

Is there Space for Remembering Habsburg World War One in Rijeka?

Considerations on the Monument to the Heroic Sailor in Sušak

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INTRODUCTION

There are many layers of memory, sometimes diverging and sometimes overlapping, that mold cultural memory in present-day Rijeka.¹ Some elements are shared with and similar to cultural memory patterns in the rest of Croatia – such as the general lack of memory relating to the First World War, or the accentuated memory of the Croatian War of Independence – while others, including the much-promoted and nurtured memory of the partisans' victory and liberation of the town in the Second World War, receive greater emphasis in Rijeka, as in nearby Istria. The latter can be considered a founding element and instrument used to legitimize the city's belonging to Croatia: at the end of the war, Istria and Rijeka were incorporated into Croatia and thus Yugoslavia, thanks to the victory of the People's Liberation Struggle (NOB – Narodnooslobodilačka borba in Croatian).

However, there are various examples of divergence in the memory cultures of the different inhabitants of present-day Rijeka, influenced by their familial or personal memories, political affiliation(s) and/or sympathies, as well as different national (or regional) identification(s).² Aside from memories relating to the Second World War or

This article is part of the project NEPOSTRANS – Negotiating post-imperial transitions: from remobilization to nation-state consolidation. A comparative study of local and regional transitions in post-Habsburg East and Central Europe, financed by the European Research Council (ERC), Consolidator Grant agreement 772264. I would like to thank Anikó-Borbála Izsák for providing me the quoted articles from *A Tenegerpart* and Luka Semenski from the Zagreb City Library for the quoted *Ilustrovani List* article. Special gratitude to Cody J. Inglis for linguistic editing and useful advice on improving the text.

- 1 In this article, I use the name Rijeka when referring to the town after the Second World War or when I write about the larger metropolitan area. For the Habsburg period, I use Fiume, as it was city's official name, was used broadly, and marks the distinction from Sušak. I am not making a national claim concerning the city or its inhabitants. Since 1947, Rijeka has comprised interwar Italian Fiume, interwar Yugoslav Sušak, and western suburbs that belonged to Cisleithanian Istria in the Habsburg era, which I do not discuss here.
- 2 On Rijeka's symbols for national communities see Vanni D'Alessio: *Divided Legacies, Iconoclasm and Shared Cultures in Contested Rijeka/Fiume*. In: Borut Klabjan (ed.): *Borderlands of Memory*. Adriatic and

the Croatian War of Independence, which will not be discussed here, additional divergences emerge that stem from memories of the interwar period and the development of an international border between Fiume and Sušak, settlements previously parts of the same state – the Kingdom of Hungary – but under different administrations.³ In this case, the contrapositions are set by the alleged national and historical rights of (local) Croatians and (local) Italians to the territories, resulting in the recognition of their own and the non-recognition of the other's national claims as genuine representatives of Fiume (which existed as a separate administrative entity within the Kingdom of Hungary) or Fiume/Rijeka as well as its surroundings, including Sušak, from late 1918 onward.⁴ Furthermore, the entrance of D'Annunzio can and is interpreted through a national lens, emphasizing either »occupation« or »expedition/venture«,⁵ regardless of D'Annunzio's own, larger political ambitions. The Croatian–Italian national dichotomy neglects various other interwar groups present in the city, such as Fiumian socialists who craved for the city to become a republic in its own right, the Autonomist-Democrats (Fiumians who opposed annexation to Italy), or the (former) administrative representatives of the Hungarian state, not to mention politically indifferent people who struggled with everyday material issues regardless of their ethnicity.

As Borut Klabjan argues, literature on memory studies and memory landscapes has proliferated in recent years, yet it has focused mainly on national sites. However, cultural memory in borderlands, particularly in the northern Adriatic – barring research on Trieste – has not been fully addressed.⁶ Furthermore, everyday life during the First World War, and consequently wartime cultural memory, are topics yet to be researched in depth in the northern Adriatic.⁷ The same holds for the Rijeka region, since the only studies on these topics are outdated and suffer from national precon-

Central European Perspectives. Oxford et al. 2019, pp. 89–117. On the disputed Habsburg legacy see Péter Techet: Post-habsburgische Erinnerungspolitik als unreflektierte Nostalgie oder als antinationalistisches Gegennarrativ im heutigen Rijeka? In: Zibaldone 68 (2020), pp. 119–132.

3 For more on Sušak see Željko Bartulović: Sušak 1919–1947. Rijeka 2004. On Fiume see Raoul Pupo: Fiume città di passione [Fiume, Stadt der Leidenschaft]. Bari 2018. For the immediate afterwar period see Dominique Kirchner Reill: The Fiume Crisis. Life in the Wake of the Habsburg Empire. Cambridge, MA, forthcoming 2020.

4 Danijela Bauk: Grad je luka, luka je grad. Od malog porta do luke različitosti [The City is the Port, the Port is the City. From a Small Port to the Port of Diversity], <<http://www.novolist.hr/NL/GRAD-JE-LUKA-LUKA-JE-GRAD-Od-malog-porta-do-luke-razlicitosti>>, 3.3.2020; Ilaria Rocchi: Il plebiscito di cent'anni fa [The Plebiscite from a Hundred Years Ago], <<https://lavoce.hr/panorama/il-plebiscito-di-cento-anni-fa>>, 3.3.2020.

5 See the different approaches of the Croatian-language daily *Novi List* and the Italian-language daily *La Voce del Popolo* in Davor Mandić: Izložba u DAR-u. Nema sumnje da je D'Annunzijeve okupacija kraj »luke različitosti« [Exhibition at DAR (State Archives Rijeka). There is No Doubt that D'Annunzio's Occupation is the End of the »Port of Diversity«], <<http://www.novolist.hr/Kultura/Izlozbe/Izlozba-u-DAR-u-Nema-sumnje-da-je-D-Annunzijeve-okupacija-kraj-luke-razlicitosti>>, 9.1.2020; Ilaria Rocchi: L'impresa che divide [The Enterprise that Divides], <<https://lavoce.hr/panorama/limpresa-che-divide>>, 9.1.2020.

6 Klabjan: Borderlands of Memory, p. 1–9. See this volume, without a specific contribution on the First World War. Further, on Trieste, see Borut Klabjan: Nacionalizacija kulturne krajine severnega Jadrana na začetku 20. stoletja: primer Verdijevega spomenika v Trstu [The Nationalization of the Cultural Landscape of the Northern Adriatic at the Beginning of the 20th Century. The Case of the Verdi Monument in Trieste]. In: Acta Histriae 23 (2015) 1, pp. 113–130; and idem.: Erecting Fascism: Nation, Identity, and Space in Trieste in the First Half of the Twentieth Century. In: Nationalities Papers 46 (2017) 6, pp. 958–975.

7 Two studies regarding some aspects of the First World War in Istria have been published recently: Mihovil Dabo, Milan Radošević: U sjeni Velikog rata. Odras ratnih zbivanja na život istarskog civilnog stanovništva [In the Shadow of the Great War. Reflections of the War on the Life of the Istrian Civilian Population]. Pula 2019; and Davor Mandić: Istra u vihoru velikog rata. Sudbina evakuiraca 1914.–1918. [Istria in the Whirlwind of the Great War. The Fate of Evacuees between 1914 and 1918]. Pula 2013.



Kriegsdenkmal in Sušak/Kroatien.
Aus: Das interessante Blatt
3.2.1916, S. 10.
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ceptions.⁸ It seems that the Rijeka region in the First World War is a blind spot, since neither the local impact of the First World War nor its cultural memory have been studied, fitting a pattern in Croatian historiography that neglected this period.⁹

Within this concise outline, I will address an aspect of the cultural memory, or rather lack of memory, of the First World War in Sušak, Fiume, and present-day Rijeka. Departing from Jan Assmann's definition of cultural memory as a »body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose >cultivation< serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image,«¹⁰ I will focus on the

⁸ Edoardo Susmel: *La città di passione . Fiume negli anni 1914–1920* [The City of Passion. Fiume during the Years 1914–1920]. Milano 1921; Antonio Luksich-Jamini: *Cinquantesimo fiumano della guerra 1915–1918* [The 50th Anniversary of the War of 1915–1918 in Fiume]. In: *Fiume XIII* (gennaio–giugno 1967), pp. 42–82.

⁹ On cultures of memory and the end of the First World War in Croatia, see Tihomir Čipek, Olivera Milosavljević: *Kultura sjećanja 1918. Povijesni lomovi i svladavanje prošlosti* [Culture of Memory 1918. Historical Fractures and Overcoming the Past]. Zagreb 2007. For an overview of Croatian historiography on the First World War in Croatia, see Vijoleta Herman Kaurić: *The First World War in Croatia – More or less known facts*. In: *Review of Croatian History* 10 (2014), pp. 7–22. The Ivo Pilar Institute began work in 2020 on the project *The First World War in the Culture of Memory. Forgotten Heritage Center*, <<https://www.pilar.hr/2020/01/prvi-svjetski-rat-u-kulturi-sjecanja-zaboravljena-bastina/>>, 20.2.2020.

¹⁰ Jan Assmann: *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*. In: *New German Critique* 65 (1995), p. 132.

historical context, symbolical meanings and function of the monument to the Heroic Sailor and the figures it depicts.¹¹

The Heroic Sailor, a monument erected in Sušak during the First World War, enables one to grasp the values of the local society, connect it with the larger national and imperial frameworks, and, at the same time, discuss the boundaries of loyalties among imagined national groups. Following the Heroic Sailor's fate, I will display the complexity of Fiume–Sušak relations and the impact of the transition and regime transformation of 1918. Finally, I will address the legacy of the monument, contributing to the understanding of elements that shape contemporary cultural memory in Rijeka.

THE MONUMENT TO THE HEROIC SAILOR

The monument – which depicts a wooden, life-size Austro-Hungarian Navy sailor inside a pavilion resembling a tower of Trsat Castle – was inaugurated in Sušak on 16 January 1916. At the inauguration, Sušak was decorated with Croatian flags and an enormous crowd attended the ceremony, including school children and almost every civil and military representative in Fiume and Sušak. The Croatian Ban was represented by the Grand Count (*veliki župan*) of Modruš-Rijeka County (*županija/vármegye*) Vinko Zmajčić Svetoivanski; the district commander (*kotar/járás*) and male co-president of the local association of Croatian disabled veterans, Konstantin Rojčević; the mayor of Fiume, Antonio Vio; the mayor of Sušak, Anton Sablić; some municipal representatives from Fiume and Sušak; representatives of Bakar and other Croatian Littoral authorities; General Nikola Ištvanović, commander of the 5th Marine Corps; a representative of the navy; and the female co-president of the local association of Croatian disabled veterans, Josipa/Joza Kopajtić Bakarska. The only individuals conspicuously missing were the Governor of Fiume and the Croatian Littoral, Count István Wickenburg and Admiral Anton Haus, who apologized for his absence. The unveiling of the monument was accompanied by the *k. u. k.* 96th Karlovac Regiment that performed the imperial hymn »Gott erhalte« (in Croatian, known as »Kraljevka«) and the Croatian national anthem. It all took place in a square recently named after General Svetozar Borojević, considered a war hero and defender of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy on the Italian Front. The inauguration ceremony was followed by a concert in one of Sušak's hotels, and the entire event resulted in 5,000 crowns in total donations to charity.¹² Postcards of the monument were sold, and the plan was, once the Heroic Sailor was fully covered, to place it in a war museum while the pavilion would be left to the Sušak municipality.

11 At the founding meeting of the Sušak association of Croatian disabled veterans, the statue was mentioned as the Heroic Sailor and the same adjective is used in Jakov Karmelić's article, as well as in the published photograph. See Društvo za pripomoć hrvatskim ratnim invalidima na Sušaku [Society for Assistance to Croatian Military Disabled Persons in Sušak]. In: Riečki Novi List, 5.11.1915, p. 2; Jakov Karmelić: Zaboravljeni spomenik pomorcu [The Forgotten Monument to the Sailor]. In: Sušačka revija (1993) 1, pp. 38–41. The transcription of the entire original article is available here: Spomenik junačkom mornaru [Monument to the Heroic Sailor], Sušak, zima 1916 17–18, <<http://croinfo.net/forum/index.php?topic=2745.0>>, 9.1.2020. Sometimes the statue was referred to as the Iron Sailor. See »Željezni mornar« na Sušaku [The Iron Sailor in Sušak]. In: Riečki Novi List, 14.11.1915, p. 2.

12 Lo scoprimento di un padiglione commemorativo a Sussak [The Unveiling of a Memorial Pavilion in Sušak]. In: Il Popolo, 16.1.1916, p. 1; Lo scoprimento del padiglione commemorativo [The Unveiling of the Memorial Pavilion]. In: Il Popolo, 18.1.1916, p. 1; Odkriće spomen-kipa na Sušaku [The Unveiling of the Commemorative Statue in Sušak]. In: Jutarnji list, 20.1.1916, p. 6; Otkriće ratnog spomen-kipa na Sušaku [The Unveiling of the Commemorative War Statue in Sušak]. In: Ilustrovani List, 29.01.1916, p. 98.

Behind the Heroic Sailor stood the initiative of the Association for Aiding the Croatian War Disabled of Sušak. The association, established at the beginning of November 1915, had the institutional backing of the local authorities: the founding member was Sušak's mayor, and the constituent meeting was held in Sušak's municipal council.¹³ The aim of the association was to engage women: there were female and male directors on the board,¹⁴ and the money raised was sent to the nationwide board for the education and treatment of disabled Croatian-Slavonian veterans in Zagreb.¹⁵

Such activities were neither a local phenomenon nor a Croatian specificity. The Heroic Sailor was part of the nailed object (*Webrmann in Eisen*) commemoration practices developed during the First World War in Germany and in Austria-Hungary. As in other parts of the Dual Monarchy, citizens could buy nails of different metals and plates and hammer them into wooden statues, contributing money for the war disabled and their family members.¹⁶ As noted by Kathryn Densford, the function of these statues was to obtain home front support for Austria-Hungary's war effort. Furthermore, these monuments served to promote patriotism, dynastic loyalty combined with other forms of local loyalty, and to reinforce and maintain the traditional, male-dominant society from which men were now physically missing.¹⁷

The Sušak monument does not differ in its characteristics from other Austro-Hungarian nailed statues. The Heroic Sailor monument and the unveiling ceremony displayed Croatian nationalism, Habsburg loyalty, local historical and maritime traditions, support for the war effort, and in turn perpetuated traditional gender roles.

At the inauguration ceremony, the tower housing the statue was decorated with Croatian, Slavonian and Dalmatian emblems; Croatian flags hung on the buildings around the monument, and the military played the Croatian national anthem. Among other slogans, the attendees shouted: »Long live Croatia!«¹⁸ The emphasis on »Croatia« was not so surprising; after all, Sušak was located within Croatia-Slavonia – an autonomous political unit within the Kingdom of Hungary – and the money was to be given to disabled Croatian veterans. However, the ceremony was not purely Croatocentric.

Obviously, Emperor-King Franz Joseph was an important reference. Initially, the plan was to inaugurate the monument on 2 December, the anniversary of Franz Joseph's ascension to the throne in 1848,¹⁹ but we can assume that the tower was not completed on time.²⁰ Although the anniversary was missed, the figure of Franz Joseph and the associated dynastic loyalty were still recalled: the military played the imperial hymn and cheers of »Long live the King!« rang out. Additionally, as the photograph shows, the elderly face of the Heroic Sailor was perhaps carved to resemble the *Kaiser*;

13 Društvo za pripomoć hrvatskim ratnim invalidima na Sušaku. In: Riečki Novi List, 5.11.1915, p. 2; Sjednica občinskog zastupstva na Sušaku [Meeting of the Municipal Council in Sušak]. In: Riečki Novi List, 12.11.1915, p. 1.

14 See Društvo za pripomoć hrvatskim ratnim invalidima na Sušaku. In: Riečki Novi List, 31.10.1915, p. 2.

15 Društvo za pripomoć hrvatskim ratnim invalidima na Sušaku. In: Riečki Novi List, 23.11.1915, p. 2.

16 Jay Winter: Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning. The Great War in European Cultural History. Cambridge 1998, pp. 82–85.

17 Kathryn E. Densford: The Wehrmann in Eisen. Nailed statues as barometers of Habsburg social order during the First World War. In: European Review of History/Revue européenne d'histoire 24 (2017) 2, pp. 305–324.

18 Odkriće spomen-kipa na Sušaku. In: Jutarnji list, 20.1.1916, p. 6.

19 Društvo za pripomoć hrvatskim ratnim invalidima na Sušaku. In: Riečki Novi List, 5.11.1915, p. 2.

20 On the progress of the construction work see Gradnja kule za »željeznog mornara« na Sušaku [Construction of the Iron Sailor Tower in Sušak]. In: Riečki Novi List, 30.11.1915, p. 1.

though there is no explicit mention of this resemblance in the sources. Nevertheless, the form of the statue had an intended significance for its audience.

As *Ilustrovani List* commented, for the people of the Croatian Littoral the sailor was the closest fighter for King and Homeland; the Viennese illustrated periodical *Das interessante Blatt* made the same comment. The German-language magazine further explained that the sailor was pointing with one of his hands to the Adriatic, either as a threat toward the unfaithful allies (that is, Italy) or as a protective gesture towards the sea.²¹ It was, of course, their sea, as it was their homeland for whom the people were shouting, be they Habsburg, Austro-Hungarian, Croatian, or all of these together. The naval character of the monument was not specific to Sušak; it was the same case with Pula (Pola in Italian and German, Pulj in Slovenian), where a Lighthouse in Iron was erected nearby, and Trieste (Trst in Croatian and Slovenian, Triest in German), where a Sailor in Iron holding a gun was placed.²² In all three cases, a maritime tradition was evoked in order to bond people at home with their fellow citizens at the front.

Additionally, the Heroic Sailor was contained within a pavilion that resembled a tower of Trsat Castle. The castle, situated above Sušak, was once owned by the Frankopan-Zrinskis, a noble family with strong symbolic value for the (regional) Croatian national movement.²³ The pavilion thus testifies to the monument's adaptation to its immediate landscape – that is, being situated literally and symbolically within it – and its use and reinterpretation of local historical tradition in service of the war effort. Thus the Heroic Sailor was not only a local monument for Sušak; it was a reference point for the larger Croatian-Slavonian coastal region.

Moreover, as the representatives of Fiume attending the ceremony testify, the monument was also recognized by the particularly Fiumian, although not exactly Croatophile, elite. In fact, a few days after the inauguration, *Il Popolo* [The People], a Fiumian Italian-language daily, reported a race to hammer a nail into the monument, informing the Italian-speaking residents of Fiume that anyone could take part in the fundraiser.²⁴ Similarly, *A Tengerpart* [The Seacoast], a Hungarian-language daily in Fiume, informed its readers that the monument could be viewed freely every day.²⁵ Another Italian-language daily, *La Bilancia* [The Libra] reported on the Grand Count's speech at the ceremony, recounting the »heroic acts of our glorious troops,« the »victory of our weapons,« and describing the crowd's cheers as »[cries] of love for homeland and our Sovereign.«²⁶ Also, the aforementioned *A Tengerpart* reported the Grand Count's speech, praising »the bravery of our soldiers.«²⁷ It was not just the

21 Eiserne Denkmäler. In: *Das Interessante Blatt*, 3.2.1916, p. 10.

22 Densford: The Wehrmann in Eisen, pp. 308–309.

23 For instance, the regional Sokol chapter in the Sušak area bore the name of this family: Sokolska župa Zrinsko-Frankopanska [Zrinski-Frankopan Sokol Chapter]. Ivan Ivančić: Predratni rad Sokolskog Društva u Sušaku [Pre-war Activities of the Sokol Society in Sušak]. In: Ivan Ivančić (ed.): *Spomenica izdalo »Sokolsko društvo Sušak-Rijeka u Sušaku«* [Memorial Publication issued by the Sokol Chapter Sušak-Rijeka in Sušak]. Sušak 1929, pp. 5–18.

24 Il padiglione commemorativo a Sussak [The Commemorative Pavilion in Sušak]. In: *Il Popolo*, 19.1.1916, p. 1.

25 A susáki fatengerész [The Wooden Sailor of Sušak]. In: *A Tengerpart*, 20.1.1916, p. 1.

26 «[...] ricordando le eroiche gesta delle nostre gloriose truppe [...] dopo la vittoria delle nostre armi» and »La folla che assisteva alla festa fece eco entusiasticamente a questo grido d'amore alla patria e al nostro Sovrano« In: Lo scoprimento del monumento a Sussak [The Unveiling of the Monument in Sušak]. In: *La Bilancia*, 17.1.1916, p. 2.

27 A susáki tengerészsobor leleplezése [The Unveiling of the Sailor Monument in Sušak]. In: *A Tengerpart*, 18.1.1916, p. 2: »...katonáink vitézségéről emlékezett«.

King and the homeland which unified Fiume and Sušak, but also its troops and weapons. Since Fiume did not have any other monuments of this kind, it is legitimate to ask whether the population, regardless of their national identification, related to that statue of the »Croatian« Heroic Sailor as a statue for all Austro-Hungarian soldiers. Certainly, those excluded from the unveiling ceremony – who either felt that way or self-excluded – were the Hungarian state authorities: the governor did not attend the inauguration²⁸ and the Hungarian anthem was not played.

Finally, the monument served to include women in the home front efforts while maintaining their traditional gender roles. The association for aiding disabled Croatian veterans in Sušak had a female and a male section, providing women representation, yet subordinating them to men in the leadership hierarchy. In fact, it could be argued that Josipa Kopajtić Bakarska was appointed as the female president of the association purely because of her husband's economic and social prestige rather than for her previous social engagement.²⁹ The ceremony perfectly depicts this traditional division of roles: men hammered the nails, while the female president received a bouquet of flowers from the male president of the aid association. Lastly, the adjective of the statue was not randomly chosen; men, and in particular the warriors, needed to be nothing less than heroic.

Despite all the overlapping meanings of the monument, the Heroic Sailor did not survive the 1918 transition. On the night of 23 October 1918, the day when clashes broke out between Fiume Hungarian state police in Fiume and the pro-Croatian Jelačić Regiment, the monument was so disfigured that the municipal authorities ordered its removal.³⁰ Several decades later, some people confessed the act; they had been young members of the Sušak Croatian high school sport association *Viktorija*: »It was Austro-Hungarian, and we were against Austria-Hungary.«³¹ The youths deprived the sailor of its symbolic Croatian character and overlooked its function as a symbol of aid and grieving for other Croats who had fought in the war. Yet the excessive hatred towards the sailor was not shared by all social and generational groups. That same day, the nobleman Sigismund/Sigismondo/Žiga Copaitich/Kopajtić,³² the husband of Josipa Kopajtić Bakarska, filed an official protest against the damage.³³ Furthermore, in his aforementioned confession, one of the youths that destroyed the monument recalled a *mlekarica* (a woman from the Croatian-speaking countryside who carried milk to be sold in town) cursing the Italians for damaging the statue. In this case, it is not clear whether the confession was a retrospective projection of the Croatian–Italian / Sušak–Fiume interwar contraposition or related a genuine event in October 1918. If it was the latter, it could be argued that

28 There could be an objective reason for the governor's absence, as he was reported sick. Il governatore riprenderà tra qualche giorno il suo ufficio [The governor will reassume his office in a few days]. In: *Il Popolo*, 16.1.1916, p. 1.

29 Josipa Kopajtić was the daughter of Josip Gorup, a very wealthy Slovene industrialist. For her short biography see Irvin Lukežić: Sigismund pl. Kopajtić Bakarski – pomorski privrednik, domoljub i vizionar. Prilog poznavanju privredne elite sjeverozapadne Hrvatske [The Nobleman Sigismund pl. Kopajtić Bakarski. Naval Businessman, Patriot and Visionary. A Contribution about the Economic Elite of Northwestern Croatia]. In: *Bakarski Zbornik* 16 (2017), pp. 7–182, here: p. 159.

30 Odstranjen mornar [Sailor Removed]. In: *Primorske novine*, 24.10.1918, p. 2.

31 Karmelić: Zaboravljeni spomenik pomorcu, p. 40: »To je bilo austro-ugarsko, a mi smo bili protiv Austro-Ugarske«.

32 Lukežić: Sigismund pl. Kopajtić Bakarski, pp. 7–182, in particular pp. 10–15, p. 33, pp. 51–52, p. 55, pp. 61–62, p. 67, p. 80, p. 87, p. 115, pp. 122–23, p. 130, pp. 132–33, pp. 136–38, p. 140, p. 149, pp. 156–57, pp. 166–172.

33 Protest. In: *Primorske novine*, 24.10.1918, p. 2.

in 1918, for some locals the monument was not an oppositional symbol to new Croatian national identification, but rather stood in opposition to (Hungarian-)Italian Fiume. The same can be said of the alleged orientation of the statue pointing not to the Adriatic, but at Fiume.³⁴

Some biographical details of the figures present at the 1916 inauguration ceremony also display unsurprising contradictions and continuities between the old empire and new nation-states. General Nikola Ištvanović (Ivanska, 1857 – Zagreb, 1944) was among the four high-ranking Austro-Hungarian military officers that participated in the National Council of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs on 29 October 1918, and was appointed commander-in-chief of the army defending Slovenia from the advancing Italian forces. While he easily translated his Habsburg loyalty into support for the emerging South Slav state, Ištvanović was not considered reliable by the political leadership of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, and was soon retired, although the decision was quickly revoked.³⁵ Kostantin Rojčević, the district commander, became a fiduciary of the SCS National Council in October 1918 and was mentioned in 1923 as a Serb, close to Pašić's Radical Party, seeking career advancement.³⁶ Antonio Vio (Fiume, 1875 – Bolzano, 1949) was one of the founding members of Fiume's Italian National Council, which requested the city's annexation by Italy and held the post of mayor until October 1919.³⁷ Vinko Zmajčić (Bakar, 1870–1920) did not continue his political-institutional career, since he retired from the position of Grand Count at the end of 1917.³⁸ Sušak's mayor in 1916, Ante Sablić (1865–1941), was still a member of Sušak's Advisory Board in 1919 after being replaced as mayor during the war, served on the board of directors of a Sušak publishing institute, and, interestingly, was an honorary consul of the Republic of Austria.³⁹ A sharp rupture between the old and the new world did not take place, in this case: figures celebrating the Habsburg war effort in 1916 were leaders or supporters of national liberation two years later. Indeed, for their sake, it was then better to remove traces of their ambiguous pasts.

Regarding the monument: in 1923, the Sušak city advisory board decided to remove the tower-like pavilion, since it was a symbol of the Austro-Hungarian navy,⁴⁰ while the statue, according to testimonies, was placed in storage outside the town. The site lost its symbolic importance, though the square maintained a symbolic naming: the Austro-Hungarian Field Marshal Borojević was substituted by a new national hero, Ante Trumbić. Just a few meters away, a new monument was erected in 1938 to honor King Peter the Great, the Liberator. It was not the first monument of someone belonging to the Karadodević dynasty in Sušak. In 1935, a monument to the recently killed King Alexander the Unifier was erected in front of the new city council building.⁴¹ What was thus stressed in interwar Sušak was loyalty to the new dynasty, while

34 Karmelić: Zaboravljeni spomenik pomorcu, p. 40.

35 Vlatka Dugački, Krešimir Regan: Zaboravljeni vojskovođa Nikola pl. Ištvanović [The Forgotten General Nikola pl. Ištvanović]. In: Radovi. Zavod za hrvatsku povijest 50 (2018) 1, pp. 153–183.

36 Izborna borba [Election Struggle]. In: Narodno Jedinstvo, 10.2.1923, p. 2.

37 Salvatore Samani: Antonio Vio. In: Salvatore Samani: Dizionario biografico fiumano [Biographical Dictionary of Fiume]. Dolo Venezia 1976, pp. 139–141.

38 Odlikovanja umirovljenih velikih župana [Retired Grand Counts Decorated]. In: Hrvatsko pravo, 1.12.1917, p. 5.

39 Bartulović: Sušak 1919–1947, p. 475, note 1085; Irvin Lukežić: Nebo nad Kvarnerom [The Sky above the Kvarner]. Rijeka 2005, p. 204 and pp. 420–421.

40 Bartulović, Sušak 1919–1947, p. 475, note 1088.

41 Julija Lozzi Barković: Međuratna arhitektura Rijeke i Sušaka. Usporedba i europsko okruženje [The Interwar Architecture of Rijeka and Sušak. A Comparison and the European Context]. Rijeka 2015, pp. 235–239.

the First World War experience was neglected, at least as part of the official memory.⁴² As in the case of the Heroic Sailor, these monuments no longer exist, since they were removed during the Italian occupation of the territory during the Second World War, and were not returned in socialist Yugoslavia. Who cared about that imperial and imperialistic war? Who cared about that former despotic dynasty when a revolutionary war had forged a new socialist state?

FORGETTING THE DEFEATED AND REMEMBERING THE VICTORIOUS

Regarding national polarization and the various layers of memory, some monuments were rediscovered thanks to groups that tried to establish new remembrance agendas after the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia. The story of the Heroic Sailor was published in the first number of *Sušačka revija* (Sušak Review), a journal created in 1993 by the recently established *Klub Sušačana* [Club of the People of Sušak].⁴³ The club's purpose was to reaffirm (that is, defend, nurture and develop) Sušak's identity, autochthonous characteristics, values and traditions, and the historical, urban, cultural, economic, societal and ethical tradition of Sušak, Kvarner and the Croatian Littoral.⁴⁴ In the 1990s, when the communist (Croatian/)Yugoslav heritage was contested, disappearing, marginalized and/or removed, the story of the city of Sušak, merged administratively in 1947 with Rijeka, could now be revalued and rediscovered. As someone in a poll conducted by the club suggested, »If there can (be) Buda-Pest, then there can (also be) Sušak-Rijeka.«⁴⁵ Obviously, the emphasis was on Sušak's Croatian elements, while Yugoslav aspects, both socialist and interwar unitarian, were marginalized.⁴⁶ The existence of the Heroic Sailor, on the other hand, could be completely ignored by the local Italian-speaking community since they already had their own memory site for the First World War at the Kozala city cemetery.

Inside the cemetery, there are various tombs and monuments created during the interwar period to remember the soldiers that fought for the Kingdom of Italy. The most prominent among them is the crypt under the Church of Saint Romuald and All Saints, which contains the remains of Italian soldiers who died in the area during the First World War and its aftermath, Fiumian Italian army volunteers, legionnaires of D'Annunzio's and Italian soldiers killed during the »Bloody Christmas« of 1920, and remains of those, including Fascists, who died fighting for the annexation of

42 For examples of interwar remembrance of World War I in Croatia, in particular concerning the Jewish communities in Northern Croatia, see Ljiljana Dobrovšak: Spomenik stradalim Židovima u Prvom svjetskom ratu u Koprivnici [The Monument to the Jewish Victims of World War I in Koprivnica]. In: *Podravski zbornik* 43 (2017), pp. 53–66; Id.: Spomenici Židovima stradalima u Prvom svjetskom ratu na području sjeverne Hrvatske u kontekstu njihova međuratnog položaja [Monuments to Jews Killed in World War I in Northern Croatia in the Context of their Interwar Situation]. In: *Historijski zbornik* 70 (2017) 2, pp. 439–461.

43 Karmelić: Zaboravljeni spomenik pomorcu, pp. 38–41.

44 Zdravko Ćiro Kovačić: Zašto i čemu Klub Sušačana [The Club of the People of Sušak: Why and What For?]. In: *Sušačka revija* (1993) 1, p. 1.

45 Tonči Host: Anketa [Survey]. In: *Sušačka revija* (1993) 1, p. 9: »Ako može Budim-Pešta, može Sušak-Rijeka.«

46 See in particular the speech by Hrvoje Šarinić, then Croatian prime minister, at the founding assembly. In: *Izveštaj o radu* [Work Report]. In: *Sušačka revija* (1993) 1, p. 4: »As someone from Sušak, he greets the foundation of Klub Sušačana, stating that the initiative to found (the club) has to be viewed within the context of everything that has happened in Croatia in the last two years, because the political changes have opened up space for turning to tradition, characteristics and everything that makes us Croats.« [Kao Sušačanin pozdravlja osnivanje Kluba Sušačana, navodeći da inicijativu za osnivanje treba gledati u kontekstu svega onoga što se u Hrvatskoj dogodilo u posljednje dvije godine, jer su političke promjene ipak otvorile prostor da se okrenemo tradiciji, obilježjima i svemu onome što nas čini Hrvatima.]

Fiume to Italy up until 1924.⁴⁷ Today, on All Saints' Day, a local Italian minority choir sings near the crypt. On All Souls' Day, an Italian-language mass is held in the crypt and another Italian minority choir sings for the deceased. The ceremony is attended by the general consul of Italy in Rijeka since the monument, as a military graveyard, is under the supervision of the Italian Republic.⁴⁸ Paradoxically, a place that merges the memories of Italian soldiers who died in the First World War and interwar Italian annexationists is an institutional memory site for the Italian minority despite the fact that most of the Habsburg-era Italian-speakers of Fiume that were drafted fought or died fighting as Austrian or Hungarian citizens. For the local Italian minority, the existence of the monument to the Heroic Sailor is not of much significance, generally representing the fallen on the Habsburg side, while the Italian nation-state's official memory site became a place for their own mourning.

In conclusion, it could be argued that a shared trait of the memory culture for both people close to Klub Sušaćana and the Italian minority is the lack of major concern regarding the First World War. The argument could be extended to the entire population of Rijeka, despite the war's becoming a topic on a very popular internet forum for local history,⁴⁹ quite a successful initiative of gathering artifacts and memories by the City Library for the Europeana project in 2014,⁵⁰ or a collection of documents published by an association of local cultural heritage in one of Rijeka's suburbs.⁵¹ The marginalization of the experience of the defeated Habsburg side, the interwar insistence on national claims, the public potentiation of the commitment of the victorious sides in the interwar period, and, most of all, another, more tragic and more directly felt World War, allowed the memories of the First World War and the Heroic Sailor to fade away. With hardly any living testimonies of the First World War, that conflict and that monument are fading away from Rijeka's collective cultural memory, since these issues can hardly have any legitimization purpose. The local experience of the First World War does not provide much material to help us remember our everyday belonging to a world of nations and nation-states. Other conflicts, in a more crystal way, have assumed that function. However, recent research, in line with the general trend in reevaluating the Habsburg experience, is slowly removing exclusive nationalistic interpretations. By writing about multilayered experiences and disputing (national) monism, such research brings the lives of common people back into focus, despite their forced or willing engagement with the defeated side. After all, the Heroic Sailor is not merely what he physically represents; he is also an allegorical symbol of what is missing. Beyond the figure of a Habsburg male marine warrior, there is a world of home front regular men and, even greater in number, regular women whose everyday existence, regardless of their ethnicity, should be remembered.

47 Lozzi Barković: *Međuratna arhitektura Rijeke i Sušaka*, pp. 351–359.

48 Pcm: *Ognissanti e commemorazione dei Defunti. Festività sentite* [All Saints' Day and Commemoration of the Dead. Solemn Feelings], <<https://lavoce.hr/attualita/ognissanti-e-commemorazione-dei-defunti-festivita-sentite>>, 9.1.2020.

49 *Rijeka i naš kraj u Prvom svjetskom ratu (1914–1918)* [Rijeka and Our Region in World War I (1914–1918)], <<http://www.lokalpatrioti-rijeka.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=28&t=2624&start=90>>, 9.1.2020.

50 *Uspomene na Prvi svjetski rat: Vaza od granate, lažni ludaci i tragična pisma u Europeani* [Memories of the First World War: A Vase Grenade, Fake Madmen and Tragic Letters in Europeana], <<https://gkr.hr/Magazin/Osvrti/Uspomene-na-Prvi-svjetski-rat-Vaza-od-granate-lazni-ludaci-i-tragicna-pisma-u-Europeani>>, 12.5.2020.

51 Draško Maršanić, Christian Grailach: *Drenovčani u Prvom svjetskom ratu* [Drenova Residents in the First World War]. In: Damir Medved et al.: *Drenova bez granica. Zbornik radova* [Drenova Without Borders. An Anthology]. Rijeka 2016, pp. 41–52.

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**Is there Space for Remembering Habsburg World War One in Rijeka?
Considerations on the Monument to the Heroic Sailor in Sušak**
(Abstract)

This article discusses aspects of the cultural memory of the First World War during the war itself and in present-day Rijeka. In particular, the focus is on the monument to the Heroic Sailor in Sušak, a nailed statue (*Webrmann in Eisen*) constructed to support the war effort of the Habsburg Empire. The institutions behind erecting the monument, the adaptation of the statue to the local and regional context, the symbols used, and the actors involved in the monument's unveiling are all factors examined in this study. In the analysis of these factors, the intertwined social values and multiple loyalties present in Sušak and Fiume during the late Habsburg period become apparent. Furthermore, the Heroic Sailor's destiny in the post-war period is significant, as it displays the complex experience and neglected memory of the First World War in Sušak in favor of a new, future-oriented politics that celebrated the Karadorđević in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). Finally, the article argues that the rediscovery of the Heroic Sailor relates to the emergence of new, local actors in contemporary Croatia. Recently, the emphasis has been on the Heroic Sailor's Croatian national features, overlooking the wartime multiple layers of loyalty, as well as connections between Fiume and Sušak. While there is evidence of national fragmentation among local Croatians and Italians regarding the cultural memory of the First World War, the wartime experience of locals on the front or at home is commonly neglected across the national divide.