutor 1]

I don't know, she mostly went alone, I crossed the crossing point, helped her to carry... We walked, we went by bicycle, later by bus. We were afraid, you had to hide. But I went with her because I also carried something, helped. [Interlocutor 8]

Women often took children with them because they were not subject to severe controls. My interlocutor said that sometimes her mum gave her some meat or other goods to hide, but rarely. The hardest thing was the border crossing, as one said: 'I was always scared when crossing the border...' (Interlocutor 1). Another interlocutor said:

It was terrible crossing the border... very stressful...we were very scared of the customs officers... if they found that you had too many goods, they took them from you...I remember two women who were very strict, two sisters Marina and Milica or something like that... they didn't speak Slovene, Serbian I think... but they lived in Koper... they were the worst, worse than men... if you had too many goods, they just took them from you. [Interlocutor 3]

Yes, it was all types... most came from Serbia...very few Slovenes were customs officers... and they always looked at you as if you were smuggling... they didn't look at you normally... well, actually you needed to bring something back... there were things

you couldn't get here... so you had to go there. [Interlocutor 4]

Oh Madonna, they controlled us, I remember... They were these *babice*, customs officers, and they would check the women all over, we called them *babice* [grandmothers, note PK]. Then, when I was already travelling with my pass, they would see if you had money, you weren't allowed to have too much. If you hid it, they took it away... no penalty, they just took it. [Interlocutor 11]

Another interlocutor, from the village of Branik (near Nova Gorica) went to Trieste once a week with her mother. They had vineyards and sold wine, schnapps, meat, fruit and butter in Trieste:

At five in the morning the train went from Branik to Kreplje [village on the Karst] and to Opčine [Villa Opicina, Italy]... the customs control was on the train... but when we came to Opčine we had to exit the train and there were desks... I still remember... and everything you had, you needed to put on them... the Italian control... [Interlocutor 5]

The Yugoslavs controlled already on the trains: 'My mum made herself a pouch from fabric and put meat, schnapps and even butter in it...' (Interlocutor 5). Women used to hide goods under their skirts and if they were subject to severe controls, the female customs officers 'examined them carefully... if you did not declare anything and they found something, they took it from you... you never got it back... although they let you go' (Interlocutor 5).

Although the controls were strict and unpleasant on both sides, the Italians and the Yugoslavs allowed the smuggling of goods to a certain extent. The Yugoslav authorities were aware that people were carrying more than the permitted quantities, but 'in order to keep the social balance, they turned a blind eye'. Even though the Italians 'apparently persecuted smuggling', they allowed it to some extent, as Trieste was also marked by the new border situation as

the city had lost its natural hinterland (Rožac-Darovec 2006). This was also explained by my interlocutors:

I don't know how much was allowed, three packs of tiles each, sometimes, sometimes you would take five and they'd send you back, the customs officer. You had to take them back to the shop. Strict... there were (also) people who said *bejži, bejži* and he closed his eyes [methaporically: pretended not to see, note PK]. [Interlocutor 8]

One customs officer explained to me, look, he says: They think we're bad. I know that when he brings iron, because he's building a house and he has this iron on his trailer, and you ask him how much iron is there? And then he lies to you and says exactly as much as is allowed, and I know because I see there's more and I say, isn't there a kilo more? No, he says. I ask him twice so he'll say, yes, yes, a kilo more. Ok, go on, because he's going to go again anyway, I know that... when he takes you for a fool, he makes an idiot of you. [Interlocutor 9]

Conclusion

Through the study of everyday life in a border area, the article showed how multi-layered and diverse the effects of a new border on a territory can be. The case study addressed the territory of Northern Istria in particular (with some minor mentions of the Karst and Goriška regions), with the aim of researching how the sudden absence in a territory caused by the creation of a new state border affected the inhabitants. The interest was to study the impact of the new border line on the population living on the eastern side of the Yugoslav-Italian border after the end of World War II.

The main methodological approach was based on holding oral history interviews with people who lived (or still live) in the border area. I was particularly interested in their experiences while living close to the border. Their 'stories' revealed a more intimate experience of every-

day life and the economic and social interactions near a newly established border. Since the interviews were carried out with members of different generations, different perspectives on the studied topic were gathered. As became clear in the course of my conversations with the local inhabitants, the post-war reality was seen differently by children and adults. Another perspective was that of the 'second' generation – my interlocutors remembered or recalled their parents' or relatives' experiences or stories told by them. This opens up new questions related to methodological issues. These were, however, not addressed in this paper, as the question was how communication, cooperation and the exchange of goods were able to continue when the border caused a strong territorial division, and how this situation was perceived by the local population. What were the daily experiences and survival strategies that people living along the border adopted to cope with the newly emerging political situation? The central question was how the border line, which divided the space both physically and ideologically, affected the local population along the Yugoslav-Italian border in Istria.

The present paper tries to show that physical and political boundaries do not necessarily completely interrupt economic and social interaction in a territory. As explained, the 'official' version of history is one thing, while the other more 'personal' view, which has been addressed in this paper, is another version. In the studied case, as in similar others, it has been shown that despite the restrictions and strict division, people find ways to communicate, cooperate and survive.

This paper has taken into consideration only one 'side' or 'reality', which was manifested in the studied region after the end of World War II. For a broader and better understanding of the relations and interactions between the inhabitants of the border area, similar research should also be undertaken with the population on the 'west side' of the new border.

List of Interlocutors*

Interlocutor 1, 1952, Koper, 1.3.2021
Interlocutor 2, 1952, Koper, 1.3.2021
Interlocutor 3, 1956, Koper, 5.2.2021
Interlocutor 4, 1949, Lokev, 31.3.2021
Interlocutor 5, 1952, Lokev, 31.3.2021
Interlocutor 6, 1955, Škofije, 9.6.2022
Interlocutor 7, 1939, Sv. Anton, 23.7.2021
Interlocutor 8, 1948, Sv. Anton, 23.7.2021
Interlocutor 9, 1941, Koper, 13.10.2021
Interlocutor 10, 1950, Škofije, 6.4.2022
Interlocutor 11, 1948, Boršt, 16.11.2021
Interlocutor 12, 1943, Lokev, 15.4.2021
Interlocutor 13, 1939, Lokev, 15.4.2021
Interlocutor 14, 1925, Koper, 28.9.2022
Interlocutor 15, 1940, Koper, 30.3.2023
Interlocutor 16, 1944, Koper, 30.3.2023

* All my interlocutors will remain unknown. The only data is year of birth.

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Summary

Negotiating about the positioning of a demarcation line, and reaching a consensus or agreement about a border between all parties involved is a complex process that has occurred in different historical periods and circumstances. The establishment of a line of demarcation strongly marks all aspects of life. In addition to the political relations between the countries or lands involved, it affects the living conditions of people living near the new border who find themselves in a new reality. When new borders are established, especially in areas that have been the subject of disputes and conflicts for many years, life changes drastically. New borders also create new relationships and conditions for life and coexistence. Adapting to a new reality always requires adjustments. The process of establishing or agreeing on a border, especially in disputed areas where different or even conflicting political regimes seek to annex territories, is long-lasting and demanding.

In this paper, I focus on the issue of determining the border between Yugoslavia and Italy in the area of the northern Adriatic after the end of World War II. Resolving this issue was demanding and took many years. In order to understand the dynamics and relations that were (or were in the process of being) established after the war between the states and the other forces involved, it is necessary to explain the very process of border creation. The area that was the subject of delimitation and which I discuss in the paper was ethnically diverse, so a clear dividing line based on 'national' affiliation could not be established. In addition, there was also an ideological struggle between two political and social systems on the future Yugoslav-Italian border. Therefore, it is not surprising that international forces with diplomatic representatives were involved in the border process.

As a historian interested in people's everyday lives, who focuses on views 'from below' – the daily experiences and survival strategies that the inhabitants of the border

area established in order to cope more easily with the emerging political situation – I pay most attention in this paper to the post-war conditions in which the people along the border lived. The central question is how the border line (either a temporary demarcation line or a later border), which divided the space both physically and ideologically, affected the local inhabitants.

The research focuses on the period after the end of World War II and life along the Yugoslav-Italian border in Istria. The emphasis is on studying how people adapted to the new reality of life in socialist Yugoslavia. Not only did the political situation change, but existing ties (family, business) were severed in the territory that had belonged to one country since the beginning of the 19th century (the Austrian Empire/Austria-Hungary, the Kingdom of Italy). At the forefront of interest is the question of how interconnections and relationships changed and broke after the border was established. The question arises as to how communication, cooperation and the exchange of goods were preserved in a period when the border caused a strong division.

Povzetek

Pogajanja o tem, kam postaviti demarkacijsko črto in doseg skupnega konsenza oz. dogovora o meji med vsemi vpletenimi stranmi, je zapleten proces, ki se je odvijal v različnih zgodovinskih obdobjih in okoliščinah. Postavitev ali postavljanje demarkacijske linije in novih meja močno zaznamuje vse vidike življenja. Poleg političnih razmerij med vpletenimi državami ali deželami vpliva na življenjske razmere ljudi, ki se znajdejo v novih mejnih okvirih, v novi realnosti. Ko so vzpostavljene nove meje, zlasti na območjih, ki so bila dolga leta predmet sporov in spopadov, se življenje drastično spremeni. Nove meje ustvarjajo tudi nova razmerja in pogoje za življenje ter sobivanje. Prilagoditev na novo realnost vedno terja številne prilagoditve. Proces postavljanja oz. dogovarjanja o meji, posebej na spornih območjih, kjer si za priključitev teritorijev prizadevata različna ali celo nasprotujoča si politična režima, je dolgotrajen in zahteven. V prispevku se osredotočam na vprašanje določitve meje med Jugoslavijo in Italijo na območju severnega Jadrana po koncu druge svetovne vojne, kjer je bilo razreševanje tega vprašanja zahtevno in dolgotrajno. Za razumevanje dinamik in odnosov, ki so se po vojni vzpostavili (vzpostavljali) med državama in drugimi vpletenimi silami, je treba razložiti sam proces ustvarjanja meje. Območje, ki je bilo predmet razmejevanja in ga obravnavam v prispevku, je bilo etnično raznoliko in jasne ločnice na podlagi »nacionalne« pripadnosti ni bilo mogoče postaviti. Poleg tega je na bodoči jugoslovansko-italijanski meji potekal tudi ideološki boj med dvema politično-družbenima sistemoma. Zato ni presenetljivo, da so se v proces t. i. borderinga vpletle mednarodne sile z diplomatskimi predstavniki. Kot zgodovinarka, ki jo zanima vsakdanje življenje ljudi in se osredotočam na poglede »od spodaj«, na vsakodnevne izkušnje in preživitvene strategije, ki so jih prebivalci ob meji vzpostavili, da bi se lažje spopadli z novonastalo politično situacijo, pozornost v prispevku primarno posvečam povojnim razmeram, v katerih so ljudje ob meji živeli. Osrednje vprašanje je, kako je mejna črta (tudi začasna demarkacijska črta kot kasnejša meja), ki je prostor delila tako fizično kot ideološko, vplivala na tamkajšnje prebivalce. Raziskava se osredotoča na obdobje po koncu druge svetovne vojne in življenje ob jugoslovansko-italijanski meji v Istri. Poudarek je na preučevanju prilagajanja novi življenjski realnosti v socialistični Jugoslaviji, ko so se ne samo spremenile politične razmere, ampak tudi pretrgale obstoječe vezi (družinske, poslovne) na teritoriju, ki je že od začetka 19. stoletja pripadal eni državi (Avstrijsko cesarstvo/Avstro-Ogrska, Kraljevina Italija). V ospredju zanimanja je vprašanje, kako so se medsebojne povezave in odnosi po vzpostavitvi meje spremenili ter prekinili. Postavlja se vprašanje, kako so se komunikacija, sodelovanje in izmenjava blaga ohranili v obdobju (močne) mejne razdelitve.

The Primary School in Postwar Koper/Capodistria as a Social Laboratory
Osnovna šola v povojnem Kopru/Capodistrii kot socialni laboratorij

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Abstract:
In the border region of northern Istria, the decade after World War II was a time of political, social and demographic changes that accompanied the introduction of the socialist system. The demarcation process between Italy and Yugoslavia led to an almost complete replacement and ethnic transformation of the urban population. A striking example of this transition is the development of primary education, which is analysed here in terms of social and architectural history. With the help of statistics and school records, we observe the impacts of emigration and immigration on the size and structure of the school population, as well as on the process of establishing the Slovenian school in the city of Koper/Capodistria. Through architectural and symbolic discourses on school infrastructure, we also question the heritage significance of school buildings and institutions for contemporary local society.
Keywords: Istria, post WWII period, population transfers, primary school, architecture, school buildings, heritage

Izvleček:
V obmejni pokrajini severni Istri je bilo desetletje po drugi svetovni vojni čas političnih, socialnih in demografskih sprememb, ki so spremljale uvedbo socialističnega sistema. Razmejitev med Italijo in Jugoslavijo je povzročila skoraj popolno zamenjavo in etnično preobrazbo mestnega prebivalstva. Izrazit primer tega prehoda je razvoj osnovnega šolstva, ki ga v prispevku analizirava z vidika družbene in arhitekturne zgodovine. S pomočjo statistik in šolskih evidenc opazujeva vplive izseljevanja in priseljevanja na obseg ter strukturo šolske populacije in na proces ustanavljanja slovenske šole v mestu Koper. Skozi arhitekturne in simbolne diskurze o šolski arhitekturi preizprašujeva tudi dediščinski pomen šolskih zgradb in institucij za sodobno lokalno družbo.
Ključne besede: Istra, čas po drugi svetovni vojni, premiki prebivalstva, osnovna šola, arhitektura, šolske zgradbe, dediščina

111

Introduction

In 2005 and 2008 two seemingly minor buildings were demolished in Koper/Capodistria,[1] a seaside town in northern Istria, Slovenia. The buildings were the Janko Premrl Vojko primary school and another primary school named after Pinko Tomažič. The site of the former is currently an empty void in the heart of the old town. Meanwhile the latter building, located on the outskirts of the town, has been replaced by a modern, box-shaped building that now accommodates the pupils and teachers of the two demolished schools. The two old buildings, built after the end of World War II in the years that represented a turning point in the history of the town and Istria as a whole, were demolished without any analysis of their heritage values. The demolitions did not provoke much public debate at the time. However, aversion to and regret about these irreversible interventions has come to light in recent years on social networks. The unresponsiveness of society at the time of the demolitions raises many questions about the significance of this architectural heritage for the local community, and its perception of the postwar history of the town and region. These questions represent the starting point of the present paper.

In his seminal classic work Louis Althusser (2018) singled out education as the first of the state's ideological apparatuses. The same role has been attributed to urbanism and architecture by several authors (e.g. Rotar 1980), following Henri Lefebvre's (1992) trialectic of production of

Figure 1: Demolition of the Janko Premrl Vojko Primary School, 14 May 2008 (source: Personal Archive of Miloš Beltram)

space in particular. Observing the development of schools – both as institutions and as architecture – can thus give us insight into the socio-historical dynamics of the region in question. The challenge is even greater in a region with a history of ethnic and ideological conflict like Istria. From the point of view of Slovenian national identity, establishing an education system after World War II represented the basis for empowering the Slovenian population. However, from an external perspective the construction of the Slovenian-centralist school system may be perceived as one of Althusser's ideological state apparatuses through which the new Slovenian authorities established their political, national, ideological and cultural sovereignty on the territory acquired after World War II.

The primary school named after Janko Premrl Vojko, which operated in the centre of Koper between 1951 and 2006, was the embodiment of the turbulent socio-political, demographic and ethnic changes in Istria following World War II. The school's history, activities and social pulse are discussed here as a case-study with the help of archival material from the Koper Regional Archive and existing studies. We focus on the early post-war years, the period of the temporary buffer-state between Italy and Slovenia, the Free Territory of Trieste (FTT) (1947–1954), and especially on the period immediately

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[1]   Since the end of World War II the city has two official names, Koper in Slovenian, and Capodistria in Italian, as the area is officially bilingual. The denomination Capodistria, written also in different forms in earlier periods (Capo d'Istria, Caput Histriae etc), derives from the Middle Ages and was the official name of the city throughout its history, especially during the rule of the Venetian Republic (1279–1797), and during the short French and later Austrian rule in the 19th century. The Slovene denomination, Koper, was also present in the later centuries, yet officially in use only during the Austrian rule and later after WWII. Currently, the city officially has both names, however, due to space limitations we only use the Slovene one here, with all due respect for the city's bilingual identity.

after its abolition (1954–1962). In terms of education, this second period was marked by the school reform, but from the political-administrative point of view it was the time when the border dispute and the division of the FTT between Italy and Yugoslavia (1954) gave way to the full integration of Zone B of the FTT into the Slovenian republic and the state of Yugoslavia. The geopolitical restructuring was accompanied by profound demographic, ethnic and social changes, linked to strategic plans for the economic renewal and development of the area as the Slovenian coastal region. The two main factors of economic restructuring, which went hand in hand with demographic and social restructuring, were industrialisation (especially with the TOMOS motorcycle factory, 1954–1959) and the establishment and accelerated development of the Port of Koper (1957–1961).

Recent historical and especially anthropological-ethnological research has highlighted the core issue of the population changes after WWII in northern Istria, especially in the coastal, urbanised zone, and described them as 'Slovenisation' and/or 'Yugoslavisation' (Hrobat Virloget 2021; Čebron Lipovec 2019a; Kalc 2019). The present analysis[2] aims to test this finding by looking at the development of post-war education and school infrastructure. We want to highlight how the school positioned itself and what role it played in this dynamic series of historical events, what it can tell us about them, and how the ruptures and transitions were reflected in its mission and its work, on a symbolic level, and in people's perceptions.

We look at these issues from two perspectives. Firstly through the prism of the institutional and social history of schools and education as the foundations of a new social, political

and national paradigm, and secondly from the perspective of architectural history, i.e. by analysing the social and spatial positioning of school buildings as representational and social spaces.

The Education System and 'The Revival of the Slovene School in Istria'

During the decade following World War II, the northern Adriatic border region between Socialist Yugoslavia (now Slovenia) and Italy was marked by several years of negotiations on a new border between the two countries. A provisional solution was the multicultural state of the Free Territory of Trieste, or FTT (1947–1954). This was divided into Zone A in the west, including the city of Trieste and its rural surroundings and administered by the Anglo-American Allied Administration, and Zone B in the east, between Koper (now Slovenia) and Novi Grad (now Croatia), administered by the military administration of the Yugoslav Army. In the years after World War II, the main tasks of the people's authorities in northern Istria (i.e. in the territory of Zone B of the FTT) were reviving the economy and renewing cultural life and the education system. The former involved satisfying the basic needs of the population and restructuring the economic region, which was cut off from its historic centre of gravity - the city of Trieste - by the abolition of the FTT and the delimitation in 1954. As regards education, it was a question of restoring Slovene schools after a 20-year violent fascist ban on the Slovene language and thus providing mother-tongue education to all the inhabitants. The aim was also to repair the cultural and national damage that the assimilation and the fascist Italianisation policies had inflicted on the Slovenian population of this ethnically mixed area.

Establishing and elevating Slovene education to an adequate organisational level faced two objective problems: a shortage of teaching staff and school premises. Many schools were housed in makeshift buildings, some teachers were recruited from the interior of Slovenia and local candidates underwent training to be-

come teachers (Perovšek 1995, 45). While waiting for teaching staff to arrive, some schools were merged and others temporarily closed (Peterle Grahonja 2004, 93). Most of the school buildings in the Istrian countryside were damaged or even destroyed during the war. Some served as military barracks for the occupying forces during the war, and after the war the Yugoslav army was stationed in some of them. The school buildings were renovated thanks to the voluntary work of local people and the help of state loans, but this took time so school classes were held in makeshift buildings. Another problem was the inadequate design of the buildings. Although they had been built recently by the fascist regime, they were just simple one-classroom buildings designed to meet the needs of the peasant population, which received only the most basic education. One teacher in a single classroom taught children from several years and of different ages, often in morning and afternoon shifts, demanding much organisation and work, but this was generally typical of education in the post-war years (Petelin 2020, 168). The results of repairs to existing schools and the construction of new school buildings and improvements in equipment were not visible until after 1948 (Peterle Grahonja 2004, 92–95).

The Italian language schools were restored wherever an Italian population was present. They enjoyed administrative and curricular autonomy, but the people's authorities sought to adapt the curricula to the new times and the ideological goals of popular democracy. There were eleven Italian primary schools and seven secondary schools. The latter included grammar schools in Koper, Piran and Izola, a private church grammar school (*seminario*) in Koper, and in 1950 an Italian teachers' college was founded in Koper (Peterle Grahonja 2004, 98). However, the mass emigration of ethnic Italians to Trieste, especially after 1947, meant that the number of pupils attending Italian school shrank. The decline in numbers was also caused by the 1952 decree (Sluga and Jelen Madruša 2006, 9) which stipulated that children whose surname appeared Slav-

ic (i.e. they were of allegedly Slavic parents), were obliged to attend a Slovene school, even if they did not feel Slovene and regardless of their parents' wishes (Beltram 1997, 207; Hrobat Virloget 2021, 96–97). Children with Italian or ethnically mixed parents could enrol in either Italian or Slovene schools[3]. In the so-called 'exodus' – the mass emigration of those who opted for Italy when the FTT's Zone B was taken over by Yugoslavia in 1954 – many Italian teachers also left (Peterle Grahonja 2004, 92). They were initially replaced by Slovene teachers who had completed the Italian teacher training college and Italian students. Later, Italian teachers from the Croat part of Istria took up these positions (Beltram 1997, 207; Perovšek 1995).

During this period, and especially in the 1950s, the school system also had to cope with the social dynamics associated with the restructuring of the region, specifically with the immigration of new populations, a phenomenon that accompanied or followed the mass departure of the so-called optants. While the number of Italian schoolchildren shrank sharply with the peak of the 'exodus' in the mid-1950s, the demographic pressure on the Slovene school structures in Koper, Izola and Piran and their new residential areas grew rapidly. For example, in 1956 there were 42 primary schools in the municipality of Koper, 38 of them were Slovene with 2,237 pupils, and four were Italian with 122 pupils. Despite progress, the school structure was still poor, with half (47.7%) the Slovene schools being single-form-entry, just under 30% two-form entry, 15.7% three-form entry, and only four schools (10%) had a larger number of classes. In addition, many children did not meet the eight-year compulsory schooling requirement because most rural schools taught only the first four years, while further years were taught in schools that were far away. The secondary schools included the Slovene grammar school (430 pupils), the Italian grammar school (70), the teacher training college (70) and the secondary school for eco-

3   PAK, 936_2, OŠ Janko Premrl Vojko Koper 1946–2006, Šolska kronika 1952–53.

nomics (119), all in Koper (Svoljšak 1956, 281–286). The problem of compulsory primary education was solved in 1958 by a school reform that abolished the four-year primary and post-primary schools and introduced a single eight-year primary school (Peterle Grahonja 2004, 104).

Difficulties in Planning School Needs

Immigration and population growth following the departure of the optants for Italy dictated the further development of school infrastructure. Meanwhile, planning in the second half of the 1950s was difficult and risky. The dynamics, size and above all the age and social structure of the population (which form the basis for educational planning) depended on the progress of major economic projects, the construction of the railway, the extension of the harbour, land reclamation, and the growth of industry, tourism and other branches of the economy (Svoljšak 1956, 287). Another problem was the high population turnover. In the years 1954–57, the coastal towns of Koper, Izola and Piran showed the greatest migratory pull in Slovenia, receiving as much as 30% of the republic's migration to urban areas (Vogelnik 1959). However, immigration was quite fluid, with people coming and going in large numbers.

This was mainly due to a shortage of housing. In the spring of 1956, there were 1,409 applications for housing in Koper, which were only partially met by the authorities. New blocks of flats were still being built, and the houses left behind by the optants were only partially usable due to uncontrolled management and the poor state they were in. The old housing stock generally consisted of far from comfortable accommodation, so it was difficult to retain newcomers from central Slovenia, especially professional staff, even though their accommodation was treated as a priority. The housing crisis, the constant turnover of experts and the shortage of professional workers prevented more vigorous

economic development and the opening of new businesses[4].

In 1956 the projection of school needs was therefore hypothetical. The drafters of the municipal development plan foresaw a strong influx of industrial workers and other personnel from Slovenia and the other republics, but the question of the nature of immigration (permanent or temporary) and the family structure of immigrants was raised. Migratory movements within the coastal region were also more difficult to predict. Although there was a clear tendency to move from the inland, rural areas towards the coastal zone (Svoljšak 1956, 287–289), the development conditions of the different regions varied. For example, rural areas that were more favourable for intensive agriculture with good transport connections were soon revitalised by immigration despite the loss of population due to the 'exodus' (Titl 1961, 22–24). However, the remoter parts of the municipality stagnated demographically due to the emigration to Italy, out-migration towards the coastal towns, and declining birth rates, and in many places experienced depopulation. Between 1953 and 1961, individual local communities in these areas lost more than half their population. In the coastal towns, the population grew rapidly in number and demographic vitality (Piry 1983, 21–22; Titl 1961, 34). Towards the end of the 1950s, immigration stabilised and there was a growing need for school structures in areas of old and new urbanisation, as existing school facilities could no longer cope with the demographic pressure (Jurman and Medveš 1974).

Koper Primary School – Its Pupils and Teachers

Let us now turn to the specific case of the Janko Premrl Vojko Primary School in Koper, which opened in the autumn of 1945. It was the first Slovene state school in the town because during the Austrian era (when compulsory primary education was established) the Italian nation-

4 PAK, 712_1, 2 Minutes of the Municipality of Koper assembly 1955–1957, 9th regular session of the Koper assembly, 3. April 1956.

Figure 2: School children of the elementary school in Koper, 1954-1956 (source: Personal Archive of Rudi Pavlič)

al-liberal municipal administrations prevented the opening of Slovene schools in order to preserve the traditional Romance identity of the coastal towns against the 'Slavisation' that was intensifying with immigration from the Slavic hinterland. In the school year 1911–12, the Ciril Methodius Society (a Slovenian cultural and educational institution), opened a private Slovene primary school in Koper, but in 1919 it was closed by the Italian occupation authorities. From then on Slovene children could only attend the Italian school (Pahor 1970, 249–260).

After the liberation in 1945, the reopening of Slovene schools in Koper and other coastal towns, where the Italian cultural milieu was predominant, was therefore not a simple matter. Although part of the population was of Slovene or Slavic origin, most families intended to continue sending their children to Italian schools. Some simply did not want the hassle of changing their children's school, others were dissuaded by practical or logistical reasons and others were indifferent about their nationality. The Slovene school was able to come alive thanks to teachers who visited parents and convinced them of the need to 'teach children a language they had forgotten or never learned'[5]. The presence of the Slovene schools in Koper, Izola and Piran was also important ahead of the visit by the demarcation commission. It made the Slovene presence visible in the towns – an argument in favour of

Yugoslav territorial claims (Peterle Grahonja 2004, 96).

The school was housed in the renovated building of the former Italian *Scuola Marinara* in a street with the bilingual denomination *Viale XX Settembre / Ulica 20. septembra* (today's Cankarjeva ulica), which had housed the teacher training school before World War I. In 1951, the school moved to a new building, which was built in the old town centre in an area called Belveder, where there had previously been a prison. In the first year it had three classes with about 70 pupils from Koper and the immediate surroundings, mostly children of suburban small farmers, agricultural laborers and officials. According to the school records, the beginnings were difficult because the pupils' knowledge of the Slovene language was poor. This was due to the shortage of and frequent replacement of teaching staff, but also social reasons, a lack of discipline and other reasons, which the writer of the records attributed to the parents' reservations regarding school, and to the impact of Italianisation and Italian education[6].

These difficulties continued to plague the school for several years, but it is true that the school was establishing and strengthening itself not only as an educational institution, but also as a fundamental social institution, embedded in the social dynamics and quite turbulent political developments in the region. These historical processes are reflected in the enrolment sta-

5   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1945/46.

6   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1948/49; Šolska kronika 1949/50.
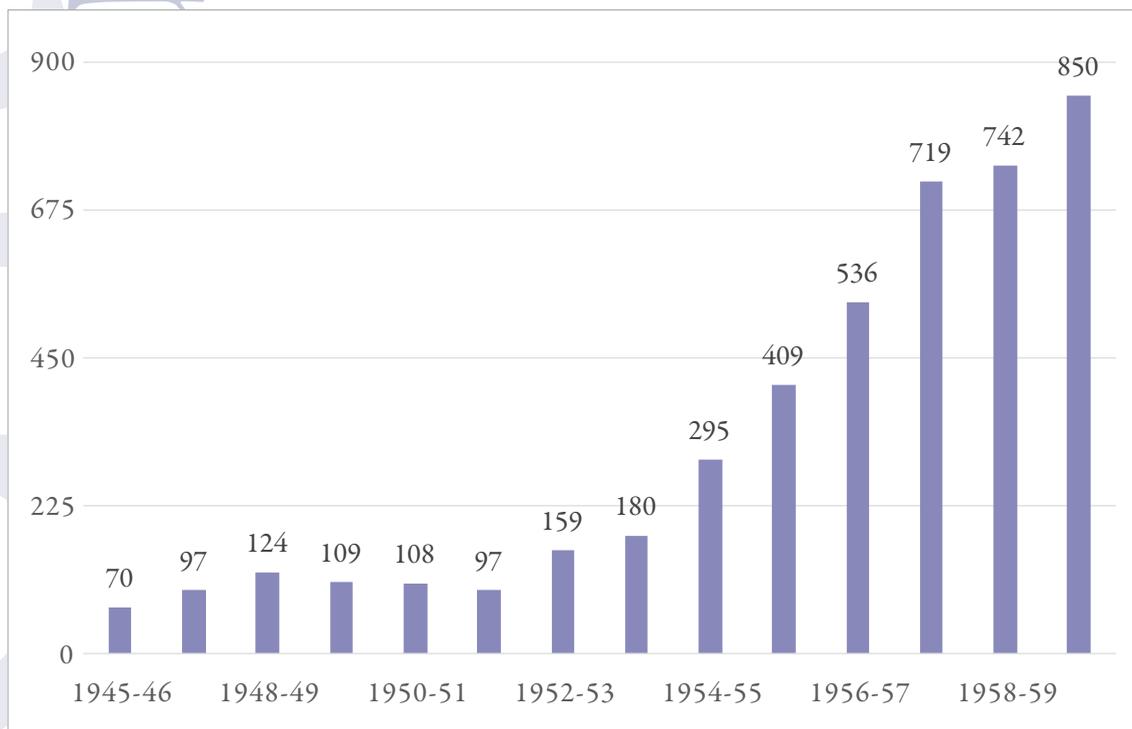
Table 1: Growth in the number of pupils at the Janko Premrl Vojko Primary School in Koper between the school years 1945–46 and 1959–60.*

*PAK, 963_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolske kronike.

tistics, which were directly influenced by various factors.

The school consolidation process lasted until the early 1950s, when the number of pupils no longer changed significantly. The fluctuations were influenced by the annual change of generations, as well as by pupils coming over from the Italian school. The school year 1953–54 marked a new, landmark phase of development, as the number of pupils more than quadrupled by the end of the decade. The number of departments multiplied accordingly, from seven in the school year 1952–53 to 21 five years later, with a teaching staff of 24.

The rapid growth outlined here coincides with the resolution of the so-called Trieste issue and the migratory dynamics triggered by the division of the FTT between Yugoslavia and Italy. Emigration from Zone B to Zone A of the FTT and immigration to Zone B from Slovenia and elsewhere had been taking place through-

out the previous years. From 1953 and especially from 1955 onwards, the final, most intense phase of the 'exodus' began. It lasted until February 1957 – the deadline by which residents who had opted for Italian citizenship and emigration to Italy (in accordance with the London Memorandum) had to depart. At the same time immigration increased sharply and by the end of the decade it had overcome the demographic deficit caused by the 'exodus'. Increased birth rates also began to have an impact on population growth (Kalc 2019, 149–153). The migration process and the effect of the population replacement was not only reflected in schools on an annual basis, but also in an increase in the number of pupils in the course of the school year. From the beginning to the end of the 1955/56 school year, the number of pupils at the Janko Premrl Vojko school increased from 330 to 409, and the same trend continued. In the following years, school enrolment reflects a continuous immigration of fami-

lies, accompanied by increasingly stable economic development and the urbanisation of the area. Within a few years, the construction of another school in the town was deemed necessary[7] (Sluga and Jelen Madruša 2006, 10).

The new settlers in the city of Koper came mainly from Slovenia, but many also came from the Croat part of Istria, especially from around Buje which had also belonged to Zone B of the FTT before 1954. The social and national composition of Koper and the coastal region as a whole underwent a radical change in a very short period of time. The proportion of the population that had been born in the urban coastal towns fell from 85% in 1948 to 33% in 1956. Meanwhile, the Italian population shrunk to 10%. Its age structure rose sharply, while the immigrant population was dominated by younger, demographically active generations. Slovenian Istria and especially its urbanised coastal zone, which had been predominantly Italian, thus acquired a Slovenian and partly Yugoslav character (Kalc 2019, 155–156).

The school increasingly became a social laboratory for this new urban reality, which consisted of people of different origins and also social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. In the socialist social order, the school as a basic educational institution was one of the key elements in the renewal of social values and relations to form a people's democracy. The programme of the League of Communists of Slovenia emphasised how schools were connected with socio-economic reality and were bound to express the cultural needs of the pupils and to conform them to the needs of society[8]. The special task of schools in northern Istria, which became part of the Socialist Republic of Slovenia, was to help integrate the region into the Slovenian national and cultural space. In order to achieve this, it was necessary to transform the cultural environment and establish the Slovene language. As can be seen from the school records, the school invested a

lot of effort in language education and inculcating new ideas during the post-war years because it had to deal with a very complex cultural and linguistic reality. The pupils' insufficient knowledge of Slovene had a negative impact on their learning progress. There were problems with immigrant children of other Yugoslav nationalities, as well as with children from the Slovene part of Istria. As regards the latter, the difficulties were attributed to the mother tongue having been neglected and a lack of Slovene national consciousness due to the persistent assimilation processes and fascist education, which meant Italian was frequently used in everyday communication at home and in general[9]. There was also an attachment to the Slovene Istrian dialect, which was full of words borrowed from Italian or Croatian. Towards the end of the 1950s, school records mention the positive effects of schools on language skills and learning abilities. Children learnt Slovene faster, their reading culture improved and they became more involved in school and extracurricular activities. Visits to theatre performances, educational excursions, participation in events and celebrations, additional courses in Slovene and local history and geography all paid off. Special credit for mastery of the Slovene language was given to the 'hard-working pupils from Yugoslavia' who spoke beautiful Slovene and became role models for the locals[10].

The Political Situation and Education

In order to understand the school's role and work in the turbulent 1940s and 1950s, it is also necessary to take into account the political situation. The opening of Slovene schools in Koper and other coastal towns meant the redressing of fascist attempts to assimilate and destroy the Slovene identity. At the same time, it meant eliminating the historical ideological-national dichotomy between the Italian town and the Slovene countryside. Under Austria-Hungary, the Italian local authorities had used this di-

7   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1957/1958.

8   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1958/59.

9   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1945/46.

10   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1950/51.

chotomy to prevent the Slovene population from moving to the towns and exercising their national rights there. The Slovene or Yugoslav people's power, which emerged from the National Liberation Struggle (NOB), overcame this by implementing the socialist principle of national equality and the policy of fraternity among nations. It considered this territory to be Yugoslav and introduced the political-administrative structures and systems of the socialist order from Yugoslavia into Zone B of the FTT. In the geopolitical configuration of the Littoral, when the peace treaty assigned Gorizia to Italy in 1947 and Trieste to Zone A of the FTT, the towns of Koper, Izola and Piran were conceived as the new centres of the Slovene territory. In the border dispute, the authorities pursued a principled policy in favour of the annexation of Zone B to Yugoslavia, and sought to create the conditions and gain the consensus of the population for this, not on the basis of nationality but on the principle of socialist belonging. However, this stumbled upon many obstacles, both national and ideological. Political opposition came not only from the Italian bourgeois and petty bourgeois classes, which manifested nationalist and irredentist tendencies, but also from workers who were in favour of the Free Territory of Trieste. Since 1948, this idea had been intertwined with the Cominform positions and the pro-FTT propaganda of the 'Cominformists'[11] (Rogoznica 2011, 301–302; Čebron Lipovec 2019a, 205). This kind of anti-Yugoslavism was supported mainly by Italian communists, and was still alive in certain areas of Zone B in 1953. At the same time, there was strong political pressure from the *esuli* (Istrian émigrés) organisations and Italian political circles from Zone A and from Italy, which spread rumours of persecution and dangers for Italians under the Yugoslav regime. For all these reasons, the consolidation of socialist positions in Zone B and the integration of Italians into the pro-Yugoslav socio-political structures, as well as putting the principles of socialist democracy into

11 PAK, 450, Okrajni komite Zveze komunistov Slovenije Koper (1945–1965).

practice (beginning with bilingualism) did not proceed as planned and without conflict. The authorities also experienced disagreements and tensions between local political cadres and those from Slovenia, who accused the former of a lack of political integrity in the struggle to eliminate anti-Yugoslav political factors.

One of the aims of establishing Slovene schools during the FTT years was therefore to repair the damage suffered by the Slovenes under and before fascism due to social and national discrimination. At the same time, it was part of the political struggle for Zone B to belong to Yugoslavia through the implementation of the socialist social order and the socialist concept for regulating national relations. On the socialist basis of equality, the authorities recognised the national rights of the Italian population while enforcing the principle that 'a Slovene child belongs in a Slovene school' and implemented it on the basis of 'objective' criteria for determining national belonging (surname, language, origin). This was their way of exerting political pressure, and in many cases it paid off and contributed to the process of integrating the local Istrian population into the Slovene nation. However, they also encountered resistance and accusations from Italian representatives for imposing Slovene education and disrespecting people's personal identity. Getting children to enrol in Slovene schools continued after the territory was annexed to Yugoslavia and the exodus of Italian-speaking population, along with efforts to consolidate the region's Slovene character. Complaints were made in political circles that even the Slovene communists often spoke Italian among themselves[12]. However, due to the mass immigration and the influence of the prevailing Slovene social and cultural environment, implementing the principle of a national school policy became easier.

The Architecture of School Buildings

How did the architecture and specifically the new primary school of Janko Premrl Vojko at

12 AS, 1589 III, Centralni komite Zveze komunistov Slovenije, 4, 249, Zapisnik seje s tovariši iz Okrajnega komiteja Koper, 24. July 1953.
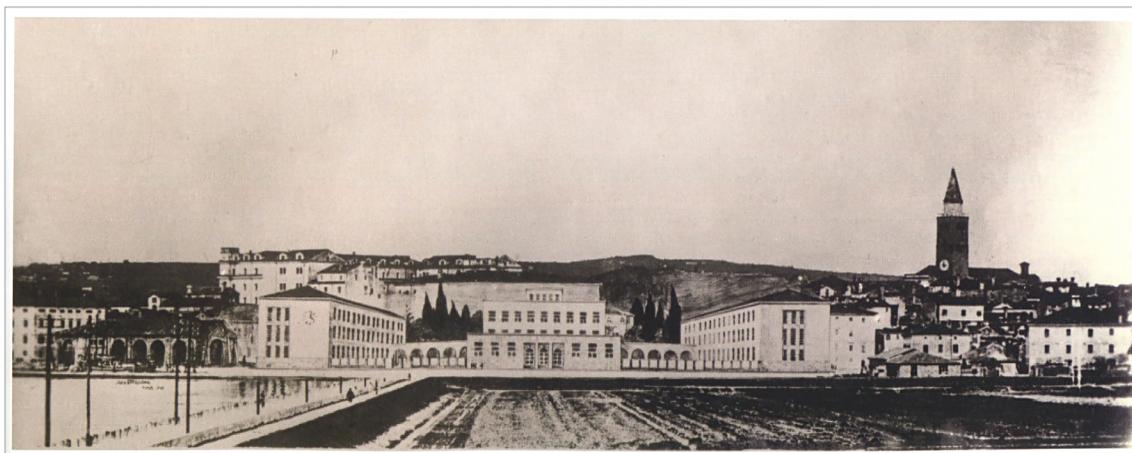
Figure 3: Photomontage of the panorama of the southern edge of the old town of Koper/Capodistria with the planned monumental school dedicated to Anna Depangher Sauro, 1939–1940 (source: Personal Archive of Mario Fonda)

Belveder fit into the political, ideological and social dynamics? The story of this first post-war school in the centre of Koper has a lengthy prelude connected with a modern, unfinished school building from the fascist era, and a follow-up that mirrors the town's demographic and urban development after Zone B was annexed to Yugoslavia.

The Fascist Primary School
Scuola Anna Depangher Sauro

In the interwar period, the fascist authorities built several rural schools in the Istrian countryside. These were typical one-room schoolhouses aimed at providing the most basic education for the peasant population. The aesthetics of these buildings followed the official style of the time, the so-called *Stile Littorio*. By reinterpreting elements from Roman antiquity, it served as a tool for legitimising the alleged continuity of the Roman – and consequently presumably Italian – civilisational and territorial domination. A monumental but unfinished primary school complex was built in the same spirit and style – but much more ambitiously – on the waterfront of Koper/Capodistria (today Pristaniška ulica) in 1940. It was dedicated to Anna Depangher Sauro, the mother of the local irredentist hero Nazario Sauro.

The new school was designed in 1938, at the height of fascism, with an exceptional representational significance. It served as the dominant feature of the monumental scenery on the promenade leading to the equally monumental memorial to Nazario Sauro from 1935. In order for construction to begin, much of the anonymous fabric of the town's Brazzol district was demolished (Cherini 1990, 265–266), following the example of Mussolini paving the way for fascist modernity in Rome. The plan for the new school complex consisted of a central dominant part and two wings (one for girls and one for boys). Due to disputes over symbolic aesthetics, in which the Minister of National Education Giuseppe Bottai intervened,[13] and the outbreak of war, construction came to a standstill and the building, with its extraordinary symbolic charge, remained unfinished.

After the end of World War II, especially after the Free Territory of Trieste was established, the school building became relevant again. The new authorities – the Military Administration of the Yugoslav Army – intended to complete the school, but again the plan was not realised as they decided to build a new school at a new location – on the site of the demolished prison at

13   SABAP FVG, fondo Istra Quarnero Dalmazia, b. 4, fasc. 172, Nuova Scuola Capodistria, prot. n. 141, 20 February 1940.

Prospettiva ~ punto di vista V della planimetria ~
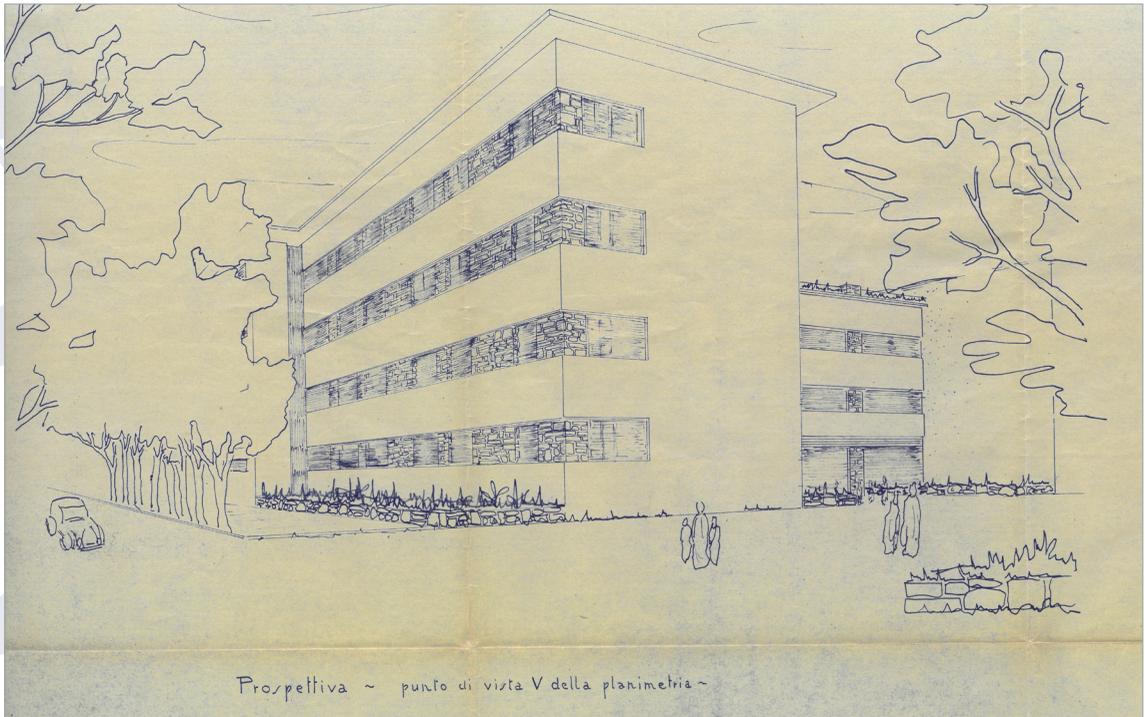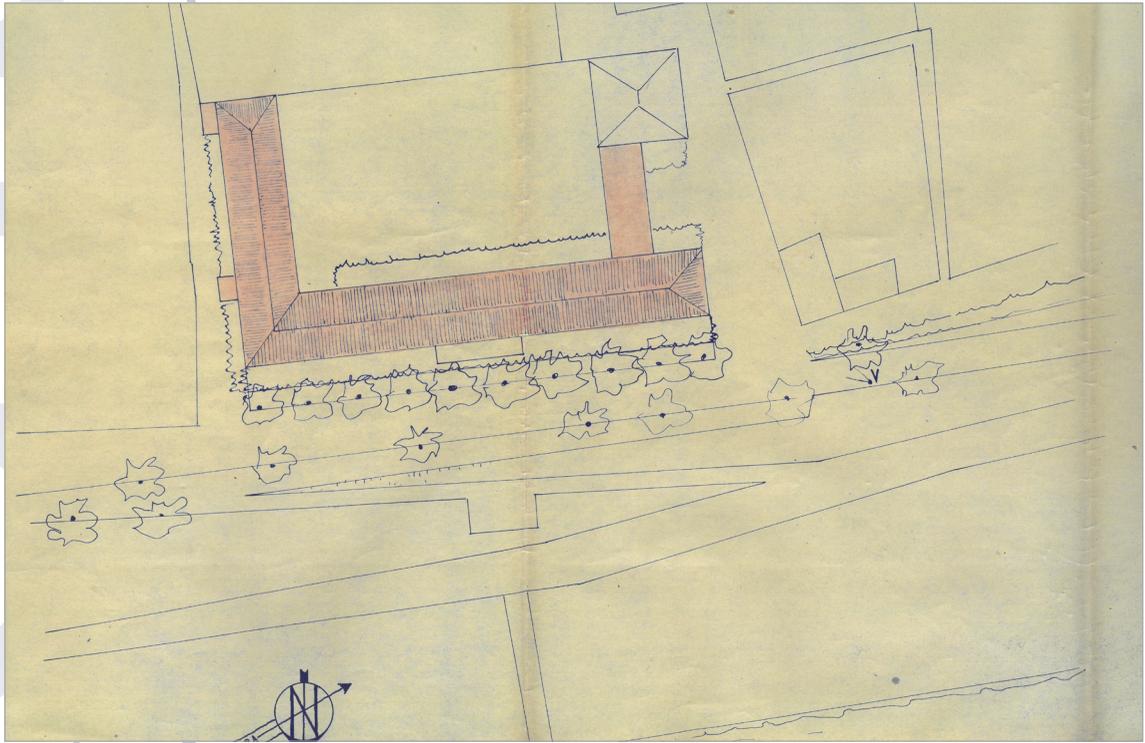
Figure 4: The original plan for the new Slovene-Italian primary school in Koper, architect Ervino Velušček, 1948 (source: PAK, 24 OLO Projekti, 312.9)

Belveder. Between 1949 and 1951, the unfinished fascist school was converted into the Triglav hotel and Omnia department store. The plans for the adaptation were drawn up by one of Slovenia's leading post-war architects, Edo Mihevc (Čebron Lipovec 2012, 216–217; Čebron Lipovec 2020, 259–261).

The Primary School in Koper: From Osnovna šola – Scuola cittadina to Osnovna šola Janko Premrl Vojko

The decision to build a new school was made for practical and ideological reasons. The practical reasons included the outdatedness and inadequate furnishings of the building used for the Slovene school, as evidenced by the school records. The main Italian school was located in a wing of the former convent of the Poor Clares, while the Slovene school did not have its own premises. As already mentioned, it was originally housed together with the grammar school in the renovated building of the former fascist naval school. The primary school was located on the upper floors on the north side of the building, and from 1948 onwards it was housed in three dark classrooms on the ground floor. The first makeshift benches, which satisfied neither the requirements nor the hygiene regulations, were provided by the Military Administration, and it was not until the school year 1947/48 that the Education Department provided new benches and cupboards. The primary school pupils had a separate entrance from the grammar school pupils, but they came together in the courtyard during breaks.

In 1948, the unknown local architect Matossi was still planning to complete the pre-war fascist school building, but the authorities decided to demolish the former monumental prison on the old town's highest point, the Belveder, and build a new school on that site. The demolition of the old building and the construction of the new one, which began in 1949,[14] was the first and most visible urban intervention in the town

14   PAK, 23, Istrski okrožni ljudski odbor, 9, 11. November 1950.

Figure 5: Janko Premrl Vojko Primary School, built on the site of the former penitentiary (photo: Neža Čebron Lipovec, 2007)

centre. The plan for the new school was drawn up by Ervino Velušček (Kregar 1952, 36; Čebron Lipovec 2018), an architect who originated from Trieste and who was completely unknown at the time but who emigrated to Italy in 1950 and created a prominent architectural oeuvre. The original plan for the school building envisaged a monumental complex with three three-storey wings to be built on the floor plan of the former prison. One wing was intended for the Slovene classes, another for Italian classes, and the third was for the administration (Kregar 1952, 36; Čebron Lipovec 2018).

In the end, only one simple single-storey wing was built and handed over for use on 3 March 1951 (La nostra lotta 1951, 2). The new school building, which had only 16 classrooms and not the larger number that had been planned, also deviated from the conceptual plan in terms of design, as it lost its original character with the reduction in size and a different roof. It is said that the original plan was abandoned due to a lack of funds (Kregar 1952, 36).

From a socio-historical point of view, the political-ideological function of this school building was crucial as it was built to house Slovene and Italian pupils under the same roof. In public discourse it was presented as a Slovene-Italian primary school or *scuola cittadina*, which symbolised the so-called *fratellanza* – the brotherhood of Slovenes and Italians in Istria. It there-

fore embodied the fundamental declared ideal of the FTT Zone B, as advocated by the Slavic-Italian anti-fascist union – the *Unione antifascista italo-slava* (SIAU/UAIS) (La nostra lotta 1951, 2). The newspaper *Istrski tednik* reported on the opening as follows:

'On the foundations of the infamous old prison, which many of us know from the time of fascist violence and terror, the first wing of the new school has been built, a magnificent building that will now welcome our young generation. From now on, they will be educated to become new socialist people in the spirit of brotherhood and unity between Slovenes and Italians' (Istrski tednik 1951, 3).

The school initially housed a Slovene 5-year primary school and an Italian 5-year primary school. However, in the school year 1956/57 the Italian primary school moved out of the building to another site in the historic centre[15]. From then onwards, the school was intended only for Slovene-speaking pupils.

Due to intensive economic development – thanks to the TOMOS factory and the port – the first years after the annexation (1954) were a time of intensive workforce inflow, and consequently of children and schoolchildren. As a result of the large population influx, and in view of the forthcoming school reform, the school was enlarged in the year 1957/1958 and given a second floor[16] with an additional eight classrooms, but these were used by the teacher training college[17]. The plans for the extension were drawn up by Miloš Hohnjec, an unknown but very prolific architect of the architectural bureau *Projektivni biro* in Koper in the first years following the annexation (Čebron Lipovec 2018, 227). In addition to the second floor extension, the architect proposed a new, lower, simple pavilion with offices for teachers and workshops, but despite the growing space constraints, the plan remained on paper. School records report of planned ex-

15   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1955/1956.

16   PAK, 24.2, OLO Projekti, 336, 4.

17   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1957/58.

tensions to the administrative building and the integration of the school into the growing new modern neighbourhood in the immediate vicinity, as well as a planned park at the front, but these plans were never realised.

In 1954 and then in 1957, development plans were drawn up for Koper by the architect Nikolaj Bežek (Čebron Lipovec 2019b, 249–253; 2020, 262–265). They outlined the development of new urbanisation on the southern bank of the former salt pans in Semedela, and in the long term also in Bonifika - the reclaimed marshy area of the former salt pans. These development guidelines also led to decisions concerning the location of new school buildings. As the new school at Belveder was short of space, a decision was made in 1957 to found a new school and build a completely new building[18]. However, the school was not built until later. In the school year 1959/60, the school at Belveder had 24 units, one of which was temporarily housed in the building of the Italian primary school in order to avoid the third shift of classes[19]. Finally, in 1962, the new school in Koper acquired premises in a new building at Bonifika.

The Primary School's Symbolism and Heritage Significance

The prison, which was demolished in 1948, primarily symbolised the place where Slovene freedom fighters were oppressed (Beltram 2008, 8). Already in 1930, members of the Slovene secret organisation *Borba* were imprisoned and tortured there; they were the first to protest violently against fascism and the attempts to annihilate Slovene and Croat identity in the region. Constructing the school on the site of the prison, therefore, carried a multilayered symbolic meaning. In the first place, there was the counterpoint between the prison's negative and repressive function of negating an individual's freedom, and the positive and philanthropic function of the school – an educational institution that pro-

18   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1957/58.

19   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1959/60.

Figure 6: The commemorative plaque erected in 1959 on the side façade of the primary school. Alongside it there is a plaque with an Italian translation of the text that was added later (photo: Neža Čebron Lipovec, 2007)

Figure 7: The commemorative plaque erected in 1985 on the side façade of the primary school marking 40 years since the re-establishment of Slovene education in Istria (photo: Neža Čebron Lipovec, 2007)

vides young generations with knowledge as a tool for achieving freedom. There is also a symbolic contrast in ethnic terms: the prison was an allegory of national struggles and attempts at ethnic domination. In Austrian times Italian irredentists were imprisoned here, during the Italian rule Slavs and antifascists were the prisoners. As a contrast to these dynamics, the post-WWII authorities wanted to celebrate inter-ethnic fraternity – *fratellanza* – with a joint Slovene-Italian school as a model of a just relationship between Slovenes and Italians in Istria. The school therefore symbolised respectful coexistence, and its origins and first years of operation can be considered a monument to the utopia that the FTT tried to implement. Yet the utopia dissolved rapidly with the emigration of the Italians, which peaked in 1955–56. Then the declining Italian classes were moved out of the building and the school was enlarged to accommodate the rapidly growing population of newly arrived Slovenes and Croats. In the school year 1959/60, the school was renamed after the Slovene partisan hero Janko Premrl Vojko.[20] In 1959, a commemorative plaque was placed on the school's side façade in memory of the prison, the suffering of the freedom fighters who were imprisoned

20   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika 1959/60.

there under fascism, and the founding of Yugoslavia's communist party. Meanwhile, the ideal of fraternity between Slovenes and Italians was no longer present. In 1985, a commemorative plaque was added to commemorate the re-establishment of Slovenian education in Istria.

In this process we see not only the dissolution of utopia, but in fact its opposite: from the annexation to Yugoslavia onwards, schools reflected the expansion of Slovene identity and a change in the region's ethnic structure and appearance. However, they not only reflected the 'exodus' of the pre-war population, but also the process of 'Yugoslavisation', as the development of the port in particular brought many people from other Yugoslav republics to Koper.

Pinko Tomažič Primary School

This 'ethnic metamorphosis' (Purini 2010) and the socio-economic development of Koper and the whole region into a flourishing Slovene, Yugoslav and socialist landscape was also symbolised by the establishment of the second primary school in Koper in 1958. The first post-war school was then renamed Primary School I (one year later renamed after Janko Premrl Vojko) while the new one was called Primary School II. Both schools initially shared the older, first post-war building. Primary School II moved into a new

building at Bonifika in 1962,[21] and was renamed after the national hero of the partisan movement, Pinko Tomažič. Although the area of drained salt pans had started to be reclaimed already under the Kingdom of Italy in the 1920s and 1930s (Čebron Lipovec 2020, 249–251), it did not actually undergo urbanisation until after it was annexed to Yugoslavia. The plan to develop Bonifika with modern neighbourhoods making up the 'New Koper' was prepared by the leading architect and urban planner in the region at the time, Edo Mihevc, as part of the Urban Plan for Koper in 1961. The latter was part of the larger Regional Plan for the Slovenian Coast (the area of the northern Istrian coast within the Socialist Republic of Slovenia) which was drawn up between 1959 and 1963. Mihevc developed a distinctive architectural idiom of 'progressive' and 'Mediterranean architecture' (Čebron Lipovec 2018, 245–265) for the newly annexed region, consisting of modern architecture with elements inspired by local, vernacular Mediterranean architecture, especially from the countryside. Through this locally influenced yet modern architectural style, he wanted to lay the foundations for modern development in the newly annexed region, based on the qualities of historical and geographical features. The new, modern villa-blocks were contemporary in their floor plans and furnishings, while their exteriors bore vivid earthy colours, accented with tile roofs, vertical windows, wooden shutters, stone details, pergolas and lush greenery. The architect wrote that this was intended to preserve the 'visual continuity of the landscape' (Mihevc 1963, 42). This way, he wanted to create at least an external appearance that sought continuity with the region's tradition. In this gesture we can recognise both a desire to respect this region, but also a desire to conceal the obvious cut in the region's development and history caused by the drastic socio-political revolution and the change of population. Nevertheless, the Mediterranean character was mainly achieved in residential and tourist architecture,

while for public buildings – including school buildings – he drew more directly on contemporary modernist trends.

It was in the context of school buildings that a major breakthrough was made in Slovenia at the time, as an echo of the development and modernisation of the teaching process (the need for a less rigid learning space, the limitation of the number of pupils, new teaching methods, etc.) (Petelin 2020, 172–173). Changes in the field of architecture began to take effect with the introduction of a new form of education after a new Law on Primary Education was adopted in 1959. It was based on the principles of the Communist League of Yugoslavia and established a balance between education and upbringing (Sluga and Jelen Madruša 2006, 10). All school buildings were built according to the same modernist principles: the basic unit was the classroom, which was to provide the pupil with sufficient space, and the floor plan of the classroom should be close to square, adequately lit and have large windows; the new floor plans should be more varied and allow for a more appropriate school design; the schools should not have more than a single storey and have dynamic, asymmetrical compositions; construction should be possible using a concrete structure, but at the same time it should be organically adapted to regional specificities; finally, schools should stand in parks, in the middle of greenery, in contact with nature. All these principles can be found in several proposed variants for the new school at Bonifika. At least four variants were made[22], proposing a subdivided construction around a central pavilion (variant A); an even more subdivided, clustered design of pavilions (variant B); and a simpler, rectangular pavilion design with a wide atrium (variant C). These three variants, which directly mirror the principles of the 'new school', were presented only in plan form. A fourth variant was developed, representing the realised building: an elongated, single-storey pavilion building on columns, with three connecting tracts and two spacious, external staircases.

21   PAK, 936_2, Osnovna šola Janka Premrla Vojka, Šolska kronika, 1962/63.

22   PAK, 24.2, OLO Projekti, 377, 5.

Figure 8: Pinko Tomažič Primary School in the 1980s. (source: Personal Archive of Zdenko Bombek)

All the designs provided for lush greenery. The pavilion design provided a solution for building on the unstable ground of the former salt pans. The building was in fact the first to be built in the poor load-bearing area (Kresal 2016, 96–97). The school was mainly attended by pupils from the suburban estates. All the plans that were drawn up testify to the commitment of the already established Slovenian authorities who shifted the focus from not just solving the spatial problem and asserting Slovenian identity, but also to expressing a special concern for the most modern trends in school architecture and also in education. In 2000, professional critics described the Pinko Tomažič Primary School as 'the only example of a pavilion-like transparent building in the Bonifika area between the old centre of Koper and Semedela, and it could become the standard form of construction in this area'. (Ravnikar et al. 2000) They proposed it should be protected as a cultural heritage site. However, structural problems meant the building was demolished in 2005, despite its architectural qualities.

The Pinko Tomažič Primary School was the embodiment of the grand plan to expand postwar Koper beyond the former salt pans, i.e. the reclaimed Bonifika, towards the neighbouring hills. The town's expansion and the construction of new residential estates, which became necessary with the economic development that followed the construction of the TOMOS fac-

tory and the Port of Koper, led to the construction of several schools in the following decades. The new estates were built in concentric circles from the old town centre southwards. In the centre of Semedela, the new modernist, terraced neighbourhood, a new school was built in 1972 and named after the national hero Dušan Bordon (Čebron Lipovec 2018, 228–229). Only seven years later, in 1979, a school named after Anton Ukmar, another national hero, was built on Markovec, a hilly suburban area, west of Semedela. The latter complex is characterised by a distinctly organic approach in its subdivided wings and its location on a ridge overlooking Koper Bay. The colour scheme of white walls, blue roofs and red details is reminiscent of the Yugoslav and Slovenian flags, although there is no document that explicitly mentions such symbolism being intentional. The school was intended for children from the newly built blocks of flats between Semedela and Žusterna, which were built due to the intensive population growth, mainly of workers from other Yugoslav republics, after the intensive expansion of the Port of Koper and the extremely rapid economic development in the late 1960s and 1970s. The new and modern school, located on one of the most beautiful vantage points overlooking the Gulf of Trieste, reflected the peak of 'Yugoslav' Koper's economic development.

Concluding Discussion

A dual – historical and architectural-historical – analysis of schools in post-war Koper illustrates the dramatic changes that took place in the north Istrian region after the war, and also before it. The motives and mechanisms behind the establishment of Slovene education clearly reflect a desire to redress the injustices of fascism and earlier historical periods. This is manifested above all in the primary concern for the Slovene language, for the 'restoration' of Slovene identity in children who had supposedly 'forgotten' their mother tongue or renounced it under pressure from the forces that wanted to assimilate and erase the Slovene character of this ethnically

mixed area. At the same time, these approaches clearly reveal the processes of establishing Slovenian dominance in the urban space of the acquired territory, through the construction of a socialist social order within the Yugoslav state. However, an architectural-historical analysis of the construction and aesthetics of schools, especially the first post-war primary school in the town centre, reveals a partially different interpretation: in the public media discourse, especially during border-negotiation period of the Free Territory of Trieste (1947–1954), the school was a symbol of the coexistence of Slovenes and Italians, united under the common ideal of a socialist future and of fraternity – *fratellanza* – between two equal peoples. It was this *fratellanza* that the new school in the town centre was supposed to foster, as it was originally conceived as a school for pupils of both languages. Despite the monumental plan for a two-nation school, only the Slovene wing was built, and shortly after the incorporation of Zone B of the Free Territory of Trieste to Yugoslavia, the Italian classes were relocated. The first school then acquired a different population and – under the influence of rapid economic development and mass immigration – became a school for immigrants from different Slovenian regions and other Yugoslav republics.

So, what is the heritage value of the Janko Premrl Vojko Primary School? It was a monument to the short and utopian period of the FTT and its fate, as well as a material bearer of the collective memory of Koper's new, post-war population. At the same time it undoubtedly testified to a historic process that could be called a post-fascist reaction to the suppression of Slovene identity. However, due to the newly acquired post-war position of power, the Slovenian population became numerically and culturally dominant, also as a result of the national or republican context and the establishment of the nation state.

At the same time, educational institutions were a monument to the new socialist reality where education was implemented in a new value system. This was based on the equal-

ity of social classes, self-management, the secular state and the integration of the Yugoslav peoples, while upholding the values of the National Liberation Struggle (*Narodnoosvobodilna borba, NOB*) – the struggle for freedom, peace and anti-fascism. The buildings of the Janko Premrl Vojko and Pinko Tomažič primary schools were therefore the primary carriers of these historical and social values, while their heritage significance is also based on specific architectural and technical achievements, such as adaptation to local specificities, modernist solutions, etc.

It is an eloquent fact that both the town's first post-war school and the second school in Bonifika were demolished in a short period of time at the beginning of the 3rd millennium. The official, technical justification for the demolition on the grounds of poor construction quality is undermined by the fact that the irreversible intervention was carried out without any professional evaluation of the significance of the destroyed buildings. The demolition is a typical example of symbolic erasure and negation (*negation symbolique*, Veschambre 2008) of the monuments of a bygone era and past ideologies – in this case socialism. Equally eloquent is the fact that the demolition of the schools was not accompanied by a professional debate on their heritage significance, in which elements of so-called 'extruded history' can be identified. This concept, as defined by Pamela Ballinger (2012, 380), concerns attitudes towards history that address 'uncomfortable' topics – particularly in the post-war period. These are usually stories of defeat, which enter the public consciousness at inappropriate moments and are difficult to fit into public narratives and into scientific conceptual frameworks; such problematic and disputed narrative is the issue of the 'exodus' (Hrobat Virloget 2021). However, the demolished schools do mark the local collective memory, as proven by the jubilee monograph on the school which was published when the school was closed down and demolished (Poklar and Jelen Madruša 2006). It was prepared by former teachers and pupils. The school's exceptional importance for the lo-
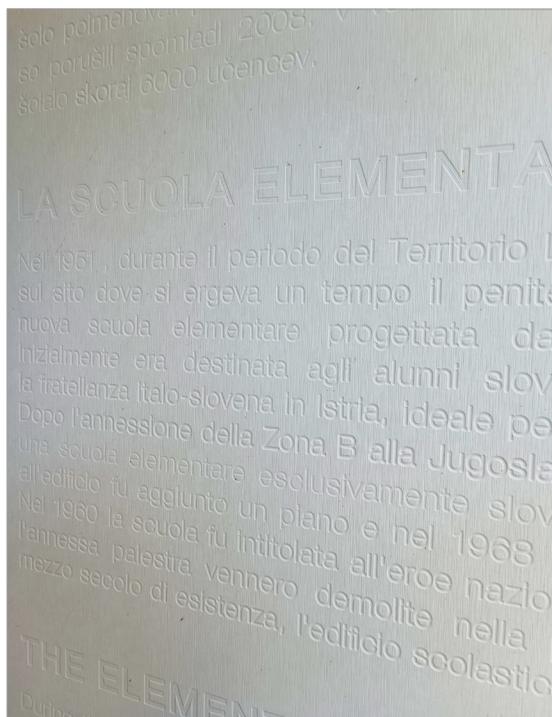
Figure 9: The 'invisibly commemorated' history of the post-war primary school on white slabs with white letters at the northern entrance to the new underground car park on the site of the old school
(photo: Neža Čebron Lipovec, 2023)

cal population is also evidenced by the existence of the social media Facebook groups and their exceptional activity. The Janko Premrl Vojko Primary School has almost 2,000 followers and was founded only a few months after the building was demolished (November 2008),

while Pinko Tomažič Primary School often appears in posts on various Facebook groups about Koper's history, for example *Koper, kot je bil nekoč / Capodistria com'era una volta* (Koper as it used to be). The comments under the posts display a wide range of different reactions – from pure nostalgia and a sense of belonging, to ignorance about the presence of Italians. The variety of comments, emotions and attitudes expressed testify to the extraordinary heritage of these two schools, while the lack of knowledge about the history behind the buildings and the institution can again be considered 'extruded' history. For 15 years, the site of the Janko Premrl Vojko school lay empty, awaiting the construction of an underground car park and a new public park on top of it. Since 2022, the existence of the first post-war school building has been commemorated in the new 'Museum Square' above the car park. Each of the three entrances to the car park has a large white slab with a short introductory text and an axonometric projection of the building. This 'site of memory' is presently (autumn 2023) visible but invisible: the white letters carved into the white slab are completely illegible. The memory of the school and its dissonant heritage significance is 'invisibly commemorated'.

However, in the absence of any interest from the academic and political spheres in evaluating the significance of the post-war schools in the northern Istrian urban space, a special, coincidental and symbolic moment is taking place right now (autumn 2023). After 67 years, the Slovenian and Italian primary schools in Koper have been reunited, albeit temporarily, in the same building – the new building of the Koper Primary School, while the old building of the Italian school is undergoing renovation.

Archival Sources

AS: Arhiv Republike Slovenije.
SABAP FGV: Soprintendenza Archeologia, belle arti e paesaggio del Friuli Venezia Giulia
PAK: Pokrajinski arhiv Koper / Archivio Regionale di Capodistria.

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Summary

The article analyses the role of establishing education and constructing primary schools after World War II in Koper, along the north Istrian coast. This is the region that was the subject of major international negotiations on the demarcation between Italy and Yugoslavia. The central topic is observed from two interconnected perspectives and methodologies: on the one hand through the social history of the development of education, and on the other through an architectural-historical lens that considers the aesthetics and meaning of school buildings. The central case study is the first primary school building, which was built in the historical centre of Koper after the World War II (in 1951), and later renamed the Janko Premrl Vojko Primary School. The institution's development is observed with the help of detailed data from school chronicles, which testify to the revival of Slovenian education in the city and region. This was abolished during the fascist violence, but after World War II it became the focal point of the national and political empowerment of the Slovenian population. We also note that in the process of empowering the Slovenian part of the population, the institution of the school contributed to exerting pressure on the Italian-speaking population, which was gradually emigrating from the region. After the annexation of Istria to Yugoslavia in 1954, another process took place within the framework of the development of education, mainly in the city centre, but also in the city surroundings - the Yugoslavisation of the urban coastal area. This was the result of intensive immigration of new residents from the entire republic and federation due to the intensive industrial development (TOMOS factory, port). The architectural-historical analysis of the first post-war elementary school also sheds light on the symbolism of the building at the time of its construction, during the temporary buffer state of the Free Territory of Trieste, when the building, erected on the ruins of a prison, symbolized the still-living ideal of brotherhood (*fratellanza*) between Slovenians and Italians in Istria, but vanished with the abolition of the buffer-state in 1954. We also discuss Koper's second post-war school, dedicated to Pinko Tomažič and built in 1961 on the outskirts of the city centre on the dried salt pans, or Bonifika, which marked the period of exceptional population and economic growth after the annexation to Yugoslavia. We conclude by reflecting on the heritage significance of both schools as architecture and as institution in general: the first post-war school was initially a monument to utopia, and then became a monument to the city's post-

war Yugoslav identity, while the second primary school is primarily of exceptional importance as modernist architecture. These findings are crucial in light of the fact that both schools were demolished 15 and 18 years ago, respectively.

Povzetek

Članek obravnava vlogo vzpostavljanja šolstva in gradnje šol po drugi svetovni vojni v Kopru, ob severnoistrski obali, torej pokrajini, ki je bila predmet velikih mednarodnih pogajanj o razmejitvi med Italijo in Jugoslavijo. Osrednjo temo opazujemo z dveh povezanih zornih kotov in metodologij: na eni strani skozi perspektivo socialne zgodovine razvoja šolstva, na drugi skozi arhitekturnozgodovinsko analizo estetike in pomena šolskih zgradb. Osrednja študija primera je prva stavba osnovne šole, ki je bila po 2. svetovni vojni zgrajena v historičnem jedru Kopra, kasneje pa preimenovana v OŠ Janka Premrla Vojka. Razvoj ustanove opazujemo skozi natančne podatke iz šolskih kronik, ki pričajo o oživljanju slovenskega šolstva v mestu in regiji, ki je bilo v času fašističnega nasilja ukinjeno, po drugi svetovni vojni pa je postalo osrednja točka nacionalnega in političnega opolnomočenja slovenskega prebivalstva. Ugotovimo pa tudi, da je v procesu opolnomočenja slovenskega dela prebivalstva prav institucija šole prispevala k pritiskom na italijansko govoreče prebivalstvo, ki se je postopoma, hote ali nehote, odseljevalo. Po priključitvi Istre Jugoslaviji leta 1954 se je v okviru razvoja šolstva, predvsem v mestnem jedru, a tudi v mestni okolici, odvil drugi proces – »jugoslavizacije« urbanega obmorskega prostora. Ta je bil posledica intenzivnega priseljevanja novih prebivalcev iz celotne republike in federacije zaradi intenzivnega ekonomskega razvoja industrije (tovarna TOMOS, pristanišče). Arhitekturnozgodovinska analiza prve povojne osnovne šole, zgrajene leta 1951, pa osvetli še pomen stavbe ob njeni izgradnji, v času začasne tamponske države Svobodno tržaško ozemlje, ko je zgradba, postavljena na ruševinah zapora, simbolizirala takrat še živ ideal bratstva (it. *fratellanza*) med Slovenci in Italijani v Istri, ki pa je z ukinitvijo STO izumrl. Obravnavamo tudi drugo povojno šolo, posvečeno Pinku Tomažiču, zgrajeno leta 1961 na obrobju mestnega jedra, na osušenih solinah ali Bonifiki, ki je zaznamovala prav čas izjemne rasti prebivalstva in gospodarstva po priključitvi Jugoslaviji. Sklenemo z razmislekom o dediščinskem pomenu obeh objektov ter šol kot ustanove nasploh in ugotovimo, da je predvsem prva povojna šola (OŠ Janka Premrla Vojka) bila sprva spomenik utopiji, nato pa povojni jugoslovanski identiteti mesta, medtem ko je druga osnovna šola predvsem izjemnega pomena kot modernistična arhitektura. Ti ugotovitvi sta ključni v luči dejstva, da sta obe šoli bili porušeni 15 oz. 18 let nazaj.

The Historical Background to the Erection of the Monument to Nazario Sauro in Koper as an Example of a Fascist Cult of Personality
Zgodovinsko ozadje postavitve spomenika Nazariju Sauru v Kopru kot primer fašističnega kulta osebnosti

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Abstract
This article describes the factors that led to the construction of a monument to the sailor and irreden-tist Nazario Sauro in Koper in the interwar period. The monument on Koper's waterfront announced the beginnings of the town's new urban transformation. However, it did not reach its final epilogue due to the outbreak of World War II. This historical study deals with the ideological pretensions of the cen-tral fascist authorities, who enabled the financing and construction of the monument, alongside local actors. The erection of the monument was the result of extensive financial and organisational efforts.
Key words: Nazario Sauro, Koper, fascism, urbanism, collective memory.

Izvleček
Prispevek podaja vzvode za izgradnjo in postavitev monumentalnega objekta pomorščaku ter ireden-tistu Nazariju Sauru v Kopru v času med obema svetovnima vojnama. Spomenik na koprskem nabrež-ju je naznanil zametke nove urbanistične preobrazbe mesta, ki pa ni doživela končnega epiloga zaradi izbruha druge svetovne vojne. V historično obravnavo so vpete ideološke režimske pretenzije central-nih fašističnih oblasti, ki so bile poleg lokalnih akterjev tiste, ki so omogočile financiranje in izgradnjo spomenika. Fizična postavitev obeležja je bila rezultat obsežnih finančnih in organizacijskih naporov.
Ključne besede: Nazario Sauro, Koper, fašizem, urbanizem, kolektivni spomin.

Introduction

The main purpose of the paper is to pres-ent the circumstances, reasons and events that led to the erection of the monument to Nazario Sauro in Koper[1] in 1935, and which have been less known to the general public until now. These facts shed further light on the com-plex roles of various actors and their activities and plans that led to the monument's erection. The present paper is only part of a larger PhD thesis, which will comprehensively address all the aspects of the erection of the monument to Nazario Sauro in Koper and its impact on the local population's views from the 1930s until the signing of the London Memorandum in 1954.

In the previous century, writing the history of 'contact spaces' was heavily ideologically and politically coloured, and was largely the domain of national identities marked by a national-polit-ical paradigm that represented one of the most important dividing lines of the common space (Pelikan 2012). The roots of national divisions dating back to the 19th century are thus present-ed through historical works on the basis of more or less exclusivist, national and ideological con-

[1] Over the centuries, Koper passed under different govern-ments. Under Italian rule it was called Capodistria.

cepts. This, however, prevents methodological alteration and limits exploration of the plurality of political, social, economic and cultural elements operating in the multi-ethnic and multilingual environment of Istria (Pelikan 2012). Historical interpretations influenced by a political-ideological prism or treated by a specific generational group seeking to create a discourse with which a particular segment of the population will identify, are more prone to anachronism or fabrication and are therefore less relevant. We must therefore be guided by transnational historiography that understands the reasons for the asymmetric treatment of individual historical actors and tries to move away from stereotypical and simplistic representations of historical events and realities (Verginella 2012). A comprehensive scientific analysis of the facts and the search for clues within a precise time frame allow us to find so-called event details and as yet unknown interstices in the micro-stories that could lead us to further understand the impact of a local phenomenon on the macro level and vice versa. The focus here is on 'contact' defined by the demarcation and coexistence of regional and national identities, and political and economic systems, etc. As an example, consider the history of symbols in the public space of an environment where different national identities are in contact with each other. The dominant ideological or social elite used public space to shape individual and collective identity. Symbols used in such an environment are an effective means of visual communication and create a distinct national-spatial identity. These influences, based on a precisely structured narrative of the past, serve to objectify national identity (Schama 1996).

With the signing of the Rapallo Treaty between the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (SHS) and the Kingdom of Italy, and the establishment of the new border in November 1920, the political reorganization of the territory of the Julian March and Istria was temporarily closed. With the annexation of Trento and Trieste, Italy achieved the much-desired national unity and integrity after World War I.

Nevertheless, this achievement could not suppress expansionist desires and prevent the emergence of fascism. For the former Austrian territories – Trieste with its wider surroundings and Istria – the new geopolitical reality had different consequences. Firstly, *Mitteleuropa's* economic interests ceased gravitating towards Trieste. There followed a transition from the precise and flexible Austrian state bureaucracy to Italian administration with its Bourbon customs and rigidly vassal relationship with the state apparatus. Meanwhile, there was a rapprochement of the local capitalist circles with the militarists and the irredentist national liberal oligarchy, which asserted its anti-Austrian, anti-Slavic and anti-socialist line (Steffè 1978, 13–38). The new government had repercussions on all aspects of the area's social life, but above all it radically changed its cultural image. This was evident in the manifestation of power through symbolism, embodied in public commemorations and the erection of buildings with symbolic value.

A clear example of the latter is the erection of a monument to the Istrian seafarer Nazario Sauro in Koper. Sauro was born in Koper on 20 September 1880. Prior to World War I, he was employed as captain of a small steamer called San Giusto by the Koper maritime company, sailing regularly between Koper and Trieste. Sauro often expressed his sympathy for the Kingdom of Italy through minor provocations aimed at the Austrian authorities, but above all, he had regular contact with the Italian consulate in Trieste. During the July Crisis in 1914, at the outbreak of World War One, Sauro's employment with the maritime company *Capodistria* was terminated, partly because of his unruly behaviour and partly because of his anti-Austrian stance (Sauro 2017, 111–112). Many prominent Austrian-Italian political representatives of the liberal-nationalist camp emigrated to Italy in the summer of 1914. Nazario Sauro expressed the intention of enrolling his son in a school in Udine as an excuse to obtain a passport that would allow him to cross into Italy. Despite the general mobilisation, the Austrian authorities allowed him to leave be-

cause he did not meet the medical requirements due to an eye injury. From Koper he travelled to Venice where he visited Giovanni Giuriati, a lawyer and president of the Trento - Trieste organisation because he wanted to join the Italian army as a volunteer. Nazario Sauro had often sailed along the eastern Adriatic coast before the war and wanted to join the Italian armed forces as an informer and scout. When Italy declared war in May 1915, he was enlisted in the Italian Royal Navy to fight against the Austrian fleet in Istria and Dalmatia. He took part in some naval military operations and was captured by Austro-Hungarian forces on 31 July 1916 while trying to escape from the submarine Pulino, which ran aground on the island of Galiola, between the island of Unije and the Istrian peninsula. As a citizen of Austria-Hungary, he was convicted of desertion and executed on 10 August 1916 (Ponis 2016). His conviction by a military court and subsequent execution had a strong public resonance, which was later manifested at the national level, especially during annual commemorations. In the interwar period, the myth of Nazario Sauro was shaped through metaphors in the public sphere (naming of schools, streets, publications, etc.), culminating in the erection of a monument in Koper in 1935. The construction of the monument to Nazario Sauro clearly shows the politics of remembrance imposed by various actors at national and local levels.

Methodological Approach

In this article, I try to shed some light on the background and the reasons that led to the erection of the monument to Nazario Sauro in Koper. The research was based on various archival sources and preserved photographic material. In particular, I would like to highlight the influence of fascist ideology and architecture in shaping the urban image of Koper at the time. The latter is mainly presented chronologically on the basis of preserved archival material and the subject is not dealt with more broadly. The aspects of forming a place of collective memory through the erection of a monument to Nazario Sauro

would also go beyond the scope of this paper, so it is necessary to highlight a few key aspects that empirically provide reasons for a better understanding of the coexistence of symbolism with public rituals. Pierre Nora, one of the leading researchers on places of collective memory, stressed the social function of collective memory for national identity. He made it clear that collective memory creates its own specific dynamics, and that memory is not only a fundamental element of any community but a clear reflection of it (Nora 1989). In his work entitled *Il culto del littorio,* G. Gentile examines in depth the national myth of Greater Italy, which obsessively linked its perception of itself as a European superpower to the glory of its ancient history. The latter is clearly visible in the urban interventions in Koper in the second half of the 1930s with the tendency to preserve the town's historical continuity from the period of the Venetian Republic. Collective memory links individual experience with public experience, whereby individual history is side-lined and public history acquires its own autonomous narrative, giving way to the political exploitation of memory, which is certainly a fundamental element of mass nationalisation (Mosse 1975). The collective memory is thus formed on the basis of public rituals, organisations, and cultural and religious acts, which are centred on the element of belonging. The construction of powerful symbols in fascist Koper, which would serve as tools of social belonging and national cohesion, culminated in the erection of the monument to Nazario Sauro. The article sheds light on the events and circumstances that led to the erection of the monument to Nazario Sauro in Koper, which were largely pushed into the background due to the ideologically tinged public media at the time.

From irrendentism to the Subsequent 'Fascisation' of the Cultural Landscape

The ethno-national conflict in the Austrian Littoral, especially in Trieste and Istria, escalated steadily in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The irredentist movement, which aspired to the

annexation of all the Italian 'unredeemed lands' (*terre irredente*), was part of democratic and republican forces in Italy and was always an important component of the left. However, one decade before World War I broke out, the movement moved to the political right . The discourse on irredentism as a possible class weapon, as a step towards militarism, is revealed in a series of nationalist journals on Italian soil in the first decade of the 20th century, in the years preceding World War I. Despite its strong presence in the Italian political discourse of the time, it did not receive any concrete encouragement from its supporters and defenders to achieve its 'main mission' – the annexation of all the 'unredeemed lands' (*terre irredente*). Nor did its inclusion in Italian politics at the beginning of the twentieth century significantly change the appearance of irredentism from that of the second half of the nineteenth century. More radical changes took place after the congress in Rome, at the end of December 1912, when about 30 representatives of the democratic wing left the nationalist movement because of its completely undemocratic spirit. After the Libyan war, which precipitated the integration of nationalists into the political struggle, the determined and intransigent wing of the nationalists welcomed into their midst a group of irredentists from Trieste (Fauro, Tamaro, Alberti, Xydias) and the Roman group centred around the magazine *L'Idea Nazionale*. Together they founded the so-called 'imperialist irredentism', of which Ruggero Timaeus-Fauro became the most characteristic representative.[2] As the initiator of the 'new irredentism' movement, he became an advocate of the liberation of the 'unredeemed lands', but no longer in the name of a national or democratic ideal, but in the expectation of Italian domination in the Adriatic. According to Ruggero Timeus-Fauro, the Adriatic question would be resolved outside Austria-Hungary by Italy gaining the former possessions of the Venetian Republic and becoming the sole power in the Adriatic. In con-

trast to some of the young intellectuals in Trieste, such as the Stuparich brothers, Scipio Slataper and Angelo Vivante, Timeus-Fauro rode the wave of nationalism and populism, insisting that any reconciliation with the Germanic and Slavic worlds was impossible in the context of a dual monarchy because it would indicate the weakness of the Italian national component. Breaking away from liberal-nationalist circles, which continued to advocate the defence of Italian interests within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, he preferred to equate the national struggle with the quest for power and expansionism. He perceived the national struggle as an inevitable destiny that would be achieved by the complete disappearance of one of the races living there, and the Slavic danger could only be eliminated by the annexation of the 'unredeemed lands' to the Kingdom of Italy and the complete isolation of the Slavic population living in the territory of the Austrian Littoral (Verginella 2016, 709). Some historians have placed Pio Riego Gambini, the creator of the 'Istrian Youth Fascio' (*Fascio Giovanile Istriano*), founded in Koper on 1 October 1911, and the editor of the magazine *Giovane Istria* (1913), alongside Ruggero Timeus-Fauro on Istrian soil.[3] Gambini expressed his thoughts and views in *La Giovane Istria* and other publications, as well as in some public appearances from September 1911 to August 1914, including a rather high-profile appearance in 1913 in front of students from the University of Naples, returnees from the Libyan campaign and fellow students from various colleges. Unfortunately, the texts of his speeches dedicated to Giuseppe Mazzini, the founding of the Italian University in Trieste and the speeches he addressed to the members and trustees of the 'Istrian Youth Fascio' in Koper in May 1914 have not been preserved. In the spirit of irredentist ideology, the young Gambini directed the strong fascio in Koper towards boycotting Austrian government measures, scaremongering and keeping a watchful eye on what was happening on Italian soil (Žitko, 2016, 699).

2 For more on Fauro's nationalist doctrine see in particular Verginella (2016, 705–720).

3 For more on the ideological views and activities of P. R. Gambini, see Quarantotti Gambini (1940, 158–169; 1954).

In terms of his ideological and political thoughts, Nazario Sauro was initially a supporter of the socialists but distanced himself from them because of their anti-militarist stance. He established close contacts with Vico Predonzani and the aforementioned Riego Gambini and advocated the creation of a socialist Mazzinian fascio, which eventually became the 'Istrian Youth Fascio' with its headquarters in the Tacco Palace in Koper. Due to the age limit of 24, Sauro did not formally join it but regularly attended meetings. Informal meetings of the young irredentists of Koper were frequently held in Sauro's cabin on the steamer San Giusto while sailing (Sauro 2017, 56–57). It would be superficial to characterise Sauro's ideological thoughts as merely traditional irredentist, aimed at defending the Italian identity of the Istrian coastal towns and their institutions. From the surviving sources, we can conclude that Sauro was strongly inspired by Mazzini's ideas of the Risorgimento, which were diametrically opposed to the militant slogans and precepts of the national interventionist circles of the Italian right at the time. However, it must be understood that by the time war broke out, irredentism had gradually acquired a strong nationalist ideological-political connotation, which was increasingly identified and consolidated in the state institutions, moving away from classical irredentism. Under the influence of interventionist circles, the idea of cultural domination was replaced by theses similar to those published by Ruggero Timeus-Fauro in his pamphlet entitled Trieste. He emphasised the aspect of national defence with the aim of extending Italy into Balkan territory within the framework of imperialist logic (Cattaruzza 2005, 71–79). The latter was 'spiced up' by Gabriele D'Annunzio with his picturesque prose and punchy slogans, thus displacing the ideas of cultural irredentism, which drew its inspiration from the concepts of Mazzini and Marx (Seton-Watson 1967, 409–427). The outbreak of World War I brought about a strong radicalisation in Italian cultural and political life, accelerating processes that had emerged in the pre-war

years in the most radical irredentist circles (Cattaruzza 2005, 71–79). The movement of the irredentist lands was profoundly transformed by the popularisation of nationalist and imperialist ideas. From its original strict territorial limitation, it acquired a new importance for the Italian political and military leadership of the time, due to the major political changes before, during and after World War I. From national antagonisms under Austrian rule, it evolved into strong support for interventionism and developed as a handy instrument for achieving foreign political and military goals. The irredentist circles became a tool and a striking force for the interventionist phenomenon and created the basis for fascist ideology to flourish and establish itself even before the March on Rome. In his rhetoric, Mussolini described Italy's entry into World War I as the beginning of the fascist revolution, so the role of the war, which cost Italy 651,000 lives, was presented by the fascist regime as regeneration (Mortara 1925, 28–29).

Italian nationalism did not subside after World War I, which ended in victory and the realisation of the ideal. Instead, it intensified and strengthened its former anti-Slavic orientation. The policy of national defence was therefore seen as the only appropriate policy for the protection of Italian identity, even after the annexation to Italy. As there were no longer any real historical reasons for it, national defence became a formula that was able to gather the consensus of the majority of the population by artificially emphasising the danger to national identity. On the other hand, this formula fostered radicalisation in the maximalist sense among a large part of the proletariat of Trieste, and radicalisation in the nationalist sense among the Slavic population of the Julian March. In this tense atmosphere, fascism found fertile ground for its development. In almost all the territories annexed after the war, it was able to present itself as a defender of victory and its fruits (Ara and Magris 2001, 147). The systematic construction of the memory of the Great War was consequently reflected in the 'fascisation' of the cultural landscape (Bosworth

and Dogliani 1999; Gentile 1994, 38–49). The metamorphosis of the new state was supposed to reflect the glory days of the Roman Empire, which would have developed Italian society according to the model of a new avant-garde civilisation of global status (Klabjan 2017). According to Mussolini, architecture had great importance in this transformation, especially as a medium of the regime – a handy tool in the hands of the politics of the time (Nicoloso 2008). The buildings constructed as a direct consequence of the Great War had to embody the dominant narrative, creating and maintaining a national consciousness that was crucial in the construction of a commemorative iconography. Nationalist groups, local committees, veterans' organisations, the army, families, and local and state institutions in the northern Adriatic region were based on irredentist tendencies, displaying images of the fallen or of so-called martyrs who fought for the redemption of the 'unredeemed lands'. The transformation of the towns and cities, beginning with Trieste, did not only mean the removal of 'Austrian' symbols and changes in street names but was a much more radical process that changed the appearance and transformed the very identity of the cities in the long term (Klabjan 2017). A complex visual transformation that transcended the local character – with the city of Trieste taking most credit for this – sought to acquire a new role in the Italian state. The new urban image of Trieste, removed from the Habsburg monarchy, had to reflect dynamism, new forces and intellect (Canali 2018, 251–335). A concrete example was the erection of the 'Victory Lighthouse' (*Faro della Vittoria*) on 24 May 1927 – the 12th anniversary of Italy's entry into the war. The idea of erecting a lighthouse had already emerged in irredentist circles at the end of October 1918, as a result of the euphoria following the victory at the Piave River. With some modifications to the original plan, work finally started in January 1923 on the site where the Austrian fortress of Kressich (built in 1854) once stood. A military installation, intended to protect the city from possible

attacks from the sea or to control possible unrest and rebellions in what was then the monarchy's largest port, completely lost its original purpose in the post-war landscape urbanism. While the old building provided an excellent foundation for the new structure, the choice of location was primarily symbolic and can be interpreted as the submission of a defeated Austria to a victorious Italy (Salimbeni 2001, 139–143). The lighthouse has two other important symbolic elements – a statue of winged victory on the top and, at the base, the anchor of the Italian battleship *Audace*, which was the first Italian ship to arrive in the port of Trieste on 3 November 1918. In combination, they give symbolic meaning to a building that had no practical value, as the port of Trieste already had a functioning lighthouse (Collotti 2000, 33–61). Symbolically, the Victory Lighthouse should be a tribute to all fallen Italian sailors, including Nazario Sauro. However, the figure of the executed sailor Nazario Sauro already served this purpose when the foundation stone for the monument was laid in Koper in 1926. The fusion of the two symbols of victory and sacrifice would not lead to the desired national cohesion that could be based on the historical experience of the Great War.

In Trieste, there is also a monument to fallen Italian soldiers on San Giusto Hill. The symbolism of this site is not accidental, as it represents anachronistic historical continuity between the remains from Roman times and the later cathedral as a symbol of Christianity, and the medieval fortress, which testifies to the city's autonomy from Habsburg rule onwards. Not only Trieste, but the whole of the Julian March was strongly subject to the erection of similar symbols. An example is the monument to Dante Alighieri erected in Tolmin at the end of the 1920s, a small regional centre in the upper Primorska region, which was a step away from commemorative buildings dedicated to wartime events. At the request of the Tolmin fascist organisation, the city of Florence donated a bronze bust of the poet Dante Alighieri, the work of the sculptor Moschi. The statue was unveiled on 9

August 1929 in the presence of the Italian heir to the throne, Umberto Prince of Savoy, and the Vice-Mayor of Florence, Dauphiné. The base of the statue bore the inscriptions: '*Dante presso il confino misurato da Dio*' (Dante at the border set by God) and 'Florence to the most Italian Tolmin'. According to legend, Dante entered a cave, known as Dante's Cave, somewhere in the area of today's Triglav National Park. This myth was therefore used to confirm the borders of the Treaty of Rapallo (Kastelic 2007, 34–44).

In the evolution of its political religion, fascism tried to portray the 'rituals of death' as 'rituals of life'. Especially when celebrating death, it had to symbolically express vitality and faith in the future. It wanted the sacrifice of those who fell for the country to be the potion that would breathe new life into the nation and give it strength for its rebirth. In this context, the fascist liturgy wanted to promote the 'myth of collective harmony', which was a key tool in the project of 'transforming the character of the Italian citizens at the time' (Gentile 1994, 54–59). Many memorials were built in line with this guiding principle: the cemetery in Redipuglia and the Kobarid ossuary – both inaugurated in 1938, the Park of Remembrance in Gorizia, the monument to Filippo Corridoni in San Martino sul Carso (today Italy), all set along the current Slovene-Italian border in the upper Primorska region, etc.

The Reason Behind the Construction of the Memorial on the Waterfront of Koper

The basic concept behind the monument to Nazario Sauro in Koper in 1935 is somewhat different from the above. The reason for it took shape like the sacrifices made in the Great War, but as a monument to a hero it was subjected to a specific ideological-mythical narrative, which was meant to serve as a collective example and memorial of sacrifice. During the fascist period, Nazario Sauro's life story was therefore further subjected to historical falsification. The result was a personality cult of Nazario Sauro, marked by a tradition of naval battles and extreme individual heroic acts. The monument's design, which would conceptually encompass both, was focused on the construction of a sacral building, but it later differed slightly from the original plans, and the unveiling ceremony also took place during the period of great changes in foreign politics in the 1930s. The extant archival material reveals the extensive organisational and financial efforts required to erect the monumental memorial to the seafarer Nazario Sauro in Koper. Preparations took two decades and fostered a diverse mythology on which the nationalist-tinged fascist discourse based itself. When the monument was inaugurated in Koper on Sunday 9 June 1935, the fascist MP Carlo Delcroix gave a speech in which he stressed the importance of the 'warrior tradition' of the local population associated with Sauro. In addition to the so-called martyrs of irredentism, he also mentioned the heroes of the Battle of Lepanto (1571). The sea, the winged lion of Venice, the King and the Duce, faith, the homeland, war and sacrifices, the nation, and the maritime tradition were the key elements used in his speech. On the waterfront, which was named after a seaman from Koper, he concluded his speech with the thought that both the Istrian towns and the monument were looking at the homeland of Italy (Marini 1936). Official wreath-laying ceremonies at the Nazario Sauro monument continued until 1943, when fascism fell and Italy surrendered. The imposing monument on Koper's waterfront, largely destroyed by German forces on 22 May 1944, was only the physical materialisation of a symbol with which the local population of the Julian March, and especially of Istria, as well as of the whole Apennine peninsula could identify. The monument created to commemorate the fallen hero of Koper wanted above all to celebrate the greatness of the nation, which was symbolically represented by winged victory. The creation of the myth of Nazario Sauro was the result of a long period of commemorations and events between the two wars.

The idea of erecting a memorial to Nazario Sauro was first mooted immediately after

the end of World War I, on 26 December 1918, when a committee was set up under the leadership of Captain Biagio Cobolo. On 7 January 1919, a call for tenders was issued for the erection of a monument to Nazario Sauro (Derin 2002). Seven years later, on 10 August 1926, a ceremony was held in Koper to mark the symbolic laying of the foundation stone, with a speech by Giovanni Giuriati, then Minister of Public Works of the Kingdom of Italy and formerly President of the Free State of Fiume. In the same year, a competition was held for Italian artists to come up with a design for the monument. The members of the jury included Leonardo Bistolfi, Cipriano Efisio Oppo, Francesco Salata and a few prominent local political figures. Out of 34 sculptors and architects, the first prize was awarded to the architect Enrico Del Debbio and the sculptor Attilio Selvi from Trieste. The second prize went to the architect Umberto Piazzo and the sculptor Roberto Terracini from Turin, and the third prize was given to the sculptor Adolare Plimieri from Trieste. The winning project was based on triangular geometric shapes that allowed the prismatic volumes to support a column on which the symbolic figure of Istria was placed. The work, which the jury judged to be 'particularly original', underwent a few more changes before it was realised. The modifications were mainly the result of new construction concepts connected with a change of location. It was envisaged that the monument would stand closer to the sea and would be oriented towards the peninsula Debeli Rtič (Punta Grossa) to the north and so towards Trieste (Neri 2006, 352). Although the foundation stone was laid in 1926, followed by the competition, the actual beginning of construction was postponed for almost a decade, presumably due to the economic crisis at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s (Faveri 2010). Commemorative ceremonies were nevertheless regularly held on an annual basis. For example, on Saturday 7 July 1928 the ceremony in commemoration of Nazario Sauro took place in the presence of a destroyer of the Royal Italian Navy, which was named after the irre-

dentist hero. During the event, the destroyer's crew received a battle flag as a tribute from the town. On the fifteenth anniversary, 10 August 1931, Minister Siriani gave a solemn speech[4]. It was not until 1932 that Mussolini approved the formation of a special Committee for the erection of a monument to Nazario Sauro in Koper, within the framework of the Commission for National Monuments in Honour of Cesare Battisti and Nazario Sauro. The Committee consisted of General Vittorio Zupelli as chairman, Senator Francesco Salata, lawyer Nino de Petris (*Commisario prefettizio*) for the municipality of Koper as member (Cherini 1990),[5] Commander Daponte from the Government Cabinet (*Gabinetto Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*) as member, and the sculptor Selva and the architect Del Debbio as competition winners. At its second meeting on 16 January 1933, the Committee discussed the final terms of the contract for the construction of the memorial in Koper[6]. Following a request from the Ministry of Public Works, Article 4 of the contract authorised civil engineers from Pula to manage the technical aspects of the works. The latter were also authorised to settle the financial accounts for the works, including payment for the artwork, which had a fixed price.[7] Just how much importance was ascribed to the monument's final appearance is evident in Article 10 of the contract, which stipulated that the approval of the highest authority in the country, the Prime Minister, was required for artistic corrections during the construction phase. Any request was to be addressed to the Monuments Committee. Regarding the suitability of artistic creations, the

4   PAK, 7, 510, Fond Mestne občine Koper.

5   On 13 October 1934, Nino Derin was appointed the new Podestà of Koper.

6   The engineers from Pula were also obliged to comply with Article 12 of the contract, which provided for the supervision of both the amount and quality of the materials and the execution of the works, and the engineers were required to supervise the completion of the individual works and to make payments to the subcontractors accordingly.

7   Interestingly, Francesco Salata used the foreign term 'forfait' to emphasise the unchanging cost of an artwork. (PAK, 7, 510, Fond Mestne občine Koper).

Special Committee was able to rely on the recommendations of an external expert advisor, whose suggestions were then sent to the Duce for review. Another aspect indicating the significance of the monument's erection can be detected from this meeting – Zupelli compared it with the Victory Memorial in Bolzano as a response to the pro-German demonstrations. In view of possible violence and demonstrations by the Yugoslavs, Zupelli stressed that the erection of a monument to Nazario Sauro in Koper was essential for confirming Italy's new and inviolable right to the Adriatic. It is noteworthy that in the case of Nazario Sauro, the Italian political leadership did not question Nazario's 'anti-Austrianism' and whether the erection of the monument would lead to pro-Austrian or pro-German demonstrations, but rather that the planned erection was primarily intended to demonstrate Italian supremacy in the Adriatic. The Mayor of Koper, Nino de Petris, added that on 15 January 1933, the general assembly held in Koper to celebrate the 'fascist *befana*' voted in favour of an agenda item stipulating that in the 11th year of the fascist era a monument should be erected to the Italian hero, the martyr of irredentism and defender of the Italian character of the Adriatic Sea – Nazario Sauro, as a solemn warning and response to Yugoslav provocations. Based on extant sources, it is clear that the memorial on the Koper seafront was not only intended to preserve the memory of the town's seaman but that it was also intended to reflect the 'warrior seafaring tradition' of its Italian population. According to prominent representatives of the authorities, the monument was also supposed to reflect historical continuity in past naval battles, from the Battle of Lepanto (1571) at the time of the Venetian Republic to Sauro's naval exploits in World War I (Marini 1936, 129–140).[8] The completion date was set for 10 August 1933, followed by the opening on 10 August 1934, coinciding with the anniversary of Nazario Sauro's execution. On 23 March 1933, Prime Minister

8 The latter is evident from the speech given by Carlo Delcroix at the unveiling of the monument.

Benito Mussolini authorised the signing of the contract with the competition winners, and on 3 May the contract was signed and endorsed by a decree of the Council of Ministers (*Consiglio dei ministri*). On 18 May, the contract was approved by the Ministry of Finance. In line with the contract, 300,000 *lire* were released in June 1933 so the works could begin. The Commission for National Monuments in Honour of Cesare Battisti and Nazario Sauro also drew up a funding programme for the works in Koper, which was originally included in the budget of the Ministry of Public Works. The cost of demolishing the former Patzowsky salt warehouse, where the monument was to be erected, and of building a wall along the quay called '*Riva Nuova*' amounted to 39,652.30 *lire* (equivalent to €42,138.06). The landscaping of the monument's surroundings amounted to a further 708,183.37 *lire* (equivalent to €752,578.63). Sources indicate that the Ministry of the Interior contributed 640,000 *lire*, as the construction work did not only benefit port activities.[9]

Construction of the Monument to Nazario Sauro

As work had not begun even a year after the contract was signed, the completion date was postponed to 10 August 1934 and the proposed opening date to 4 November 1934, the anniversary of the Italian victory in World War I. The multiple postponements of the construction deadline could not be blamed on possible subversive or anti-state actions or on the 'inactivity' of the people involved but on the technical complexity and demanding nature of the construction itself, as can be seen from the archival documentation. The sculptor Selva expressed the opinion that in order for the monument to be of the desired quality the construction deadline should be extended, and that it would only be reasonable to talk about the date of completion once work had actually begun (Marini 1936, 129–140). Francesco Salata pointed out that the selected contractors or artists should be encouraged as much as

9 PAK, 7, 510, Fond Mestne občine Koper

possible in their work, as the foundation stone had been laid way back in 1926. The cabinet of the Minister of the Interior gave the final green light for the start of construction work on the site of the monument on 4 September 1934, when the work actually began.

We can find out more about the phase of viewings and preparations for construction from the report by the municipal engineer from Koper, dated 13 January 1933. It was written at the request of the Prefect of Koper, Nino de Petris, and could be used to present the progress of the preparatory work at the meeting of the special committee. This document shows that the architect Del Debbio and the sculptor Selva had already visited the site in Koper in the autumn of 1930 and determined the most suitable location for the monument and the orientation of its components. They also noted that the 'backdrop' to the monument would also need to be developed. It would consist of a nearby park and a platform on which the sculpture would stand. To this end, it was decided to take some building material from the seabed of a nearby shipyard and an islet created by the excavation of material for the Dreher brewery. The two competition winners then began visiting Istrian quarries and examining rock samples in order to determine the most suitable material for the monument's construction. On the basis of the results (inspection, measurements and the rocks themselves) and some suggestions from the committee, they refined the original plan. At the same time, a unit of the Royal Engineers from Pula (*Corpo reale Civile di Pola*) was given the task of examining samples from the plot on which the monument was to be built in order to draw up a plan for the foundations. In the course of drilling, it was realised that the new foundations would partly rest on the remains of the former salt warehouse, so Selva and Del Debbio proposed to shift the monument's location so the entire composition would rest on more solid ground. In addition to drawing up a plan for the foundations, the Royal Engineers from Pola were also required to provide the ministry with an estimate for the amount of

material (soil) that would have to be brought in to build suitable foundations. The quality of the soil from the Dreher brewery that was to be used for the foundations was not assessed. In addition, the municipal engineer in Koper stressed the necessity of landscaping the wider area around the monument that had often been used as a waste dump. In his view, there was a risk the landscaping might not be carried out later, or it might cost more. On 28 January 1935, Bianchetti, Head of the Cabinet of the Council of Ministers, informed the Ministry of Public Works that the estimate given by the engineers from Pola for the purchase and development of the land to be used for the monument amounted to 105,000 *lire*. Bianchetti added in his letter that the Prefecture of Koper estimated another 250,000 *lire* would be needed to pave the entire surface around the monument – in addition to the already anticipated costs. The municipality of Koper was not able to cover this cost, so it turned to state aid, which approved all the planned financial inputs. A letter from January 1935 shows a rough estimate of the additional costs amounting to about 355,000 *lire* (105,000 *lire* estimated by the engineers from Pola and 250,000 *lire* by the Prefecture of Koper). Bianchetti also informed the Ministry of Public Works that the engineers from Pola had been given permission to begin urgent construction work in the area surrounding the monument. The *podesta*, or mayor, of Capodistria tried to take advantage of the monument's construction – for which the state had allocated a considerable sum of money – to carry out additional infrastructure works in the town itself, requesting an additional 185,000 *lire* for this purpose. These would be earmarked for the redevelopment of St. Mark's salt warehouse (the present-day Taverna), but his tactical intention did not succeed. In a letter from 23 February 1935, we can see that the Prefect of Pola informed the *podestà* of Koper that the Ministry of the Interior had not approved an additional 185,000 lire for the landscaping of the monument's surroundings. The letter also made it clear that, given the financial situation, such renovations

could only be carried out after the opening ceremony. The available sources also show that the restoration of public property in Koper did take place, as on 18 January 1935 the Milanese company Imprese Generali began landscaping the area around the monument. On this occasion, the architect and conservator Ferdinando Forlati, the new *podestà* of Koper Nino Derin, the engineers Maier and Madonizza, and representatives of the construction companies tasked with the additional work were present to see the works begin (Cherini 1990, 248).

The monument's shape resembled a submarine, consisting of an elongated oval base on which a staircase and a pillar in the form of a conning tower were erected. The monument was constructed mainly from roughly hewn granular cubes of Istrian stone. The height of the monument measured from the walkway to the top of the tower was 10 m. At the rear of the monument, on the first terrace, there were two 2.3 m high bronze statues representing Nazario Sauro and his mother. The visual representation of this encounter was based on a real event that happened on 6 August 1916, when the gendarmerie of Koper received a telegram demanding that Nazario Sauro's mother and sister appear before the court of the Austrian Admiralty in Pola. Despite the fact that Anna Depangher Sauro, Nazario's mother, firmly denied knowing the captured Italian sailor before the military court in the hope of saving him, the court sentenced Nazario Sauro to death. The event had a strong propaganda connotation under fascism, as such an extreme act embodied the virtues that Italian mothers were supposed to possess in the time of fascism (Sauro 2017, 249–259).[10]

The front of the monument, facing the sea, had a 2.5 m high bronze statue of a helmsman holding a ship's rudder. The sculptor Silva modelled the helmsman on the sailor Gianni Pi-

ras from Sardinia. Piras had been a crew member on the submarine Giacinto Pullino when it ran aground and subsequently became a prisoner of war (Derin 2002). The main statue, which was placed on top of the tower, symbolised the winged goddess of victory with a sword and shield. The bronze sculpture, weighing a total of 5 tonnes, measured 6.8 m in height, which meant that the entire monument measured a full 17 m from the ground.[11] The base of the monument was adorned by an exedra of evergreens forming two lateral grassy patches. Six lights placed in the flowerbeds themselves illuminated the monument in all its grandeur.[12] On 9 June 1935, the monument to Nazario Sauro was inaugurated in Koper in the presence of King Vittorio Emanuele III, Corrado Ricci, Armando Diaz and more than 50,000 people. On this occasion, the Savoy dynasty awarded the architect Enrico Del Debbio and the sculptor Attilio Selva the Knighthood of St. Maurice[13] (Neri 2006).

The Urban Interventions in Koper as a Reflection of Fascist Ideology

Less than two years after the signing of the contract, on 16 January 1935, the Royal Monument Conservation Department of Trieste (*R. Sopraintendenze alle opere antiche e di arte*) took part in a wide range of restoration works in Koper.[14] In addition to the many proposals for finishing works around the monument, they also began renovating St. Mark's salt warehouse (the present-day Taverna). After the proposal to demolish the warehouse was rejected, its use was changed to that of 'a folkloristic social facility with catering services'.[15] Saint Justina's column (*Colonna di S. Giustina*), dedicated to the Battle of Lepanto, was relocated to Carpaccio Square,

10 The extant archival material shows that the judicial authorities verified Sauro's identity through a request made to the municipality of Koper on 3 August 1916. In the letter, the municipality was asked to confirm that Nazario Sauro was the son of Giacomo/Beretta and Anna Depangher (PAK, 7, 510 Spomenik Nazario Sauro, Fond Mestne občine Koper).

11 Note: In the surviving archival material on the monument, the main statue is also referred to as naval glory.

12 PAK, 7, 510, Fond Mestne občine Koper.

13 PAK, 7, 110 Spomenik Nazario Sauro, Fond Mestne občine Koper.

14 PAK, 7, 510, Fond Mestne občine Koper.

15 Letter from F. Forlati from the *R. Sopraintendenze alle opere antiche e di arte* from Trieste to the prefect of Koper, 16 January 1935 (PAK, 7, 510, Fond Mestne občine Koper).

and the aforementioned Monument Conservation Department also organised the restoration of the Carpaccio House. Some sacral buildings were also renovated – in the Romanesque rotunda of St. John the Baptist, now the Chapel of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the municipality financed the demolition of the old sacristy and the erection of a new altar. The chapel known as the *Santissima del Duomo* was also restored. The idea of asphalting the nearby main square (today's Tito Square) was quickly abandoned so as not to destroy the 'typical Italian square', as the architect Ferdinando Forlati, head of the Royal Monument Conservation Department in Trieste, described it at the time. Some minor works were also carried out in the Loggia Café (removal of the glazing on the Gothic vaults and restoration of the ceiling in the interior). In addition, the façades of important buildings that were most visible at the inauguration of the Nazario Sauro monument were repainted. Forlati also issued clear instructions that the Isola Codex of Dante's Divine Comedy should be presented in the Museum of History and Art ahead of the ceremony and had the 'less relevant literary works' removed from the shelves[16].

However, things began to get complicated two months before the ceremony. Forlati wrote a letter directly asking the Prefecture of Koper whether they preferred to discuss things rather than working. The available documentation shows that the municipality's ownership of the salt warehouse, and consequently the planned construction works, would not be resolved by the date of the monument's inauguration. Neither was there any progress in the renovation of Carpaccio House and the Loggia. The surviving sources also show that despite delays in the main construction works, minor 'aesthetic' improvements in the town continued to be made, such as the removal of the modest wooden buildings in the square named after Vittor Pisani (to-

day's Ukmarjev trg).[17] At the beginning of April 1935, the architect Forlati also inspected the so-called 'Venetian House', then owned by Arturo Steffè. The conservation department spent 2,500 *lire* restoring the windows on the house. Steffè received a letter from the government indicating that the typical 14th-century Venetian-style building was the subject of a sale between him and the son of Nazario Sauro for a price of 4,000 *lire*. Ultimately, the sale did not go through because the future owner wanted to use the ground floor for a mechanic's workshop. The building was unsuitable and most of it would have had to be demolished. This did not make sense due to its historical value and the cost of demolition. Forlati also ruled out the possibility of the building being bought by the Monument Conservation Department from Trieste. However, he wanted to emphasise the 'Venetianness' of Koper in a different way. At the end of April 1935, he proposed that the statue of the Venetian winged lion be moved from the Libertas Rowing Club to the façade of the salt warehouse because he thought it did not serve the right 'purpose' on the sports club building. He justified his proposal on the grounds that the statue had recently been placed on the external wall of the Koper sports club and that relocating it again would not cause any major inconvenience. Nino Derin, the new *podestà* of Koper, was of the same mind and wanted to emphasise Koper's 'Venetian aspect' with a Venetian flag measuring 2 x 3.5 m, which the municipality of Koper had ordered from the Venetian section of the National Veterans' Association of Military Volunteers 1915-1918 (*Azzurri di Dalmazia*)[18].

From a broader perspective, the 'urban renewal' of Italian cities at the time coincided

with an architectural trend that emerged after the move away from Futurism and towards classical elements of Expressionism, the Renaissance and, above all, the Italian imitation of ancient Rome. This was overseen by the *Ministero Corporativista* with twenty associations, the seventeenth of which was dedicated to the '*Belle Arti*'. Control over the architectural sector was further tightened with the creation of the national Syndicate of Fascist Architects, headed by Alberto Calza Bini between 1923 and 1936. Three architects made the decisions on urban planning at the national level: Gustavo Giovannoni, Marcello Piacentini and the aforementioned Calza Bini. They were also present in the Fine Arts and Public Works Committees and were authorised to approve urban development plans (Kastelic 2007, 155–156). The architect Ferdinando Forlati had the main say regarding Koper, especially from the point of view of architectural and cultural heritage. In the absence of 'suitable traces of the Roman Empire', he focused on the iconography and motifs of the Venetian Republic. The history of the Serenissima's hegemony in the Adriatic coincided well with Italy's imperialist aspirations in the Mediterranean and the Balkans. The reconquest of Trieste and the Istrian peninsula was reminiscent of the territory that the Venetian Republic had once dominated, and the port cities of the newly conquered territories were thus once again under the former domination. Venice had the opportunity to regain its status as a privileged centre on the Adriatic (Fincardi 2001, 3–5).[19]

In Koper, the Italian authorities used architecture for two purposes: as a tool for marking space and as a convenient ideological apparatus (Čebron Lipovec 2020, 249–158). The town of Koper, as an urban interventions entity, had only just begun its transformation when the war interrupted the planned constructions. The Nazario Sauro monument and its surroundings

had been designated as a place of commemoration for years. The promenade and park in which the collective imaginary was able to find its link with the past also provided an ideological vision for the future. In addition to the monument, a primary school named Anna Sauro Depangher was built in Koper between 1939 and 1940, but never opened due to the outbreak of the war (Sauro 2017, 311; Čebron Lipovec 2012, 215).[20] The naming of the school after the self-sacrificing mother of an executed seaman from Koper probably had strong symbolic value. The modernist building, which was never completed, distanced itself from the historic land subdivision and created new intermediate market spaces with offset sections.

Conclusion

The tendency to present Italy as a 'strong' nation on a par with other 'great' nations took on more militant forms in Italian nationalism, and especially later under fascism. This 'violent' attitude was also adopted towards members of the same nation (Erjavec 1988). Social loyalty to the state apparatus had to be nurtured and glorified through historical practices. In interwar Koper, the monument to Nazario Sauro embodied several ideological concepts including historical myth, the ideological narrative of fascist rhetoric, and was a suitable tool for constructing general commemorative belonging to the ruling local community. At the same time, it is necessary to take into account the change in the social perception of the subject in question, which changed together with the figures in power in local politics, along with a change in the external appearance of this space. The creation of the myth of 'Nazario Sauro' did not actually be-

19   Marco Fincardi points out that the rise of fascism saw two Venetians take the reins of very important state portfolios: Giuseppe Volpi became the Minister for Finance and Giovanni Giuriati Minister for Public Works. We cannot say this was a political affirmation, but a targeted strategic investment for the port of Venice and the coastal industry.

20   In her article entitled Architectural monuments in Koper's reconstruction after World War Two, Neža Čebron Lipovec states: The central body of the building was built in 1940 according to plans drawn up by the architect F. Mazzoni and assistant engineers S. Scimone and V. Quasimodo (SAT, ASopTS Istria Quarnero Dalmazia, busta 2, fasc.117 and busta 4, fasc.172). The partially preserved plans in the archival material are not signed, but the accompanying documents from Edilit mention the architect of the postwar remodelling of the school, 'our architect Matossi', 'il nostro architetto Matossi'.

gin with the laying of the foundation stone or the establishment of the competent committee, but germinated over decades and became deeply ingrained in the general consciousness of the population. The process presented was therefore multi-layered. It was primarily the regime's official institutions that made it financially possible, committing substantial financial resources, and managing and coordinating the most important projects for the construction of the imposing monument and the landscaping of its surroundings. At the local level, it is also possible to trace a number of actors who, through their respective competencies, kept the basic conceptual framework in line with the guidelines of the ruling elite. Their work was crucial in shaping social consciousness and transmitting ideas with which the public could identify, regardless of the historical discontinuities in the treatment of Nazario Sauro and his actions. The latter was also passed on to generations that were not familiar with heroic deeds, sacrifice in war, and naval tradition. Even though the younger generations felt that 'old-school' irredentism was archaic, they were nevertheless able to identify with the aspirations and visions of the new fascist regime through the prism or the symbolic myth of the domestic environment, regardless of the new circumstances.

Archival Sources

PAK: Pokrajinski arhiv Koper / Archivio Regionale di Capodistria.
SAT: Archivio della Soprintendenza di Trieste.

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Summary

In the last century, the writing of the history of 'contact spaces' was strongly ideologically and politically colored and to a greater extent the domain of national identities. The dominant ideological or social elite often used public space with the aim of forming individual and collective identity. The manifestation of political power took place through symbolism, which was present both in public commemorations and in newly built buildings. In Koper, the Italian authorities, for example, used architecture in two ways: as a tool for marking space and as a convenient ideological apparatus. The article deals with the erection of the monument to the Istrian sailor Nazario Sauro. A myth was formed about the latter in the period between the two wars, through metaphors in public space (naming of schools, streets, editions of publications, etc.), which reached its peak with the erection of a monument in 1935 in Koper. The construction of the monument clearly indicates the imposition of memory politics by various actors, both at the national and local levels. The professional article presents the buildings that were built as a direct result of the 'Great War' in the Austrian Littoral. The article also deals with the extensive organizational and financial efforts that were necessary to erect a monumental memorial to the aforementioned sailor in all its grandeur. The ideological pretensions of the central fascist authorities, which together with local actors enabled the financing and construction of the monument, are given historical consideration. In the period between the two wars, the erection of the monument to Nazario Saura probably marked the beginning of Koper's urban transformation. Due to the outbreak of World War II, this transformation never experienced an epilogue.

Povzetek

V prejšnjem stoletju je bilo pisanje zgodovine »stičnih prostorov« močno ideološko in politično obarvano ter v večji meri domena nacionalnih identitet. Prevladujo-

ča ideološka oz. družbena elita je pogosto izrabljala javni prostor z namenom oblikovanja individualne in kolektivne identitete. Manifestacija politične moči je potekala preko simbolike, ki je bila prisotna tako v javnih komemoracijah kot tudi v na novo zgrajenih objektih. V Kopru se je italijanska oblast npr. arhitekture poslužila pri dvojem, in sicer kot orodja za označevanja prostora ter kot priročnega ideološkega aparata. Strokovni članek obravnava postavitev spomenika istrskemu pomorščaku Nazariju Sauru. O slednjem se je v obdobju med obema vojnama preko prispodob v javnem prostoru (imenovanje šol, ulic, izdaj publikacij itd.) oblikoval mit, ki je svoj vrhunec dosegel s postavitvijo spomenika leta 1935 v Kopru. Izgradnja spomenika jasno nakazuje na vsiljevanje politike spomina različnih akterjev, tako na nacionalni kot tudi na lokalni ravni. V članku so predstavljeni objekti, ki so bili zgrajeni kot neposredna posledica »velike vojne« v Avstrijskem primorju. Članek obravnava tudi obsežne organizacijske in finančne napore, ki so bili potrebni za postavitev monumentalnega spominskega obeležja omenjenemu pomorščaku v vsej njegovi veličini. V historično obravnavo so pri tem dane ideološko-režimske pretenzije centralnih fašističnih oblasti, ki so bile poleg lokalnih akterjev tiste, ki so omogočile financiranje in izgradnjo spomenika. V obdobju med obema vojnama je začetek urbanistične preobrazbe Kopra najverjetneje predstavljala prav postavitev spomenika Nazariu Sauru. Slednja pa zaradi izbruha druge svetovne vojne nikoli ni doživela končnega epiloga.