

“ACRO PELLEGRINAGGIO” Visits to World War I Memorials on the Soča/Isonzo Front in the Interwar Period

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The paper presents a case study of visits to World War I battlefield sites (monuments, sacred zones, cemeteries) on the Soča/Isonzo front. The focus is on acknowledging the motivations related to the construction of monuments and the role and interest of the Italian authorities when influencing and encouraging these visits. The paper will also attempt to determine the importance of this practice in the case of memorial sites at the Soča/Isonzo front. Additional issues addressed in the paper include how common visits to these sites were in the interwar period, who the primary visitors were and if and how this activity resonated in the tourism sector, and how tourism reflected the Italian national narrative in the contested border region.

Keywords: Soča/Isonzo front, secular pilgrimage, battlefield tourism, tourist guidebooks

Introduction¹

During the nineteenth century, tourism became of increasing importance in the economic sector and in society. Modern forms of tourism present during the period of modernization in several European countries and North America such as visits to thermal spas and seaside and alpine tourism also developed in the Habsburg Empire (later Austria-Hungary). The period of modernization refers to the industrial revolution and its consequences both in economic, social and cultural contexts. In the eighteenth century, new philosophical ideas of Enlightenment created a new perception of the individual and of the body (sport was also linked to tourism). The nineteenth century was characterised by the growing influence of romantic ideas and the bourgeoisie who had slowly become an important factor in the tourism industry. The new fashion of bathing, climbing etc. that was also promoted in medical discourse developed during this period. An important role was played by steam-powered boats

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and trains, which were new means of transport that made travel easier, faster, more punctual, safer and cheaper. After the end of World War I, a different scenario was also reflected in the tourism industry. First, the Great War symbolized the end of so-called *élite* tourism. A decrease in tourist activity was recorded in the first years of the post-war period, especially due to the significant changes in state borders that also affected the former Austrian Littoral,² which will be examined in this article. In the first years after the war, a decline in tourism was characterised by a lack of “old” tourists from Mitteleuropa, and was not sufficiently replaced by Italian tourists. The tourist industry was in search of new potential markets, and a considerable effort was made in the area of battlefield tourism, although the promotion of these visits was strongly related to (secular) pilgrimage to war sites. The intent was to stir emotions among potential Italian tourists to encourage them to visit these war sites (Leonardi 2014: 82–83).³

This study will concentrate on the relevance of growing tourist activity in the region of the former Austrian Littoral, with a focus on the role of battlefield tourism and/or (secular) pilgrimage within a visit to World War I memorials placed in the area where the Soča/Isonzo front line (from May 1915 to October 1917) between Austria-Hungary and the Kingdom of Italy was located. The construction of *lieux de memoire* (sites of memory, a concept first introduced by the French historian Pierre Nora) in this area, such as parks and monuments, was significant for the affirmation of national identity, especially in an ethnically mixed, border region where a common nation identity had not yet emerged.

My interest is to acknowledge the motivations related to the construction of monuments and the role and interests of the Italian authorities when influencing and encouraging such visits. As pointed out by Eade and Katić (2017), visitors to World War I battlefields saw themselves as visitors to a sacred place imbued with great emotional meaning. These “emic understandings have been typically analysed through the use of the etic category” (Eade and Katić 2017: 1), which is defined by Walter (1993) as secular pilgrimage. These pilgrimages are secular because the emphasis was not on the religious ceremonies that were held on the sites, but on the acts of remembrance, grief and memory (Eade and Katić 2017: 1–3).⁴ Traditional religion “offered a language and imagery with which to express the grief of the nation and assisted the creation of rituals”, which helped the process of mourning (Lloyd 1998: 5). The large World War I memorials at Sredipolje/Redipuglia, Oslavje/Oslavia and in Kobarid/Caporetto represented a national territory, where the Italian state aimed to glorify its victorious battles and strengthen its national identity. The action of commemoration was for mourning and memorial purposes (Klabjan

² Austrian Littoral (Avstrijsko primorje, Österreichisches Küstendland, Litorale austriaco) was an Austrian (later Austro-Hungarian) crown land from 1849 until 1918. It was comprised of Istria, Gorizia and Gradisca, and the capital was in Trieste/Trst (Kavrečič 2017: 81–82).

³ Leonardi analyses the case of tourism in the Alpine area of the new Italian (former Austrian/Austro-Hungarian) territories and the effort made by the Italian state to influence visits to this area where World War I battles also took place.

⁴ For further interpretations see Eade and Katić 2017.

2010: 401–403), but also served as a tool for “nation-building and integrating individuals into the national body” (ibid.: 401), which fashioned a mythology and an image in the collective memory of the nations involved in the war (Iles 2008: 138).

In this paper I attempt to determine the importance of this practice in the case of the memorial sites at the Soča/Isonzo front. How common were visits to these sites in the interwar period, who were the main visitors and how did this activity resound in the tourism sector, if it did at all, and how did tourism reflect the Italian national narrative in the contested border region?⁵

Secular pilgrimage and battlefield tourism after World War I

Tourism manifests in various ways, and one of these is linked to visits to attractions associated with “disaster, suffering, violence or death” (Šuligoj 2016b: 260). This type of tourism is most commonly associated with dark tourism, or considered a form of thanatourism in “which issues such as remembrance, nationhood, family, honour and respect are regarded as integral aspects of tourist motivation and activity” (Winter 2011: 173). Dark tourism as a phenomenon is considered to be “a research area where war related sites represent its core component”, even though the term “may be theoretically limited, fragile and thus indeterminate” (Šuligoj 2016b: 260). The first known, large scale visits to sites of war were after the battle of Waterloo, which is considered to have changed British travel to Europe (Seaton 1999), “although intensive development of battlefield tourism was initiated not earlier than the end of WWI” (Šuligoj 2016b: 260; see also Battilani 2014: 249–250). Due to the apparent disinterest of tourists in grief (Walter 1993: 72; Winter 2011: 165; Mosse 2007), mourning and remembrance, they were considered inferior to pilgrims (see Winter 2009: 616).

This statement was understood within the context of tourism development during the nineteenth century when leisure purposes were at the forefront. The tourist was an elite vacationer who consumed the tourist supply at health, seaside and climate resorts. Tourists enjoyed their leisure time at these locations and were not burdened by tragic events. The devastation of World War I changed this perspective, or rather it created a new segment for the tourist industry; it was, however, considered “morally inappropriate” to profit from death and tragedy. Thus, a more acceptable way of travel was introduced that was linked to commemorative practise and memorial visits (see Griffith in Iles 2008: 147). In fact, the memorial sites built after the war were originally meant for commemoration and for pilgrims (the bereaved and ex-servicemen) (Winter 2009: 615–616). Commemorative events were held at the sites where battles had taken place and where soldiers had sacrificed their lives (Mosse 2007: 20). It was believed that tourists banalized or trivialized the memory of the fallen, were without emotion or respect for their sacrifice, and were suppos-

⁵ See also Battilani 2014 for the case of Trentino and South Tirol.

edly driven by simple curiosity (Walter 1993: 72; Winter 2011: 165). A pilgrim, on the other hand, was seen as a spiritual visitor of graves and sites and a seeker of meaning (Walter 1993: 71; Eade and Katić 2017: 2). The relationship between the sacred (pilgrims) and the secular (tourists) (Lloyd 1998: 40) is in this case very complex and intertwined, and it is hard to distinguish the two groups, which are not among themselves homogenous. Battlefield tourism was interpreted as a “trivialization of war experience” (Mosse 2007: 168) and the tourist as a person seeking only enjoyment without understanding the deeper meaning of memorial sites, and was thus inferior to the pilgrim.

The site and monuments themselves were considered sacred places, and “the use of the language of pilgrimage developed as part of a wartime search for meaning in the face of the enormous casualties of the war” (Lloyd 1998: 47). Two major groups of travellers to the sacred sites were ex-servicemen and bereaved relatives. These two categories were regarded as pilgrims, since the reasons behind their visits were of a spiritual nature and for the purposes of mourning and memory. Since tourists and the commercialization of such visits were considered a threat to and a trivialization of sacrifice, there were also attempts to prevent (or limit) tourist visits. Some examples of this include a proposal by the British House of Commons in 1919 to “exclude tourists from the battlefields until the relatives of the dead had visited their graves”, and the English journalist Rudyard Kipling’s plea to travellers in *The Times* (1919) that war sites were “holy-consecrated in every part by the freely offered lives of men, and for that reason [must] not to be overrun with levity” (Lloyd 1998: 40).

Nevertheless, the strict division between pilgrims and tourists can be problematic. During a visit to a memorial site, tourists might also change their perspectives and develop more profound and sentimental feelings towards that particular place. The links between the two categories and the possible transition from one to another seem to confirm Winter’s argument that the commonly defined dichotomy between the battlefield tourist and the secular pilgrim is problematic, since attempts to distinguish between the two categories have not been sufficiently confirmed (Winter 2009: 616).⁶ Nevertheless, scholars remain divided on this issue, and some suggest the two categories have become almost blurred, while others argue that the distinction between them persists (Winter 2011: 167; see also Eade and Katić 2017).

Visits to World War I battlefield sites began even before the war had ended and are still common today, and are even growing in popularity (anniversaries, nostalgia, media promotion). Soon after the war, the tourist industry targeted the possibility of new supply, but since the “primary purposes of the memorial were remembrance and commemoration”, tourists were not the central target group “for whom they were designed” (Winter 2009: 616). The first organizer of tourist packages, Thomas Cook and Sons, also joined this process by supplying the private market with “battlefield excursions”. Other tourist agencies followed this example, including Dean

⁶ Mosse, for example, argues that the two categories were in fact even then hard to distinguish, since pilgrims also bought souvenirs and used the tourist supply (accommodation, food) (Mosse 2007: 170–171).

and Dawson Ltd, Alpine Sports Ltd, Pickfords Ltd, Polytechnic Touring Association Ltd and Frame's Tours, among others (Lloyd 1998: 30).

The battlefields, such as the Western Front for British visitors (Iles 2008: 138) or Gallipoli (Turkey) for visitors from Australia and New Zealand (Lloyd 1998: 98) have been and continue to be strong points of interest, in both the sacred and secular senses. The war, with its devastating effects and mass slaughter, caused considerable trauma and left a strong impact on various nations' imagination (Iles 2008: 138). After the war, many nations were subject to the process of mourning and for this purpose also emphasized commemoration rituals. Some scholars link the commemorative practice to religious and spiritual activities (Moriarty, Becker in Lloyd 1998: 5–6), while others connect them to a "secular appropriation of the sacred", which Mosse argued is the creation of the myth of war experience (Mosse in Lloyd 1998: 5–6). Prost, however, defines the practice of remembrance as a civil religion (Prost in Lloyd 1998: 5–6).

In this paper, I have chosen to use the term (secular) pilgrim⁷ when referring to bereaved families and ex-servicemen whose purpose for visiting these memorials was related to emotional feelings (grief, mourning, memory) towards the sacred sites. Battlefield tourism has been regarded as a more secular and without emotional or empathic response, and solely for the purposes of curiosity. These two groups are, in this case, also hard to distinguish, especially when other issues have been in forefront and given more emphasis such as national identity and the *italianità* (Italianness) of the territory, and the construction of a collective memory through memorial practices and glorification of the sacrifice in the war. Other categories arise as well, as for example, the scholarly groups with educational purposes or workers in the *dopolavoro* (free time after work), who were not considered tourists by the Italian state.

Commemoration of World War I

When the Unknown Soldier and the victorious war and great sacrifice became glorified and sacred, new commemoration practises and rituals were introduced. World War I brought a different type of war, which "deprived individuals of their identity and thrust them into indistinguishable, unknown and unknowable mass" (Klabjan 2010: 401). Soon after the end of the war public commemoration for fallen soldiers was introduced. A large number of large memorials, memorial parks and cemeteries were constructed both inside and outside the former battlefield areas. Among the

⁷ I have chosen to use the term secular pilgrimage as defined by scholars when referring to specific groups of visitors (veterans, bereaved families). Nevertheless, since most tourist materials and other sources from this period defined the practises of these groups as pilgrimage due to its characteristics, I have deliberately chosen to use the academic expression secular pilgrimage with the addition of parentheses. A similar approach was chosen by Kamila Baraniecka-Olszewska, who uses quotation marks: "secular" pilgrimage. The term pilgrimage is not used metaphorically, but instead "refers to the spiritual aspects of a journey" (Baraniecka-Olszewska 2017: 130).

numerous victims were many who were unidentified, so the erection and placement of a memorial devoted to the Unknown Soldier was recognized as being most appropriate (ibid.). These memorials were commonly placed in capital cities or where the battles had taken place. This sent two strong messages: the soldier's sacrifice for his own nation and (secular) pilgrimage was considered the most appropriate way to honour this sacrifice. According to Griffith (2000 in Iles 2008: 147) marking a battlefield helped fulfil the need to understand, possess or even control the event that had taken place there. Since the war had devastated the landscape where the battles took place and "there was very little to see", the placement of memorial parks and monuments was a meaningful context (Iles 2008: 139). In fact, as pointed out by Lloyd, the landscape that attracted visitors was "largely an imaginary one", since the associations and memories of the sites were the main factors for this attraction (Lloyd 1998: 112).

The arrangements of sites of memory were carried out by organizations that oversaw their regulation, surveillance and maintenance. They were first established by governments in the victorious countries: in Great Britain it was the War Graves Commission, in France it was Secretary of State for Front Line Veterans and Victims of the War, in Italy the *Ufficio centrale per la cura e le onoranze alle salme dei caduti in Guerra* (Central Office for the Care and Honour of the Fallen in War) (COSCG, established in 1920). The defeated countries, however, could not afford to maintain the graves, so this was carried out by private organizations: the Austrian Black Cross and the German *Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge* (German War Graves Commission) (Mosse 2007: 91–92; Fabi 1999: 54; Todero 2010: 64). These organizations also sponsored travel for bereaved relatives and veterans who could not afford a commercial tour (Winter 2009: 622). Organized trips were also provided for other target groups, including school children (to the battlefields of Flanders) and worker associations, among others.

Since the region under discussion was allocated to the Kingdom of Italy as its new eastern province, the government had a great interest in not only the glorification of the sacrifice of its soldiers, but also as a means of national affirmation in the multi-ethnic territory. The impressive monuments and parks of remembrance for the soldiers of World War I were a clear sign not only of grief but also of the Italian national identity, and were intended to consolidate Italian authority in the new provinces (Kavrečič 2015, 2016; see also Judson 2002). The population of Venezia Giulia was ethnically mixed and included inhabitants who had fought on opposing sides. Slovenes, Croats and also Italians from the Austrian Littoral fought for the army of Emperor Franz Joseph, so a common effort towards building an Italian national identity seemed necessary, and was mostly done by ignoring the existence of "the other side", and by creating a one-sided interpretation and selective memory of historical events. The case of the Soča/Isonzo front after World War I was clearly subject to this kind of "one-sided" interpretation of past events. In fact, this territory did not have a connection to the Italian national tradition, so one had to be created.

The glorification of sacrifices made by Italian soldiers during the war was an efficient tool for creating a national affiliation.

As already explained, the phenomena of memorial buildings, parks and other types of creations celebrating the sacrifice of the war emerged to a significant extent in the victorious European countries, particularly in Great Britain and France. War memorials, especially from the Western front (and Gallipoli in Turkey), received considerable attention starting from the end of the conflict.). Many (secular) pilgrims (families of fallen servicemen, veterans) visited war sites to express their grief and come to terms with their memory. The purpose of the visit had a strong emotional note and was considered a spiritual and sacred act of commemoration. Visits to these sites have been comprehensively studied, and the focus has mainly been on the "complicated relationship between pilgrimage, travel and tourism" (Eade and Katić 2017: 1). A similar process also occurred in Italy.

Nevertheless, the cult of the fallen soldier also gained significant importance in countries that had lost the war, like Germany, for example. It became a factor in the religion of nationalism or patriotism and had a strong political influence (Mosse 2007: 7; see also Todero 2010: 53).⁸ The post-war authorities found this kind of glorification of the dead the most proper, and created a myth of the fallen⁹ with war cemeteries playing a central role (Mosse 2007: 7–8). In Germany, Italy and partly in the Soviet Union, the phenomenon of glorifying war was still very much alive towards the end of the 1930s.

Totalitarian regimes (as well as others) based their authority on nationalism and the ideals of combat (Dato 2014a: 701–702). This process was especially evident in the eastern Italian border region. The process involves a particular community (in this case Italian) selectively choosing a memory and using it to determine its identity, and then also interpreting "its" past through memorials, monuments and commemoration rituals. In this regard, war monuments and cemeteries symbolize a strong political component and serve as a tool for elites to create and maintain a desired image of the past, and to consolidate a particular community's national unity and identity (Širok 2012: 633). In this case the memorial sites helped to "control or censor dissonant accounts of the past... through fragmented and contested memorialisation" (Carr in Stone 2012: 1567–1568). Winter (2009: 607) argues that every generation needs to create social memories which are, according to Halbwachs (2001) the reconstruction of the past in light of the present through the selection and articulation of information. In the case of World War I memorials, the need to justify sacrifice and war had to be met. It was important to determine what from the past should and should not be remembered (Cadavez 2010: 150; Winter 2009: 614), which means that the placement and the inauguration of the large memorial in Sredipolje/Redipuglia or those other locations were not casual events; on the contrary, they were important in relation to a consolidation of the regime.

⁸ Todero argues that the "religione della patria" later developed in the mythological universe of fascism.

⁹ The myth of the war experience, and its legitimization and justification were "invented" a hundred years before, with the French Revolutionary Wars (1792–1802) (Mosse 2007: 10).

Promotion of battlefield tourism in Venezia Giulia: the case of the Soča/Isonzo front

World War I drastically affected the Austrian Littoral (Österreichisches Küstenland/Avstrijsko primorje/Litorale austriaco), and it was particularly devastating for the regions where the war took place and the landscape was altered significantly. After the end of the conflict, there was a change in the political, economic and social atmosphere. With the Treaty of Rapallo (1920), the formerly Austrian territory became an Italian province, and after 1920 it was known as Venezia Giulia.¹⁰

As previously mentioned, during the nineteenth century this area developed a diverse tourism supply: seaside and thermal health resorts, and alpine, climate and cave tourism. After the war these forms of tourism continued to develop along with a new form that resulted from the consequences of war, which had behind it a new concept focused on Italian patriotism and included visiting former battlefields (Šuligoj 2016a: 448).¹¹

With this new political atmosphere after World War I, Italy was interested in affirming and justifying its presence in the region, which was done through different institutions such as the national tourist organization. The emphasis was on a selected memory of Italian victories and on promoting the commemoration and glorification of sacrifice for the nation. The national tourist organization assisted in this process.

It is important to consider the reasons for the creation of the myth of the fallen and the sanctification of battlefields. The post-war population, devastated by the great dimensions of the war, needed to make sense of their loss. These sacred sites fulfilled this need and “satisfied a number of social needs for the population of the time” (Winter 2010: 165). It was the most appropriate way to commemorate the loss of many. This process was also underway in the case of the Soča/Isonzo front, where the involvement of Italian soldiers in the twelve battles that took place there was emphasized as being a sacrifice for the nation. Thus the act of visiting a battlefield in this case, as in those of other nations and for the social needs of the post-war generations, was referred to as a pilgrimage.

In the case of the Soča/Isonzo front, there was a process of national identity building involving battlefields and victims of war, at least on the winning Italian side. These places were memorial locations such as *Parchi della Rimembranza* (Remembrance Parks), *Boschi degli Eroi* (Heroes' Woods) or *Cimiteri e Sacrali monumentali*

¹⁰ This geographical area, which became part of Venezia Giulia after World War I, was larger than the former Austrian Littoral, but the region addressed in this article used to be part of Littoral as well as Venezia Giulia.

¹¹ While considerable attention was given to battlefield tourism, secular pilgrimage and commemorative practices in the former Western and Eastern battlefields (Lloyd 1998; Mosse 2007; Winter 2009, 2011; Iles 2008), such interest was not given to the battlefield zone between the Kingdom of Italy and Austria-Hungary, where these practices developed as well. Slovene historiographers have addressed the Soča/Isonzo front, although mostly in the last 25 years, and they have focused on aspects of war; strained post-war relations between Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes due to border designations; the period of fascism and the resistance movement. Only in the last few years have several academic papers about the memory of World War I and the Soča/Isonzo battlefield been published. A greater anthropological and historical interest in battlefield tourism is also linked to the anniversary-related events in the region.

(Memorial Cemeteries and Shrines). Over half a million of the Italian and Austro-Hungarian victims were buried on the Italian side of the front, and maintaining could become a problem. COSCG had been established for this purpose, and in 1927 it was staffed with 150 officials, 35 chaplains and 4,000 soldiers, who were involved in managing and maintaining these sites (Fabi 1999: 54–55). A first important step was made in 1923 with the establishment of the imposing *Cimitero degli Invitti della terza armata* (Cemetery of the Undeclared Third Army) near Colle Sant’Elia, which was inaugurated on May 24. It was not a coincidence that such a memorial was placed in an area that had been granted to Italy after the war, and it implied the importance of Italian sacrifice and the redemption of these lands. Present at the ceremony were King Vittorio Emanuele III and the Duke of Aosta, as well as the Prime Minister Benito Mussolini, who had made his visit as a *sacro pellegrinaggio* (sacred pilgrimage) (Dato 2014a: 703). Many important events and ceremonies were held at the cemetery including a large-scale ceremony on 17 June 1923, when the remains of thirty seven volunteers from the front were consecrated, and some of which were interred at Colle Sant’Elia (Toderò 2010: 63–65).

COSCG continued placing memorials, and towards the end of the 1930s most of the provisional cemeteries had been removed. These *Zone sacre* (Sacred Zones) were visited by veterans and their families, as well as by patriotic associations, schools, the younger population and *dopolavoro* (free time after work) organizations. Beside these visits, those of political figures were of particular significance. Commemorations at the inaugurations of memorials took place in 1923 and 1938 and during visits by members of the royal family such as Crown Prince Umberto II’s visit to Venezia Giulia in 1929. He visited Gorizia and Tolmin on 8 August 1929 for the inauguration of the Monument to the Fallen in Gorizia (ASGO). The local newspaper reported on the large attendance at the event: “Trains and lorries, buses and cars have unloaded hundreds upon hundreds of people, endless processions with flags flying, winding through streets and alleyways, heading toward the location of the assembly” (Il Piccolo 8.8.1929 VII 3013).¹²

Commemorative practices at the Soča/Isonzo front are an interesting case of nationalist discourse both in the sense of the post-war glorification of victims and as means of emphasizing the nationalist narrative in the border area. The fascist regime successfully appropriated the myth and the memory of the war experience, as well as the victory and sacrifice for the war. As scholars have noted, it is important for the population to visit the “icons of the ‘Nation’”¹³ (Toderò 2010: 64; Cadavez¹⁴ 2011: 152) which were “particularly important for the citizens from the younger nations” (Winter 2011: 166).

¹² “Treni e autocarri, corriere ed automobili, hanno riversato – è la parola – centinaia e centinaia di persone che interminabili coreti, coloriti da sventolii di bandiere, serpeggiando per strade e per calli, si recano ai luoghi fissati per l’adunanza” (Il Piccolo 8.8.1929 VII 3013).

¹³ Another case of nation building is the Battle of Gallipoli, where Australians visiting the site were “strongly motivated by nationalism and visiting the birthplace of their nation” (Winter 2009: 616).

¹⁴ In her article the author presents the case of Portuguese Estado Novo.

Considerable effort was made in September 1938 when the *Sacrario di Redipuglia* (Memorial of Redipuglia) was inaugurated and, according to newspaper accounts, Mussolini himself along with approximately 80,000 people were in attendance. The remains of 100,187 dead were buried at the memorial, of which only 39,857 had been identified (Fabi 1999: 55–58; Visintin 2010: 79; Dato 2014a: 705). In fact, Sredipolje/Redipuglia is the archetype of the Italian *lieux de memoire*, a testimony to the sacrifices made by the soldiers during World War I (Dato 2014b: 16). On a symbolic level, the Italian defeat at the Twelfth Battle of the Isonzo/Soča (The Miracle of Kobarid) in October 1917 was transformed into a victory, as Mussolini himself explained: “Now is no time for history; it is a time for myths” (Klavora 2011: 87). In September 1938, Il Duce made his glorious journey of the Goriziano (Gorica), starting in Trieste/Trst, and continuing through, among other locations, Doberdob/Doberdò del Lago, Šmihel/San Michele, Gorica/Gorizia, Oslavje/Oslavia, Tolmin and Kobarid/Caporetto, where he inaugurated the great World War I memorial.

But who were these visitors to the memorials of the Soča/Isonzo front? One of the aims of memorial buildings is remembrance and the attribution of value to the victims. The first visitors were indeed the bereaved and ex-servicemen in search of the graves of their family members, friends and comrades (Fabi 1992: 103; Winter 2009: 615), and it was for these people that the first guidebooks were intended. The nation building myth was constructed upon the valorisation of battle and sacrifice, instead of on death and war. The sacrifice was for the nation. The myth of the war experience presented the conflict in a more “positive” sense, emphasising glory instead of suffering. The memory of war was sacralised, thus providing the nation with religious emotion (profound and spiritual) and creating a group of martyrs, saints and places of worship (Mosse 2007: 7). The sites of mourning and memory created in this region, and especially those of Sredipolje/Redipuglia, Oslavje/Oslavia and Kobarid/Caporetto, served this purpose. The fascist regime in the province of Venezia Giulia embraced every given opportunity to diffuse the idea of a strong Italian nationhood in this region, and the cult of the fallen volunteer played a central role (Todero 2010: 64–65).

Visits to the sites were promoted by different organizations, and one in particular, *Ente nazionale per le industrie turistiche* (ENIT, the Italian National Tourist Organization) will be analysed here. The tourist organization’s aim was to promote travel and tourism in Italy, but was also engaged in promoting battlefield tourism. The target groups, according to ENIT’s Undersecretary of the Finance Ministry, were the excursionists/tourists and pilgrims (*I campi della Gloria* 1927: 5). The organization saw its role in promoting pilgrimages to the *Zone sacre* as a “commitment of honour, to raise in the most efficient and appropriate ways awareness of these sacred sites of heroism and the sacrifices of the glorious Italian Army” (ENIT 1926: 28).

Along with others, including Michelin and TCI (*Touring club Italiano/Italian Touring Club*), ENIT published several guidebooks in the after war period, which in the case of Venezia Giulia also helped “the appropriation, also in the collective im-

aginary in the newly redeemed lands” (Dato 2014b: 35).¹⁵ In this sense, these tourist organizations acted as a “mediators” between different interests: memorialisation as well as the pilgrimage of bereaved families and veterans,¹⁶ for soldiers (military pilgrimage; see Eade and Katić 2017: 5–6), workers (in their *dopolavoro*/free time after work), young population (patriotism, education) and the tourist (curious) (Garibaldi 1928: 6).

The first tourist guide, *Guida dei campi di battaglia* (Battlefield Guide, 1919), about the Soča/Isonzo battlefield was issued in four volumes by the *Agenzia italiana pneumatici Michelin* (Italian Michelin Tires Agency). The first volume was a historical introduction, and the other three were about the Soča/Isonzo front (Vol. 2), Piave, Cadore and Carnia (Vol. 3) and Trentino (Vol. 4). Since new editions were later published, it is quite possible that there was a significant interest in this type of supply. The proceeds were donated to orphans of war.¹⁷

In 1921, ENIT released a guidebook in four languages entitled *Itinerari per la visita ai campi di battaglia* (Itinerary for Visiting Battlefields). The guide offered different itineraries to sites of memory according to cost. For example, a trip in a luxurious car (five-seater) from Trieste/Trst cost 395 lire, or 250 lire from Gorizia/Gorica. The first itinerary was longer and included a visit to the museum and castle in Gorizia/Gorica.¹⁸ The guidebook from 1921 suggested taking at least three days to visit the former battlefields and at least one day to visit the *Zone sacre*. An additional suggestion was to visit the famous Postojna Cave, which combined a more sacred excursion (secular pilgrimage) related to a commemorative and emotional act, with a visit for pleasure that was more commonly associated with tourism.

ENIT was established by the state in 1919, soon after the end of World War I. During the interwar period, ENIT had an important role in the tourism sector, which also included the eastern territories allocated to Italy after World War I. The aim was to promote visits to Italy among both local and international tourists and to establish Italy as a modern tourist destination.¹⁹ Soon after the first years of decline in tourism, which were characteristic for the post-war years, visits to Italy by foreign tourists, including those from the former Austria-Hungary (e.g. Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Austria and Hungary) began to increase. The main concern was re-establishing tourism in the regions of Trentino, Südtirol and Venezia Giulia, because while they had become part of Italy, they had originally generated a great deal of income from Austrian and German tourists, and in particular at the prominent spa and seaside

¹⁵ Originally: “*L'appropriazione, anche nell'immaginario collettivo, delle nuove terre redente*” (Dato 2014b: 35).

¹⁶ Although, according to the tourist guide from 1928 (Garibaldi 1928: 6), the veterans were categorized separately from pilgrims.

¹⁷ Michelin Tyre Company produced fifteen guidebooks in English only up until 1921. Profits were donated to reconstruction efforts in the areas devastated by war (Lloyd 1998: 30).

¹⁸ In the same period, roundtrip public transport by car from Opatija to Trieste/Trst cost 450 lire per person.

¹⁹ One of ENIT's projects included founding professional schools for tourism and, for example by 1928 there were already schools in Turin, Rapallo, Venice, Bagni di Montecatini, Rome, Palermo and Bocen. Another important contribution was the formation of the *Consorzio italiano per gli uffici di viaggio e turismo* (Italian Consortium for Travel and Tourism Offices), which focused on coordinating associations and enterprises in the field of tourism, and to unify the administration of tourist offices in Italy and abroad.

destinations. By 1923 these destinations had witnessed the “return” of traditional customers (Battilani 2014: 251–254). This was not the case for World War I battle-field memorial sites, which mostly remained a “local” destination.

According to some, for example António Ferro, the Portuguese Director of the *Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional* (Official Board of National Propaganda),²⁰ the tourist was considered to be a “naive discoverer”, “who finds what is prepared for him to discover” (Cadavez 2010: 151). Tourism was seen to be, as Ferro stated, an appropriate tool for promoting nationalist ideologies (ibid.: 151–153; Cadavez 2011: 145–147), since it “is a lot more than just an industry providing wealth and civilization. It is also a perfect way to propose national propaganda, as well as political propaganda” (Cadavez 2010: 151). The same also holds true in other countries, as in the example here.

Despite ENIT’s opinion that not just Italians, but also French and German tourists should be target groups for tourism to the memorial sites, their efforts to attract foreign tourists were not completely successful (an example of which is the Thomas Cook agency which tried to promote visits to these sites, but with an apparent disinterest) (Lloyd 1998: 96). One of ENIT’s aims was described as follows: “to promote knowledge of this area, consecrated by the heroism and sacrifice of our glorious army, in the most effective and appropriate forms... it is most august and worthy of visitation in Italy, and has been resurrected to new life after the war of liberation” (ENIT 1926: 28).²¹ In this sense, the nation’s glorious history, the selected collective memories, also influenced the tourism sector, and a clear role that should be played by tourism was stated. Tourism was used as a tool for national affirmation and for the construction of a common identity and narrative.

Both ENIT tourist offices in Trieste/Trst and Venice supposedly recorded a significant number of visits by foreign tourists to World War I sites in 1921 and 1922. But the only available statistical data about visits to World War I monuments and sites is the number of tourist visits to locations in the period from 1920 to 1925, which exceeded 10,000 (ENIT 1926: 29), although another source claims that during just one week in May 1926, over 32,000 pupils and their teachers from schools in Venezia Giulia visited these sites as a good example of patriotic education (Garibaldi 1928: 53–54). It is not clear what categories of tourists (or foreign tourists) were included in ENIT’s statistics.²² As a point of comparison: in 1925 Opatija, the most well-known seaside health resort from the Habsburg period, recorded 42,723 tourists (Kavrečič and Klabjan 2010: 193).²³

²⁰ The Portuguese *Secretariado da Propaganda Nacional* (Official Board of National Propaganda) was established in 1933 during the regime of António de Oliveira Salazar.

²¹ “il promuovere nelle forme più efficaci ed opportune la conoscenza di quella zona consacrata dall’eroismo e dal sacrificio del nostro glorioso Esercito... essa costituisce il monumento più augusto, più degno di esser visitato, dell’Italia risorta a nuova vita dopo la guerra liberatrice”

²² Other sources about a possible interest from or visits by foreign tourists have not yet been studied in the frame of this article.

²³ Although the comparison of the two tourist destinations is not completely adequate, due to the different typology of the offer, the sole duration of visit and insufficient statistical data.

ENIT was involved in the promotion of a different kind of tourist supply. Organized tours to the memorial sites started in 1923. The first target groups were veterans and their families, which according to the tourist organization, were considered pilgrims rather than tourists. ENIT promoted tours for other target groups (i.e., workers or public civil workers). On special occasions (anniversaries, inaugurations), larger commemorative events were organized (ENIT 1926: 28–29). Towards the end of the 1920s, along with veterans and their families, groups of Italian scholars and other organizations become more frequent visitors to the memorial sites. School groups were the first "organized" tours to these sites, although the purpose of these was related to education and nation building rather than tourism (Garibaldi 1928: 6; Fabi 1992: 105). Should these scholarly visitors be considered tourists or patriotic excursionists? And in this case, was ENIT playing the role of a promoter of tourist packages or a patriotic organization?

In 1927, in collaboration with COSCG, the *Consocazione turistica italiana* (Italian Tourist Consociation) published a seven-volume tourist guide called *Sui campi di battaglia* (On the Battlefields). This illustrated guide included a historical overview and itineraries and was intended for (secular) pilgrims as well as scholars and workers or *dopolavoro* organizations. Guided tours for school children were also organized, during which children from other parts of the country met those from Trieste/Trst or Gorizia/Gorica in order to disseminate the heroic nation and memory of these events. It was important for the state and its political ideas to educate the younger population, who were the bearers of the nation's future, so as to preserve and strengthen memory and to instil in them a sense of belonging (Širok 2012a: 139). Edited by the TCI, Garibaldi's guidebook from 1928 was dedicated to pilgrims, veterans, soldiers, workers in their *dopolavoro*, younger people and curious tourists (Garibaldi 1928: 6). The guide also provided information about transport connections by train and car, accommodation, restaurants, tourist information and the like. It also suggested visiting the city of Trieste/Trst and the caves in Postojna and Škocjan (Garibaldi 1928: 53, 98). An effort was also made to promote visits to "traditional" tourist destinations, although it is hard to determine whether this initiative was successful.

In 1927, a guidebook issued by ENIT, *I campi della Gloria* (Fields of Glory), offered an itinerary of memorial war sites or *zone monumentali dei campi di battaglia da Trieste a Trento* (memorial battlefield zones in Trieste and Trento). It also included a description of Italian involvement and investments in the war, the costs and the victims and their sacrifices in the fight for their motherland: "Forty-two million Italians always ready to protect the interests of the Motherland" (*I campi della Gloria* 1927: 6).²⁴ Fulvio Suvich, the State Secretary at the Ministry of Finance and an active personality in the field of tourism (*Commissariato per il turismo*/Tourist Commissioner, ENIT), reflected on this in the introductory notes. He was critical of the small number of people visiting former military battlefields, which, according to him, was a consequence of poor organization resulting in an insufficient tourist supply in this

²⁴ "Quarantadue milioni di Italiani sempre pronti a difendere gli interessi della Patria."

area, despite ENIT's efforts to organize tours and pilgrimages. Even though Italy enacted a law (October 29, 1922, No. 1386),²⁵ which named World War I memorial sites (*Gazzetta Ufficiale* 1922: 2808) in 1922, in his opinion the number of visits to the sites was inadequate.

It is interesting to note that ENIT's 1925 report claimed a successful number of visits to these sites and that ENIT's guide promoted destinations for tourists, but that the two categories had attracted different types of visitors. The "classic" tourist seaside destinations were visited for health and leisure purposes (mostly by foreign tourists),²⁶ while the World War I sites appeared to be more for locals who saw them as memorial, patriotic and educational destinations, and who probably had only a modest interest in tourism.²⁷ In this region a greater importance was given to national identity and the *italianità* of the Province.

This 1922 law was enacted to consecrate and express gratitude towards the warriors in the *Guerra redenta* (the Italian war of redemption) between 1915 and 1918. Among the sites that were proclaimed to be *Zone monumentali / Zone sacre*, which were overseen by the Ministry of War, were also the mountain areas of Pasubio, Grappa, Sabotin/Sabotino and Sv. Mihael (Šmihel)/San Michele on the Soča/Isonzo front. The location of the sites served a purpose of selectively building national identity, which in this case was the Italian nation's strong, heroic anti-Austrian struggle. Sabotin/Sabotino and Šmihel/San Michele were relatively accessible locations and were where the Italian army also achieved success during the war (Širok 2010: 346).²⁸ The important thing was to raise consciousness among the population, although in Suvich's opinion there were not enough visits to them, which he attributed to different reasons: the sites were not adequately accessible or set up and organized for visitors, and the travel costs were high (Suvich in *I campi della Gloria* 1927: 3–5).

Tourist promotional materials, in this case the guides mentioned here, were also intended to expand battlefield tourism to a wider audience, which the tourist organizations believed could be reachable if the travel costs were more affordable (*I campi della Gloria* 1927: 5).²⁹ Although Suvich complained about some of the sites' difficult accessibility, the ones at Šmihel/San Michele and Sabotin/Sabotino were easier to reach, though not yet completely set up for visitors. In Šmihel/San Michele a guard,

²⁵ RELAZIONE e REGIO DECRETO-LEGGE 29 ottobre 1922, n. 1386, che dichiara monumenti alcune zone fra le più cospicue per fasti di gloria del teatro di guerra 1915–1918.

²⁶ In the second half of the 1920s most tourists in Opatija came from Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Germany (DAR).

²⁷ If we take in consideration that most tourists came from the former Austria-Hungary, it is understandable that, within an emotional context, they would have considered World War I sites as part of their lost national territories. The former seaside destinations of the Austrian Littoral probably did not have the same effect, or perhaps the tourists traveling there were exclusively interested in leisure. These are only theoretical assumptions which would need a thorough analysis.

²⁸ As stated by Širok (2010: 346), an important discourse was carried out about the history of the city of Gorizia/Gorica. The first political construct was made by the Italian historical narration about the sanctity of the city, design for the memory of the liberation, redemption of the city in 1916 – the liberation from the Austrian repressive state. The significance of the sanctity of the city was emphasized in 1922 with the proclamation of the Sacred Zones of the nearby mountains of Šmihel and Sabotin.

²⁹ Tourist guides of battlefields were published also by the Italian Touring club and by Enrico Galante (1925, 1939, 1959, 1962) (Fabi 1992: 103–105; Visintin 2010: 70–71).

who also served as the caretaker of a small museum, was situated at the location, and there was a place for refreshments and an employee in charge of the visitor's book. It was easier to visit the *Zona sacra* in Sabotin/Sabotino, since it was possible even without the guide/guard, although asking for assistance from the caretaker was recommended for those wishing to access the caves. Similarly to Šmihel/San Michele, a small museum, refreshment area and promotional materials (pictures, postcards, guidebooks) were made available at Sabotin/Sabotino (Garibaldi 1928: 60–61, 79).

An important step in increasing potential visits was made with the construction and placement of monuments in more accessible areas in the Karst, as well as in the "new" Italian cities such as Trento (a monument to Cesare Battisti), Doberdob (Filippo Corridoni) and Trieste/Trst during the 1930's (Fili 2016: 45).

According to sources, more than 100,000 pilgrims visited the memorial sites in Italy in 1930 (Visintin 2010: 70). What impressions did the (secular) pilgrims take away from the places they visited? What kind of itineraries did they follow? Some traces can be found in "travel diaries", and one example is from a group of veterans who had been members of the 269th infantry regiment. After the war they gathered in an association which lasted until the late 1920s, and they made several visits by car (Fiat Tipo 2) as a group to the World War I battlefield sites. One such visit began on 16 August 1925. The group stayed at the Hotel della Posta in Gorizia/Gorica, where they started their itinerary: Gorizia – Gradisca – Sagrado – Redipuglia – Ronchi – Aquileia – Monfalcone – Duino – Doberdò – Vallone – Gorizia. The descriptions in the diary are emotional, affected and patriotic:

and [we] admired from a distance, Mount S. Michele from the Four Peaks still red from so much heroic blood...to Redipuglia for a mandatory warriors' tribute to the Memorial Cemetery of the Fallen of the Third Army, where thirty thousand Heroes, almost all unknown, sleep the eternal sleep...in an atmosphere of glory and of love for the Motherland, live in an instant all the epic gestures of a wonderful army through four years of fierce war. (Toderò 1995: 94–95)³⁰

The glorification of the Italian army and the sacrifice made by the soldiers is very visible in the quoted words: heroic Italian blood, a great Army, glory, devotion and love for the motherland, war heroes etc. The pilgrims, as the writer of the diary refers to the group (Toderò 1995: 92) visited the main battlefields' locations and memorials, and paid tribute with flowers and sentiment. Nevertheless, the (secular) pilgrims also included a more secular note, with a visit to the ancient ruins of Aquileia (Toderò 1995: 94–98).

³⁰ "... ed ammirato, in lontananza, il M. 'S. Michele' dalle Quattro cime ancor rosse di tanto sangue eroico... a Redipuglia per un doveroso omaggio guerriero al Monumentale Cimitero dei Caduti della 3^a Armata, ove dormono l'eterno sonno trentamila Eroi, quasi tutti ignoti... nell'atmosfera della gloria e dell'amor di Patria, vivere in un istante tutte le epiche gesta di un Esercito meraviglioso attraverso quattro anni di durissima guerra."

If we take in consideration a later guide published in 1968 by Carlo Corubolo,³¹ we can see that not much changed in the proposed itineraries.³² Some locations were excluded from the itineraries due to border changes after World War II. The new demarcation was accorded between Italy and Yugoslavia in 1947 (Paris Peace Treaties) and part of the territory given to Italy after World War I was then transferred to Yugoslavia, including the site of Sabotin, which was not included in those itineraries.

However, the Slovenes only began to show an interest in battlefield tourism to World War I sites after 1990. After World War I the Italian authorities promoted visits as part of the regime's propaganda, but the Slovene inhabitants of the area were not "invited" to identify with them nor did they seem interested in getting involved in this process; after all, during the war they had fought for the other side, and the Italian military forces in this region during 1915–1917 had frequently been violent towards the Slovene population. There was no place for the Slovenes in the Italian national discourse. The Italian national (selected) memory about the Soča/Isonzo front was at that time the only one considered legitimate. As such, the memory of war was kept for many years inside private homes among the families of the Slovene population (Klavora 2011: 85–87). Slovene historical interest was mostly focused on war history and only a few museum exhibitions presenting the war at the Soča/Isonzo front were organized. For example, it was not until 1983 that the Goriški muzej considered preparing an exhibition, which did not come about until 1988 (ibid.: 88–89). The political system after World War II (SFR Yugoslavia) focused its interest on topics related to the struggles and the resistance movement of World War II. Changes did not occur until the 1990s, with Slovene independence and the state introducing commemorative events. First, the World War I Museum in Kobarid (1989) was established, which was initiated by local inhabitants. Later, the *Poti miru* (Walk of Peace) Foundation (2000) was created, which was supported by the state. The period between the first initiatives in the 1990s and 2000 marked the growing role of the Soča/Isonzo front as a national memorial site through ceremonies, exhibitions, lectures and symposiums (Klavora 2011: 90), in addition to being a tourist attraction. Once "forgotten" by the Slovene national discourse, today the memory of World War I helps form narratives about the past for Slovenes as well.

In the last few years, especially since the anniversary of the beginning of World War I, many tourist agencies and operators in Slovenia and Italy have begun selling tourist packages for visits to World War I memorials on the Soča/Isonzo front. One example of such a package is offered by an Italian tourist agency from Sicily, which in 2014 organized a travel package called *Sulle tracce della Grande Guerra tra Redipuglia*

³¹ In visits to the Western front after World War II, there was a similar decrease in visits to World War I battlefields.

³² The starting point was Gorizia/Gorica, from there different trips were suggested: Gorizia – Oslavia S. Floriano; Gorizia – Monte Calvario; Gorizia – Vallone di Doberdò – S. Michele – Cippo Brigata Sassari – Trincea delle Franche – Redipuglia e ritorno per Gradisca; San Michele – San Martino – Bivio Castelnuovo a sinistra per Doberdò – Ronchi dei legionari Redipuglia; Gorizia – Gradisca d'Isonzo – Redipuglia Ronchi dei legionari – Monfalcone – San Giovanni al Timavo – Trieste; Gorizia – Trieste per il Vallone di Doberdò e San Giovanni di duino; Redipuglia; Redipuglia – Aquileia e Grado; Redipuglia – Gorizia per Fogliano – Sagrado – Gradisca d'Isonzo; Redipuglia – Sagrado – Versa Medea – Cormons (Corubolo 1968).

e Caporetto (In the Footsteps of the Great War between Redipuglia and Caporetto), which included an itinerary named *Pellegrinaggio della Memoria* (A Pilgrimage of Memory). The travel package was organized to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of World War I. The first part of the package illustrated a historical overview and is an interesting case of memory remembrance. Eleven battles were mentioned from the period between 1915 and 1917, as well as the twelfth one, which in the Slovene national memory is known as the heroic "Miracle at Kobarid", but in the Italian as "*la più grave disfatta dell'esercito italiano*" (the greatest defeat of the Italian Army, which was "forgotten" in the Italian national memory after World War I). This tour included visits to the most important sites, such as Redipuglia, Kobarid and its museum and a visit to the city of Gorizia and its surroundings and nearby museums. The package tour was for a three-day trip with accommodation in two hotels, one in Italy and one in Slovenia. Although it was called a "pilgrimage", it also included an option to visit the casino in Nova Gorica.³³ The rhetoric has changed since the 1920s and 30s. National affiliation, patriotism and nationalist discourse are not emphasized nor as clear as they were in the interwar tourist materials. But contrary to the proposed itineraries from 1968, the one from 2014 offered a package including sites in both Italy and Slovenia.

But nothing has changed in the sense of celebrating anniversaries, which have continued since 2014. The tourist industry finds a way to promote such a type of supply, and adapts economic needs to current political situations. Since interest in the darker side of human history will probably never cease, the market has and will continue to flourish. In fact, the segment of dark tourism (battlefield tourism is considered a part of dark tourism) is still popular and expanding (war sites, concentration camps, sites of natural disasters, terrorist attacks etc.).

Concluding remarks

The end of World War I marked a new political structure in Europe. The region discussed here, where battles between the armies of Austria-Hungary and Italy were fought, became part of Italy (Treaty of Rapallo in 1920). One of the ways to affirm Italian nationalist expansion was also echoed in the promotion of World War I battlefield sites with a strong emotional significance. Italian nationalists argued the "continuity between past and present in this region to demonstrate that Mussolini's government was not 'new or different' but carrying on the Italian tradition" (Hametz 2004: 116), and they emphasized the great sacrifice for the nation made by soldiers. The aim of the states was to construct a myth of the fallen by glorifying their sacrifice more than emphasizing the atrocities of the war itself (Winter 2011; Iles 2008; Lloyd 1998).

³³ <http://www.ioviaggi.it/sulle-tracce-della-grande-guerra-tra-redipuglia-e-caporetto/> (accessed 15. 7. 2017). In the last few years various Slovene and Italian initiatives have promoted this tourism segment through websites, joint cross-border projects and cooperation, publications and tourist itineraries. In this paper, I have presented only one example.

The nationalist political discourse emphasized the role of sacrifice for the nation and the sanctity of war sites, but also tried to increase tourism. This region had developed a diverse tourism supply before the conflict (cave and alpine tourism), and the devastation of war “offered” a new opportunity to the tourist market. There is not enough statistical data available about the relevance of tourist visits, but by examining other sources it can be asserted that this activity was of particular importance for patriotic, memorial and educational purposes. During the interwar period, memorial sites to the Soča/Isonzo front retained a mostly local (Italian) character, in which the cult of the fallen soldier was strongly emphasized by Italian political discourse. Commemorations and celebrations were organized on special occasions and on anniversaries, which also “helped” strengthen (or build) a national identity. Similar cases of “nation building” can be traced in Australia, New Zealand and Canada (Lloyd 1998).

The Soča/Isonzo front memorial sites represent a more nationally-oriented case of “tourism” development, since the sacred sites were mostly visited by Italians for memorial purposes (as part of a (secular) pilgrimage for the bereaved families and sometimes ex-servicemen), as well as for patriotic and educational purposes. International visitors, e.g. the British, were not common, despite an initiative by Thomas Cook to organize tours to the North Italian battlefields (ibid.: 96).

All of this raises questions of how and why battlefield tourism on the Soča/Isonzo front is developed. Unlike those on the Western Front (which have been thoroughly studied), these sites seem to have kept a more “local” influence, although soldiers from different nationalities fought on these battlefields. Some issues have also arisen, such as the role of the national tourist organization within the construction of national identity and the success of their initiatives to encourage tourism. Further investigation considering the specific historical circumstances in the region after World War I should be carried out, which will help to clarify these issues.

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"Sacro pellegrinaggio". Posjeti memorijalnim lokalitetima Prvog svjetskog rata na Sočanskom bojištu u međuratnom razdoblju

Rad na primjeru Sočanskog bojišta obrađuje razvoj i motive posjećivanja nekadašnjih bojišta u međuratnom razdoblju, gdje su, kao spomen na bitke, bili postavljeni i uređeni spomenici, obilježja i groblja. U središtu zanimanja su motivi povezani s izgradnjom i postavljanjem spomenika te uloga i interes talijanskih vlasti u promociji posjeta tim krajevima. Također, nastoji se odrediti važnost takve prakse na Sočanskom bojištu, odnosno pokazati koliko su se često u međuratnom razdoblju posjećivala bojišta i tko su bili glavni posjetitelji. Rad se bavi i time je li se i na koji način ta aktivnost odrazila u području turizma te kako je turizam reflektirao talijanski nacionalni diskurs na tom prijeponom pograničnom području.

Ključne riječi: Sočansko bojište, sekularno hodočašće, turistički posjeti bojištima, turistički vodiči