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LINES IN THE WATER, PEOPLES ON THE MAP: MARITIME MUSEUMS AND THE REPRESENTATION OF CULTURAL BOUNDARIES IN THE UPPER ADRIATIC

This article explores the relationship between political and symbolic borders in the Gulf of Trieste. The author inquires into the persistence of understandings that map peoples onto specific territories and terrains, such as the stereotypical association of Italians with the coast and Slavic peoples (Slovenes and Croats) with the rural interior. Focusing on representations of maritime culture along two contentious political borders – that between Italy and Slovenia and that between Slovenia and Croatia – the analysis demonstrates that museums become powerful sites for the reproduction of the coast/interior cultural boundary, even when the specific ethnic groups it maps onto change.

Keywords: Adriatic, Istria, borders, maritime culture, museums, representations, stereotypes

In *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Fernand Braudel famously argued that, at least into the 17th century, "The Adriatic is perhaps the most unified of all the regions of the sea" (Braudel 1972:125).¹ In the succeeding centuries, however, the Adriatic has often been imagined as constituting a border zone between culture areas, languages, religions, and environments. In the 19th century, distinctions between peoples living along the coast and in the interior of the Eastern Adriatic increasingly became mapped onto ethno-national divisions even as the Habsburg Empire fostered a multi-ethnic maritime culture centered on Trieste/Trst and

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Rijeka/Fiume. In this paper I explore the symbolic construction of cultural boundaries demarcating peoples of the coast from those of the hinterland around the Gulf of Trieste – an "inner" sea of an inner sea – and inquire into the contemporary representation of maritime cultures and heritages in local museums.

The focus on museums reflects the ways in which "museums are products of modernity and their development is deeply implicated in the formation of the modern nation-state" (Macdonald 1996:7). Museums thus stand as both symptom and instrument of taxonomical processes key to state-making, for museums have "historically played significant roles in the modernist and nationalist quest for order and mapped boundaries" (ibid). Furthermore, investigating representations in museums follows out of the observation that "[t]he process of musealization of the local shows to what degree we have learned to declare and to decipher our existence by means of stories concerning the region or the localities in which we live" (Köstlin 1999:34). In this article, then, I ask what stories maritime museums in Trieste and Istra/Istria tell about cultural and ethnic differences, particularly in light of the history of competing nationalist claims to the sea (based in part on the notion of peoples "belonging", or not, to coastal environments) and the massive demographic shifts in the Gulf of Trieste region during the interwar and post-World War II periods.

Although the territory in question around the Gulf of Trieste may strike some observers as comprising an entirely "coastal" region, within that zone micro distinctions between coastal and inland have offered significant means of sorting out the area's diverse ethnic groups. In his analysis of Italian and Istrian Italian conceptions of the Mediterranean in Trieste, anthropologist Bojan Baskar notes the delimited understanding of the coastal zone as a "narrowly conceived Mediterranean of the local notions (only islands and coastal ribbons of intensive horticulture, to the exclusion of mountains and pastoralism) [that] virtually coincides with the extent of Venetian empire in the eastern Adriatic" (1999:131). Thus conceived, the coastal/interior divide has overlaid an urban/rural split that, in turn, has stereotypically been associated with Italian and Slavic peoples (Slovenes and Croats), respectively.

In my anthropological work among Istrian Italian "exiles" in Trieste and Italy during the past decade, I have often heard statements that, as "Italians" left Istria en masse between 1945 and 1955, Slavic peoples came from the interior (either of Istria or Yugoslavia more generally) and took up residence in a foreign and strange environment to which they did not belong by either custom or historical right. For some exiles, the incompatibility of these "inlanders" with coastal culture is manifested in things like cuisine; the supposed lack of a tradition of seafood cooking makes for "improper" handling of seafood (cooking fish with vegetable oil rather than olive oil, for example) or stock seafood dishes that have nothing to do with regional

culinary traditions. Thus even though in reality Slavic peoples were settled in places along the coast near Trieste and in Istria and, in turn, Italian-identifying peoples resided in the interior of Istria prior to 1945, the powerful mapping of ethno-national identity onto place (coast/interior) underwrites persistent stereotypes that these peoples "belong" (exclusively) to certain environments.

Istrian Italian exiles are not the only ones prone to such statements about authentic maritime cultures, however, as contemporary Istrian fishermen I interviewed in the Savudrija/Salvore area of Croatia make similar arguments about the lack of a homegrown fishing tradition in Slovene Istria as a result of the post-World War II exodus, which largely emptied the coastal towns. The differentiation between Italians and Slavs on the coastal/interior axis thus parallels (and, at points, intersects) broader anthropogeographic distinctions employed to "sort out" differences among South Slav groups, as I discuss in the section, "Mapping the Sea and its Peoples".

Since World War II and the migration of Italian populations out of Istria, the coastal/interior distinction has increasingly become an instrument for distinguishing between Slovenes and Croats, particularly in the contemporary moment in which Istria's maritime boundary remains contested between the Slovene and Croatian states. I note these shifts and their resonance in the later sections of the paper that analyze representations of local maritime cultures in the Civico Museo del Mare or Civic Maritime Museum, located in Trieste/Trst; the proposed Ribiški Muzej Tržaškega Primorja or Museum of Fishing of the Triestine Coastline; the Pomorski Muzej "Sergej Mašera" or Maritime Museum in Piran/Pirano (Slovenia); the Muzej solinarstva v Sečovlah or Museum of Salt-Making at Sečovlje/Sicciole in Slovenia; and the Kuća o batani/Casa della Batana or House of the Batana in Rovinj/Rovigno.²

Mapping the sea and its peoples

The mapping of difference among the peoples of the Eastern Adriatic and, more specifically, around the Gulf of Trieste reflects imperial projects of classification initiated by the Venetians and the Habsburgs and later reworked by ethnologists and cultural geographers in Italy and Yugoslavia. Italian scholars focused on the coastal/interior division as a key symbolic boundary between two large cultural groups: Italians and Slavs. Ethnographers of the

² For names of institutions, I will first give the name in the original language and then the English version, subsequently using the English translation. For place names, I will follow the convention of giving the version of the language of the country to which the place currently belongs, followed by other variants. For the particular example of Trieste and Istria, after giving the Italian and Slavic (Slovene or Croatian) versions, I will use the familiar English (and Italian) variant throughout the rest of the paper.

First Yugoslavia instead tended to focus on key boundaries within the South Slav group, with relatively little attention paid to the Italian populations on the coast (remembering, of course, that Istria and Zadar/Zara did not form part of Royal Yugoslavia). The Yugoslav cultural geographer Jovan Cvijić, for example, included both Istria and Trieste as part of the Balkans (Baskar 1999:122). The Italians, in contrast, tended to neglect the Slavic presence on the coast, particularly in Istria. Both traditions continue to have resonance in contemporary representations of the cultural groups around the Gulf of Trieste even as they draw upon and refract older classificatory schemes derived from the Venetian and Habsburg administrations.

During the long period of Venetian hegemony over the Adriatic Sea, the Adriatic often appeared to be little more than a "Venetian lake". This control, however, remained neither uncontested nor understood as implying cultural homogenization nor as signifying "ownership" over the sea. Steinberg maintains,

... the peoples of the Mediterranean constructed the sea as a non-possessible space, but one in which and across which state power legitimately could be asserted in the interest of stewarding its bounty. State power routinely was mobilized to manage, conserve, or hoard its resources (including the ephemeral resource of "connection") and to bind peripheral lands to the metropole, but it never was extended to imply actual possession of the sea as land-like territory (Steinberg 2001:61).³

As Venetians began to describe and classify the denizens of their imperial lands in and along the Adriatic, they categorized difference primarily in terms of civilization or its lack. These emerging categories of identity "did not recognize a national distinction between Serbs and Croats among the Slavs, and, in fact, Venice preferred to consider both Italians and Slavs of Dalmatia as amalgamated members of the same Dalmatian nation" (Wolff 2001:11). In Dalmatia, as in Istria, the significant marker of difference lay between the "civilized" peoples of the coast and the rough peoples of the interior (the Morlacchi of Dalmatia and Čićarija/Cicceria). The Venetian priest and amateur ethnologist Alberto de Fortis gave attention to both coastal and interior peoples, illuminating their differences. Along the coast, for example, Fortis studied natural history (fish and shells) together with the customs of fishermen. Fortis chastised the fishermen for their superstitious ways and hoped to find ways to render fishing more productive and efficient

³ This followed out of the Roman (Justinian) tradition of treating the sea as a common territory, *res communis omnium*. Though conventions, such as that of Bologna (1529), recognized Venetian dominion over its terrestrial and maritime possessions, they also reaffirmed the right of free navigation in the Adriatic. In this specific case, the right to free navigation assured the Habsburgs of rights that the Papal States had already insisted upon (see Moscarda 1999:229, 237).

economically, an initiative backed by the Venetian Senate (Wolff 2001:99, 101). Though he deemed some of the fishermen's practices uneconomic, Fortis (and the Venetians more generally) instead saw the Morlacchi as by nature inefficient, lazy, and undisciplined. The Morlacchi of the interior also acquired a reputation for violence – in Fortis' words, they were "a race of ferocious men, unreasonable, without humanity" (ibid:126) – together with generosity and hospitality.

Some Venetian authors in the late imperial period, however, began to reclassify these "Morlacchi" as Dalmatian Slavs closely affiliated with a larger pan-Slavic world rather than an Adriatic sphere of culture. The complete transformation of these still unstable understandings of identity into ethno-national classifications would only occur, though, during the subsequent period of Habsburg rule. The consolidation of Habsburg rule included more comprehensive projects of cartographic mapping and ethnographic description.⁴ This entailed mapping out an elaborate "social division of labor" that, initially at least, reflected class differentiations (and, to some, degree regional ones) more than ethnic or national ones. András Vári notes that between the 1790s and 1830s, ethnic stereotypes in the Habsburg Empire operated not to map out exclusive differences but rather to provide a guide for the construction of a civil society by illuminating which virtues (and, by extension, the peoples who exhibited them) should undergird the public sphere (Vári 2003:39). As the 19th century progressed, however, political identities increasingly became wed to exclusive ethno-national distinctions centered on religion and language (rather than place in a society of orders), particularly in border areas and other mixed zones. "As nationalist rhetoric came to dominate local politics in the periphery", ethno-national identifications increasingly became "a crucial component of one's political identity, precisely because of the apparent ambiguities of social identity in ethnically mixed regions" (Judson 1993:51).

A tradition of ethnographic study examining such ethnically mixed regions had already been established in the German-speaking lands in the 18th century. 18th and 19th century German observers of the Habsburg Adriatic perceived this region as belonging to the "South" (Carmichael 1996: 201). Writers often discussed the different languages of the region and placed the area's different groups into a hierarchy, which tended to place the coastal "Italians" as more culturally advanced in contrast to the interior "Slavs", typically deemed lazy and unkempt but also simple (in a "state of nature"). These representations of Slovenes and Croats converged with those of Croats elsewhere, as well as Romanians, often depicted by German-speaking

⁴ A comprehensive, if not systematic, mapping project of the Monarchy was carried out between 1763 and 1787. "The second comprehensive mapping of the Monarchy (1806-1869) standardized local spatial practices within the Austrian *Kaiserstaat*" (Popova 2003:21).

scholars (particularly those in dialogue with the descriptive statistical school in Germany) as "Naturmenschen: hardened, lazy, wild, sensual, poor, extravagant, and drunken" (Vári 2003:45). These character differences ostensibly mirrored the physical landscapes they inhabited, with the desolation of the Karst contrasted to the fertility of the coast. In his 1833 travel account, Carl Gottlob Kuettner (Küttner) phrased the contrast in these terms, "At length you arrive at the end of the Karst, and suddenly find yourself on the brink of a precipice which would make you shudder did you not anticipate the appearance of Hesperia's enchanting plains... what a contrast to the country we had just traversed" (in Carmichael 2003:207).

For many of these authors, the *primary* differentiation was not between Italians and Slavs (both of them subject peoples of the empire) but between these groups and Germanic peoples, "the Musterknaben of progress and civilization" (Vári 2003: 45). Several of the authors discussed by Carmichael not only classified the Slavs along the Adriatic with Slavic groups elsewhere but also linked them with Tatars and other Caucasian peoples. These comparisons inevitably praised Germans and made claims to territory on the basis of a "civilizing mission" (see also Wingfield 2003:3), a logic shared by Italian nationalists and their cult of *civiltà*. As Carmichael puts it, "Looked at in this way, the Slavs were history's squatters" (1996:203). In her analysis of ethnographic stereotypes in the Habsburg Adriatic, Carmichael notes the impact of Herder's work, particularly its implicit focus on geography. "By discovering that 'Slavs' had a different kind of Volksgeist to their neighbours, the question of what we might euphemistically call territorial incompatibility would eventually have to be raised, which was crucial in the multiethnic milieus of Central and Eastern Europe" (ibid:199). The discourse of territorial incompatibility would become particularly prominent during the late Habsburg and Italian eras.

Later ethnographic projects like the Kronprinzenwerk (KPZ) – twenty-four volumes of ethnographic descriptions published between 1886 and 1902 that mapped out the Habsburg Empire's array of peoples and cultures – further reified notions of difference. Ironically, the KPZ's promoters wanted "to undermine the idea of territorial exclusivity for individual ethnicities", thereby providing an alternative to the "land and peoples" model of ethnographic survey promoted by scholars like the German Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl (Bendix 2003:154). The chapter devoted to the Littoral (Küstenland) comprising Trieste and Istria, for example, discussed physical traits together with "costume and custom" (ibid.:160). In the end, however, the KPZ reinforced stereotypical images of cultural difference that nationalists increasingly mapped onto demands for territory.⁵

⁵ In the late 19th century another model of ethnographic categorization of Istria and its inhabitants competed with these understandings, as some Austrian ethnologists claimed to

As Italian nationalists claiming Trieste and Istria became more strident during the late Habsburg period and after World War I when these areas became part of the Italian state, many Italian folklorists sought to demonstrate Istria's Italian ethnic provenance and thereby validate Italy's territorial claims.⁶ Triestine scholar Francesco Babudri, for instance, went as far as to claim the existence a common regional language ("Veneto-giuliano"), despite a complete lack of evidence. Laura Oretti notes that Babudri's assertions sketch the "image of a monocultural area, rigidly determined and impermeable to foreign influence" (2004:29), an image that denies the reality of Istria's cultural and linguistic intermixture. Italian research derived from the anthropogeographic tradition noted the great "importance that the sea has in stabilizing/determining population", particularly its effects on climate, fishing, and navigation; one scholar even mapped out the population distribution in Istria in relation to its distance from the sea (Gravisi 1903:160). Contending that the majority of Istrians lived on or near the sea, Giannandrea Gravisi implicitly traded upon the association of the coast with Italian culture to claim Istria as belonging territorially to Italy. Similar arguments about territorial belonging (and incompatibility) reappeared in the territorial struggle over the region after World War II and continue to figure in popular representations of ethnic and territorial identities today.

Beyond Trieste and Istria, the coastal/interior distinction today often serves more to differentiate between Slavic groups, rather than between Italian and Slavic peoples. In the 1990s, the coastal/interior distinction "was on occasions conflated with the distinction between the predominantly ethnic Croatian Littoral and the predominantly ethnic Serbian hinterland" (Čapo Žmegač 1999:47). Drawing on the work of an older generation of Yugoslav ethnologists, sociologist Stjepan Meštrović revived long-standing anthropogeographical distinctions in his attempts to explain the bloody break-up of Yugoslavia.

Cultural geographers and ethnologists like Jovan Cvijić, Dinko Tomašić, and Branimir Gušić had powerfully shaped ethnological approaches in the First Yugoslavia by reworking older Habsburg ethnographic traditions. Key to the classificatory systems of these scholars was an anthropogeographical division between peoples of the Dinaric mountain area and the Pannonian Plains. Cvijić additionally distinguished a Central Balkan group (including the Southern Morava Valley, Vardar Valley, and the Šopi) and the "East Balkan" area (the rest of Bulgaria) (Kaser 2003:219). For Cvijić, these distinctions had relevance as *psychological types* (related to but distinct from

have unearthed the remnants of an "archaic, pre-national phase of European popular culture" (see the work of Nikočević and Škrbić cited in Frykman 2003:118, fn. 8).

⁶ During the fascist period, the fledgling tradition of Slavic ethnographic work in Istria came to a halt (Milićević 1984:170).

the *culture zones* he also identified) rooted in sociological, geographical, and historical factors. Trained in the German traditions of anthropogeography and sociology as a student in Vienna, Cvijić gave great weight to environment as delimiting cultural characteristics of specific peoples. He contends in *The Balkan Peninsula*, "Throughout the cultural development of a people, the tendency to grow into one with the abode is evident" (cited in Čulibrk 1971:431). For the area in and around Istria, Cvijić distinguished the karst not only as a particular type of environment but also as defining a type of village (ibid.:433) and identified a "Mediterranean type" of Balkan town along the Adriatic coast. Cvijić's Dinaric type comprised some coastal inhabitants, such as the Dalmatian Slavs.

Central to the Dinaric type was a strong attachment to land and place of birth, suggesting a terrestrial orientation even for those peoples who lived along the Adriatic Sea. For Cvijić, "The Dinaric people were more closely tied to their homeland than other South Slav peoples because their lives were so largely shaped by the difficult ecological conditions of the Dinaric Mountains" (Kaser 2003:220). Cvijić further subdivided the Dinaric psychic type into five categories, one of which comprised the "Adriatic variety" and was further split by Cvijić into the littoral (immediate coast) and Zagora (hinterland) group. For Cvijić, the coastal strip and the nearby mountain ranges belonged to a common Dinaric world that, in turn, belonged to part of a larger South Slav reality (Baskar 1999:122-124). Though this contrasts with the Italian nationalist emphasis on seeing the littoral and hinterland as belonging to distinct and exclusive culture complexes, Baskar has demonstrated how some of Cvijić's ideas implicitly inform the contemporary writings of Triestine Italians and Istrian Italians with the consequence of "an implicit but perfectly unambiguous extension of this menacing Dinaric habitat to Karst immediately behind Trieste (which is inhabited by Slovenes) and indirectly to central Slovenia as well" (ibid.:130). Cvijić's classifications, in their original form suggesting cultural unity, thus become reworked to sharply demarcate the cultural traditions of "coastal" Italians from "karstic" Slovenes.

Whereas Cvijić devoted little attention to the peoples of the Pannonian Plains, focusing instead on the Dinaric type he valorized, Tomašić instead idealized the rural plains dwellers of Croatia in contrast to the violent, emotionally unbalanced pastoralists of the Dinaric zone (Kaser 2003:222). Later ethnologists of socialist Yugoslavia such as Milovan Gavazzi, who defined the anthropological research paradigm in and for Croatia into the 1980s, refashioned the coastal/interior terms somewhat but nonetheless kept the distinction in place. Gavazzi viewed the Adriatic coast as a place where the Mediterranean and Dinaric culture areas – distinguished primarily by modes of livelihood determined, in turn, by ecological conditions – intersected (Čapo Žmegač 1999:38). In an analysis of the geographic elements of such ethnological work, Kaser reminds us of the continued link in both the

scholarly and popular imaginations between peoples and specific "Balkan" places/environments.

Kaser points to the work of Braudel as offering an alternative to the problematic mappings of cultures onto territory in the Balkans, contending that Braudel's work on the Mediterranean admits the significance of geography but nonetheless "contains no Balkanizing statements" (Kaser 2003:228). Yet the precise links between place and people remain at issue even in the work of scholars, like Braudel or his intellectual heir Predrag Matvejević, who stress the circulations and exchanges in and along seas rather than the fixity of peoples in environments. In *Mediterranean*, Matvejević (who notes the Adriatic "influences" on his native Mostar) admits to the powerful shaping (if not deterministic) role played by the geography of coast and interior:

I am particularly interested in Mediterranean rivers and borders and the connections between them. I cannot explain why at some points the coastal area is so narrow and ends so abruptly and major transformations occur at so short a stretch from the sea. Cross a mountain and the bond with the sea is broken: land turns into hinterland and grows coarser, harder of access; people practice different customs, sing different songs (Balkan *gange*, for example), play different games (stone throwing or number guessing), thus appearing alien to their maritime neighbors... In other areas, analogous obstacles notwithstanding, there is still a Mediterranean element molding land, customs, and people (1999:66).

Even for those, like Matvejević, who celebrate the sea and its coasts as spaces onto which ethnic or cultural borders do not map neatly, then, geography still matters for the representation of the peoples in and along the Adriatic (as well as the wider Mediterranean and the adjacent Balkan region). Let us turn now to consider how museums specifically dedicated to this sea space navigate the slippery questions of identity and place in the region.

Navigating the Gulf of Trieste

If we accept Palumbo's contention that "museums are institutions in which, through the particular exposition made of objects, it is possible, if not indeed necessary, for the political and social tensions that roil public space to be represented in a controlled, dialogical form" (Palumbo 2001:20), museums dedicated to the Gulf of Trieste should offer a valuable window onto the continued issues of territorial provenance that "roil public space". Though Yugoslavia's dissolution did not alter the border established between Italy and Yugoslavia by the 1954 Memorandum of Understanding (and ratified by the 1975 Treaty of Osimo), it did ignite heated discussion in Italy regarding the events that led to the region's partition after World War II. The legacies of

these border changes and their attendant demographic shifts continue to weigh heavily on the political life of the region, particularly local politics in Trieste. The 50th anniversary commemorating Trieste's "return" to Italy in 1954, for example, occasioned a spate of exhibits and publications stressing the city's *Italianità* or Italian-ness and thereby obscuring the city's rich multiethnic past.

How, then, is the imperial past of Trieste represented in the museums of a city that has, since 1954, been reduced to the periphery of an Italian state? The Civico Museo del Mare or Civic Maritime Museum offers little in terms of an overarching historical context for the region's maritime history, instead illustrating the city's maritime past through a mishmash of objects ranging from ship models to propellers to knots. While typical of older modes of museum representation, this may also reflect a strategy for sidestepping controversial questions about the region's past that might alienate potential audiences. The primary contextualization for the museum's specific objects comes from the eclectic presentation of the worldwide evolution of boats and navigational instruments, with examples ranging from a pirogue typical of New Zealand and Polynesia to Hellenic boats dating to the 5th century B.C. to Chinese junks to the *Mayflower*. Artifacts such as fishing nets, lines, or tools for opening oysters have little accompanying information as to who used them or how. The Museum presents a world of objects lifelessly detached from their users or larger historical contexts.

For a visitor unaware of the basic history of the region, cases containing boat models (such as the *Gru Welin/Gruetta Welin*) dating to the 1920s and 1930s or referring to the steamship *Armando Diaz* from Izola/Isola in Istria may make little sense. One label notes, "One remembers that, until 1935, a narrow gauge railway also passed through Isola on the Trieste-Parenzo line". If a visitor does not know that Parenzo once was part of a shared territorial space under the Habsburgs and then Italy, and since 1945 has been known as Poreč in Yugoslavia and then Croatia, the significance of this historical detail remains lost. This makes the selection of many objects in the museum – such as a scale model of the Istrian city Rovinj/Rovigno or a 1927 "carta di pesca" (fishing map) for the Istrian coast – appear somewhat haphazard or arbitrary. The museum thus *assumes* a shared past without ever explicitly acknowledging or discussing the contests over borders that have shaped and fragmented a once unitary maritime space. Nor does the museum address itself explicitly to the issue of maritime culture/s, perhaps because this would necessitate discussing the *agents* of culture and history and thereby touching upon the delicate issues of ethnic and linguistic groups. The monolingualism of the museum (with labels only in Italian) further ignores the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual past of this regional maritime space and renders that past inaccessible to non-Italian speaking visitors, including those from the wider region.

Ironically, the *history* of the Civic Maritime Museum itself does reflect the border changes and nationalist struggles that have divided the region (Marino Vocci, personal communication). The origins of the museum lie in the Habsburg era, with the founding of the Società di Pesca e Piscicoltura Marina or Society of Fishing and Aquaculture in 1888 and the subsequent establishment in 1904 of a museum of fish/fishing together with a marine lab. In 1911, the museum received material from the Istituto Nautico or Nautical Institute (previously the Scuola Nautica, founded in 1753) and opened a "Permanent Maritime Exposition" (Esposizione Marittima Permanente) (Staccioli 1987:13). During the fascist era, the museum moved to Via dell'Annunziata. The museum, located since 1968 in Campo Marzio, displays a 1932 plaque commemorating the 10th anniversary of the fascist take-over and the work of the mayor Giorgio Pitacco in transferring the museum. An inscription at the bottom of the plaque has been cancelled out, leaving the visitor to wonder what additional information the fascist administration of the city included on this plaque. In keeping with fascist Italy's aim to evidence the *Italianità* of the region (and to further Italianize it), the regime combined some of the collections of the Istituto di Biologia Marina and the aquarium with the Austrian-era aquarium and Biology Institute in Rovinj/Rovigno in the newly "redeemed" Istria. At the end of World War II, with Italy's control over Istria unsure, a part of the library of the Marine Biology Institute transferred to Venice (Marino Vocci, personal communication).⁷ These materials returned to Trieste in the 1960s. Envisioning a museum that takes account of this past but also supersedes it through regional scope and cooperation, Trieste's Civic and Scientific Museums Director of External Relations Marino Vocci and his colleagues have an ambitious vision for revitalizing the institution.

Contending "it's the sea that tells the story/history of this region", Vocci hopes to recount both the natural and cultural history of the upper Adriatic in a reconfigured museum. This proposed institution would draw on the latest innovations in maritime museums, as well as aquariums, and bring together the natural history materials of the aquarium with a museum of navigation, fishing, and maritime culture. In an interactive exhibit, for instance, a viewer could click on a panel about sardines and find information ranging from the habitat and life cycle of the fish, modes of fishing, recipes, and so on. Vocci and his colleagues intend to see the Civic Maritime Museum as a part of a larger Museo del Golfo (MuseoGo) or Museum of the Gulf, ideally with an open-air aspect that would include a boat to take visitors to various points around the Gulf of Trieste ("un percorso del mare") and to other related maritime institutions, such as the Pomorski Muzej "Sergej Mašera" or Maritime Museum at Piran/Pirano in Slovenia. This MuseoGo would, in turn,

⁷ The Ruđer Bošković Center for Marine Research continues to operate in Rovinj/Rovigno.

connect to a proposed "Parco del Mare" or Marine Park (see Bressi 2005). A MuseoGo and Marine Park would seek a more inclusive experience for visitors that, taking the unity of the Gulf of Trieste as a starting point, would reforge connections across national, ethnic, and linguistic divides.

In contrast to this regional vision of a common maritime space, the promoters of a Ribiški Muzej Tržaškega Primorja/Museo della pesca del litorale triestino or Museum of Fishing of the Triestine Coastline explicitly address and challenge the ways in which the Slavic experience of the sea has been obscured by the strong identification of Italians with the coastline. This museum would thus pursue a very different strategy from that of the MuseoGo in overturning stereotypical thinking about the relationship between ethnic groups and environments. Bruno Volpi Lisjak, a former sea captain and a researcher of fishing history, sparked interest in such a museum with his publications on the fishers (particularly those of tuna) who historically operated along the coastline just west of Trieste (Volpi Lisjak 1996, 2003). Volpi Lisjak describes Duino/Devin, Sistiana/ Sosljan, Aurisina/ Nabežine, Contovello/Kontovel, Barcola/Barkovle, and Santa Croce/Križ as historically home to villages of "Slovene fishermen". Nationalist efforts to make the coastline Italian ultimately extinguished this maritime culture as a result of land expropriations sanctioned by Rome after World War II. Considerable swathes of Slovene land were expropriated to build housing, like that at the Villaggio dei Pescatori/ Ribiško naselje or Fisherman's Village in Duino/Devin, for resettled Italian refugees coming from Istria.

Volpi Lisjak (and also Volk 2004) sees this process as part of a conscious strategy designed to further Italianize the coast and delegitimize Slovene claims. Contends Volpi Lisjak, only in this area "did Slovenes come into direct contact with the sea and become fishermen", in contrast to the Istrian coastline that now forms part of Slovenia. In Volpi Lisjak's mind, a kind of unofficial "barter" took place after World War II in which Slovenes obtained the coast around Koper/Capodistria in exchange for the genuine "ethnically Slovene coast" west of Trieste (Volpi Lisjak, personal communication).

Collecting material culture from and interviewing former fishermen and their families from these Slovene areas, Volpi Lisjak began to conceptualize a museum dedicated to this unique maritime culture. He stresses the need to preserve the traces of this culture "before it disappears... before 1000 years of Slovene history along the coast disappear". Volpi Lisjak has found scholarly support and interest from the Slovenski etnografski muzej or Slovene Ethnographic Museum of Ljubljana, though he claims to have found little knowledge or awareness there of "the dialect of the fishermen, the maritime terminology, the terminology for fish, the instruments and names of nets" and so on. To understand this maritime mentality, he says, requires being a "man of the sea". In making this claim for a visceral knowledge

rooted in belonging to a specific place (here the sea), Volpi Lisjak implicitly affirms anthropogeographic notions about maritime and interior cultures, though he does not see them as mapping onto a distinction between ethnic groups but rather a division within an ethnic group (the Slovenes) spread across different types of terrains.

In stressing the adaptation of Slovenes to this coastal environment, Volpi Lisjak has conducted extensive research on a typical boat used by these fishermen, the *čupa* (or *zoppolo* in Italian). Volpi Lisjak has traced the etymology of the term *čupa* to old Russian and Slovene. He has worked with the Slovene Ethnographic Museum in Ljubljana to bring an example of a *čupa* out of storage, where it had languished for fifty years because the museum "didn't understand its significance". Volpi Lisjak battles to bring greater awareness of the *čupa* not only to demonstrate the Slovenes' deep roots along the Triestine coastline – where this type of boat was used over a period of approximately 1200 years – but also to highlight its importance for "marine archaeologists all over the world". Volpi Lisjak stakes a simultaneous claim, then, for a long-standing ("authentic") Slovene maritime culture specific to the coastal environment between Trieste and Duino/Devin and for a culture worthy of international recognition.

In light of this, Volpi Lisjak and his colleagues formed a steering committee within the Cultural Society "Albert Sirk" (dedicated, tellingly, to a local painter of marine scenes who emigrated to Yugoslavia during the first Italian period in the region) to lay the groundwork for a future museum to be built at Santa Croce/Križ. According to Volpi Lisjak, the members of the "Albert Sirk" all hail from local families with fishing backgrounds. Though the group initially toyed with becoming part of the Civic Maritime Museum, it decided to remain autonomous. This reflects the group's desire for control over representation of "their" maritime culture. In my interview with him, Volpi Lisjak derided the small-scale model of the "zoppolo" (labeled only in Italian and constructed on the wrong dimensions) found at the Civic Maritime Museum, underscoring the group's desire to correct the false picture of fishing culture in and around Trieste. The group aims to reach a wide audience by presenting information in English, Slovene, and Italian. Central to the "Albert Sirk" group's vision, then, is a museum site on the precise territory where Slovene fishermen lived and worked. The museum promoters hope to create a tourist pass offering the possibility to visit the museum together with the Museo della Casa Carsica di Rupingrande/Muzej Kraška hiša v Repnu or Karst House Museum, an in-situ museum that highlights the agrarian culture of the Karst's Slovenes; such a project would link the "coastal" and "interior" aspects of the Slovene experience.

The group laid the founding stone for the museum in the summer of 2005 on the site of an abandoned traditional fisherman's house and currently seeks funding from the Region and other sponsors. Will the future museum

attract a largely ethnically Slovene audience or succeed in drawing other residents of the region and from beyond? The future answer to this question will shed additional light on the degree to which the territorial borders that demarcate states along the Gulf of Trieste continue to operate as social and cultural borders, as well.

No-man's land (or water)

Volpi Lisjak's comments about the shallow roots of Slovene culture along the Istrian coast raise questions about the representation of coastal culture in the maritime museums of Istria, where many of the region's fishermen and coastal dwellers left in the decade following World War II. The Pomorski Muzej or Maritime Museum located in Slovenian Istria in Piran/Pirano had its origins in the city museum founded in 1954, the year in which the territorial dispute between Italy and Yugoslavia reached resolution. Rechristened as the Maritime Museum "Sergej Mašera" in 1967, the museum aims to detail "the history of Slovene seamanship, collecting the material cultural heritage associated with the sea (salt-making, fishing, shipping trade, etc.)" (Žitko et al. 2002:2). Whereas only proposals exist to link the Civic Maritime Museum in Trieste to a projected regional Maritime Park, the Maritime Museum in Piran already has affiliate institutions at the "rural life" museum Tonina Hiša at Sv. Petar/S.Pietro and the salt-making museum in the Sečovlje/Sicciole landscape park.

In further contrast to Trieste's Civic Maritime Museum and its avoidance of any explicit discussion of national borders or ethnic groups, the stress on a distinctly Slovene maritime heritage appears throughout the Piran Maritime Museum exhibits. Upon entering the Slovene museum, for example, the introductory collections of archaeological objects from the late prehistoric, early Iron Age, and classical eras are said to speak "of the oldest sea routes and links between the inhabitants of the Slovene coast of the Adriatic and the inhabitants of the neighbouring coasts from prehistory onwards". Throughout this specific exhibit, the anachronistic "Slovene coast" label appears several times, as in the statement made of the Roman period, "The coastal position of Slovene Istra certainly contributed to its economic development".

As the visitor moves through the exhibits, relatively little space is devoted to fishing, though the čupa and the tuna fishery near Trieste do receive mention. The primary focus lies instead on documentation of shipbuilding and seafaring, with many model ships (including those created by the Jesuit Gabriel Guber for his school in Ljubljana) and examples of marine and votive paintings. After a discussion of shipbuilding in Piran/Pirano and Portorož/Portorose, the visitor arrives in the rooms dedicated to "Slovene seamen in the 19th century" and "Slovene seamen from 1918 to

1945". These exhibits counter the image of Slovenes as landlocked agrarians by displaying documents, photos, and personal objects of Slovene sailors, like those collected by Anton Dolenc on his trip around the world between 1898-1899 on the *Saida*. The historical shifts in territory from the Habsburg Empire to Italy to Yugoslavia and Slovenia are traced out through the experience of Slovenes while other residents of the coastal area amongst whom Slovenes lived receive virtually no mention.

In contrast to the lack of historical background provided in the Museo del Mare, the "Sergej Mašera" museum exhibits – supplemented by handouts printed in various languages in each of the exhibition rooms – offer considerable (if Slovene-centric) historical detail about the changes in regimes and borders and how this impacted Slovenes working on the sea. Again and again, the contribution of Slovenes receives emphasis. Over one-half of the seven page handout detailing Slovene seamen, for example, focuses on the role played by Slovenes in the struggle against the occupiers during World War II. One group of anti-fascist prisoners interned by Italians "continued their resistance activities in captivity and even founded a group named 'Jadran'", the name signaling the deep attachment of the Slovenes to the sea. Ironically, however, the focus on seamen and their role in the merchant marine and various navies throws into relief the overall absence of material on Slovenes working and residing in the *coastal space* (as opposed to *sea space*), unintentionally drawing attention to the fact that a coastal culture centered on fishing largely disappeared from the "Slovene" littoral after World War II with the mass departure of many self-identifying Italian inhabitants of the coastal towns. Through its neglect of this history of demographic change and its reading of the maritime history of the Gulf of Trieste through a narrow Slovene prism, the museum renders this "other" past even more problematic.

The Piran Maritime Museum, together with its affiliate institutions at Sečovlje/Sicciole and Sv. Petar/S.Pietro, map out and stake a claim for a specifically Slovene space and historic cultural tradition, much as the proposed Museum of Fishing of the Triestine Coastline aims to link up with the Karst House Museum and thereby map out a Slovene territory ranging from sea to karst. The proposed Museum of Fishing of the Triestine Coastline seeks to subvert the symbolic distinctions associating Italians with the coast and Slavs with the interior by putting Slovene fishermen back on a (coastal) and ethnographic map (specifically that west of Trieste) that the post-World War II change in political borders altered significantly. The museums in Slovene Istria instead implicitly naturalize changes in "ethnic" borders brought about by the 1954 Memorandum of Understanding, at least on the Istrian coastline. The representation of culture in these museums located in Slovenia proper also stakes claims in the ongoing contests over the political borders (maritime and terrestrial) between independent Slovenia and Croatia.

The sites of two of the museums discussed above, those of the Tonina Hiša and the saltpans, actually sit on or between the boundaries of Slovenia and Croatia.

The official disagreement between the governments of Slovenia and Croatia lies over where to delineate the maritime border in the Gulf of Piran. Nationalists on both sides have gone further, using the unresolved maritime border as the pretext for questioning the terrestrial border at Sečovlje/Sicciole. Some Slovene nationalists have argued that three villages just across the border in today's Croatia actually belong historically to the Commune of Piran; a more extreme argument claims that the "natural" border between Slovenia and Croatia is not the Dragonja River (whose course the Habsburgs altered) but the Mirna. This would give a sizable chunk of Croatian Istria to Slovenia. Supporters of a territorial revision favoring Croatia instead claim that the zone around Sečovlje/Sicciole extending as far as the airport of Portorož/Portorose rightfully belongs to Croatia.

In this contested strip of territory lies the Muzej solinarstva v Secovlah or Museum of Salt-Making, whose entrance can be accessed only in the no-man's land between the Croatian and Slovene border crossing stations at Sečovlje/Sicciole. (Five salt fields, in disuse since the 1950s, lie in today's Croatia.) This crossing has been the site of several nationalist protests and demonstrations in recent years, many of them organized by the Slovene nationalist Joško Joras. Joras, who owns a house just across the border in Croatia, has continually insisted that his home actually lies in Slovene territory. In a gesture intended to provoke, he displays a prominent Slovene flag, visible while one sits in line at the border station manned by Slovene personnel, and lettering on a building proclaims, "This is Slovenia".

These aggressive expressions of nationalist sentiment prove the exception rather than the rule, however, for ethnographic work at various points along the Slovene-Croatian border in Istria has demonstrated "that the nature of communication [and identity] along the border in Istria is diverse and derives from very localized, specific situations" (Nikočević 2003:104). One of anthropologist Lidija Nikočević's informants from the border village of Pasjak (today in Croatia) captures the fluidity of identity in such spaces:

Sometimes we had a Slovenian priest in the village, and sometimes a Croatian. When the Slovenian priest was here, he would say: "You are, of course, Slovenian." We told him we were. But the Croatian priest told us that we were Croatians. We agreed with him also. The only thing we knew was that we were not Italians because, at the beginning, no one understood Italian (ibid.:98).

The imposition of "hard" borders since 1991 has complicated long-standing relationships of kin, friendship, and economy in communities, like Pasjak, that straddle the new divisions. Border areas such as Savudrija/Salvore along

the coast have likewise undergone profound transformations, as Croat locals there no longer travel the short distance by water to Piran/Pirano but instead look towards more distant Umag/Umago as a place to do shopping and other business and as fishermen come to view their Slovene counterparts as adversaries rather than neighbors. How, then, does the museum at the salt pans – a marshy locale that embodies the shifting, unstable spaces constituted by border zones – represent the local cultural traditions dedicated to harvesting salt from the sea?

Since 2001, a 6.5 km² area of marshes and salt pans has enjoyed the status of Nature Park under the protection of the Slovene state. In the area known as Fontanigge stands a Museum of Salt-Making where visitors can observe various stages of the traditional process of salt crystallization. The Maritime Museum in Piran completed work on this in-situ museum in 1991, the year of Yugoslavia's break-up.⁸ The on-site materials at the museum, as well as guides available for purchase, stress the deep-rooted tradition of the salt pans in the areas, noting changes from the period of Venetian control to Austrian domination to the present day. The on-site exhibits focus, not surprisingly, on objects of material culture such as the rakes and other special instruments used in salt-making and collection, the traditional Maona boats used to transport salt, documents testifying to the range of salt production and its importance for Piran/Pirano, items of the salters' daily life like bread and the distinctive seals or stamps used by specific bakers and families, and photographs of the seasonal salt workers in their distinctive reed hats.

The exhibits do not specify the ethnic or linguistic identities of these workers, though the companion guide produced by the "Sergej Mašera" comments,

The salters, primarily the hired ones and those working in salt pools, came to work from Piran and its hinterland. The Italian population preserved the salt-pans tradition for centuries, of which speak [sic] the many terms and phrases in the local Italian dialect that we now come across virtually in all spheres connected with the salt-pans and production of salt (Žagar 1995:40).

Although the actual exhibits of the Museum situate salt in the political economy of Piran/Pirano and its surroundings, they fail to discuss the major population shifts that have transformed the area around Piran/Pirano in the last fifty years.

The silence of the exhibits on these topics is more than compensated, however, by the commentary of the docents who take visitors through the open-air portions of the museum and demonstrate moments in the salt

⁸ For a history of the Museum's genesis from the "Open-air Museum of Salt Making" envisioned by Miroslav Pahor to the establishment of an "ethnological reserve" around the Giassi channel, see Ravnik (1995:12-15).

production process. On the day that I toured the museum in June, 2005, a friendly and knowledgeable young man escorted our party around the saltpan fields. The guide discussed the creation of the museum and the protection of the wider area, first by the Ramses Convention of 1993 (as a bird habitat) and then with the creation of the landscape park in 1990. Mentioning "population changes" after World War II, the guide discussed this in terms of "people coming from everywhere", as opposed to a mass migration out of Istria.

Repeating a stock phrase heard throughout Istria, the guide told us that every twenty years or so borders change in Istria. Such a statement would suggest that Istrians adjust themselves to what they know to be political, rather than cultural or social, borders. In the next breath, however, our guide pointed to a map in order to indicate the "old border of the Commune of Piran", which he claimed today lies in Croatia. "We are all one people, this is just politics", he continued, asserting pan-Istrian solidarity. He once again shifted registers, however, accusing Croatia of "fomenting hate". He contended that Umag/Umago, for example, never had a sizable fishing fleet until a decade ago, when the fleet expanded, in part thanks to "people coming from all parts of Croatia, like Vukovar". This statement reverses the claims made by Croatian fishermen across the border (and by Slovenes in Trieste like Bruno Volpi Lisjak) that Slovenia proper does not have an "authentic" fishing tradition or fisher population, given that many of the fishing families in this area left with the post-World War II exodus. The guide's claims instead question the legitimacy of Croatia's fishing traditions, implying that many of its fishermen not only do not hail from Istria (whether coast or inland) but from the Pannonian interior. The guide added that the residents of the area around Savudrija/Salvore (in Croatia) are "mostly Slovenes" and he complained that Croatia "tries to shut us in a corner with no access to international waters". Our guide stepped back from his statements, though, to assert his Istrian credentials, declaring himself the child of a mother born in Croatian Istria and a father born in Slovenia. Despite this, his sympathy for Slovene territorial claims came through in his comment, "our politicians [i.e. Slovenes] made a mistake not to put up barricades", referring to the establishment of the border between Croatia and Slovenia. He even went so far as to make the maximalist claim for Slovene territory, asserting that the Mirna River constituted Croatia's "true" border.

While one should not move from one guide's comments to make sweeping generalizations about the representation of culture at the Museum of Salt-Making, the guide nonetheless spoke in his official capacity as an employee of the museum. His words reiterated the "defensive" nature of many representations of a Slovene maritime tradition, as noted in the previous discussions of the Museum of Fishing of the Triestine Coastline and the Maritime Museum of Piran. Whereas much of this defensive discourse works to challenge the old stereotypes that map Italians onto the coast and Slavs

onto the interior, here the strong assertions of authentic Slovene coastal traditions gain salience in the context of a Slovene-Croat dispute over to whom the coast and sea "belong".

The notion of people belonging (and not belonging) to the coastal environment thus remains a powerful symbolic marker, reworked as political borders shift and draw new lines on maps of both land and sea and migrations redistribute peoples across those maps. To some degree, this reflects the significance of boundary maintenance for ethnic groups as discussed by Fredrik Barth. Barth contends, "it is clear that boundaries persist despite a flow of personnel across them" and when the cultural contents defining those boundaries changes (1969:9); when speaking of personnel, Barth intends individuals who may move in and out of an ethnic group. In the case discussed here, however, we can see that the symbolic boundary between peoples of the coast and people of the interior persists, even when the ethnic groups filling (or claiming) those slots change.

Museums mirror these struggles over boundary maintenance, given that "[t]he museum is a modern political intellectual institution that regulates and represents connections between private and public spheres, between local community and national identity, and between memories and history" (Palumbo 2001:19). The analysis here of different museums dedicated to maritime history and traditions thus reveals the ways in which the supposed "non-place" of the sea – in this case, the Gulf of Trieste in the upper Adriatic – remains, even in the post-Cold War era, fractured by symbolic and political borders. Museums prove one powerful site for the reproduction of the coast/interior cultural boundary that renders the seemingly "formless" sea a possessible and meaningful place.

All winds lead to Venice?

Though limitations of space prevent detailed analysis of various ethnological museums in Croatian Istria and their representation of maritime culture, it should be noted that no "proper" maritime museum exists on the territory of Croatian Istria. The Ethnografski Muzej Istre or Ethnographic Museum of Istria at Pazin/Pisino, for example, has to this point focused on (Croatian) peasant culture; the museum's emphasis reflects the ambivalence of the socialist regime towards the "Adriatic orientation" (Rihtman-Auguštin 1999) and socialist Yugoslav ethnographers' almost exclusive focus on rural life, at least until the 1970s (Čapo Žmegač 1999).⁹ The Povijesni muzej Istre or

⁹ The early efforts of Josip Ptasinski to establish an ethnographic museum of Slavic culture in Istria during the Habsburg era failed (Milićević 1984:170). A survey of Yugoslav anthropology between 1952-1954, the years in which the territorial dispute over Istria came to a resolution, notes the urgent need for the creation of museum collections to preserve disappearing customs and material culture (Škerlj 1955:659-660). The Ethnographic

Historical Museum of Istria in Pula/Pola instead reflects the historiographical tradition of the socialist regime, with an emphasis on topics such as the Italian "occupation" and the partisan resistance during World War II. The picture changes in Dalmatia, where maritime history is better covered by small local museums like that at Komiza on Vis or the large museum of maritime history in Dubrovnik. The recently opened museum in Rovinj/Rovigno dedicated to the *batana*, a small traditional wooden boat, represents a significant exception to the dearth of representations of maritime culture in Croatian Istria.

An intimate museum dedicated to one particular aspect of local maritime traditions, the museum remains closely connected to the Italian minority in the city, underscoring the historic importance of Istria's Italianate population in the peninsula's maritime culture. A restored batana boat now graces the entrance to the Centro di Ricerche Storiche di Rovigno or Center of Historical Research, the research center dedicated to the Italian minority and its history, and Center scholar Marino Budicin was one of the major forces behind the creation of the museum. The batana has become a symbol of the larger Italian minority in Istria and the Kvarner/Carnaro region, serving as the name for the literary journal of the Italian population (*Battana*). Despite this, the museum does not send a message about drawing borders between ethnic groups or coast/interior. Rather, the museum may serve as a model for future projects exploring the region's *common* maritime heritage.

The batana boat has become not only a symbol of the Italian minority in Istria, for example, but also of the entire city of Rovinj/Rovigno (which also markets the batana as a potent tourist symbol). The batana has been embraced by many of the city's varied residents, regardless of whether their ancestors have lived in the city for centuries or have moved from the interior of Istria or of Yugoslavia sometime in the past fifty years. The museum offers explanations in both Croatian and Italian (and hopes to soon offer English text) and has organized city-wide festivals celebrating the local culinary traditions associated with the batana. That said, the exhibits in the Batana Museum recognize the deep roots of the batana in an Italianate culture, in contrast to the silence of the Piran Maritime Museum about Italian maritime traditions in Istria. The four fishermen whose voices can be heard in an interactive exhibit, for instance, all speak in either Italian or Istro-veneto. Likewise, the exhibit text notes that the city's older, traditional istriotto dialect contains many words linked to the sea, fishing, and the batana.

Elsewhere in the museum, the period of Italian rule over Istria is acknowledged implicitly, as in the section of the exhibit remembering

Museum of Istria came into existence the following decade. Current director of the museum, Lidija Nikočević, has recognized the need to reorganize the museum in innovative ways that represent Istria's multicultural heritage. New exhibits, for example, examine Istria as seen through the eyes of Habsburg ethnologists and folklorists and focus on Istrian self-identification as expressed through tourist souvenirs (Nikočević 2001:4-5).

particular builders of batanas. One case displays the "libretto di lavoro" (work book) of a well-known builder, E. Arnesi di Emilio Privileggio Cagarùche. The document attests that Cagarùche joined the Fascist Party in 1932, though he did not participate in the March of Rome (a standard question on the work documents of the day); he had also enrolled in the Balilla youth group. The exhibits present this material without explanation or justification; it is simply a part of Istria's past and the museum designers chose not to enter into political discussions or make claims for the coast "belonging" to a particular ethnic group. If the batana and the coast around the city belong to any group, the Batana Museum seems to suggest, it is to Rovignesi – here understood as including all those in the city, whether Italian, Croat, Albanian, or Bosnian Muslim.¹⁰

The exhibits also stress that though a traditional boat form, the number of batana increased dramatically in the 1960s, when small "Tomos" motors produced in Koper/Capodistria made these boats particularly suited for fishing. The batana and its current iconic status thus represent a revitalized tradition. The "golden years" of the batana also coincide with the golden years of socialist Yugoslavia, at least as remembered by many locals, raising the question whether the museum encodes an implicit nostalgia for that era. Just as likely, however, the museum reflects a diffuse nostalgia for the imperial era before coastal/interior distinctions had hardened into exclusive ethno-national understandings mapped onto specific territories.¹¹ Fittingly, in September of 2005, a restored batana sailed from Rovinj/Rovigno to participate in the Regatta storica or Historic Regatta of Venice, which recalls and recreates a lost world connected (rather than divided) by water. The *gajeta falkuša*, a rebuilt traditional fishing boat from Vis, sailed up the Adriatic and stopped in Rovinj/Rovigno to join the batana on its journey to Venice. Paralleling the efforts to revitalize the batana tradition, the restoration of the Gajeta Falkusa represents the realization of a long project, spearheaded by scholar Joško Božanić, intended to recuperate unique aspects of the Dalmatian maritime heritage.

In his conceptualization of a Black Atlantic crisscrossed by ships, slaves, commodities, and cultural influences, scholar Paul Gilroy takes ships

¹⁰ Admittedly, the batana embodies a strong claim for an "authentic" local culture to which some groups may feel greater or lesser amounts of belonging. On the ways in which a pan-Istrian identity may exclude those migrants from outside of Istria, see Ballinger 2004. Relative to the other representations of maritime culture in the Gulf of Trieste discussed in this paper, however, the Batana Museum does offer a more inclusive vision.

¹¹ That said, I also keep in mind the danger that the vision embodied by the batana may ultimately reflect what Baskar, writing of a Mediterraneanist discourse in Trieste, calls "a petrified Mediterranean, a reflection of the myth of Venice, not a dynamic notion" (1999:132). That the batana retains salience as part of a living tradition in Rovinj/Rovigno, however, holds out the promise that this is not the case.

as both actual and symbolic "living means by which the points within that Atlantic world was joined" (1993:16). Boats like the batana and gajeta falkuša may likewise constitute literal and symbolic means by which to (re)join the upper Adriatic and re-imagine it as a space of connections, rather than borders.

Conclusions

Museums have historically represented a key technique of classification in the arsenal of modern states seeking to render its subjects visible and legible (Scott 1999). Recent scholarship has focused on museums not only as institutions in which the knowledge-power nexus is forged, however, but also contested. "Precisely because they have become global symbols through which status and community are expressed", writes Sharon Macdonald of museums, "they are subject to appropriation and the struggle for ownership" (1996:2). In this article, I have examined a number of museums dedicated to the maritime heritage around the Gulf of Trieste and have analyzed those museums in terms of broader contests for ownership over the sea and coast that have characterized the region historically. In particular, I have focused on symbolic struggles (that have been intimately bound up with political territorial questions between states) to separate the narrow strip of coastline from the karstic interior and to map out peoples onto these environments (coastal/interior). Old stereotypes that Italians "belonged" to the coast, in contrast to "history's squatters" (Slovenes and Croats), continue to resonate in local discourse in and around the Gulf of Trieste, including in those instances when museums labor to counteract those stereotypes. At the same time, coastal/interior distinctions used to signify difference between South Slav groups are reworked in ongoing symbolic contests between Slovenia and Croatia over ownership of the sea in Istria.

The analysis offered in this article reflects the interpretations of an American anthropologist who has worked in Trieste and Istria for over a decade and has focused on "Italian" historical and cultural questions there. Further work on the museums around the Gulf of Trieste requires inquiry into reception by (other) visitors of the materials in these institutions, as well as the behind-the-scenes debates about the organization of the exhibits. In stating this, I recognize that my own reading of the museums discussed in this paper is "a particular and positioned act of interpretation" (Macdonald 1996:5) and I do not intend it to appear "as consonant with both the *motives* of exhibitors and the *messages* picked up by visitors" (ibid). Hopefully, the region's museums will increasingly become the objects of critical study, given the richness of their collections and their productivity as a site from which to study social memory, historical consciousness, cultural objectification, and boundary making.

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CRTE U VODI, LJUDI NA KARTI: PREDOČAVANJE "GRANICA" KULTURNIH SKUPINA NA SJEVERNOM JADRANU

SAŽETAK

U članku se razmatra kako su političke i simboličke granice podijelile i dijele sjeverno Jadransko more, posebice Tršćanski zaljev. Antropogeografska tumačenja koja su vezivala skupine uz određene prirodne sredine bila su u toj regiji središnja u devetnaesto- i dvadesetostoljetnim borbama za teritorij (kopno i more); jedna posebno otporna ideja vezivala je Talijane s obalom, a Slovence i Hrvate s unutrašnjošću. Nakon što kratko opisuje povijest tih stereotipa, članak propituje njihovu opstojnost u predočavanjima maritimne kulture u nekoliko lokalnih muzeja posvećenih moru.

Autorica zaključuje da ucrtavanja ljudi na teritorije još uvijek utječu na muzejska predstavljanja regionalne maritimne kulture. Ponekad neki muzeji potpuno izbjegavaju suočavanje s poviješću teritorijalne podjele dok drugi otvoreno osporavaju ideju da Slovenci nisu "pripadali" obali i moru. Nekoliko muzeja u slovenskoj Istri svojataju pravo na "autentičnost" slovenske prisutnosti na tom prostoru. To implicitno dovodi u pitanje tvrdnje da su "pravi" nositelji lokalne maritimne tradicije otišli u poslijeratnom egzodusu iz Istre istodobno ističući "pravo" Slovenije na spornu maritimnu granicu s Hrvatskom.

Ključne riječi: Jadran, Istra, granice, maritimna kultura, muzeji, stereotip