

Out in the Open and Invisible: The City as Archive in the Essay Film
San Sabba

Romana Turina

Film Department, Arts University Bournemouth, Poole, UK.

Dr. Romana Turina, Senior Lecturer, Film Department, Faculty of Media and Performance, Arts University Bournemouth. Wallisdown, Poole, BH12 5HH, UK.

rturina@aub.ac.uk

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8056-3713> ORCID number: 0000-0002-8056-3713

Romana is a Senior Lecturer in Film at the Arts University Bournemouth, she holds a PhD by Creative Practice in Screenwriting and Filmmaking for Film and Television, from the University of York. Romana taught screenwriting at the University of Indianapolis (US), the University of York and the University of Greenwich (UK). She is the leader of the Research Group “Essay Film”, which operates within the framework of the British Association of Film, Television and Screen Studies (BAFTSS). Examples of her research on film are *Lunch with Family* (2016), nominated for the *Art and Humanities Research Council Awards*, UK; and *San Sabba* (2016), a finalist at the *Hollywood International Independent Documentary Awards*.

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Abstract

Independent filmmaking is often confronted with difficulties. For the team behind *San Sabba* (Turina 2016) the issue resided in the invisibilities embedded in the film's location: a concentration camp within the city of Trieste. This article will explore how and why *San Sabba* considered the city of Trieste as an archive of multiple histories, memories, and postmemory, and how it evolved into a phenomenological examination of what a landscape can add to the collective memory of a city. Linking other locations in the city, which contribute to the elucidation of stories and histories deprived of public attention, this article will consider the ontological qualities of the landscape as an archive where dominant narratives impact the understandings of present and past identities.

Keywords: Trieste; San Sabba; history; geography; memory; essay film; Italy; Slovenia; Trieste, human geography; Holocaust memorial; silenced history; archive.

A Sea Side Extermination Camp

The essay film *San Sabba* (Turina, 2016) captures a thin slice of a past that in Trieste, a port in north-eastern Italy, is characterised by its poignant complexity. The film visits the rice-husking factory of San Sabba, which harbours a multiplicity of often contrasting histories and memories. The factory was completed in 1913, in the valley under the ethnically Slovenian village of Servola, as part of the industrial development of San Sabba, once San Sabbata. At its seashore, in 1912, James Joyce wrote one of his best poems, *Watching the Needleboats at San Sabba* (1927). Simultaneously, on the other side of the hill, his friend Italo Svevo was writing psychological novels in Villa Veneziani. After the annexation of Trieste to Italy in 1920, the rice-husking business went into a rapid decline and the factory closed. Subsequently, the fascist regime allocated the building for the lodging of the horses and men of the Italian Regiment

Novara (Fölkel, 2000, p. 25). In 1943, after Italy signed an armistice with the Allies, the area was occupied by the German army between 1943-45 and transformed into the *Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland* (OZAK), the Zone of Operations of the Adriatic Littoral, with San Sabba as a KZ or Konzentrationslager (concentration camp). Immediately after the end of the Second World War, the facility was transformed into the San Sabba Refugee Centre by the Anglo-American administration (Allied Military Government) which administered the city until 1954.

The unit of men who occupied the former rice-husking factory of San Sabba in 1943 expanded the already established fascist organised matrix of repression, and applied methods which had previously been adopted and perfected in Poland. Most of them belonged to the *Einsatzkommando Reinhardt*, a special body of the SS which had established and managed the extermination camps of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, and which was responsible for one third of the total killing of Jews during the Second World War (Pucher, 2011). In 1943, these men were sent to Trieste, the capital of the OAK, to engage in anti-partisan combat (Fölkel, 2000, pp. 163–172; Bryant, 2014, p. 8; Turina, 2018, pp. 297–316). Their commander, party leader and the governor of Vienna, Odilo Lothar Ludwig Globočnik, oversaw what would become the *Sonderabteilung Einsatz R* (Special Mission R), as the new Höherer SS- und Polizeiführer, in Trieste. His superior and friend, Dr. Friedrich W. Rainer, was an Austrian Nazi Governor of Salzburg and Carinthia, who in 1943 became the High Commissioner (SS-Obergruppenführer) of the OAK (Miller, 2017, pp. 367–384).

Globočnik was born in Trieste, and his family moved to Austria when Italy occupied the city in 1918. Globočnik has been defined as the ‘typical brutal Nazi’ (Mayer, 1990, p.196), and the kind of man Himmler and Heydrich would send for the worst missions (Reitlinger, 1967, p.147). As Himmler expected, the transfer of

Globočnik to Trieste resulted in a campaign of terror against the freedom fighters and their families (referred to as bandits), and the publication of the manual *Bandenkampf in der Operationszone Adriatisches Küstenland (The fight against the bands in the Zone of Operations of the Adriatic Littoral)* by Hanns Schneider-Bosgard, with an introduction written by Globočnik (Sema, 2003).

When the OAK (1943-45) was created, the authority of the Italians on the territory was already jeopardised by the guerrilla war led by bands of Slovenian anti-fascist groups, smaller groups of Italian freedom fighters, and the large partisan organisation of Joseph Broz Tito (Bryant, 2014, pp. 139–156; Von Weichs zu Glon, 1943). Thus, the Einsatz R supported the Italians fascists in combat against everybody supporting the *bands*, and confiscated or destroyed their properties. Policies and actions were first of all anti-Bolshevik and *Partisaneneinsatz* (operation of suppression of partisans), while the persecution of the Jews followed the routine implemented in other areas (Ibid., p.139 and p.146). Initially, San Sabba was a hybrid camp, where troops found their barracks, the captured Jewish population worked in several laboratories for the SS, other prisoners awaited a transfer to bigger camps, and the political prisoners were tortured and killed. In 1944, the camp was transformed into a *Vernichtungslager* (death camp), with a gas cell, a system of suppression *durch motorenabgase* (a gas-van), and a crematorium (ibid., p. 139). By the end of the 1944, mostly because of widespread collaboration, the OAK was declared free of the Jewish presence (Fölkel, 2000, p.15). However, the fight against the *bands* and their families would intensify until the last days of April 1945 when the Einsatz R fled Trieste, alarmed at the rapid advance of the IX Korpus (Slovenian) and the Yugoslav army that would enter San Sabba, and subsequently liberate Trieste on 1st May 1945.

Historically, the Italian post-war politics of memorialisation inserted the camp

in to the narrative of the Holocaust, as about one thousand Jewish people died on the site, and some twenty-five thousand passed through on their journey to the extermination camps. After a fire destroyed a major part of the structure in 1966, in 1975 the site was altered and transformed into the current museum. Documents and interviews recorded during the Trial of the Risiera di San Sabba (1976) testify to the original purpose of San Sabba (Burgwyn, 2004, pp. 314–329; Scalpelli, 1988). The direction of the museum of the Risiera di San Sabba continued to promote the Holocaust narrative. Such a decision can be understood as an attempt to establish the importance of the site in Europe. However, a detailed and multi-layered narrative would offer a more comprehensive picture of this small but highly significant site, and the invisibility of the camp's primary purpose as the site of imprisonment, torture and killing of the freedom fighters opposed to the Axis, constitutes a permanent question mark.

The reduced profile given to the *Sonderabteilung Einsatz R* (Special Mission R) in the permanent exhibition as a force sent to Trieste for anti-partisan combat at the Museum of the Risiera di Sabba, and in the memorialisation of the site in the Italian media, inspired and informed the development of the film *San Sabba* (2016). However, the research undertaken to understand the history of the site posed questions about the local dynamics of the memorialisation and silencing of Trieste's social, cultural and political history. In plain view within the body of the city, there are buildings that have been utilised by the fascist regime and retain a pregnant significance, but are not discernible as such, as there is no memorialisation and reflection on the events that took place there. Among them, notably, the sites of the first proto-fascist activity, which found a voice in the futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944), who influenced the framing of Trieste's role within the fascist political framework.

Initially, the desire to see Trieste annexed to Italy determined the political orientation of the Italian Futurism (Goriely, 1967, p. 153). Refused as an artistic form of expression in 1908, when Marinetti presented his poems in the Hall of the Filarmonico-Drammatica in Trieste (Bembo, 1908, p. 2), which is still in use as an annexed theatre hall of the Teatro Verdi, in Trieste. In 1909 the *Manifesto Futurista* appeared first in Trieste's newspaper, *Il Piccolo della Sera* (10 February 1909).ⁱ The manifesto drew consensus for its political drive not its artistic ideas (Marri, 2009). In 1910, at the Theatre Rossetti in Trieste, Armando Mazza, Aldo Palazzeschi and Marinetti gave a speech, *Discorso ai Triestini* (Speech to the Triestiners). In this speech, published as *Rapporto sulla vittoria del Futurismo a Trieste* (Report on the Victory of Futurism in Trieste) in the *Incendiario* (Arsonist) (Palazzeschi, 1910, p. 12), Marinetti defines Trieste as the "rossa polveriera d'Italia" (red powder keg of Italy) (ibid., p. 9) and continues:

Finally, Trieste! A bursting of fiery screams, a bright surge of hurrah! All our friends came and waited for us. A hundred passionate hands reached out to us...a hundred intoxicated and intoxicating glances looked, feverish, among us for the unique, invisible God: the exultant Italian flag! (ibid., p. 10).ⁱⁱ

The one hundred friends were the Italian intellectuals, members of the Italian irredentist movement of Trieste, who followed the futurist movement from the pages of *Poesia*, the literary journal the futurists founded in 1905 (ibid., p. 28).ⁱⁱⁱ Through the years and until the outbreak of the First World War, the Italian cultural circles of Trieste continued to embrace the futurist idea of annexation of Trieste (Tiddia, 2005). Benito Mussolini visited Trieste often, and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti held their first joint

meeting in 1915 (Jensen, 1995, p. 37). Marinetti's *Fasci politici futuristi* were absorbed into Mussolini's *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento* (1919), later Partito Nazionale Fascista (Fascist National Party). In 1921, in Trieste there were 14,756 members of the Fascist Party, representing more than 18% of the overall membership of the movement (Bosworth, 2006, pp. 153–159). Consequently, as demonstrated by Annamaria Vinci and others, when Mussolini gained political power in Italy in 1922 Fascism had already triumphed in Trieste (Vinci, p. 100; Škerl, 1945; Hametz, 2001, 2005).

Geographies of Memory in Trieste

The composition of Trieste's geographies of memory mirrors the multiple and layered realities that the city hosts, which are however not represented in the Italian media (Sluga, 1994, 2001). During the development of the film *San Sabba*, the study of the archival material found in Trieste unearthed an array of unexpected information never encountered before. To put the material into context, we mounted an effort to dig into the past, in order to question, connect and reflect on phenomena that at first appeared to be independent of one another. Many factors converged and contributed to the decades between 1918 and 1945, which culminated with the terror the Axis forces unleashed against the Slavic element in the OZAK. One of the most important would be the interpretation of the numeric proportion between the Italian and Slav element in Trieste.

The human geography of Trieste and its territory has been a matter of contention since 1846, when the Austro-Hungarian Imperial officials took the last census without reference to national allegiance, and offered an historical picture of the peoples according to mother tongue. Later censuses were made by the local administrators representing the dominant group, and were based on 'language usually used', which

mirrored the daily obligatory social routines. Documents on the 1910 census show how the Italian administrators declared the presence of 36,000 Slovenians, and the Austrian Imperial Officers had to revise the inquiry with a final finding of 20,000 Slovenians overlooked by the first count (Taylor, 1990, p. 47). This less than sophisticated understanding of the layered reality of Trieste, which in time acquired a political value, can be linked to a routine where for centuries people who had entered the city in search of a better life had learned a German or Italian trade, and spoke the languages of power, German and Italian. However, until 1848 the German character of Trieste had nothing to do with ethnicity or national character: to be German was purely a class indicator. German identity became associated with certain professions, which included lawyers, writers, urban clerks, traders and schoolteachers. Similarly, to be Italian in the Habsburg Monarchy meant to speak the language of classic culture and the navy, which was the milieu of the mercantile class in power in the *Reichsunmittelbare Stadt Triest und ihr Gebiet* (Imperial Free City of Trieste and its Suburbs), the port of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. These cultural indicators were used prejudicially against the progressive Slavic groups, especially in Trieste but also in other towns within the empire. Often the children or grandchildren of the immigrants, who had risen to state jobs or mercantile occupations, would forget that they had ever been anything but town dwellers aligned with the most suitable group in power (Taylor, 1990, p. 28). The acquired position would offer a sense of pride, and allow for the establishment of a sense of identity directly related to social status acquired within the city, as opposed to in the countryside which was considered primitive and (after 1917) prone to Bolshevism.

However, in contrast to the official narrative of the German and Italian cultural dominance, analysis of the census of 1910 reveals that the surnames of half the population of Trieste were of Slovenian origin. In the town, a socio-linguistic ecology

of private multi-culturalism and public macro-diglossia was reflected in the names of the palaces and public buildings. German was the official language and the Triestine dialect (a form of Venetian corrupted by multiple borrowings) was the inner-city koine: the Slovenian language was present if not prominent in town, but was dominant in the surrounding suburbs (Grassi, 1991, p. 159; Czeitschner, 2003, p. 71; Muljačić, 1993, pp. 44–61). Consequently, if the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna (9 June 1815) made the idea of nation and language inseparable, in Trieste until 1848 the dissent was manifested only among the intellectuals, who created in their writing the nations that would inspire generations to come. The politics they supported were rooted in literature and they fought by founding national clubs and demanding national universities. In time, this resulted in the cultural monopoly of the economically stronger group at the expense of the others (Taylor, 1990, p. 33), and in Trieste this translated into the Italian mercantile group's support for the annexation of Trieste to Italy. This briefly outlined process would lie behind the Italian population's sympathetic response to the actions of the proto-fascist (1918-1921). The irredentist-nationalist ideological frame, inflamed by Marinetti's futurist movement, prepared and subsequently prompted the action of Mussolini's Camicie Nere (Black Shirts), whose punitive missions against the native 350,000 Slovenians and 200,000 Croats (Kalc, 2005, p. 58; Sauro, 1939) of the north-eastern part of present day Italy became frequent after 1918, as did the exile of Slav intellectuals to penal houses.

Through the years of the fascist regime (1922-1943), and the German occupation (1943-1945), Trieste witnessed an overwhelming level of collaboration amongst its population with the forces of oppression, often inspired by the fear of losing the economic benefits offered by the city. Ultimately, during the Trial of the Risiera di San Sabba this collective mindset resulted in the Jury focussing solely on Jewish

victims, as the Slavic civilians killed in the Risiera were portrayed as communists and therefore inherently as enemies.

Part of this uncovered material was mediated in the essay film *Lunch with Family*, which explored the struggle of the indigenous Slavic population in the territories annexed to Italy in 1920. This sobering account of loss and resistance links two historical events in Trieste: The Arsons of 1920 (an event comparable to the *Kristallnacht*, the 'Night of Broken Glass' pogrom of 1938), when the cultural centre, shops and Slav clubs were destroyed, and the National Cultural Hall (*Narodni Dom*) of the Slovenians was torched by the Italian fascist black shirts led by Francesco Giunta; and the period, culminating in the establishment of the *Risiera di San Sabba* (1943-1945), and the joined effort of the Axis against the anti-fascists, characterised by mass torture, killing, and burning of villages suspected to aid the *bands*. Subsequently, in *San Sabba* the focus dictated itself, as much of what we had discovered during the development of the first film had escaped its initial frame. The second essay film focused on the concentration camp; however, the discovery of locations affiliated to San Sabba opened up a new and unanticipated perspective on the geography of memory in Trieste, and the city's vexed history of language, place and identity.

Out in the Open and Invisible

The geography of memory in Trieste appears to be the manifestation of a *perfect idea*, what in psychology is known as a *prison of the mind* (Cecchin & Apolloni, 2003, p. 44), which is supported by a protracted cultural conditioning based on the politically oriented narrative of Trieste's inherent Italian-ness. The related practices of collective remembrance of the past made Trieste a place where the seasonal ecology of memory is

divided between those who remember the massacre of people in the Risiera di San Sabba, during *Remembrance Day* (27 January), and those who recall the massacre of people buried in the *foibe*, natural sinkholes in the Karst, during the Italian celebration of *Giorno del Ricordo* (Day of Memory) (10 February). Nationally, if we take into account the fascist era and the Second World War, Italy allows for sites of memorialisation focused on events which occurred during the period 1943-1954. The dominant discourses concentrate upon the German invasion, the communist crimes (*foibe*), and the martyrdom of the Italian people of Istria that left the territories annexed to Italy in 1918 at the end of the Second World War (*Istrian diaspora*). The mediatic value, politics, and the scientific evidence of the *foibe* will not be examined here, as there are relevant works which have already addressed this question (Verginella, 2010; Kersevan, 2008).

San Sabba look at Trieste as an example of an open archive hidden to the oblivious tourist and inhabitant alike, as the city offers a route marked by significant memorials related to the annexation of the city to Italy, but fails to narrate the places utilised for the repression of the Slavic indigenous population and the Italian anti-fascists (by the Kingdom of Italy first, and the fascists regime later), which remained active during the German occupation. In Trieste, these sites are at times forgotten, abandoned, or have been sanitized like the area of the Risiera di San Sabba, where the destruction of the majority of the camp permitted the creation of an abstract museum. Inaccessible to the public, and therefore little known, is the altered coastline adjacent to the Risiera di San Sabba, which has been filled in the precise location where the German and Italian SS dumped the remains of the people killed and/or cremated in the camp. The change is visible in two images obtained from satellite research (Google Earth, 2018). Figure 1 (dating from 1943) shows how the camp was relatively close to

the seashore. San Sabbata witnessed an industrial development promoted by the Austria-Hungarian Empire, and then by the fascist regime, as indicated in Figure 2 (Cerasi, Petri & Petrunaro, 2008, pp. 41–45; Cova, 2008, p. 390). The site was served by a rail station (Stazione Trieste-San Sabba), and several marinas. Figure 3 presents the seashore today, which accommodates the thermoelectric powerplant Elettra CLT, and the steel production site Arvedi SPA. Also noticeable is the previously-mentioned reduced size of the camp, which was transformed into the Museum of the Risiera di San Sabba in the 1970s. Figure 4 is a composition of Figure 2 and 3, which better highlights the changes in the coastline.



Figure 1. Aerial view of San Sabba in 1943, (Google Earth, 23/12/2018).

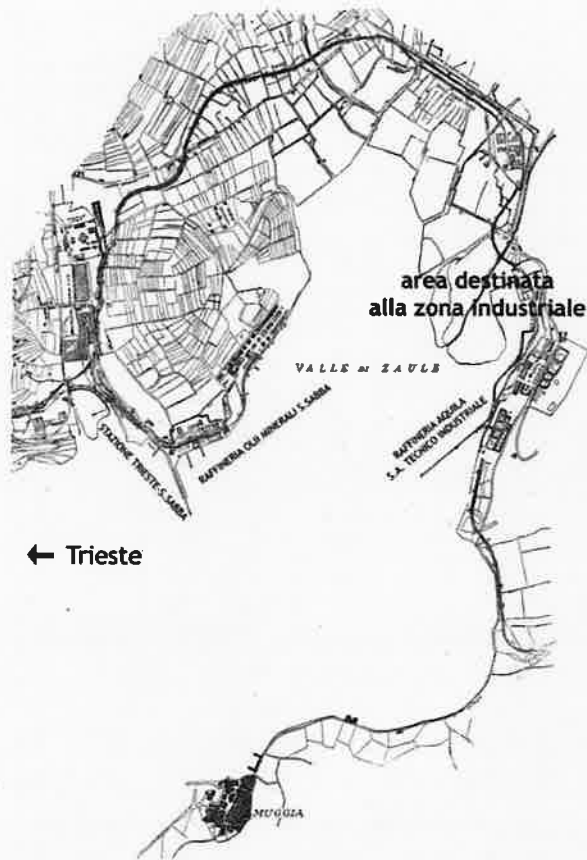


Figure 2. Topographic View of Trieste's port area in the Zaule Valley, 1938. Archivio di Stato di Trieste, Prefettura, Gabinetto, envelope 433/1941.



Figure 3. Aerial view of San Sabba in 2018, (Google Earth, 23/12/2018).



Figure 4. Composite of Figure 1 and Figure 2 (Google Earth, 23/12/2018).

The geographical evolution of the area, in line with the needs of the industrial development of the city, is indicative of the lack of importance given to the seashore as a graveyard. During the investigations for the Trial of the Risiera di San Sabba (1976), the area near the KZ (Concentration Camp) revealed the presence of ashes, bones, and bodies of the camp's victims. Testimonies of the killing practiced in San Sabba were collected, and indicated the relentless *Bandenkampf* (Axis fight against the Bands of anti-fascists) that the population of the OZAK had suffered (Fölkel, 2000; Scalpelli, 1988). Aldo Furlan, who in June 1944 worked at the electrical power station of the SIAP of San Sabba, testified that he witnessed the daily arrival of a horse-drawn cart that carried large paper bags. Between 18:00 and 20:00 hours, two SS men would take the cart to the marina of San Sabba, load a small boat, and dump material in the sea. However, one day there was no boat and instead the SS emptied the bags in front of the marina. Later in the evening, Furlan went to look and collected fragments of burnt bones, which analysis confirmed to be human. Furlan gave his evidence to Luigi Frausin, the leader of the communist brigade

in Trieste, who would be arrested in August and killed in the Risiera. His testimony was corroborated in 1975, as during the preparatory research for the trial, burnt human bones were found in the sea bed close to San Sabba (Scalpelli, 1988, pp. 86–95).

San Sabba looks into these events and the wider operation of the camp. People would arrive at the camp to be sent on to Germany, or to be tortured and killed, or to be cremated after being killed elsewhere. A network of Italian and German interrogation and detention centres sent people to San Sabba as a final destination for detainees. Italian police stations, and detention centres were filled with anti-fascists of mostly Slavic origins from as early as the 1920s (Capogreco, 2004), and between 1943 and 1945 they continued to work under the orders of the *Sonderabteilung Einsatz R*. Its offices were in Giustinelli Street in Trieste, in the centre of the urban residences of the ‘Trieste bene.’ Although now demolished, nearby was the Villa Trieste (8, Bellosguardo Street), one of sites of the *Ispettorato Speciale di Pubblica Sicurezza per la Venezia Giulia* (Special Inspectorate for the Public Security in the Julian March) established in 1942 to fight the local anti-fascist partisan movement. This was reputed to be one of the city’s most horrific sites of torture (Fölkel, 2000). The Inspectorate was organised into 21 mobile units of fifty men. In 1943 it came under German command and continued to be active on two fronts: the anti-partisan fight and the detention of Jews for transportation to the camps. Another site of the *Ispettorato Speciale di Pubblica Sicurezza* was located at number 8, Cologna Street. Figure 5 shows a plaque on the building to the memory to its victims. This building is intact and represents an excellent site for a museum about the fascist past of the city.



Figure 5. *Ispettorato Speciale di Pubblica Sicurezza per la Venezia Giulia*. 8, Cologna Street, Trieste. (Turina, 03/9/2018).

In the centre of Trieste, an area of major interest is certainly Oberdan Square, which hosts the Italian *Museo del Risorgimento* (1848-1918), and other buildings with fascist histories which remain incognito. The most noteworthy is the building that lodged the *Comando della Polizia di Sicurezza Tedesco* (the SS Headquarters). The building hides the sites of the offices and the torture chambers, and nothing on its exterior alerts the public to its historical significance. Figure 6 offers an image of the building in use by the Axis, and Figure 7 an image of the building as it stands today. A plaque indicates the purpose of the building but no additional effort has been made to identify the location in an exhaustive map of the history of Trieste, or the wider history of the Second World War. Similarly, and in direct relation to the significance of the Concentration Camp of San Sabba for the indigenous Slovenian population of Trieste, a series of sites of memorialisation located in the periphery of the city are denied their collective relevance within the history of Slovenian oppression. However, the reporting of such events does not reach the mainstream Italian media and remains largely local and limited to the Slovenian press in Trieste (Jones, 2018).



Figure 6. Piazza Oberdan, Comando della Polizia di Sicurezza Tedesco (SS Headquarter), (Frate Alberto, 26/01/2017).



Figure 7. Piazza Oberdan, Former Comando della Polizia di Sicurezza Tedesco (the former SS Headquarters), (Turina, 20/09/2018).

One such event happened during the *Giorno del Ricordo* (10 February 2019), when after the official Italian celebrations to remember the foibe, in Basovizza (Basovizza, Italy) near Trieste, a gathering of about one hundred people of the group Casa Pound held a torch-lit march in the Slovenian village (“Slovenia accused Tajani”, 2019; Saviano, 2018; “La giornata della memoria”, 2017; Jones, 2018).

Among this group the most active neo-fascist elements cried out repeatedly ‘we want the Slovenian’ (*Trieste All News*, 13 February 2019) causing fear and anxiety to the Slovenian inhabitants. What followed was the desecration of one of the most important monuments to Slovenian anti-fascists (Zdenko Kalin, 1965), who were put to death by an order of the *Ispettorato Speciale di Pubblica Sicurezza per la Venezia Giulia* on 5th September 1930 (Verginella, 2008). Figure 8 shows the monument in its original state: Figure 9 shows the word ‘porci’ (pigs) written on the grave by the neo-fascist elements.



Figure 8. Monument by Zdenko Kalin to Bidovec, Marušič, Miloš and Valenčič, Basovica, Trieste, Italy, (Turina, 10/5/2013).



Figure 9. Desecration (detail) of the Monument by Zdenko Kalin to Bidovec, Marušič, Miloš and Valenčič, Basovica, Trieste, Italy, (Turina, 13/02/2019).

These examples are representative of the divergent treatment different sites of collective memory are accorded in Trieste. They also serve to unearth the tensions that continue to exist in the territory. These are not traceable on official maps, and are revealed only after the silenced history of the indigenous Slavic population has been recovered from sources preserved either by the local Slavic communities, or the archives disseminated in Europe (Cermelj 1936/1945; Gombač, 1993; Sereny, 1995).

Conclusions

Linking the different layers of information that the team found in the archives in Trieste, Ljubljana, and Berlin, the essay film *San Sabba*, narrated the history of the concentration camp and questioned the absence of representation of the pivotal role the *Bandenkampf* played on site. The use of the essay film form offered the director the chance to reflect on Trieste as a city archive that hosts many different voices but makes only one visible. The film, therefore, became a liminal visual space for the observation of an unacknowledged human history and geography of Trieste that remains invisible to the majority of the city's population.

The homogenisation of the history of the north-eastern part of present day Italy, as promoted by the central government in Rome, appears deliberately obfuscatory. The history of the indigenous Slovenian population in Trieste has little to do with the history of the population that left Istria, and was allegedly persecuted by the communists (Stranj, Klemenčič, and Majovski, 1999). The Slavic presence is indigenous to Trieste, just as the Venetian presence is indigenous in many villages along the coast from

Muggia (near Trieste) to the Dalmatian towns. This ethnic difference is deep-rooted, as Trieste and Venice were enemies, and Trieste asked to be annexed to the Austrian Empire to be protected from the destructive Venetian incursions (Act of Submission, 1382). This historical event is important because if Italy is able to remember the Venetian population in Istria and Dalmatia as Italian, and commemorate their suffering when they left the territories annexed to Italy in 1918; the same process should be possible for the Slavic element in Trieste, which should be remembered and respected for its resistance to a forced Italianisation (1918-1945), its part in the struggle against proto-fascist and fascist violence, and its commitment to defend and remain in their city (Oliva, 2006). Instead, during the Italian *Giorno del Ricordo*, in Basovica, European Parliament President Antonio Tajani and Italy's Interior Minister Matteo Salvini equated the foibe with Auschwitz, and claimed Istria and Dalmatia back for mother Italy (*Euractiv*, 12 February 2019).

Cinematically, *San Sabba* questions history from a position of personal micro-history. Looking at the liminal spaces is key if we wish to move beyond a dominant history and capitalise on discontinuity, to produce a respectful mapping of Trieste as an archive of simultaneous histories and memorialisation. It is this focus on discontinuity, as a characteristic of the *image-temps* (Deleuze, 1983), that has the potential to translate silenced history and postmemory in film. Hence in *San Sabba* the city as an archive becomes the city as a temporal flow of enquiry, where differentiation is viewed as a positive quality not a negative one, as it wishes to ask for the recognition and respect of a history that has been obscured. Today the memory and visibility of this history is under attack from neo-fascist elements. As such, the respectful mapping of diversity, manifested as contrasting memories imbedded in the territory, at present seems impossible. Consequently, in the case of *San Sabba* the possibility remains a dream

written in film form, where the quest for an interstice of possibility remains, as in Trieste one imposed establishment memory represents a failure of communal memory. The power of juxtaposition is key in Trieste, as it can open history and make it visible as a complex process. I like to think we can approach this complexity like we approach an essay film: consciously aware of what the 'cinema of between' seeks, and never manages to complete:

between two images, which does away with all cinema of the ONE. It is the method of AND, 'this and then that', which does away with all the cinema of Being = is. Between two actions, between two affections, between two perceptions, between two visual images, between two sound images, between the sound and the visual: make the indiscernible, that is the frontier, visible. (ibid., p. 185).

Thus, in *San Sabba*, the intention of getting out of the chain of association that cinema produces and to look at the void the image seems to cross, puts into question the automatism of the narrative in cinema and ultimately, the construction of meaning as sclerotised in the official narrative of the Risiera di San Sabba. This process constitutes an invitation to open the closed canon on which history is predicated in Trieste, to allow the city to become an archive of visible sites of juxtaposed collective memory. This will create a new, third way to remember, a new map from an old archive.

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ⁱ Later published in the French *Le Figarò*, 20 February 1909.

ⁱⁱ Translated by the author from the Italian: “Finalmente, Trieste! Un crepitare di grida infiammate, un lampeggiante scoppiare di urrah! Tutti I nostril amici son venuti ad aspettarci. Cento mani appassionate si tendon verso di noi...cento sguardi ebbri e inebrianti cercano febbrilmente fra noi l’unico dio invisibile: l’esaltante vessillo italiano!” (Palazzeschi, 1910, p. 10).

ⁱⁱⁱ The irredentists in Trieste, and Italy (from irredento = not redeemed/freed) advocated the annexation of Trieste to Italy.