

ENGLISH VERSION

# TOPONYMY OF THE GREAT WAR ON THE CARNICO ISONTINO FRONT

PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT  
PERSPECTIVES

TOPONYMY OF THE GREAT WAR  
ON THE CARNICO ISONTINO FRONT  
Protection and Enhancement Perspectives

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Fulvio Salimbeni

## THE FIRST WORLD WAR ON THE CARNICO ISONTINO FRONT

When talking about the Great War on the Italian front, one almost always immediately thinks of the offensives on the Isonzo Front or the battles in the Alpine sector of Cadore, with reference to the related military bibliography and, in particular, to the fundamental text by Mario Isnenghi and Giorgio Rochat *La Grande Guerra, 1914-1918* (Il Mulino, Bologna 2014), but thanks to the progress of specific historiography, which has long since become attentive to the anthropological, social and cultural dimensions in a broad sense of the term, the discussion has now become much more articulated and multidisciplinary. It is certainly important to draw the public's attention to the toponymy of the carnico-isontino front, from Monte Hermada to S. Michele, from Gorizia to Udine, the "capital of the war", as it was called due to the fact that it housed the supreme command and the other bodies responsible for the operation of the war machine, from Monte Croce Carnico to Pal Piccolo, with their war memorials and cemeteries, but even more so, with the new didactics of history in mind, to make known only apparently minor aspects of the conflict, which, however, make it more comprehensible and human. It was only at the end of the 1960s, on the initiative of the Gorizian teacher Camillo Medeot, a well-deserving "amateur" scholar, but in reality of undoubted quality as a scholar of the history of his country, that consideration began to be given to those who fought on the other side of the front and to the tragedy of the people living in the war zone.

In this context, a special role was played by an important and well-deserving cultural institution of the Isonzo capital, the Istituto per gli Incontri culturali mitteleuropei (Institute for Central European Cultural Meetings), which, founded in 1965, inaugurated its public activity the following year, which still takes place at an unquestionably high level, with the first international conference dedicated to poetry, by inviting Giuseppe Ungaretti to deliver the keynote address, in which he recalled his own experience on the Gorizia front, concluding by pointing out that the soldiers they had to fight against were not felt to be enemies, but rather brothers, forced to endure the same sufferings and to fight like them without hatred, subject

on which you can now read Giovanni Capecchi's essay *Lo straniero nemico e fratello. Letteratura italiana e Grande Guerra* (CLUEB, Bologna 2013). And this was not a sentimental forcing of one of our greatest poets, but a reality experienced on various fronts. In the same perspective is, moreover, one of the most beautiful novels about the Great War, *Addio alle armi*, by Ernest Hemingway, 1929 (latest ed, Mondadori, Milan 2020), partly based on his experience on the Italian front, from which Charles Vidor made a classic Hollywood film in 1957, in which an important role is played by an American nurse, which brings to the attention of the reader and/or viewer the role played in the conflict by the so-called auxiliary services, which were however fundamental to the smooth running of the armies involved in the conflict, first and foremost the Red Cross, health care and medical education. Nor should it be forgotten that the protagonist of Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, which won him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1958 and was also the subject of a Hollywood blockbuster directed by David Lean, is a doctor who was mobilised in the Tsarist army during the First World War and who fell in love with a Red Cross nurse.

All these events find their place in a precise geographical and toponymic context, which gives specific concreteness to the discourse on the war operations and which has already been studied in detail by Mauro Buligatto in two specific articles, both published in "Sot la Nape", a Friulian cultural magazine edited by the Società Filologica Friulana, *I toponimi della Grande Guerra (Settore carsico goriziano-monfalconese)* (LVII, 4-5, 2005, pp. 9-47), and *I toponimi della Grande Guerra (Alto e Medio Isonzo)* (LXII, 2, 2010, pp. 53-73), as well as in *Miti e realtà nella Grande Guerra in Friuli, "La Bassa. Rivista di storia, arte e cultura del Latisanese e del Portogruarese"*, 75, 2017, pp. 95-110, to which we refer, while Antonio and Furio Scrimali jointly signed *Prealpi Giulie. Escursioni e testimonianze sui monti della Grande Guerra* (Panorama, Trento 1997). Silvo Stok, for his part, edited together with Marco Mantini, Nicola Persegati and Paolo Gaspari - the Udine publisher expert on the Great War, who, in fact, published them respectively in 2007, 2008 and 2014 -, *I tracciati delle trincee sul fronte dell'Isonzo. Le valli del Natisone e dello Judrio, I luoghi dimenticati della Grande Guerra. The province of Udine, and Itinerari segreti della Grande Guerra nel Goriziano. La trincea delle frasche.*

The already mentioned Institute for Central European Cultural Meetings, on the other hand, organised a study evening March, 25, 2020, via videoconference on the Zoom platform, on *I figli di Maria* (Maria's children) - that is Bergamas, the mother from Trieste who chose the Unknown Soldier -, showing clips from the documentary of the same name, directed by Cristian Natoli from Gorizia and dedicated to this event, with a historical framework of the event, which refers to the suffering of millions of young people throughout Europe, relived through the specific Italian case.

One of the innovative aspects of historiographical research on the specific theme under consideration here concerns those Italians who found themselves fighting on the other side of the front, in the Austrian armies. As

far as Trentino is concerned, see the essay by Fabrizio Rasera and Camillo Zadra, *Patrie lontane. La coscienza nazionale negli scritti dei soldati trentini 1914-1918* ("Passato e Presente. Rivista di storia contemporanea", n. 14-15, 1987, pp. 37-73), and *Il Trentino e i trentini nella Grande Guerra. Nuove prospettive di ricerca*, edited by Marco Bellabarba and Gustavo Corni (Il Mulino, Bologna 2017), while for the Julian context we refer to the already mentioned works by Camillo Medeot. As regards, instead, those "irredenti" who, in order not to fight for Austria-Hungary, defected, enlisting in the Italian army - apart from the now classic *Guerra del '15. Dal taccuino d'un volontario*, and *Ritornarono. Romanzo*, both by Giani Stuparich, originally published in 1931 and 1941, but now available from Quodlibet (last ed. Macerata 2017) and Garzanti (last ed., edited by Bruno Maier, Milano 2015) respectively -, *I volontari irredenti della contea di Gorizia. Tutti i nominativi*, by Giorgio Milocco (Nuove Edizioni della Laguna, Mariano del Friuli) while in 2010, the same author, and always for the same publisher, had published *Tutti gli uomini dell'imperatore*, namely those subjects of the Austrian Littoral who had served in the Imperial Army without thinking of defecting.

Beyond, however, these new historiographic horizons, which allow a much less conventional reading of the events of the war, it should be borne in mind that until October 1917 Cadorna - on which see *Il Capo. La Grande Guerra del generale Luigi Cadorna*, by Marco Mondini (Il Mulino, Bologna 2017), and *La guerra di Cadorna 1915-1917. Atti del convegno di Trieste - Gorizia, 2-4 November 2016*, edited by Pietro Neglie and Andrea Ungari (Ufficio Storico dello Stato Maggiore dell'Esercito, Rome 2018) - he conducted the operations in such a way as to deserve the title of "butcher", showing that he had learned nothing from what had happened and was happening on the Western Front, the Franco-German front, where the great British offensives on the Somme and the German offensives at Verdun had resulted in the massacre of hundreds of thousands of men for the conquest of a few thousand metres and a few trenches, without achieving any substantial or decisive result. If you read the autobiographical *Un anno sull'Altipiano* by Emilio Lussu (last published by Einaudi, Turin 2014) - from which Francesco Rosi later made the film *Uomini contro*, with an emphasis on certain episodes - you will find substantial confirmation of this.

Since reference has been made to a literary text, it has to be underlined the importance of the testimonies of the writers in uniform at the time, who also lived through that tragic experience, to whom, even if from a local perspective, in 1989 an outstanding scholar such as Elvio Guagnini dedicated his concise but accurate essay *Scrittori giuliani e Grande Guerra*, which opens the monographic issue of the "Quaderni del Centro studi economico-politico Ezio Vanoni" dedicated to *Trieste e la Grande Guerra*. It features *Ricordi e riflessioni* (n. s., n. 17, 1989), which also includes contributions by Marina Rossi, *La guerra ad oriente. Percorsi della memoria dei giuliani*, Camillo Zadra, *Memorie autobiografiche popolari nella Grande Guerra. Documenti, fonti, problematiche*, Mario Silvestri, *Due eserciti a*

*confronto*, to whom we also owe *Caporetto: una battaglia e un enigma* (Mondadori, Milano 1984), and *Isonzo 1917* (latest ed. Rizzoli, Milano 2017), as well as the introduction to the volume by Alice Schalek, Austrian war correspondent, *Isonzofront: marzo-luglio 1916* (LEG, Gorizia 2014).

But among the many other narrative and autobiographical texts on the subject, we should remember at least *Trincee. Confidenze di un fante*, by Carlo Salsa (Mursia, Milan 2018, originally published in the 1920s), on which see the precise critical note by Fulvio Senardi, *Diario di una guerra italiana*, "Trieste Arte&Cultura", March 2008, pp. 18-19, who in the same venue (May 2014, pp. 4-5) would also have discussed Carlo Emilio Gadda's *Giornale di guerra e di prigionia* (Garzanti, originally published by Einaudi in 1955), another significant testimony of his wartime experience, all texts that follow in the wake of the masterpiece *Niente di nuovo sul fronte occidentale* (tr.it., Neri Pozza), by Erich Marie Remarque - published in 1929 and from which Lewis Milestone made a beautiful film in 1930, a ruthless denunciation of the nationalistic and warlike indoctrination of young people implemented by the school system in force at the time, and not only in Germany under the rule of William, because the same thing happened in Italy, for example, as documented by Paolo Ferrari and Alessandro Massignani in *Giovani e guerra. Una scuola al fronte 1914-1920* (Rossato, Valdagno 2018), examining the case of the students of the Regio Istituto tecnico "Zanon" in Udine, persuaded by propaganda that that war would have put an end to all conflicts and would have succeeded in "hygiene of the world", but then, when the facts were proven, they found themselves faced with a very different and frightening reality, that of technological and ideological war, which Ferrari and Massignani had already illustrated in 2014 in *1914-1918: la guerra moderna. Con documenti inediti* (Franco Angeli, Milano).

We should also keep in mind the multi-voice discussion - edited by Gianni Isola and Simonetta Soldani -, all by authoritative scholars such as Paul Fussell, Mario Isnenghi, Eric J. Leed, Giorgio Rochat and Piero Melograni, *La Grande Guerra: tante storie*, published in n. 10, 1986 (pp. 9-22), of "Passato e Presente. Rivista di storia contemporanea", on the current tendency to make increasing use of literary and oral sources and a close and organic relationship with the social sciences, which took its cue from the conference *La Grande Guerra. Esperienza, memoria, immagini* (Rovereto, 26-28 September 1985), the monumental proceedings of which (almost nine hundred pages), edited by Diego Leoni and Camillo Zadra, were published by Il Mulino in 1986. This new dimension of conflict is also the subject of the monographic issue of "Apice. Le monografie di Pagine della Dante" (III, 2, 2018), *La guerra totale. 100 anni dalla fine della prima guerra mondiale*, which analyses the pages on this subject by Prezzolini, Ungaretti, Rebora, Gadda, Matilde Serao, Sant'Elia and the Futurists, the propaganda use of Dante himself on the eastern front and of the female image, and the fundamental contribution of women to the war effort, which would require a specific treatment, but for which, in the meantime,

*Donne nella Grande Guerra* can be consulted, with an introduction by Dacia Maraini (Il Mulino, Bologna 2014), and Ilaria Tuti's historical novel *Fiore di roccia* (Longanesi, Milan 2020), dedicated to the story, unique in its kind throughout the European war, of the *Portatrici carniche*, who between 1915 and 1917 spontaneously mobilised to bring supplies to their men on the front line in the Monte Croce Carnico area, even under enemy fire. While Marco Mondini, an expert in military history, describes *Paesaggi di guerra. Le battaglie sul fronte italiano attraverso i loro luoghi*, which is linked to the aforementioned work by Buligatto. Another component, apparently secondary but psychologically important, of the national mobilisation at the time was that of the clergy, and in particular the military chaplains, on which the works of Luigi Bruti Liberati, *Il clero italiano nella Grande Guerra* (Editori Riuniti, Rome 1982), and *I cappellani militari d'Italia nella Grande Guerra. Relazioni e testimonianze (1915-1919)*, and *Cappellani militari e preti-soldato in prima linea nella Grande Guerra. Diari, relazioni, elenchi (1915-1919)*, both edited by Vittorio Pignoloni (Edizioni San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo - MI - 2014 and 2016). Talking about the other side of the front, we should at least remember the volumes by Fritz Weber, *Guerra sulle Alpi 1915-1917*, and *Tappe della disfatta* (for both last ed. Mursia, Milan, respectively 2016 and 2014).

Since the main protagonists of the Great War were young people, it seems right to conclude these brief introductory notes and general framework by pointing out the meritorious initiative of the liceo "Einstein" in Cervignano del Friuli (UD) and its talented headmaster Aldo Duri in the context of the "Erasmus plus" project 2015-2017, which has led to the bilingual (Italian and French) publication of the pedagogical and didactic manual *Teaching the Great War - Educating for peace, Enseigner la Grande Guerre - Eduquer a la paix* (pp. 178, with numerous illustrations and photos of the period), the fruit of cooperation between high schools in Austria, Slovenia, Germany, Italy and France, which fulfils the dream of Stefan Zweig, passionately expounded in his writings and conferences of the 1920s and 1930s, now collected in *La patria comune del cuore. Considerazioni di un europeo, 1914-1939* (Frassinelli, Milan 1993), in which, in particular in the essay *La storiografia di domani* (text of a conference held in America before the outbreak of the Second World War), he hoped that history would be taught as the history of civilisation and no longer, in a notional way, only about dates, leaders, wars and political events, so as to encourage friendship and cooperation between young people with a view to establishing a truly supranational and European spirit.

**Mauro Pascolini**

## **LANDSCAPES AND PLACES OF WAR: THE FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA REGIONAL LANDSCAPE PLAN, A TOOL FOR KNOWLEDGE AND ENHANCEMENT**

The contribution, divided into several parts, deals with the contribution that geography, and in particular its interest in the landscape, can make in the study of past landscapes through, in particular, cartography and toponymy. Moreover, on the basis of the instruments of government and management of the territory, such as the Landscape Plans envisaged by the Italian legislation, it is possible to protect and enhance the places of the Great War.

Starting from an in-depth examination of the meaning of place and landscape, the contribution proposes a diachronic reading of how man relates to his spatial dimension and specifically to the places of memory of the war events that profoundly marked the territory of Friuli Venezia Giulia in the First World War, highlighting the more immaterial dimensions alongside those closely linked to the imagery linked to the places of war. The contribution that geography can make to the project dedicated to the toponymy of the Great War on the Carnico-Isontino front is to be placed in this key of interpretation, enriching it with the proposals and indications that can be drawn from the recent Regional Landscape Plan of Friuli Venezia Giulia (PPR-FVG), approved in April 2018, exactly one hundred years after the conclusion of the First World War on the Italian front. In fact, maps and geographic maps if integrated with all other sources, from iconographic and artistic to literary ones, can in fact be a powerful tool to interpret the material and immaterial dimensions of the landscape as we perceive it today in its historical stratifications.

In this perspective, the problems more exquisitely linked to the collection, cataloguing, interpretation, systematisation and valorisation of the important heritage constituted by the corpus of toponymy are recalled, particularly in a territorial context where Latin, Germanic and Slavic matrices have succeeded one another as the borders have changed, generating for many places quadruple names (Italian, Friulian, German and Slovene), to which could be added those given by the fighting soldiers coming from the various regions of Italy or from the regions of the Hapsburg Empire.

Indeed, in the 'places' of man, and even more so in those marked by war,

and in this case a war made of hard earth, rock, dust, snow and water, the events are intertwined with the spatial context, generating landscape and landscapes that continually change, transform, change function, sometimes even becoming ghost landscapes forgotten and/or preserved by the oblivion of time.

Can it be said that there is an iconic landscape of the Great War? If in the collective imagination the landscape of the First World War is inextricably linked to the famous image of the 'trench', it is enough to break down that whole into many pieces and we immediately realise how many and how diverse the landscapes of that war are, linked on the one hand to memory but also to oblivion, on the other to museification, but sometimes to artificialisation and finally to the normality of its natural evolution and transformation.

Turning now to maps and toponymy, it should be remembered that the mobility of the borders that affected the eastern part of Italy forced cartographers to take note of the mobility of the names on the maps themselves, which in a short period of time took on names in Italian, Friulian, Slovenian, German and who knows how many other idioms depending on where the soldiers in the trenches came from. To exemplify this assumption, several maps were analysed in a diachronic key, from the early 1800s to the first post-war period and some emblematic toponyms such as Krn / Nero / Neri; Flitsch / Bovec / Plezzo / Plez; Karfreit / Caporetto / Kobarid / Ciauret.

With regard to the theme of landscapes that change, that are destroyed and rebuilt, the case of the Ponte del Diavolo (Devil's Bridge) in Cividale del Friuli was considered, built in 1442 and blown up by Italian troops during their retreat after the breakthrough at Caporetto on 27 October 1917. Today we perceive the Ponte del Diavolo as something that has always been there, unchanging in time and space, but a diachronic reading tells us instead of the deep wound that divided the two sides of the city for a few months. The need to relive the landscapes of memory, even in the impossibility of bringing them back to their original reality, meant that, on the occasion of the centenary of its destruction, since it was not possible to destroy it again in order to reproduce the same landscape as in October 1917, an artistic work was created, traceable to 3D Anamorphic Pavimental Art, creating a large painting stretched along the pavement and the parapets of the bridge, which would re-propose, in a three-dimensional and highly suggestive way, the vision of the bridge that is not there.

Finally, the issue of landscape planning, management and enhancement in its multidimensional complexity was addressed on the basis of the current Italian legislation on the basis of the *Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio*. The Friuli Venezia Giulia Region is one of the few in Italy to have a Regional Landscape Plan (PPR-FVG) whose drafting process was based on the concept of landscape as defined by the European Landscape Convention. Among the landscape assets protected by law and included in the Plan are some relating to the landscapes of the First World War:

the banks and gorge of the Natisone river; the area between the Timavo springs and the overhanging Hermada hill; the banks of the Isonzo river in Gorizia; a large part of the Monrupino area; a vast area of the Trieste Karst, with the whole system of trenches, which is still partly visible.

In addition, the Plan provides for the creation of the Cultural Heritage Network, which has identified properties or complexes of properties of high historical, cultural and identity value that have been recognised as 'Poles of high symbolic value' and included in a list of 40 sites that also include some that refer to the Great War: the Sacrario Militare of Redipuglia, the Fortress of Monte Festa, the Ara Pacis of Medea, the Monumental Zone of Monte Sabotino, the Monumental Zone of Monte San Michele, to which can be added places, with more historical stratifications, such as the Fort of Osoppo, the fortress town of Palmanova, the Castle of Gorizia. For each of the sites identified, a single analytical sheet was drawn up, including the location and relative map, the protection measures in force, the description of the site, the reasons for recognition, and the regulations for use. For example, the Fortress of Monte Festa, the Ara Pacis of Medea and the Monumental Zone of Mount Sabotino were analysed in detail.

In conclusion, the short journey through landscapes, places, names, maps and charts has shown how complex the relationship between man and society is with their own living space, both in the past and in the present, and how necessary it is to work in different directions when this space becomes a landscape and takes on a 'value', not only for the community that lives in it and recognises it, but also, as in the case of the landscapes of memory, for the wider audience of internal and external users.

The 'landscape asset' thus becomes a heritage with all the implications that such a change of perspective generates, with the consequent expectations, planning, but also conflicts and conflicting interests. There is thus a strong need, on the one hand, to implement all those forms of protection and safeguard that the care of an asset requires, and on the other hand, to educate people about the landscape through participatory sharing processes involving not only formal educational agencies, but also the varied world of associations whose field of interest is the environment and the territory, fuelling the important phenomenon of tourism and memory hiking.

It is clear that this relationship with the past, or rather with the memory of places, inevitably leads to a loading of 'sense', of meaning for the space experienced and the places in the context of wider and more complex units, but as we have tried to highlight, it must be placed within a correct vision where there must also be room for the awareness that at every moment we are building a landscape, an expression of the precise historical and social moment in which man's existential project is developing: returning to the starting point of our reasoning, to that special alchemy when man chose a place and gave it a name, making it important and unique for an entire community. And perhaps these were the thoughts of Alpine lieutenant Carlo Emilio Gadda, when in his 'Taccuino di Caporetto'

he wrote the following on 10 October 1917 in Sverinaz: “From Koprevich, which some maps indicate as Koprovice, along a well-trodden path we reach the mule track that connects Cithovenich to Zabrado. The meadow and the path ploughed by grenade puddles; the damp soil, in dumplings, spread over the green carpet [...]. The misty, autumnal landscape with beautiful woods: like the ideas in my poems: but we lack the souls of the men I imagine”.

**Paolo Plini**

## **GEOREFERENCING THE ROYAL ARMY'S GREAT WAR SITES**

The commonly agreed representation of the ‘Italian front’ localizes it along the border between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Italy. Actually, during the First World War Italy sent 450,000 of its troops to the Eastern front, 250,000 to the Western front, 60,000 to the Palestine front, 200,000 to Libya and Eritrea, and minor contingents to Northern Russia and Siberia.

The geographical knowledge related to troop’s deployment along these war fronts is well depicted in terms of place names within the documents, official reports and memories while it often lacks in details about the actual position of those places.

The memory of places suffered an understandable and inevitable contraction; at the national level there are only a few dozen places still representing the collective memory; going down to local level things change, the places become more numerous, but they are different from area to area as well as the memory associated with them. However, it remains true that over the course of a hundred years the connection between a huge number of places and the war events associated with them has been lost. The complexity in the correspondence between names and places raised during the research dealing with WWI (World War I) along the Italian front for the identification, collection, georeferencing and dissemination of the places involved during the war. Different types of errors and site names’ changes and lexical variants (different forms of a word affecting morphological or phonological features or may be limited to spelling) made the task of positioning places particularly challenging. Particularly the complete correspondence between a name and its position was fundamental to implement the Geographic Information System (GIS). For the identification of the sites, extensive use was also made of period and modern maps, both in digital and printed format.

The collection of WWI geographical data was performed by manually extracting the information from more than three hundred documents, ranging from the daily official General Staff bulletins and the recap diaries of battalions and regiments edited by the *Regio Esercito Italiano* (Italian Royal Army) to specialised texts, to historical travel guides depicting the

battlefields. After a seven-year's research, it is now possible to represent through geographical tools the places that have been involved during the four years of war and their position. The research is based on a geodatabase and on a geographical information system aiming at identifying, cataloguing and georeferencing the so-called places of war or *Luoghi della Grande Guerra* in Italian.

Variants linked to different languages are related to changes in the national borders before and after the war. These changes led to the need to manage names in three languages. The places located along the border between the Kingdom of Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire are now mainly belonging to the Italian and Slovenian territory. Only a line of about 50 km still follows the centenary border along the Carnic Alps. Therefore, the places now located in Italy had a German name, while those in the Slovenian territory had an Italian and Slovenian name and some places have up to three languages in some cases. More than 4700 entries correspond to alternative names, formal and/or lexical variants, misspelled names. 3246 entries correspond to name of places in French, German, Slovenian and other languages; they also include the local names in Friulian language referred to places located into Friuli region, the northeastern part of the Italian territory.

The online GIS has been designed in order to display the results of the work clustering the information into different subgroups such as modern and historical cartography, borders, front lines, sites and accessory elements. The user has the possibility to display the information about sites in relation to the displacement of the different military units, airfields, war cemeteries, POW camps. It is also possible to display the places mentioned into the Austro-Hungarian and Italian official history of WWI and perform queries based on more than one name as well as SQL complex statements. The dissemination of this information relies on two different but complementary tools, a gazetteer and an online GIS. The gazetteer has been compiled in order to ease the search function of the online GIS providing univocal and unambiguous results. The first version of the gazetteer (May 2020) is available in pdf format at <http://luoghigrandeguerra.ii.cnr.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/gazetteer15mag2020.pdf>. It contains at present 20,010 entries corresponding to 12,184 sites. All the occurrences are listed; the non-preferred ones are linked to the preferred form, which contains the additional information coming from the geodatabase. The preferred place names in this gazetteer can be used in any activity where it is important to mention the correct toponymical form.

All the forms contained in the gazetteer are the pivot element connected to the search function in such a way that each name now corresponds one and only one place and the name itself could be used while performing queries providing univocal and unambiguous results.

Both gazetteer and online GIS are intended to provide a geographical support not only to historical studies but also to represent a valuable tool for the preservation of local history and memory of men and events.

Enrico Cernigoi

## TRENCHES AND FORTIFICATIONS. OLD NAMES FOR NEW DEFENCES

The study of the influence of a *geographical element* on war operations, beyond any other evaluation referring to the natural context (altimetry, orographic layout, presence and distribution of rivers or lakes, vegetation) or the anthropic one (density and distribution of population and buildings, road, rail and port infrastructures, presence of services and agricultural or industrial production activities, energy production and transmission facilities), consists in assessing its value from a strictly military point of view.

It is therefore necessary first of all to clarify the concept of the value of a *geographical element* from this point of view: it consists of a precisely surveyed point or of a land, lake or sea surface, more or less extensive and variously articulated, which is considered in its relations with the operations of war (location of the fighting units on the two fronts, presence of natural or man-made obstacles, exposure to light, visibility of movements and objectives, strategic importance) and which may have an absolute or relative value with respect to the events of war at the precise moment in which it is surveyed. The *absolute value* derives from the intrinsic and substantially stable material conditions of the element itself, while the *relative value* depends on its location in the spatial field of conflict, on its relations with other relevant geographical elements and on its orientation with respect to the direction of military action; its importance is also subordinate to the intensity of such action.

These general considerations are also underpinned by a well-defined geographical element, which is responsible for the defence of a place independently of actual warfare, such as *fortifications*: which, in the western urban civilisation that arose in the Middle East, from the earliest works built by the Sumerians, Assyrians and Egyptians to protect their settlements, reached the cyclopean walls of Mycenae or, in our peninsula, of Alatri or Erice, and continues to develop in Etruscan, Greek and Roman times. In the offensive point of view, and with different characteristics due to their temporariness and conformation on the ground, *trenches* are geographical elements, aimed at siege or, in general, attack actions. Their unequivocal identification is an unavoidable task of military commanders,

and finds in the First World War - in particular on the Italian front on the border between territories of different languages and in the clash between States of different languages, but not necessarily coinciding with the local language of the war operations - a moment of particular commitment and quasi-ethnographic research, to make the abstract geographical element (absolute or relative), the military denomination (one's own and that of the enemy) and the local denomination coincide, all the more so in the continuous displacement and reoccupation by the opposing army of the same places previously part of the opposite front.

In ancient times, when armies crossed entire regions with relative speed for the purpose of conquest, the only obstacle they had to overcome was the defence of the built-up area, generally speaking the fortifications. Garrisons with an adequate number of armed men ready to fight the aggressor to the point of sacrifice were placed at their disposal. The fortress, or in any case the fortified defence apparatus, was therefore the last bastion that an organised community set up against an enemy attack that could potentially overwhelm it.

The system of fortifications has therefore, since ancient times, been the branch of the art and science of warfare that has studied, designed, created and used the natural features of the environmental and geographical context as favourable to offensive activity or to deterrence and defence, which are brought about by the layout and shape of the terrain, enhancing the value and potential of those natural features with works designed to favour the action of the troops, the capacity of their weapons and the effectiveness of their technical means in order to hinder the aggressive action of the adversary.

The greatest achievement of the system of fortifications in antiquity was the scientific development of the Romans; with the fall of the Empire, the techniques they used also declined. In the Middle Ages, the assault consisted mainly of mine work and in the identification of a single point on which to concentrate the action of the jetting machines in order to open a breach: however, these were rarely regular sieges. It was only in the 15th century that walls began to be built according to scientifically based plans, also in relation to the increasing effectiveness of artillery. It was only with the Roi Soleil's great military engineer, Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban (Vauban 1633 - Paris 1707), that the art of siege began to develop as a real science with modern criteria, through precise determinations and calculations on the range and effectiveness of artillery, according to mathematical theories.

In accordance with modern techniques, the trenches were built, approaching the enemy square with the construction of the first trench and, parallel to it, of a second entrenched line, which had to be built about 150 metres from the city walls: the new positions and the mortar batteries were built. Once these two parallel positions had been established, the trench branches were built, having the same directions as the radii of which the siege system formed a circle around the square, but in a zig-zag pattern

to avoid being attacked by the defence artillery. A further step was the third parallel entrenched line, placed at the foot of the besieged rampart, equipped with a covered walkway served by batteries: towards the walls it was planned to descend the infantry, cross the ditch, open and occupy the breach and crown the breach against the inner entrenchments.

From the point of view of defence, the inability of ordinary masonry to resist and the danger posed by the earthen cover masses and the uncovered position of the major artillery were evident. Initially, the problem was tackled by increasing the strength of the material of the protective masses, thanks to the use of thick concrete, capable of resisting the effects of bursting, and of iron or steel and its alloys to strengthen the protection of the fire mouths. Later, however, having recognised the need to renounce traditional forms, which, although capable of withstanding the fight against the means of attack of the moment, were destined to see their resistance diminished at the first increase in the effectiveness of the means themselves, the science of warfare followed the criterion of giving small reliefs and minimal depths to the defence works, concealing them by taking advantage of the pre-existing forms of the terrain and confirming the covers in such a way as to favour the rebound and deviation of the bullets. As a result of this tradition, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the pre-war fortress, which had its origins in the ancient fortresses, came to consist of a block of concrete slightly protruding from the ground, into which the fixed or revolving metal casemates were inserted in various ways and under which the rooms indispensable for the operation of the work were built. The world war, with the use of modern and extremely powerful artillery (howitzers of 420, 380 and 305), gave prevalence to expeditious attacks which, on the western and eastern fronts, initially gave brilliant results, leading to the rapid transformation of the fortresses themselves, which were sometimes preserved only as strongholds, defended with broken lines in front of them and connected to each other by a line of improvised and subsequently reinforced trenches.

The front of the First World War, fought palm to palm, interacted with anthropic geography, that is, with all the aspects of the relationship that man had previously established with the places of settlement, whether residential or productive: it is a matter of personal and collective "experience", of cultural perception (including the idea of *landscape*, where felt as such, or narrative and poetic description), of mythical and religious aspects, of economic and social ones. Not only that, but the extremely intense density of men and events caused by the presence of two armies facing each other for years, often without substantial changes in their positions, in turn creates a new anthropic geography that in part binds in continuity to the previous one and in part overlaps with it (and sometimes doubles up when the occupant of a trench was replaced by the enemy), In those same territories, a new experience is created, a new history that develops with the material signs of war, but also with experiences, emotions, memories and stories, giving those places a new identity.

A sign of identity are the names which, insofar as they are assigned to *geographical elements*, even tiny ones, constitute toponyms, i.e. the proper names of those elements. On the sites of the war front, the names of the previous anthropic geography intersect and overlap with those of the time of the war, which in turn appear with different names depending on the army that identifies them, and may not even have been included in the graphic descriptions of the official military topography, but may have been in use among the troops, created for the most varied reasons, cited in documents or in writings and memories, contemporary or subsequent. Hence the interest in reconstructing, through the names assigned to places, the lives of millions of people who have left their mark on them, to the point, on some occasions, of giving places their own names: combining *toponym* and *anthroponym*: in a sense and with an intensity completely different from the attribution of a person's name - via Giuseppe Verdi Street - to a street without a direct relationship with the person called upon to designate it in the city's toponymy, which is more precisely defined as *odonomastics*. Consider the "Enrico Toti quota", in which the geographical element has a consubstantial relationship with the person who was shot dead in that particular place. In other words, that *geographical element* is one with that person: there, matter and life, nature and history, abstract space and concrete time of existence merge together in the closest intimacy. This is a nominal attribution that sometimes takes place already in wartime and then on numerous occasions in post-war celebrations; hence also the importance of toponymy as a mirror of the human experience of those places of sacrifice.

Petra Svoljšak

## THE TOPONYMY POLICY OF THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION 1915-1917 AND THE SLOVENIAN RESPONSE

Language is considered to be one of the constitutive and fundamental elements of a nation and, in the case of Slovenia, it is also a constitutive element of national identity and consciousness, given that from the 19th century onwards Slovenes defined their national identity on the basis of language and culture. In the decades of the growth of Slovene national consciousness during the 19th century, this process was accompanied by the struggle for the affirmation of the Slovene language in public life, especially in the field of education and public administration. Therefore, any threat to the Slovene language and culture was in this context understood as a threat to the existence of the nation.

In the light of such an attitude towards language and culture, Italian-Slovene relations also developed, especially from the 1880s onwards, also as a result of growing Irredentism in the Austrian Littoral. Irredentism represented a direct and real threat to the Slovene ethnic existence on the western border of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and on the western end of the Slovene ethnic territory. The Italian-Slovene conflict was also part of the unresolved national question in the multi-ethnic Habsburg Monarchy, which contributed to its dissolution at the end of October 1918.

The annexation of Veneto to the Kingdom of Italy in 1866, and thus also of the Venetian Slavia, had a direct impact on Italian-Slovenian relations, because the policy of the Italian state in the Natisone valleys (Nadiške doline), in the Resia valley (Rezija) and in the Torre valley (dolina Tera), where the indigenous Slovene community lived, aimed at the unification of the state system, follows a line of cancellation of linguistic particularism, which is rooted in a desire for uniformity, which does not even take into account the loyalist attitude of the population that is the object of these measures.

In all three parts of the Austrian Littoral (Trieste, the Princely County of Gorizia and Gradisca, Istria), Italians and Slovenes lived side by side. However, the economic, political, cultural and social growth of the Slovene community was frowned upon by the Italian population and favoured a limited and narrow-minded policy of ethnic defence on the part of both Italians

and Slovenes, which, of course, fostered tense relations between the two communities. This lack of cooperation influenced the political and ethnic climate especially in Trieste and, to a lesser extent, also in Istria and Gorizia. In this tense climate, which saw the emergence of Italian Irredentism, the so-called cultural irredentism, as opposed to the political one, was also emerging, to develop Italian culture in dialogue with Slavic-Southern and German culture. Trieste, according to this plan, should have become a meeting place for these cultures, but no response was received from the Slovene side, as its political elite was still searching for its own identity, which prevented it from integrating into the multi-ethnic reality of the region.

Italy's entry into the war against the former ally on 23 May 1915 was undoubtedly the culmination of the negative attitude the Slovenes had hitherto towards the Italians. The beginning of the conflict on the south-western front caused a significant change in the Slovene understanding and attitude towards the ongoing war: at that point, in fact, with the entry of Italy into the fight, it took on the appearance of a just and defensive war. In the first offensive wave, the Italian army occupied a portion of the Slovene ethnic territory with approximately 26,000 inhabitants. It was established the General Secretariat for Civil Affairs, which assumed the tasks of civil authority in all spheres of public life in the occupied territory of Trentino and Isontino: the aim of the meticulously elaborated occupation regime was to prepare the occupied lands for the post-war period, when peace negotiations would confirm their annexation to Italy. The measures were also the result of a great distrust of the civilian population and prejudices based on a lack of knowledge of the Slovene language, culture and traditions, as well as the belief from Italians they had come as liberators of the "Irredent provinces".

In the winter of 1907, the Italian diplomat Carlo Galli, a consul in Trieste, began to get to know the Slovene. He wrote in his memories that Slovenes were trying to increase their numbers and aspiring to become a majority. He understood that it would be impossible to avoid a reaction and that only freedom would be useful to overcome such complex national situations that at first glance may it seemed insoluble to him, with intelligent tolerance but also unlimited trust, from him, in the Italian civil and cultural supremacy. In January 1915, a few months before the signing of the London Memorandum, Galli also met the Slovenian and Croatian political representatives in Trieste and convinced them to accept the Italian occupation in exchange for the respect of their national rights, in particular cultural freedom and the freedom to use the language. According to Galli, the Slovenes and Croats would give up the lofty goal of becoming the majority in the Littoral because the Yugoslav expectation, in Galli's opinion, could not have been established without Italian intervention (and victory). He was counting on the fact that Slovenes and Croats, if they were allowed to preserve their language and customs, would undoubtedly be assimilated by the Italian culture in one or two generations at the

most, as had happened in the case of all the Slavs, Greeks, Jews, Poles or Germans who had come to Trieste, had stayed there and whose children had become Italian.

During the war, only a few of occupants were aware of the delicacy and sensitivity of military occupation: the commander of the town of Kobarid, General Achille Papa, stands out for his sympathetic attitude towards the population of the occupied territories. Throughout his command, he tried to win the trust of the population and create a very real picture of the situation.

In the processes of preparation of the occupied territories, when the authorities resolved questions of administration and public life, both in the short and longer term, the language and its use represented one of the fundamental instruments of a gradual but penetrating fusion of public administrative life with the Italian "original" one. The activities of the public administration services were conducted in Italian, but in the first period of occupation the announcements of the military authorities, especially those concerning matters of public safety and population movements, were published in both languages, Italian and Slovene. The next decisive step towards the affirmation of the Italian language in the Slovene space, in light of the preparations for the future, was the planned renaming of Slovene names and surnames and Slovene place names in Italian, i.e. their adaptation to the Italian spelling. In the occupied region of Brda/Collio, in Kojsko, which had not suffered any serious damage during the entire war period, streets were given Italian names such as via Avellino, via Toscana, piazza Forlì, corso Vittorio Emanuele. The Slovene newspapers reported that everything had become Italian, all inscriptions were Italian, Italian officers and the army travelled through Slovene localities, all offices had suddenly become Italian and the Slovene language had "moved" into the churches.

In September 1915, the Slovenian newspaper *Slovenec* published two articles on Italian toponymy policy, one dedicated to the historical past of the "Giulia Region", and the other dedicated to Achille Dardano's map *La regione veneta e le Alpi nostre: dalle fonti dell'Adige al Quarnaro: carta etnico-linguistica*, published in February 1915 in Novara by the Istituto geografico De Agostini.

It must be stressed that geography and cartography played an important role in the "definition" of Italian borders. The main Italian geographers of the time, Filippo De Magistris and Achille Dardano, as well as the publishing house, the Istituto Geografico de Agostini in Novara with the founding geographer Giovanni De Agostini, represented together with the Reale Società Geografica Italiana the backbone of Italian national colonial and anti-Austrian policy. The plans and reflections on the definition of the Italian national space date back to the period before the formation of the Kingdom of Italy, and the promoters of the Risorgimento had in mind the scope and boundaries of the Roman Empire from the time of Emperor Augustus (23 B.C. - 14 A.D.), when the border, as assessed by the studies

of the time, reached the Julian Alps, touched Logatec and included Istria without the eastern coast.

Another article in *Slovenec* entitled *The Italians and our Slovenian places* went into more detail on the 'artificial preparation' of Slovenian places for the 'Italian future', taking it from the Reichpost news agency, which also relied on Dardanus' map, which included 'places and landscapes where no Italian has ever lived' but which had 'beautiful Italian names'. Both articles agreed that the seemingly ridiculous Italianisation of Slovenian names had the serious aim of arousing the interest of the Italian public in these places and the conviction that this territory belonged to Italy.

However, the Italian naming of Slovene places in the article of the *Slovenec* was also attributed to their official Austrian name, against which the Slovene deputies in the Vienna parliament protested. Due to the suspension of parliamentary work (from March 1914 to May 1917), the introduction of absolute power in wartime, the abolition of basic civil liberties and the introduction of strict censorship, the Slovene deputies and Slovene politics were unable to intervene with the Viennese authorities, and only with the reconvening of the Parliament was a limited democratic life restored in the Austrian part of the Monarchy, so that they were able to submit questions. Thus, the Slovene deputies addressed an interpellation to the Austrian government: the protest was directed against the official Austrian use of Italian names for Slovene places, hills and rivers on Slovene territory, which also meant tacit support for Italian aspirations on Slovene territory. As they wrote, Italian Irredentism wanted to annihilate the existence of the Slovene-Croatian majority in the Littoral through deliberate Italianisation, i.e. to create the impression that the country was Italian; but among the means of achieving this goal they wrote that the planned removal of Slovene names of places, rivers and hills and their replacement by Italian ones, mostly arbitrarily coined only in recent years, played an important role.

At the suggestion of the Italian General Secretariat of Civil Affairs, in February 1917 the Supreme Command set up a special Toponymy Commission to involve representatives of the Press Office, the General Secretariat, the Italian Touring Club, the Royal Italian Geographical Society and the Italian Alpine Club, as well as technical institutions. The Commission's task was to formulate general principles for the restoration or transformation of the local nomenclature in the occupied territories; at the same time the Commission was to prepare and review research and findings in order to prepare a practical and legal arrangement of the new naming of occupied places. At the end of 1917, prior to the adoption of the proposal, a manual of local names existed for the entire region of Gorizia - Gradisca, the Cisalpine part of Carnia, part of the province of Trieste and Istria. More than 2,500 names were arranged in geographical order, followed by an alphabetical list of names with all proposed or existing forms; the manual was to conclude with a report on the methods and resources on which the Commission's work had been based.

In defence of its own Slovenian national interests, the Slovenian press also sought external and impartial confirmation when reporting on the Italianisation of Slovenian personal names, places, rivers, waters and even roads. The newspaper *Slovenec*, for example, summarised the writings of the British military journalist of the *London Times*, John Carriage, who wrote for the *Journal de Geneve* on the occasion of his visit to the Gorizia front: *Slovenec*, in fact, reports that he wrote about the Slovenes in Gorizia, whom he called Yugoslavs, discovering to his surprise that the locals spoke a 'Yugoslav dialect'. When he asked where they came from or where they had taken refuge, he realised that they were locals living on Slovenian soil. The newspaper *Slovenec*, summarising the articles, wrote that it seemed strange to him because until then he had always thought that everything there was Italian; because Italian newspapers have always written about irredent brothers who are looking forward to being welcomed into the arms of a caring mother.

On 3 November 1918 the new phase of the Italian military occupation began, when, after signing the armistice with Austria-Hungary, the Allied forces authorised Italy to take control of the territories defined by the London Memorandum, i.e. Venezia Giulia and part of the former Carniola. The administration of the occupied territories was headed by the same office as we have already seen - the General Secretariat for Civil Affairs - with the same personnel, therefore continuity until January 1919 ensured a proven administrative policy for the occupied territories.

As we know, the multinational composition of the population in the Julian Region represented a peculiar problem for the occupying authorities, since 450,000 Slovenes and Croats lived within the borders of Italy, which represented a quarter of the Slovenian population of the former Dual Monarchy.

The first measures taken by the Governor of the Giulia Region, General Carlo Pettiti di Roreto, indicated the direction of the Italian occupation policy, ordering the disarmament of the National Guards who had assumed military power on Slovenian territory in the last days of the war and the first days of the armistice and ensuring peace and quiet. In addition, a military tribunal was established, press censorship was enforced and the crossing of the demarcation line and unauthorised movement in the Julian Region was prohibited. These were undoubtedly partly security measures, but the main objective was to reduce and weaken the Slavic presence in the province and to show its Italian character, encouraged by the pro-Italian demonstrations and all that was necessary for the success of the negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference.

The new measures caused the emigration of Slovene and Croatian intellectuals already in the first days of the occupation, and about 15,000 Slovene in refugee camps and colonies did not want to return to the occupied territories. In the following weeks, the Italian authorities intensified their measures, arresting and deporting mainly men eligible for military service, as well as the rest of the civilian population: most of the internments were

carried out in February and March 1919 and mainly affected teachers, clergy, administrators and doctors, who were interned in Sardinia, where the Italian authorities had already interned Austro-Hungarian citizens from the occupied territories during the war.

The military administration of the occupied territories ended on 1 August 1919, when civil control was taken over by the Central Office for the New Provinces. The question of the border, as we know, was resolved by the Treaty of Rapallo, by which the hitherto occupied territories were annexed to the Kingdom of Italy; since Italy had been declared winner of the war, the peace treaty did not contain any articles for the protection of minorities.

If we limit ourselves only to the toponymy policy, the Italianisation of Slovene place names and personal names continued in the violent process of assimilation in the following years: gradually the Slavic population lost the right to their own ethnic and social physiognomy, and at the same time their own language was banned in public. The national reclamation in the following years also accelerated the emigration of the remaining intellectual elite and middle class, and the Slovene community dissolved economically. The long-term consequences marked Italian-Slovenian relations for many decades and in the image of the average Slovenian of his western neighbour the fascist was equated with the Italian, creating a sense of complete distrust and rejection of everything Italian.

**Diego Kuzmin**

## **MOUNTAINS TO THE RIGHT AND RIVERS TO THE LEFT. POST-WAR GEOGRAPHY AND TOPONYMY IN S. ANDREA DI GORIZIA**

On 24 May 1915, at the outbreak of the First World War, Gorizia was immediately at the centre of the war chessboard, in Luigi Cadorna's optimistic idea that, once Gorizia - the gateway to the Alps of the ancient invasions - had been conquered, with a rapid advance across the plain of Ljubljana, the Italian army would immediately reach Vienna.

Although there had been plenty of time for preparation, the Italian breakthrough on Ljubljana and Vienna was not as immediate as it could have been and six of the twelve battles of the Isonzo were necessary to conquer Gorizia, with the inhabitants who had been displaced far from the war zone, in Austria and Slovenia, finding on their return the ruins of the city 'liberated' by the Italian army.

This was also the case for the inhabitants of Sant'Andrea, a small rural village south of Gorizia along the postal road to Trieste and the object of the present toponymic considerations: a return to devastation that can be clearly seen in the accompanying images, propaganda postcards, in this case Austrian, describing the ferocity of the enemy with photographs taken at the end of 1917, after Caporetto and the reconquest of the territory lost the previous year.

Sant'Andrea had become an autonomous municipality by decree of Emperor Franz Joseph on 19 May 1866 by detaching it from the municipality of San Pietro. Both territorial entities were included within the larger administrative district of the "Princely County of Gorizia and Gradisca", as the province was called at the time. The urban development of its settlement had been spontaneous, with buildings constructed without any particular alignment, with subsequent additions and extensions on the sides of country lanes, forming a community mainly dedicated to agriculture, which at the 1910 census counted 302 houses, 439 families, 1743 inhabitants, of which 5 Italians and 2 Germans, and which at the 1921 census would be reduced to 296 families and 1526 inhabitants, with the houses destroyed and at that time almost all still to be rebuilt.

Already with the temporary Italian Military Government, in what was soon to be called Venezia Giulia, it took place immediately the assimilation of

the 'alloglotti', as they would later be instrumentally called, those who spoke a language other than Italian within the Italian state, in order to avoid explicitly defining their different nationality, whether Slovenian, Croatian or German.

At the end of the conflict, it was necessary to remember that the war had begun as a war of liberation, the fourth of the wars of independence of the Italian population oppressed by the Hapsburgs, and that it was necessary to justify, in the sense of glory and nationhood, the sacrifice of over six hundred thousand young Italian soldiers sacrificed to "liberate" a territory populated by three hundred thousand inhabitants, two thirds of whom were not Italian.

In order to conceal what was a war of imperialist aggression, such as it was on the Italian side, it was necessary to overcome the foreign element, transforming even the settled inhabitants of different ethnicities and languages into "Italians". In the same way it was also necessary to tell a new story of the history of the conquered places, from the point of view of the particular perspective aimed at softening the memory of the Counts of Gorizia and the Austrian administration, finding traces of Italianness everywhere.

At the end of the Great War, all toponymy names referring to the previous Austrian administration were immediately removed from Gorizia, starting from the current Corso Italia, which went from Corso Francesco Giuseppe I to Vittorio Emanuele III and then, again under Mayor Giorgio Bombig, renamed Bombi in 1929, via del Ponte Nuovo, renamed viale XX Settembre on 20 September 1919 to commemorate the date of the taking of Porta Pia and the end of the temporal power of the papacy, in defiance of Benedict XV's vain appeals against the 'useless slaughter' of the conflict.

In the wide spread of toponymy concerning the victorious war, 'Italian' place names arrived in the Slovenian-inhabited Sant'Andrea when it had already been reduced to one of the suburbs of Gorizia and was governed by the Italian administration of the provincial capital. However, these toponyms were made official only on 29 July 1938, with the determination of the mayor Valentino Pascoli (1882-1976), stating that there was a need to provide for the naming of some important streets in the settlement of Sant'Andrea and that the intention of the administration of the municipality of Gorizia was to commemorate the units of the Italian army that fought there during the occupation of the city (8-9 August 1916).

After the Second World War, the municipal policy concerning the Slovene nationality in the municipality of Gorizia continued in total continuity with the nationalist situation after the First World War. The strategy of the Gorizia municipal administration in the 1950s, even though the Italian Republic had been proclaimed and respect for ethnic minorities had been recognised in the Constitution, continued along the general lines of denationalisation that had begun at the end of the First World War and had been made even more bloody by the fascist regime, which it was generally believed had been brought to an end with the war of liberation from Na-

zi-fascism. The recurring theme is therefore always the Homeland, fundamental for Gorizia, which has just had to fight a new battle to reaffirm its Italian character, not even thirty years after the "Redemption", and seems almost to have to continually reaffirm its Italian faith.

The combination of the toponymic celebrations of the First World War dating back to the period between the two wars and those of the (later) administrations of Bernardis and Luigi Poterzio (1961-1964), had such an impact on the town's toponymy as to determine, even today, the image of a town whose history, although almost a thousand years old, began in Vittorio Veneto. This image, on the other hand, is perfectly in line with the reasons for which Gorizia is known in the rest of the country, namely the battles of the Isonzo.

The general principle of toponym formation, today as then, recommends the choice of characters or events relating to the history of the place, while the decision of the Municipality of Gorizia totally overrides the subjective particularity of Sant'Andrea, which historically is characterised by a strong presence of the Slovene-speaking community. For its new thirteen place names, in fact, in stark contrast to these principles, it was decided to dedicate the streets of Sant'Andrea to battles and events of the Risorgimento wars or of the First World War, completely overriding the spirit of its Slovene inhabitants, with names 'dear to the hearts of Italians': five routes named after rivers: Timavo, Livenza, Ticino, Natisone and Tagliamento, and eight named after mountains: Monte Sabotino, Monte Canin, Montasio, Monte Grappa, Monte Sei Busi, Monte Festa, Matajur and Montello. In the evident, although puerile, motivation of the geographical-typological affinity, with respect to the central road spine of the town, the names of the "war" rivers are placed to the left, towards the bed of the Isonzo, while those of the mountains are placed to the right, towards the peaks surrounding the Gorizia plain, for a total that today still counts the same five rivers, but thirteen mountains.

Luca Caburlotto

## **TOPONYMIC IRREDENTISM. STREETS AND SQUARES OF TRIESTE (AND SOME MONUMENTS) BEFORE AND DURING THE GREAT WAR**

The distortion of the historical toponymy of Trieste - which took place especially, but not only, between the two wars - and the resulting perceptual disarticulation of the urban fabric, which continue unchanged after a century before our eyes, are the result, as is well known, of the long wave of pre-war irredentism and of the exaltation for the success of the war, the desire to appropriate 'redeemed' lands, reducism, D'Annunzio's voluntarism and in general the more or less extremist expression of Italian national sentiment: a multiform and often confused galaxy of aspirations, claims, declarations, expectations, feelings and intentions then skilfully exploited and orchestrated by the Fascist propaganda system within the framework of the rhetoric of Victory and the Caesarean and imperial myth of Rome. The road map of Trieste that was (trans)formed (in part, with the opening of new roads, it was formed; in part, with the renaming of the old ones, it was transformed) between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, raises the nomenclatorial discourse above the merely linguistic level, certifying, forcibly, the belonging of the city to a cultural sphere that was in reality for the most part extraneous, if not for elitist upper middle class training. A light that was only reflected and a certification that came down from above (in concrete terms, from the liberal-national city administration) on the fabric of the city, which erased the tradition (Italian, or rather dialectal) of names of popular origin and based it not on the promotion of 'family' glories, but on the exaltation of those of the great centres of Italian cultural production: Venice, Florence and Rome, above all. In some ways, this is an appropriation of class, almost more than of a national sense.

As is well known, monuments are a resounding theatre of disputes and contention in streets and squares - more impressive than their names - as visible pivots of ideologies or programmes, intended to display and explain, through the evidence of the material and the art that gives them form, the primacy of those who erect them and the "authentic" interpretation of history and the ideas they embody. Trieste also expresses in the "monumental" battle the bitter disputes that animated it between the 19th

and 20th centuries, between legitimism and national aspirations. Thus for the monuments to *Ferdinand Maximilian* in piazza Giuseppina (later Venezia; 1875), to the *Dedication of Trieste to Austria* in piazza della Stazione (later Libertà; 1889), to *Emperor Franz Joseph* planned in piazza delle Poste (now Vittorio Veneto; 1898) but placed inside Palazzo delle Poste, to *Domenico Rossetti* in corsia Stadion (later via Cesare Battisti; 1901), to *Giuseppe Verdi* in piazza San Giovanni (where it was first planned to erect the one to Domenico Rossetti; 1906) and to *Elisabeth of Austria* also in piazza della Stazione (1912), whose events (of displacement, destruction, reconstruction, relocation) are intertwined with the renaming of the places where they are (or were) erected, and tell the “disputed” history of Trieste in a plastic way.

In this context, since the mid-1970s, a gradually accelerating change in the city’s toponymy took place in Trieste: from the prevalence of references, for example, to the small orography and hydrography (Erta San Giacomo, via del Torrente, via delle Acque, via Media) to institutions or activities (piazza della Dogana, via dell’Istituto, via del Ginnasio, piazza dei Negozianti), to existing or existed manufactures (via del Molin Grande, via del Tintore, piazza del Fieno, piazza della Legna), to traditional names (via del Solitario, androna del Moro, via della Mattarizza, androna dell’Olmo), to the owners of land and buildings (via Amalia, via Braineck, via Chiozza, via Dobler), passes to the prevalence of names referring to personalities from Italian history, literature, science, music and art, and also from the Risorgimento (Nicolò Tommaseo, Massimo D’Azeglio, Giuseppe Verdi, Silvio Pellico, Giosuè Carducci, among others), names that are only very rarely motivated, even if only instrumentally, by Trieste’s past (as was the case for Enea Silvio Piccolomini or, indirectly, for Francesco Petrarca) and therefore have a declared political orientation.

This change is in line with the intensification and then radicalisation of the national perspective expressed by the hegemonic bourgeoisie of the city and its representative municipal institutions and associations - in parallel with the birth and organisational, political, economic and cultural development of the Slovenian component - to the point that the increase in the number of names of city streets dedicated to Italian personalities, represented diagrammatically, could become an empirical measure of the growth of national aspirations and their implementation through the decisions taken by the municipality. It is even surprising that the central authorities recognised, acknowledged or at least tolerated - a manifestation of respect for the rule of law, however one wishes to consider the historical context - increasingly provocative dedications such as those to Nicolò Tommaseo (1902), Silvio Pellico (1906) and Giosuè Carducci (1907), the latter also referring to the memory of Guglielmo Oberdan, of very clear political significance.

This phenomenon is part of the more general Italian situation following the unification, in which emerged a concern to build up a sense of national identity, which until then had belonged only to the cultural elites, and

which found a very important pedagogical tool in the naming of streets after important figures in recent history, an operation that was widespread in urban space better than with celebratory monuments, although these carried an incomparable symbolic force. A tool that, even if not supported by the same diligence in the actual cultural education of the new citizens, even if tendentious, nevertheless facilitates the spontaneous learning and assimilation of names, dates and places that were fundamental to the new Italian national community.

In Trieste this phenomenon acquires necessarily particular characteristics and if, between the two wars, the city follows what happens in the rest of the country, and even exceeds it in intensity and impudence due to the greater violence and aggressiveness manifested by post-war nationalism and “border fascism”, before the First World War it cannot adopt an explicit or systematic program of general toponymy redefinition. However, it is clear that the municipal authorities extended the political, cultural and spatial appropriation of the city to their own national programmes, by means of visible signs experienced by the community in the everyday life of the city streets, in order to offer, even perceptually, the material evidence of an unquestionably Italian identity, wholly or as closely as possible akin to what was happening across the border with the Kingdom of Italy, and although this is done with cultural connections that are in fact evanescent in the merit of the personalities of the past, recent or remote, highlighted in the urban space with such argumentative and demonstrative, persuasive and pervasive intentions

A first phase of this process can be identified in the last quarter of the nineteenth century: it is intertwined with the urban development of the city. The opening of new streets offers the opportunity of naming them after Italian culture without having to intervene, for the time being, in the historical toponymy of the city.

One of the areas of greatest expansion of the city in the second half of the 19th century was Barriera Vecchia, a junction between the 18th-century villages and the new suburbs, Here took place the long story of the erection of the statue of Domenico Rossetti, founder in 1810 of the still lively Minerva Society, proposed in 1874 on the centenary of his birth but only realised in 1901, whose personality had been subjected by local historiography to a precise ideological revision that had literally transformed the scholar and man of law, defender of Trieste’s autonomy in full compliance with the laws and the Hapsburg government, into a convinced supporter of the Italian character of Trieste and a real “precursor” of Julian irredentism.

At the beginning of the new century, renaming operations gradually extended to the Borgo Teresiano and the central areas, as for example in the case of Via Benvenuto, which overlooked Piazza della Stazione (now Piazza della Libertà) and was intended to welcome the newcomer; in 1900 it was renamed Via Benvenuto Cellini in a name-dropping trick. Via delle Poste Vecchie, along the Grand Canal, was named after Gioachino Rossini

(1901), while the piazza del Teatro, as well as the theatre itself, was named after Verdi, who died on 27 January 1901. Still in the musical sphere, the bank of the Grand Canal opposite the new Via Rossini, called Via del Canale, was dedicated in 1902 to Vincenzo Bellini, on the occasion of the centenary of his birth.

1902 is the year, of the qualitative leap, in which the toponymy "requalification", perhaps also for the reason or the alibi of abandoning old names considered a sign of a Trieste still backward with respect to the impending modernity, is manifested with the greatest evidence in one of the most frequented areas of the city, with the naming of Piazza della Legna to the Venetian playwright Carlo Goldoni. At the time of the new toponymy, the square and its surroundings are undergoing a process of urban renewal. In 1905-1907, following a project formally drawn up by the city council in 1901, the Fornace gallery was built, now dedicated to podestà Scipione de' Sandrinelli, who promoted the initiative, with the intention of linking Goldoni square with the Sant'Andrea area, whose entrance is scenically enhanced by the Scala dei Giganti by Ruggero and Arduino Berlam, which expresses the search for Italian style in architecture, identified in the Renaissance and ancient Rome.

At the other end of the new gallery, following the rearrangement of the area, were opened piazza Sansovino, piazza Giovan Battista Vico, via Antonio Pacinotti, via Galileo Ferraris, via Antonio Pacinotti, via Galileo Ferraris, via Alessandro Vittoria, via Lorenzo Bernini, via Donato Bramante via Tommaso Grossi and via Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi.

In the meantime, via della Fornace, which before the excavation of the tunnel went up to the Castle of San Giusto, was dedicated to Silvio Pellico (1906) in time for the occasion of the inauguration of the tunnel. This is the other qualitative leap in a national direction of these years, which found its first energetic inspiration in the modification in 1902 of the name of the central Piazza dei Negozianti into Piazza Nicolò Tommaseo, preceded by the less exposed Tommaso Grossi and followed by Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi and Massimo D'Azeglio the following year. In 1907, the municipality made its last major toponymy declaration on the national front, naming the central via del Torrente.

No less significant as true declarations of irredentism, no longer entrusted only to Italian culture but directly to men linked in various ways to the Risorgimento and even to personalities from Trieste's Liberal-National Party, were the numerous titles given in the years that followed, starting in 1908 with that to the intransigent leader of the same party, Felice Venezian, immediately after his death, to follow with Edmondo De Amicis, Antonio Stoppani, Costantino Ressel, Filippo Zamboni, Francesco Dall'Ongaro, Ettore Daurant, and Francesco Hermet.

In the early years of the century, however, other names were given to personalities of Italian culture, also taking advantage, as had already happened in Barriera Vecchia, of the new building areas: in the same direction of the expansion of Barriera Vecchia, were created via Vittorino da Feltrè,

via del Ghirlandaio, piazza del Perugino and via Francesco Redi. Similarly, following the development of the slopes of the Scorcola hill, streets were opened in the name of Giovanni Boccaccio, Torquato Tasso, Ludovico Ariosto, Giacomo Leopardi, Vincenzo Monti, Vincenzo Gazzoletti Antonio Somma, Aleardo Aleardi, Gasparo Gozzi and Lorenzo Ghiberti.

In the San Vito district streets are named after Vittore Carpaccio, Vittoria Colonna, Gaspara Stampa, Benedetto Marcello, Giovanni Segantini, Fulvio Testi, Giovan Battista Tiepolo, Aldo Manuzio, Guido Reni and to scientists Francesco Denza, Antonio Meucci, Giovanni Schiaparelli, while in the district of San Giacomo streets are named after Paolo Diacono, Paolo Veronese, among others, while Marco Polo and Amerigo Vespucci streets were already named in the 19th century. Solemn reminders of the glories of ancient Rome are the 1905 via Ottaviano Augusto and the 1912 via Giulio Cesare.

The declaration of war to Austria-Hungary by the Kingdom of Italy on 23 May 1915 laid bare the "toponymy intolerance" of the Habsburg lieutenancy, which reverted to the previous denomination of some streets, showing which were the most disliked choices among those determined in the last period by the Municipality of Trieste led by the liberal-national party. So it was to be expected that if there were names to be cancelled and restored to the original, it would be those of Nicolò Tommaseo, Silvio Pellico and Giosuè Carducci. In the local and national political sphere, the streets Giuseppe Caprin, Felice Venezian, Francesco Hermet and Massimo d'Azeglio fell under the measure, to which we can also associate Giuseppe Verdi. The others concern Carlo Goldoni and Giacinto Gallina, and some of the musicians who had been called upon to give a sign of Italianism to the city, Pierluigi da Palestrina, Vincenzo Bellini and Gioachino Rossini. Via di Torrebianca went back to being via di Carintia and via Nicolò Machiavelli with via dei Forni; Giuseppe Lorenzo Gatteri returned the assignment to Via Amalia and Via Dobler, but also, among the others, via dei Rettori and via della Procureria went back to being via di Piazza Vecchia and via di Piazza Piccola. Via Silvio Pellico does not return to Via della Fornace, but passes by San Primo, a Triestine patron saint who is actually legendary.

The Habsburg authorities also added via Lissa in the S. Andrea area, in memory of the defeat of the Italian fleet in 1866, on the 50th anniversary of which the banks of the Pescatori (now Nazario Sauro) and Mandracchio took the name of riva Tegetthoff, after the admiral who led the Austrian fleet and who also led it in 1864 in the battle of Helgoland in the North Sea against the Danes, to whom part of via Francesco Hermet was named. A street is also dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Custoza, which saw the defeat of the troops of the young Kingdom of Italy led by Alessandro Lamarmora. The Goldoni pass, formerly via dell'Armonia, became passo al Torrente, the via and piazza Nuova (now via Giuseppe Mazzini and piazza della Repubblica) via and Piazza Maria Teresa. The square in front of the then-built Palace of Justice, which after the war would be called Foro Ulpiano, was named after Eugenio di Savoia, victor over the

Turks. In addition to a few other names of lesser significance, among the new names dictated by the Austro-Hungarian authorities, two linked to the current war must be mentioned: one to the town of Doberdò for the battles fought there, speaking in the past tense since the text was written after the rout of Caporetto, and the other to General Svetozar Boroević von Bojna, then commander of the Austro-Hungarian troops on the Italian front, attributed to via Belvedere, today via Udine.

Soon at the end of the war, Trieste regained the names of streets and squares that had been obliterated and already on 11 November 1918, the city council declaimed the names of the martyrs of the new secular religion of victory, superimposing them on the old place names: Guglielmo Oberdan, Nazario Sauro and Cesare Battisti. The contrada del Corso had the name of Vittorio Emanuele III, and piazza Grande becomes piazza dell'Unità (in 1954 it will be "dell'Unità d'Italia"), while via della Caserma and riva Carciotti change to Via XXX Ottobre and riva III Novembre respectively, glorifying the dates of the most recent epochal events.

**Annalisa Giovannini**

## ***TOPOS AND THANATOS. THE KARST AND THE CEMETERY OF HEROES IN AQUILEIA***

Aquileia, formerly the ninth urban centre of the Roman Empire, is in itself a polysemantic place and a historical palimpsest: in the stratification of its phases, in which each one does not cancel the previous one but rather enriches it, the page written by the Great War appears to the reader almost as a return to the origins and, at the same time, the closing of a temporal circle.

The city - which was not mentioned in Luigi Cadorna's first war bulletin, a sign that it was not given any particular value at that time - entered rather quickly and increasingly strongly into the collective imagination of the Kingdom of Savoy with a superstructural vision and propaganda, that of daughter of Rome, therefore neglected by the Hapsburgs, therefore daughter of Italy, which is returning to its true homeland.

Its centuries-old cemetery, known as the Cemetery of the Basilica because it is located behind and around the Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta, saw the Fallen of the Karst front arrive from the small hospitals and field hospitals promptly installed in various parts of the town from 7 June 1915. The bodies were buried in the leftover spaces between the graves of the people of Aquileia until every available space was filled. Ideological visions led to the Basilica cemetery being considered the place where heroes rested, assimilated in this respect to the milites of the Roman era, so that the military cemetery would eventually supplant its civil function, with the remains of the inhabitants buried or transferred to the New Cemetery, nor would it be affected by the dismantling of the war sites, which began in 1921-1922 with operations managed and financed by the State, culminating in the late 1930s with the creation of the shrines.

Thus the Cemetery of Heroes was born, its official and recognised name. In the first six months of the war, 121 Fallen were buried in the Basilica's Cemetery, a fact which in 1916 and even more so in 1917 led the military and ecclesiastical authorities to accept, due to a real lack of space, only soldiers, especially officers, who had distinguished themselves on the battlefield, sent from their place of death by intervention of the higher authorities.

While the iron crosses designed by Alberto Calligaris and donated to the Cemetery by the "Dante Alighieri" Society, Udine section, provide essential personal details, the twenty-four stone markers that exist today in the Cemetery could offer additional information on the events that led to the death of the young men who continue to sleep eternally beneath them.

The study focused here on twelve of these monuments (two of which belong, respectively, to two Fallen, the other to four), since their inscriptions do not provide any information about the place and manner of death. The study and research, carried out under the aegis of the Archaeology of the Great War, and in particular of Memorial Studies, have reconstructed the last events, bringing to light human stories of courage and suffering in a plot in which topos and thanatos appear to be united in an endless weave. These are the *loca sepulturae* of (in alphabetical order): Sol. Mario Brua (1916), Capt. Luigi De Prospero (1916), Lt. Leone Fedeli (1917), Sol. Antonio Masi (1915), Lt. Ernesto Monteverde (1916), Capt. Carlo Minotti (1917), Lt. Mario Minotti (1916), Sol. Umberto Orazi (1916), Lt. Giovanni Giacomo Porro (1915), Gen. Alessandro Ricordi (the highest rank received in the Cemetery, 1917), Sol. Carlo Scotti (1915), the four lieutenants Giovanni Scuderi, Francesco Celentani, Federico Castagnaro, Edgardo Ercolini (1917), Capt. Severino Uberti (1917).

These men cannot and must not just be or become just names, *nomina nuda*. They are stories in History, each of which appears unique in its human aspects and as a reflection of the contingent moment and therefore of the place of action and battle. *Thanatos* is a divinity that decides for each one of us an end that belongs to us alone and that sometimes seems almost to be the result of personal choices, taken in full self-awareness: this was also the case for some of the men just mentioned. General Ricordi died on 28 May 1917 on Mount Debeli, at an altitude of 100 metres, in his command post located in the so-called *Dolina delle Baracche*, because he had chosen to give up the repaired post (the cave later named after him, at an altitude of 92 metres) that had been assigned to him in order to safely follow the progress of the actions aimed at the conquest of Mount Hermada: his conscience as a soldier and as a gentleman had suggested that he left it to a rescue station. He thus took with him in death his two aides-de-camp, Captain Riccardo della Torre and Lieutenant Rodolfo/Adolfo Rogier, who were buried next to him in Aquileia.

A few days later, the four lieutenants Scuderi, Celentani, Castagnaro and Ercolini died on the Debeli, hit by a grenade blast, which made their remains indivisible. They were buried in a single receptacle, first in the Cimitero Nuovo of Aquileia (New Cemetery) and later in the Cemetery of Heroes, so that one could say that they were united in life, united in death and in eternal resting place. This phrase, which has almost the flavour of myth, can be repeated for the two brothers Mario and Carlo Minotti, whom their parents wanted to reunite in 1919: on Mario, a lieutenant who was returning to his unit in complete solitude along the lower Isonzo,

an Austro-Hungarian airplane dropped a bomb, which made him disappear like a Greek or Roman hero, almost a new Romulus, suddenly taken up to heaven. What was left of him was taken to the cemetery in Aquileia, unless you want to think of a cenotaph; his brother Carlo died a year later on Monte Santo, torn apart by a grenade. On the tomb of their lost hopes, the father and mother placed a broken column, a talking symbol.

Lieutenant Monteverde died instantly with his chest ripped open: his monument celebrates him as an ancient warrior, who died in heroic nudity, holding aloft the torch on which the flame of freedom, which can only be won by fighting, is lit. Buried in one of the war cemeteries near Gorizia, for whose conquest he died, he would be moved to Aquileia during the dismantling of war cemeteries decided in 1931.

From the reality overshadowed by mythical images to that cruelly revealed by words. De Prospero knows well how to use words and, above all, how powerful their evocative power is: he is not only a man who is consistent with himself and thus able to change his ideas and opinions if his conscience tells him to, but he is also a journalist, highly appreciated at national level. And yet the last sentence he utters before his death has nothing studied about it, but it is the result of tremendous pain endured with stoicism. In fact, he was able to say to General Luigi Vanzo, who visited him in the hospital in Aquileia where he had been hospitalised after his wounding: 'I die happy to have fulfilled my duty to the last'. Where does the essence of this sentence, later engraved on his tombstone, which may seem like the typical rhetorical phrase that in the collective imagination should crown the so-called beautiful death, lie? It is hidden in the wound received from a piece of shrapnel: it ripped open his palate and severed his tongue, as Duchess Elena di Savoia-Aosta (wife of Emanuele Filiberto, commander of the Third Army, later known as the *Invitta*) noted in her diary during one of her periodic visits to military hospitals in her role as Inspector General of the Italian Red Cross Volunteer Nurses. The General reported this sentence to De Prospero's mother, assuring her that she would have a tombstone erected in perpetual memory of the young man.

Tombs, then, epigraphs and decorative decorations to be interpreted as expressions of homage to young men considered as lost hopes for the future, on whom the feelings of fellow soldiers and family members were focused, the object of love, be it that of a mother or a betrothed.

Porro is the only archaeologist of the Royal Italian Army who died in the Great War: he was a Lieutenant without a Captain, a Lieutenant who died after only a month at the front, a fact that recalls the tragically short survival of a US Lieutenant in Vietnam, who was shot in the forehead (he wore his regulation cap on his head, not the Adrian helmet, which would come into use too late for him and many others as late as October 1915) while leading his men to attack on Mount San Michele, in a ghostly setting. He will be honoured with a monument that, recalling the funerary ones in Rome, evokes his profession, which he was practising with flattering suc-

cesses that promised a bright future, full of satisfaction. All he would have in the end was to be buried in the land of Aquileia, rich in the archaeology he loved so much.

The soldier Scotti summed up his life, which ended in June 1915 on Italian soil, in his own tomb, one of the first, if not the first, to receive a stone monument, placed and offered by what had been his new family, his "Band of Brothers". Other soldiers will always decorate it with flowers, as a photo taken for the honours on 2 November 1916 reminds us.

The infantryman Masi will also soon sleep under a tombstone: his tomb, but without him being disturbed in his coffin, will be moved at the beginning of 1921, to make room for the soldiers' Angel, the Angel of Charity, the first monumental work in Italy to commemorate the Great War, which is destined for Aquileia at the express wish of the Duca d'Aosta.

The Orazi family decided, after the ceremony of the choice of the *Milite Ignoto*, the Unknown Soldier, on 28th October 1921, to decorate the tomb of the cavalryman Umberto, who died in Monfalcone, with a tombstone on which the phrase that greeted the arrival of the coffins of the Eleven Unknown Soldiers in Aquileia would be traced, as if wanting to bring the young man closer to these men who had become a living symbol in death: 'Heroes do not ask for tears, Glory Glory in the sacred name of Italy'. Even the Orazi had their hero, who paid with death for the privilege of being one.

Mrs Ercolini, the mother of one of the four lieutenants torn to shreds on the Debeli, had the strength to prepare a small plaque with the phrase "Edgardo Ercolini, La mamma", which seems almost like a tender commemoration of a young man who always remained a child to be looked after with love.

A *mater dolorosa*, Mrs Teresa Landi Brua, transfigured as Mary holding in her arms the body of Christ deposed from the Cross, watches over Mario Brua's tomb, as if to show everyone that in his short life he could only be a son, given to his country.

May the homeland remember all those who have fallen for it: this is the admonition that the plaque of Leone Fedeli sends out to everyone. He was machine-gunned while attempting to cross the Locavaz river, in the area of the Timavo springs, stretching towards the Karst of Trieste, forever watched over by the personification of a sad and afflicted Italy, which has the face of a young girl from Aquileia. A perhaps ungrateful homeland did not want to emphasise with a Gold Medal, as the sign says, perhaps made too hastily, the gift of itself made by Severino Ubertis, who died after ten days of agony: his fiancée, like that of the Captain della Torre, wanted to wait for him for the rest of his life, with the recommendation to place in her coffin the fistful of earth she had collected from his grave when she could join him in the afterlife. But that's not all: in a period newspaper, 'L'Illustrazione Italiana', November 2, 1917, a photograph has been found of a tombstone no longer present in the Cemetery, which therefore belonged to a fallen soldier transferred to his home town. Thanks to pho-

to-retouching, it was possible to read part of the inscription and, by means of the *Liber defunctorum* of the Basilica of Aquileia, to trace it back to the soldier Massimino Milanese, who was wounded at Monte Sei Busi in July 1915 and died in one of the military hospitals of Aquileia. The marker, depicting a naive Victory, was dedicated to him by a fellow soldier, as a sign of the special bond that war has created as a refuge for the soul.

So many stories. So many Fallen. Only one Cemetery: that of the Heroes of Aquileia.

Silvo Stok

## TOPONYMY AND WAR CARTOGRAPHY ON THE CARNICO-ISONTINO FRONT

### PRINCIPLES OF A RESEARCH

The more than thirty years of activity done by the members of the “Gruppo Ricerche e Studi Grande Guerra” (World War First Research and Studies Group), operating in the field of research and historical studies, both documentary and field studies, has always been consciously confronted with the question of place names, even if the deepening in this regard have been limited, partial and aimed at other objectives.

Among the most frequent needs is the search for place names mentioned in the archival materials but no longer evident in today's documentation, so that the name-place connection has been lost. This disconnection has often forced us to look for documentary links, or proven traces in the territory, in order to re-establish the original relationship and transfer it to the current situation. Another frequent use and verification of locality names in reference to the locations of the WWI took place whenever it was intended to point or identify the movements of specific departments in a defined space-time context or even to identify the paths and “traces” left by individual soldiers. At the level of dissemination and visit to the locations identified, reference is made to the current toponymy, as is done by all people during their travels, although often unconsciously. It so happens that frequently the toponymy is reduced to a list or a table of comparison/correspondence between the terms of the time with the current ones, or between those defined in one language with the correspondents of another.

In the most general meaning of the term, the human being has the need to name, in addition to people, any object recognized, recognizable, distinguishable and consequently also a portion of territory declined in all their physical or conceptual forms: if something does not have a name you can say that thing for the community “does not exist”.

This is how the project was born, to create one of the first organic systems for the management of toponymy related to the First World War in the cross-border territory of Friuli Venezia Giulia.

### The territory

Observation of the territory of Friuli Venezia Giulia, including the cross-border areas, reveals its complexity due to the convergence of mountains, plains, and sea and the transition from the Italic plain to the Balkan region governed by the last Alpine foothills. Many studies have been carried out on the subject and just as many are in progress in the specific disciplines concerned, among which geography and geology stand out; the first works date back to the end of the 19th century with the research of Olinto Marinelli and Michele Gortani.

From a military point of view, the most reliable knowledge of the territory on which one is going to operate is fundamental; during the WWI, the commanders of the Royal Army were deficient in this respect, contributing to the failure of their bloody offensive operations.

In our context, it is not necessary to delve too deeply into this issue, but we will use the results of these studies which have led to the creation of a series of maps subdividing the territory according to its predominantly morphological characteristics: this zoning is useful as a basic framework to work on as it can be considered, unlike the others, fixed in time.

East-west bands are defined, which distinguish the mountain, pre-alpine, foothill, high plain, and low plain areas respectively. In the interior, there are areas with their own characteristics, such as the morainic amphitheater, the lagoon, and the Karst. The long main strips are broken up by some vertical structural elements, which are the river bars of the Tagliamento of the Judrio-Isonzo system. As a result, all the names of the individual areas have been filed: Carnic Chain, Tolmezzo Alps, Julian Alps, Carnic Pre-Alps, Julian Pre-Alps; Morainic Amphitheatre, Upper Friulian Plain, Lower Friulian Plain, Karst, and the consequent subdivision into sub-areas.

### History

From the earliest times, these territories have been places of transit, meetings, and clashes between different populations. In our project framework, the focus is oriented towards the period of the WWI, with an initial temporal reference prior to the conflict itself and a final one at its conclusion.

The period which follows is also taken into consideration, but specifically addressed to the transformations that occurred and “happened” as a consequence of the WWI. The final temporal reference remains the present day, onto which the previous references are “projected”, but also from which they are seen, read, and interpreted.

The period in question is characterized by a first phase of relative calm that took place between 1866 and the beginning of the World War First on 28 July 1914; a second phase, between 28 July 1914 and 24 May 1915, which involved the lands within the territory of the Empire in various ways; the third phase defines the war fought directly on our territories.

This third phase deals with the most significant events up to the beginning of the twelfth battle of the Isonzo on 24 October 1917. The fourth phase

is the one that starts with the Austro-German advance during the Battle of Caporetto and is characterized by the occupation of the entire territory by the Hapsburgs; it ends with the Battle of Vittorio Veneto and the subsequent armistice of Villa Giusti, which came into force on 4 November 1918. The following period, up to the beginning of the WWII, is taken into consideration, but focuses only on the changes and transformations carried out on the territory with particular reference to the toponymy. All this is compared and mirrored with the current context.

The time portion is analyzed in more detail and consequently divided into the most significant events also from a territorial point of view. On a general scale, we can see the initial offensive surge of the Italian army (24 May - 22 June 1915), the first battle of the Isonzo (23 June - 7 July 1915), the second (18 July - 3 August 1915), the third (18 October - 4 November 1915) and the fourth (10 November - 2 December 1915).

This was followed in 1916 by the methodical attack between January and May that would gradually lead to mine warfare and the use of asphyxiating gases (29 June 1916); the fifth battle of the Isonzo (11- 15 March) the sixth battle with the capture of Gorizia (4- 17 August 1916); the seventh (14- 17 September); the eighth (10- 12 October); the ninth with the advance on the northern sector of the Karst as far as Faiti and Castagnevizza (1- 4 November 1916).

In 1917 the tenth battle of the Isonzo took place (12-26 May) with the conquest of the Kuk and Vodice ridge; the eleventh (17-31 August) saw the Italian advance in the middle of the Isonzo, on the Bainsizza plateau. This canonical scheme, fundamental but very partial, clearly reveals that the military operations were much more articulated and diverse.

Hence the need to start distinguishing, before increasing the territorial scale, the areas of competence of the various departments of the two opposing armies and their organization. On the Italian side, the territory is divided according to the sectors of competence of the individual armies. Carnia Zone: Carnic ridge from the Sorgenti del Piave to Pontebba and then on the Alpi Giulie up to the Cima Confine of the Gruppo del Canin; Second Army: from the Rombonino of the Gruppo del Canin, through the Gruppo del Monte Nero, near Tolmino, then following the course of the Isonzo up to the Austro-Hungarian defenses of Gorizia (Sabotino- Calvario); Third Army: from the Plain of Gorizia to the Karst as far as the sea (Monfalcone). From this partition one progressively descends in level to define that attributed to the lower divisions, which can stop at divisions and brigades for the most heavily garrisoned areas, but for the Carnia area in particular must descend to battalion level.

The Austro-Hungarian counterpart deployed from the sea to Bovec the Fifth Army also called “Isonzo Armee” and further up, along the Carnic ridge, the Tenth Army; also in this case it is necessary to go into much more detail and divide it up at least at divisional level. If on the one hand

we find and consider territorial subdivisions that are purely “military”, on the other hand, another characteristic element is the variation of the borders during the various historical periods considered, up to the present day with the definition of the state borders, of the regional territory and of the provincial and municipal administrative borders.

### Populations, languages and dialects

The languages and dialects of the peoples living in this area reflect this meeting, clash and transit characteristic of these places, as do the geographical, geological and naturalistic components. The main “official” strains are Italian, Slavic and German, which have alternately dominated this territory or parts of it. Considerations and objections can be manifold on each of the indicated strains: in fact the reality is much more articulated and presents a vast and complex Friulian presence, as well as Venetian, mixed or settlements of Germanic or even Russian origin.

The importance of this information is relevant not only to onomastic but also to toponymy in our region. The historiographic reference context is always that of the WWI, divided into the peculiar phases already mentioned above. However, particular attention is also paid to the transformations and impositions that occurred in the period after the World War First and which were the consequences of that conflict.

Further changes, especially towards the end of the Second World War, still influence the current situation. The pre-war reality on this theme was profoundly changed during the war, both by the displacement of parts of the population and above all by the massive presence of soldiers from all over the territory for more than three years (both from Italy and the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire).

### Toponymy

The aim of this research is to collect and gradually reorganize, as far as possible, all the available data on the toponymy of the WWI in these territories. It is the complex network of place names correlated to the languages and dialects of the populations that succeeded one another in these territories and that was defined on two levels, the anthropological and endemic one and the formal, administrative one, often marked by “governmental” impositions.

The multitude of soldiers of various and distant origins, deployed on opposite sides of the front, who were forced to spend long periods of time in these areas, are also considered as “populations”. They began, either out of military necessity, or out of emotional references (personal, wish, refreshment, superstition, etc.) to name ‘their’ places, topographical references and structures of various kinds. This articulated and complex network of place names, in continuous evolution, is marked in time by the structuring of history understood as a sequence of documented and shared facts that took place on a defined and specific territory. This is the heart of the research; the terms identified must be linked to the correct glottological

or philological field of reference (language, dialect, etc.) and connected to the respective territorial “object” (regardless of its size and/or form). The description of the toponym will define on the one hand its meaning, on the other hand the definition of the object; a glossary is placed in support of the terms most commonly used and/or referring to “common” territorial elements (forest, stream, sinkholes, etc).

### The landscape

From the outdated conception of landscape as “natural beauty” and “architectural magnificence” based above all on ‘sight’ and ‘beautiful landscape’. With the *Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio*, we have moved on to a much more profound and “holistic” concept that includes both the physical and intangible landscape assets that characterize and constitute a specific environment in a specific area. Thus, while the traces of the WWI are still present in the area, there is also a specific related toponymy, which is also part of the landscape context as an intangible asset and at the same time reinforces the physical asset present in a given place.

The Friuli Venezia Giulia region approved a few years ago the Regional Landscape Plan which, although very interesting and in some areas very detailed, unfortunately does not include among the specific themes the one referring to the assets of the WWI, although in some cases they are mentioned in a precise and indirect way, such as the fortified structures.

Very useful is the thematic base cartography, which together with and above all with the well-proven regional cartography CTRN 5000, offers on the one hand a rich set of current toponymic information, and on the other hand a very useful detail to search for objects and less obvious traces still present on the ground.

### Temporality

We would like to emphasize here the importance of the concept of time and its dynamism, which, by moving along this hypothetical axis, makes it possible to visualize the progressive changes, transformations and alterations, first and foremost of place names, but consequently of the related territorial object. It is displayed and marked in the file with reference to the historical landmarks considered significant, defined and chosen in the historical and historiographic context.

### DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES

The references and documentary sources are almost infinite, so there is clearly a redundancy and overlapping of information. However, this information must be verified from time to time, and in several cases it makes it possible to prove and/or ascertain the truthfulness or location of certain elements that would otherwise be uncertain or imprecise. For the sources, a special filing system has been set up and the individual references found are cited in the respective toponymy file.

### Structuring of information

All these names and toponyms have to be collected, verified, framed and finally filed; in reality, one does not operate directly on them but through them on that specific object that the single term identifies.

### Types of elements

A first distinction to be made is that between the broader and less defined elements and those that are more circumscribed, punctual or better located and delimited. The exemplification of primary sources previously proposed, deliberately in a visual way, especially with maps and cartographies, highlights how the data are presented and the different criticalities of reading and interpretation that need to be addressed and resolved.

In the basic cartography, the simplest elements are identified first, the point elements, such as heights, summits etc. (morphological), and then roads, infrastructures, etc. (anthropological); then proceed with the linear ones that present some greater difficulties, between which water streams, ridges, etc. (morphological) and then practicability, infrastructures, etc. (anthropic); finally with the areas, which exhibit the greatest risk of uncertainty.

### Dimensional scaling

The dimensional scaling between the various toponyms and consequently of the objects considered consolidates and highlights the dose relationships present in the places, between element and element. Although it is not always possible to visualize it, it remains a concept to be applied wherever possible. One can speak of vertical scalarity (from large to small) and horizontal scalarity (between elements of the same level).

### Evolution over time

The time factor is indispensable for documenting and highlighting the dynamism of the toponymy that is present in these territories and was also conditioned by the WWI. The reference time span.

was subdivided into partial segments defined by the events considered significant for these territories; for certain areas affected by particular events, the further subdivision of points 2 and 3 into smaller parts was planned but not implemented, based on the time intervals of the individual battles. This ladder allows to frame the single place names with respect to the historical changes linked to the WWI and to verify if, as new events evolve, new names intervene or if the prevailing names vary from one language to another.

### Linguistic stratification and toponymic transformation.

The name of the place is checked from a linguistic point of view and the languages and/or dialects used to call that object referred to a certain period of time are indicated. A classic example of the First World War is the naming of sinkholes; in a first period they are entitled in a provisional or

occasional way and only in 1917 they will be made official, for necessity of orientation, in definitive names.

Together with the advance of the Italian army on the karst terrain, Austro-Hungarian sinkholes are conquered, already called, which will change the previous toponym, acquiring a new one that will become the prevailing one.

### Example table of languages

language	language	language	language	language	dialect	dialect	dialect
Italian	Slovenian	German	Friulan	Hungherian	Bisiacco	Triestino	Carnico

### Geographical link

The connection of place names with places and spatial objects is fundamental. Before the computer age, some synoptic tables and tables (topographical references) were developed that described the corresponding point on the maps or cartographies, so as to be easily connected to the toponym itself.

Today, with today's technologies, everything is simplified; in the text of the toponym in question, there are pairs of fields in order to insert the geographical coordinates of reference. Currently the dereferencing is of punctual type, in result, importing the data in a G.I.S. This part can be implemented by inserting more articulated coordinate systems.

### DEFINITION OF THE DATABASE

The structuring of the information has led to the definition of the fields necessary for the realization of a file of the place names of the Great War. Four types of cards have been defined, two main and two support. The main tabs are:

Tabs for general, small-scale and less defined elements

Fact sheets for specific, more defined and precise elements

The differences between the two types of cards are minimal, and vary on certain parts related to the dimensional scale and the possible correct processing and inserti on of geographic data.

The tab then groups the following main data partitions:

Type.

Toponymic class.

Horizontal dimensional scaling.

Temporal evolution.

Linguistic stratification.

Toponymic class.

Geographical description.

Historical description.

Glottological description.

Link to territorial information systems (coordinates).

Link to source data sheets.

Link to glossary data sheets

### Support boards

*Data sheets for sources.* To rationalize and simplify the main files, these cards have been created that define each individual source with its unique reference code, diversified by typology: cartography, lists of place names, diaries, publications, images, oral memories.

*Tabs for the glossary.* These descriptive forms collect and describe those toponymic terms or parts of them that recur with a certain frequency. (es. Grad, Log, Travnik, Kuk, Forca, Rio, etc.)

### Focus areas

Having identified this methodology for the collection and organization of the place names related to the Great War on the Isonzo Carnic front, an initial collection and insertion of data considered general (cartographies 1:100,000- 1:25,000) was carried out.

Subsequently, five restricted areas were identified where to enter deeper into the dimensional scale going to search for the most characteristic war place names and details.

The areas selected are the following:

Heights of Monfalcone.

San Martino del Carso- Monte San Michele.

Heights of the Calvary Ridge - Podgora - Grafenberg - Piuma - Oslavia.

Krn Group

Pal Piccolo Ridge - Freikofel - Pal Grande

Each of these sites has been identified for its particular characteristics that are reflected in the war toponymy. From the names of the trenches, the karst strongholds, the caves of Monfalcone you pass to the trees, the Valloncelli, the mines of San Martino del Carso and San Michele, the Honved mountain.

The ridge of Calvario-Oslavia, the hills "death"\* (A. Shalek), introduce to the heights of the Isonzo dominated by Monte Nero, an extensive group with several articulated peaks, distinguished by countless war denominations.

The experimentation on the carnic ridge above Timau, area of carnic carriers, where two open- air museums have made it possible to rediscover the toponymic details of each hump and to deepen the knowledge on the two opposite sides of the front: different names and points of view of the same territory.

### RESULTS ACHIEVED

From the technical and systematic point of view, the information collection apparatus developed is valid, but in order to carry out research on the data and visualize it properly it needs an appropriate insertion in a G.I.S.

So far, 3,600 place names have been recorded, of which 1,200 are specific to the Great War, but we realize that the work is just beginning. This re-

search has made it possible to make us aware that as the exploration of the territory leads to get excited and to rediscover remote corners and vestiges

interesting and forgotten, the same happens by deepening the study of war toponymy.

The dose biunivocal relationship between these two parts feeds itself leading to unsuspected and unpredictable results. The insertion of the data, in order to be optimal, must be accompanied alternately by the surveys on the ground, that terrain represented in the correspondence, described, photographed and interpreted; Today, even with the new LIDAR technologies, the investigation is never enough, and the circle closes to retrace then in another round.





Il volume raccoglie in forma interdisciplinare – a seguito di una prima campagna di censimento svolta sul terreno e su documenti cartografici e testi storici memorialistici e letterari – contributi intesi a sviluppare in una prospettiva inedita la ricerca sulla Prima guerra mondiale in Friuli Venezia Giulia, intrecciando patrimonio materiale e immateriale. Se la genesi di un luogo alla coscienza dell'uomo sta nel valore elettivo e designante del nome, questo diventa, oltre che mezzo di determinazione spaziale, anche radice d'appartenenza, spazio e tempo del "vissuto", fonte percettiva di vicinanza/distanza mentale ed emotiva ma anche strumento di appropriazione. Il volume ne evidenzia l'estrema complessità e ne propone la metodologia di analisi, mantenendo il focus sul primo conflitto mondiale e le sue conseguenze sino ad oggi. Sono qui contestualmente raccolti gli atti del convegno conclusivo della ricerca "La Toponomastica della Grande Guerra sul fronte Carnico Isontino".



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**In copertina:**

Stazione eliografica sul Cuel de la Baretta, 1916.  
(A.U.S.S.M.E.)

*sullo sfondo*

Mappa del sistema difensivo M.Cullar – M.Palon –  
testata del Rio Lius, 1916. (A.U.S.S.M.E.)