Presnitz in the Piazza: Habsburg Nostalgia in Trieste

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Habsburg Nostalgia in Trieste

Maura Hametz

Habsburg grandeur of the turn of the twentieth century is often remembered in the context of Carl Schorske's *Fin-de-siècle Vienna* (1980), in which the city's glittering cultural and intellectual life and modernity is set against the background of political decadence in the twilight of the monarchy. In Austrian and German terms, nostalgia for this turn-of-the century world often appears as a "regressive emotion," "a rejection of history" that divorces Austrians and Germans from the "tainted" past associated with Nazism (Schlipphacke 14). The city of Trieste offers an alternative locus through which to view the memory of the final "golden Habsburg years." In Trieste, which became part of Italy in the wake of the Habsburg collapse and then passed through periods of Liberal Italian, Italian Fascist, Nazi, Yugoslav, and Anglo-American Allied Military control before returning to Italian sovereignty in 1954, nostalgia for an imagined Habsburg past does not signify a "rejection" of history, but rather a selective remembrance of local history. Habsburg nostalgia transcends the local ethnic and nationalist divides that have plagued the Adriatic city since the late nineteenth century and have dominated civic discourse since the city's entry into Italy. It does not constitute a rejection of Italy; indeed, Trieste has been one of the most fiercely Italian nationalist (*italianissima*) cities in the country. Since the city's annexation to Italy, its inhabitants have been among the political right's most consistent supporters. Rather, Habsburg nostalgia provides a vehicle to reconcile the city's Central European past with its position on the geographic periphery of Italy and western Europe. It presents opportunities for development and association beyond the confines of Italy, a state that Triestines, rightly or wrongly, see as neglectful of their needs and

ignorant of their particular situation. It articulates and disseminates civic perspectives and beliefs founded on what Antonella Procecco has identified as enduring "aspirations for autonomous existence" (148) based on the city's Adriatic position and maritime role. It provides a foundational block for the city's commercial integration in central Europe, its role as an Adriatic trading center and outlet to the Mediterranean identified more than a century ago by Triestine journalist and socialist Angelo Vivante. Italian irredentists and nationalist Liberals vilified Vivante as a traitor to the Italian cause, but today he is celebrated for the clarity of his economic analysis of Trieste's experience in the monarchy, his insistence on economic integration as the key to the city's prosperity, and his dismissal of ethno-nationalist politics as short-sighted and unproductive.

The legacy of the fin-de-siècle Habsburg world is, perhaps, most evident in Piazza Unità in the center of the city. On a clear day, patrons sitting in the historic Caffè degli Specchi sipping coffee or at Harry's Grill enjoying an aperitif can look out at the northern end of the square that opens onto the Gulf of Trieste. Beckoning in the distance is Miramare Castle, built for the Habsburg Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian (the brother of Franz Joseph) and his wife Charlotte, which, on rare crisp autumn or spring days, when the wind and weather are right, is framed against the Julian Alps, lending an alpine Central European backdrop to the seascape.

Piazza Unità is not like typical Italian city squares that are protected, enclosed urban spaces set among buildings, arcades, and columns and are modeled on the Roman Forum (Isnenghi 3–4). Absent are the Renaissance, Gothic, and arcaded buildings of an Italian space. Even the Venetian architecture ubiquitous along the Adriatic coast fails to make an appearance. Instead, grand and ornate buildings in the Central European style of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries reflect the port city's historic Habsburg tastes and aspirations. The Palazzo Pitteri, built in 1780, and the Palazzo Stratti, built in 1839 and modified in 1872 to upgrade the facade (originally designed as a side face of the building), are neoclassical in style. Viennese architects Emil Artmann and Heinrich von Ferstel, respectively, designed the Palazzo della Luogotenenza (former seat of the Austrian government, built 1899 to 1904), and the Palazzo del Lloyd Triestino (former headquarters of the shipping company known prior to unification with Italy as Lloyd Adriatico and Lloyd Austriaco, built 1883). Both architects were responsible for major public projects in nineteenth-century Vienna as well as these structures in Trieste.

The predominance of Central European styles might appear simply as a vestige of Habsburg rule. Trieste became part of the Habsburg domains in 1382 when its leading citizens sought Leopold III's protection against the Republic of Venice. It remained in the Habsburg realms for more than five hundred years, until it was annexed to Italy at the end of World War I. Originally called Piazza San Pietro after a church that once stood on it, the square came to be known under the Habsburgs as Piazza Grande (Great Square). In 1918, the Italians officially renamed it Piazza Unità d'Italia to commemorate Trieste's unification with Italy. It was rebaptized Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia (Unity with Italy Square) in 1955 after World War II in celebration of the exodus of Allied troops and the return to Italian sovereignty (Trampus 644). The full name belies actual local associations, however. Known simply as Piazza Unità, the name's intent has been re-construed in recent years to sever it from its Italian nationalist connections. Since the reemergence of Central Europe in the 1990s and with the emergence of the independent state of Slovenia along Italy's eastern border just beyond the city limits, sympathetic Europeans have come to associate *unità* with the impulse to integrate, welcome, and unify diverse populations, particularly Slovenes, into the space and life of the city.

Not in its physical attributes, usage, or symbolism does the square represent Italian nationalism or nationhood. None of the Italian heroes typical to Italian piazzas make an appearance; no graceful statues commemorate Garibaldi, Mazzini, or the Savoyard kings. Nor are any local Italian nationalist figures like Gabriele D'Annunzio in evidence. Niches in the facade of the Lloyd building host two statues, Tethys and Venus, goddesses of fresh water and salt water. The inland end of the piazza is graced by the Fountain of the Four Continents, erected in 1751 to celebrate the city's commitment to international commerce and maritime life. Atop the fountain an allegorical figure of Trieste, a woman with her arms spread open bearing packages of all types, presides over figures representing the four known continents of the time—Europe, Asia, Africa, and America (Fontana dei quattro continenti). Charles VI, the Vienna-born Holy Roman Emperor who declared Trieste a free port in 1719, stands nearby atop a column overlooking the scene (Barbo). He faces the site of the city's stock exchange and points toward the sea.

The predominance of Central European styles and maritime-inspired themes cannot be interpreted simply as a remnant of history. Their significance lies in their survival and preservation through decades of construction, redesign, redevelopment, and rebuilding in and around the piazza. As

Janice Monk noted, although monuments "might seem to function largely as backdrops in daily life, they are intended to commemorate what we value and to instruct us in our heritage through visible expressions on the landscape" (124). The piazza reflects the collective memory of local commitment to international commerce and the sea, to cosmopolitanism at the "crossroads of Europe," and to European grandeur and prosperity. These themes serve as reminders of the presumed golden age of the city, the final decades of the Habsburg empire. Gone from the square are traces of Fascist Italy's presence, evidence of which survives elsewhere in Trieste and dominates the open park spaces atop the city's San Giusto Hill. The only monument on the massive square (at 132,181 square feet, reputedly the largest square in Europe) contributed by the Italians in nearly a century of rule since 1918 are the pillars on the seaward end erected in 1933 (Trampus 644). These bear little evidence of "Italianness." Installed at the height of Fascism, they are not monumental Roman-inspired columns but rather thin flagpoles topped by finials bearing Trieste's emblem, the halberd of San Sergio. They serve as a testament to the city, not to the Italian nation. Absent too are monuments referencing the circumstances of World War II and the politics of the decades of the Cold War.

The seemingly tenuous link between the Italian nation and the local sense of place in the center of Trieste provokes questions relating to the foundations of the local sense of belonging and home that relate to conceptions of both memory and nostalgia. *Nostalgia* is an elusive term in the twenty-first century. Unchained from its seventeenth-century moorings in the medical condition of homesickness related to a disorder of the imagination, it is both "a cultural phenomenon and a personally subjective experience" (Wilson 21–22, 30). In the sense it is used here, it refers to a collective "longing for the past . . . admittedly for [one] that did not necessarily exist" (Wilson 36) and for a past that Triestines imagine as a shared experience of Habsburg rule that guided the city in its political, cultural, and economic development and brought it into the modern age. Nostalgia for the final decades of Habsburg rule "provides the key to the gate connecting the lessons of the past and the needs of the present" (Wilson 36) and offers a model for crafting the European Trieste of the future. It offers a way to understand "locality," a conception of place that Angelo Torre suggests "should be read as an incessant social and cultural construction" (3). It provides a means to transcend the hostility and trauma associated with the decades of ethnic and nationalist conflict and violence that have marred civic, regional, and national relations in the northern Adriatic territory.

Historians tend to see borderlands as areas of contestation, as the loci of conflicts arising from the attempts of nation-states to establish sovereignty, assert claims to or protect territory, and reify borders against neighboring states. Scholars have recognized border zones between nation states as contact points, areas of cultural intersection, and transnational spaces (Ara and Magris; Hämäläinen and Truett 343–44), but borderlands studies continue to focus on the challenges of mixture, diversity, and "hybridity" and to characterize borderlands as loci of ethnic controversy and political violence. Scholars may recognize that border "violence was never natural and inevitable" and that the "political imaginary" has played a decisive role in border construction and maintenance, but they nonetheless cling to interpretations that highlight conflict on the margins of nation-states. Notions of borders not imagined in terms of national boundaries may constitute a "powerful reality," but they generally take a back seat to the cold, hard reality of power and the perception that mixed borderlands serve as the breeding grounds for the articulation of various national, and often destructive, "myths, narratives, and identities" (see Bartov and Weitz, 3–13). The association of nostalgia with a lost home extends in this national framework to include allusions to a threatened or "stolen" home (Duyvendak 94). Viewed through this lens of nation-states' conflicts, nostalgia appears a frivolous sentiment that reflects "core" nations' understandings of identity and supports visions of the presumed ineluctable march to modern development.

In the case of Trieste, Pamela Ballinger has sought to transcend the retrograde view that linked nostalgia to nationalism, identifying the tendency to "mythologize" the Habsburg era as part of a "prospective nostalgia." This was not a simple glorification of the past but a means of imagining the future and reconceiving cosmopolitanness to re-position the border city and craft its political future (Ballinger 97). This conceptualization recognizes the complexities of Trieste's position, and the "prospective" label posits a forward rather than regressive trajectory, but the argument remains grounded essentially in Trieste's "unique" border condition and in the geopolitical, statal perspectives that predominate in contemporary studies of borders. Yet Trieste displays, as David J. Smith and Stuart Burch have identified for Narva, Estonia, "an array of different—in some cases one might say diametrically opposed—narrations of political space" (405). Habsburg nostalgia in Trieste points to a continuous and stable identity constructed outside of the statal expectations that dominate twentieth-century political assumptions. It chal-

lenges common understandings of western European nostalgia as linked to notions of national homogeneity (see Duyvendak 22–25). Exploration of the characteristics and aspects of Triestine collective memory viewed (and often dismissed) as manifestations of regressive nostalgia offers an alternative vision to the fractious, violent, and ultimately conflicted reality and ephemeral nature of political power in the borderland.

Antonella Procecco has argued that Trieste occupies a space as the meeting point of cultures in the fragmented territory of the Upper Adriatic region. She traces Trieste's distinctive identity to ideas of "autonomy, self-representation and myth" associated with various phases of the city's history, ideas that are specifically related to four themes: the economic myth of the city as the Habsburg empire's premier port; political myths revolving around national struggles and irredentism; the city's reputation as a hub of literary multiculturalism; and exalted traditions of "municipalism" that served historically as the basis for claims to autonomy (Procecco 133). Svetlana Boym's notion of "restorative nostalgia," predicated on the relationship of nationalism to desires for a "return to home," the battle against "enemies" to protect that home, and the concomitant erasure of complexities of history that might threaten claims to that home (41, 43–44) speaks to the political myths of irredentist and national struggles. On the margins of the Habsburg empire, Trieste developed a reputation as an urban crossroads, a bridge between east and west, and an outlet to the Mediterranean and overseas worlds. Reinvigorated by the blossoming of Central Europe after 1989, the city now looks to the "ghosts" of its Habsburg past, articulated in its urban spaces, its culinary and arts culture, and its built environment to define its role as a leader in new and unified twenty-first-century Europe.

Homage to the "new Europe," particularly poignant in Trieste on the southern fringe of Churchill's famed "iron curtain," might be viewed as "desirous nostalgia," an understanding of nostalgia identified by Stephen Norris in his discussion of St. Petersburg (198). Norris suggests that St. Petersburg's nostalgia may not be for "the past it had, but for the past it *could* have had" (198), a past interrupted in Russia by the cataclysm of 1917, the communist takeover, and decades of Soviet rule that ended with the collapse of the Soviet system. The similarities in St. Petersburg's and Trieste's situations lie in similar memories linked to the lost grandeur of imperial cities supported by royal patronage, the loss of prestige associated with the collapse of imperial net-

works, and the sense that modern development was interrupted by the political conflicts and violence of the twentieth century.

The physical setting of the Adriatic city offers reminders of an imagined "pacific" and commercial past fostered by Habsburg patronage and attention to the city's "true" maritime calling. Memory of this commercial golden age provides a convenient escape from the disappointments of the twentieth century, viewed in terms of the port economy's collapse, Italian ultra-nationalist and Fascist violence, Nazi oppression, and Cold War territorial division with its concomitant political tensions. It provides a vehicle for selective historical amnesia—enhancing the ability to forget the city's history of fierce Italian irredentism and Fascist nationalism, Cold War conflicts with Yugoslavia, contested "Slavic" (primarily Slovene and Croatian) contributions to local culture, and bitter resistance to Nazi occupation, which is associated with Austro-Germanism. The memory of Habsburg imperial sovereignty provides an alternative "political imaginary," privileging pre–World War I imperial experience over that of nation-state rule that has fueled ethnic tensions and been the basis for political conflict in the region for decades. Further, it provides a basis for "deploying," "co-opting," or "subverting" the "global designs" that have defined Trieste as a "border city" (Bialasiewicz and Minca 1087–88) rather than as a crossroads or contact point.

Urban Space/Architecture

Nostalgia for the Habsburg past does not preclude Italian national celebration. The marriage of Italian national celebration and aspirations for cosmopolitanness and maritime commercial prosperity imagined as part of the Habsburg past are nowhere more evident than in Piazza Unità. On national holidays, the buildings illuminated by red, green, and white lights bring the Italian tricolor to life and celebrate the city's place in the modern Italian nation. The Italian flag flies proudly from the highest flagpole above the municipal building at the square's southern end. Blue lights embedded in the pavement of the square installed as part of a massive refurbishment after 2000, based on a plan by French architect Bernard Huet (the winner of an architectural competition sponsored by the city) and actualized from 2001 to 2005, make the city appear as if it flows directly into the Adriatic Sea and mark the square as the site of celebration as a maritime crossroads of the new Europe. The lights also intentionally recall the Habsburg past; they are ar-

ranged to trace the boundaries of the old harbor and delineate the area where the port buildings stood prior to the Habsburg development in the 1830s (*Friuli-Venezia Giulia*).

As artist Claudine Isé noted, "Often the presence of monuments generates opportunities for social interaction and reflection" (13). In his design for the piazza, Huet chose not only to make the square appear contiguous with the sea and to recall the old harbor but also to reposition the Fountain of the Four Continents. Removed in 1938 to make way for the crowds expected to jam the piazza during Mussolini's heavily orchestrated visit, the fountain was returned to the piazza in the 1970s but positioned off to the western side of the square's landward end. In the 2001 to 2005 renovation, it was restored to its original position, centered on the facade of the municipal building on the southern (landward) end of the piazza. The re-positioning symbolically re-centered commerce at the heart of the city and also restored the original lines of sight, making the fountain devoted to commerce visible from the Stock Exchange plaza situated a block to the east.

As Lorraine Dowler, Josephine Carubia, and Bonj Szczygiel point out, "[L]andscapes are actively produced, programmed and scheduled . . . they are not innocent; rather, they are the palette of a specific moral agenda" (7). The nostalgic intentionality in the city's restoration was evident even before the renovation had begun. In 2000, a public art project designed to promote visions of Trieste's pan-European heritage hearkened back to the Habsburg international entrepôt and its history as a commercial gateway to the east (Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia, Trieste 2000). A mural was laid out on the square, delimited by taped lines that fashioned "mosaic tiles." Over the course of several months, volunteers, members of the public, and chance passersby painted each tile with a roller. When all the tiles were filled in, the painting (243 by 472 feet, or nearly 115,000 square feet), was revealed to be a female allegory of Trieste bearing a lance topped with the city's halberd emblem. The figure appeared astride a bull with a halo of yellow stars each representing a country of the European Community. She rode toward the Adriatic and, the painting implied, from there toward eastern seas, indicated by images of the Levantine sun and crescent moon. The painting revealed a city poised to recover its maritime prominence and to lead the new Europe (Piazza dell'Unità d'Italia, Trieste 2000). This image evoked visions of a unified Europe, and its method of actuation had engaged the Triestine public in the project of renovating and redefining Trieste.

Efforts resembling those undertaken on the piazza to restore buildings and monuments to their Habsburg splendor have been under way throughout Trieste for several decades. The renovation is consistent with international trends to refurbish port spaces—the push to revitalize urban spaces and buildings abandoned as port services moved to the suburbs or peripheries in the twentieth century and the impulse to reclaim and repurpose for public use centrally located waterfront properties in the twenty-first century (Minca 225–26). Habsburg designs and structures figure prominently in such programs in Trieste. The ex-Pescheria, or former public fish market, built in 1913 and designed in Liberty style by architect Giorgio Polli, was constructed with an eye toward technology, modernity, and the future (Comune di Trieste, *Pescheria centrale*). Located just west of Piazza Unità on the broad avenue that runs along the harbor, its exposed industrial interior, designed to be aesthetically pleasing as well as functional and hygienic, recalls the grandeur of Trieste by the sea. Having passed through various iterations as a public building and fallen into a state of disrepair, it was refurbished as an exhibition space with the evocative name "Salon of Enchantments" (Comune di Trieste, *Salone degli incanti*). The exhibition hall invokes romantic visions of the sea and maritime culture unmistakeable in the nave ceiling design and other architectural adornments including a sea shell frieze. At the same time, the name conjures magical associations tied to the building's past and recreated in its restoration. The building's renovation was not a blind act of "restorative nostalgia" that sought to turn back time and hide every crack, taint, imperfection, or sign of age (Boym 41). Rather, it was a deliberate repurposing of the space to increase its public utility and draw attention to the building's original design and purpose.

In 2011, the newly renovated space hosted "Trieste Liberty," an exhibition highlighting the city's fin-de-siècle Liberty architecture. The exhibition claimed to demonstrate "the complexity and contradictions of an era of great interest that remains too little known" (Comune di Trieste, *Trieste Liberty*). It placed the buildings in contemporary context using twenty-first-century streetscape photographs (Rovello, Messina, and Resciniti) to demonstrate how art and architecture associated with Trieste Liberty permeated the modern cityscape and influenced the rejuvenation and modernization of commercial and residential spaces. Emphasis on Liberty style, the Italian adaptation of art nouveau or Floreale, distinctive in its floral and natural motifs, and associated at the turn of the twentieth century with the patterns and

designs of London's Liberty and Company, presented a vision of the city's historic integration in Europe. Emphasis on the city's integration in the modern and European cultural and artistic cross-currents associated with the international art nouveau movement erased Trieste's peripheral "border" or "frontier" identity at the edge of western Europe. It also recalled the work of well-known Triestine artists, particularly graphic artists including Marcello Dudovich, Adolph Hohenstein, and Leopoldo Metlicovitz who were linked to the *Jugendstil* (Bossaglia 44–45) and artistic currents that flowed among Milan, Venice, and Vienna reflecting the styles of Europe and beyond.

The "Trieste Liberty" exhibition, which ran from March to June 2011, was ephemeral and designed to evoke nostalgia for the final decade of Habsburg rule. At the same time, it reflected the broader impulse to preserve the Habsburg architecture and cityscape to present what Luiza Bialasiewicz and Claudio Minca have identified as "alternative spatial imaginaries" that use "nostalgic reconstructions of the city's past" to define geopolitical strategies and "re-position" the city in the changing European context (Bialasiewicz and Minca 1087). The exhibition drew clear parallels between the architectural aims of the first decades of the 1900s and contemporary architectural aspirations. The exhibition catalog described the Liberty projects as "pioneering efforts" undertaken by architects who partnered with engineers to find "formal and technical solutions" to resolve "specific problems relating to optimization of space and structural irregularities." Among the solutions applied in Trieste were techniques to adapt buildings to the city's irregular or inclined terrain and the use of "false stone" (synthetic or composite materials) to restore or produce intricate designs on building facades (Rovello, Messina, and Resciniti 19, 35). The exhibition's illustration of the adoption of such modern techniques at the turn of the century underlined Triestines' historic willingness to look to greater Europe, to innovate, and to serve as a conduit for the spread of new styles and European trends.

Further evidence in the built environment of interest in the Habsburg monarchy can be found directly across the wide boulevard to the landward side of the former fish market in Piazza Venezia, known under the Habsburgs as Piazza Giuseppina. A statue of the Habsburg Archduke Maximilian graces the square (fig. 1). Erected in 1875 in memory of the archduke assassinated in Mexico and to honor his ties to Trieste, the statue was dismantled after World War I and removed to the grounds of Miramare Castle. For the Italians, the post–World War I dismantling and move from the center to the periphery of

Fig. 1. Piazza Venezia. Photo by the author.

the city was a real as well as a symbolic displacement. Abandoned for decades until 1961, the statue was then remounted and exhibited in Miramare's park.

Five miles north of the city center in Grignano on a promontory overlooking the Gulf of Trieste, Miramare castle (fig. 2) has been the site in Trieste most self-consciously associated with Habsburg nostalgia since the city rejoined the Italian state in 1954. Beginning in 1856, Austrian architect and engineer Carl Junker designed and oversaw the construction of the castle commissioned by Archduke Maximilian, head of the Austrian navy, as a home

for himself and his consort Charlotte of Belgium. In 1860, with the exterior complete, the Archduke moved into the castle. Maximilian never saw the interior completed. He died in 1867 in Mexico on the ill-fated mission to restore the Mexican monarchy. After his death, the castle remained in the hands of the royal family, and Maximilian's widow Charlotte, suffering from mental illness, remained there until the turn of the century. After World War I, the castle passed into the hands of the Italians and, from 1931 to 1937, became the residence of the Duke of Aosta, a member of the House of Savoy, a cousin of King Emmanuele III of Italy, and a war hero. During World War II, Nazi troops occupied the castle and grounds. They were followed by Allied troops who at the end of the occupation period passed the castle on to the Italian state. In 1955, it became a museum (Trampus 392; *Castello di Miramare Museo Storico*). In the postwar period, Miramare was inscribed as Habsburg—a place to remember the legacy of the monarchy. At the end of the Cold War, the reemergence of Central Europe and the fragmentation of Yugoslavia spurred reevaluation of the Habsburg legacy, and significant renovation efforts aimed to restore the castle and the grounds. The contemporary museum presents the castle building, featuring richly decorated and restored interiors. The manicured park with its exotic flora and spectacular sea views evokes the memory of Habsburg splendor and grandeur. The avenue along the water leading to the castle and the park are favored walking sites for Triestines. At a distance from the city center but clearly visible from Piazza Unità, Miramare serves as a reminder of Trieste's Habsburg past and a monument to its Central European present.

The restoration of the Habsburg castle may seem a typical manifestation of nostalgia as a yearning for and extolment of the imagined glories of the past. But nostalgia for the Habsburg era must, from the Triestine perspective, be divorced from ethnic, specifically Germanic, associations. For Italians, the "Germanic" Austrians were the enemies of Italian nationalists prior to World War I and, while the Germans were ostensibly allies of Mussolini, in Trieste ethnic Germans remained suspect throughout the interwar period as former enemies and potential traitors to the Italian state. During World War II, Germans once again became enemies, associated with the brutal occupation of the city claimed by the Nazis as part of Germany and the Reich's Adriatisches Küstenland (Adriatic Littoral). After World War II, the park and castle on the city's peripheries became a place to contain the memory of German influences, including such relics of Habsburg rule as the statue

Fig. 2. Miramare Castle. Photo by the author.

of Maximilian. By the turn of the millennium, ties to the Habsburgs and the Germanic past had been reinvented in light of the increasing integration of Europe and the expansion of the European Community in which Germany took a leading role. In 2008, the statue of Maximilian returned with civic fanfare to its post at Piazza Venezia.

"Nuove Litorale," an e-publication dedicated to the history of the "New Littoral"—the Italian "Litorale," the Austrian "Küstenland," and the Slovene and Croatian "Primorje"—with "particular reference to the Austrian and Austro-Hungarian period," recounts the Maximilian statue's journey and return to the piazza. The publication's mission is to "call attention to and stimulate the desire to learn of Triestines, Gorizians, Istrians and all who are interested in its [Habsburg] history," described as "a very long period of history, which is usually (deliberately?) omitted" but remains essential to understanding "the present and planning for the future" (*Nuove Litorale*). The section in "Nuove Litorale" on monuments in Trieste highlights the statue of Maximilian as well as statues of Charles VI in Piazza Unità, Empress Elisabeth (Sissi) in Piazza Libertà (in front of the railway station), and Leopold I in Piazza della

Borsa (in front of the historic stock exchange) ("Nouve Litorale: Monumenti Trieste"), pointing to the Habsburgs' occupation of critical points of intersection in the city. While "Nuove Litorale" may be dismissed as a publication of minor importance, designed simply to draw tourists to the Adriatic territories based on a nostalgic representation of their former grandeur, it reflects a new vision of unified Europe with sections devoted to history, monuments, and music in the New Littoral encompassing Trieste and its surroundings, Gorizia and Gradisca and Istria. Oblivious to ethno-nationalist differences and national boundaries, it unifies the areas in a seamless whole.

Trieste's troubled history of ethnic conflict and the tendency to minimize ties to Germanness have produced a particularly "non-ethnic" foundation for Habsburg nostalgia that eschews references to the monarchy as German or Germanic or to the Pan-Germanic perspective assumed in other contexts. It has also produced a sort of historical amnesia and confusion, particularly in the peripheries of the city. The checkered history of Trieste is remembered most vividly at the Museum of the Risiera San Sabba, the site of the Nazi death camp located in the city. The Risiera stands as a testament to Nazi brutality associated with the German occupation from 1943 to 1945. At the same time, a headline in Trieste's daily *Il Piccolo* on May 29, 2012, read, "La trattoria 'ex Hitler' minaccia di chiudere" (the "Former-Hitler" restaurant threatens to close). The article focused on a dockside trattoria, opened in 1907 and officially called Lilibuontempo after its current proprietor, located in the village of Muggia on the outskirts of Trieste. The owner blamed the recent loss of business on public road construction projects in the vicinity. The curiosity, with respect to memory, lies in the article's reference to the establishment's name "ex-Hitler," purportedly based on the physical resemblance of a former owner to the Nazi dictator. The assumption that a restaurant serving the public could bear the name "Hitler" reflects a peculiar sense of *località*, a sense of symbolic and material relations tied specifically to the place (Torre 5). The current owner's insistence on the importance of the restaurant's hundred-year continuous history and at the same time willingness to maintain the association with the name "Hitler," assuming that it could be divorced from its politics and negative connotations, not to mention the ability of the "ex-Hitler" to survive with this name, suggests an eccentric historical amnesia impossible in Austria, Germany, or most other parts of Europe where Hitler's name is anathema and public celebration of Nazism is illegal. It suggests selectivity in Triestines' remembrance of the past, an ability to divorce the local environ-

ment from association with a Germanic past that is somewhat uncharacteristic of the lands formerly part of the western part of the monarchy.

Foodways

In Trieste, Habsburg identity appears to lack an ethnic connection and is associated instead with Central Europeanness. Contemporary observers have been quick to note the persistence of the fin-de-siècle coffee culture and the survival of several historic cafés, evocative of the type of nostalgia that Janelle Wilson sees as realigning "cognition and emotion to produce comfort and security" (23). While often linked to Viennese influences, Trieste's coffee culture's origins lie in the city's historic role as a coffee emporium. The coffee trade first came to Trieste in the early 1700s from the Ottoman empire. Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it expanded, encouraged by free port incentives and Habsburg patronage and subsidies. In 1891, the Association of Commercial Coffee Interests was founded in Trieste; after Hamburg and Amsterdam, it was the third such organization devoted to coffee in Europe. In 1904, the city opened its coffee exchange (Associazione Caffé Trieste). On the eve of World War I, Trieste ranked second in Europe in coffee transport and hosted four major coffee processing companies that prepared raw beans for the consumer market (Hametz 50–51). While interest in coffee continued, the trade languished in the interwar period as a result of the end of Habsburg patronage and the advent of Fascism and the corporative economy. After the Second World War, in the period of Anglo-American Allied control from 1945 to 1954, coffee was one of the sectors targeted in reconstruction efforts. In the decades after Trieste's return to Italian sovereignty, the city achieved limited success in reviving the trade in raw coffee through special trade agreements with South American and other overseas coffee interests, and attention in the sector focused on trade of prepared coffee beans in Italy and throughout Europe (Hametz 75–76).

In 2006 in recognition of the commercial importance of the coffee trade, the Friuli-Venezia Giulia region (Italy's eastern border region on the Adriatic, centered in Trieste) established the Industrial Coffee District. In 2008, Trieste established the Trieste Coffee Cluster, an initiative to bring together individuals and companies engaged in all aspects of coffee trade and production. No doubt these ambitious initiatives were linked to the influence of Riccardo Illy, scion of the famed Illy Caffé family, mayor of Trieste from 1993 to 2001

and after that a member of the European Parliament. From 2004 to 2008, as president of the Assembly of European Regions, Illy promoted autonomous regions of Europe. His commitment to expanding commercial relations to strengthen local autonomy in a federated Europe and his work on Eurozone initiatives reflected clearly the trajectory of Trieste, from Habsburg emporium to European city. While Illy's interests and influence no doubt attracted investment in the coffee sector, the success of local coffee initiatives also hinged on coffee's resonance in the city where it appears as a "characteristic vocation" (Torre 20), its smells and tastes absorbed in the fabric of the city.

Nostalgia certainly plays an important role in shaping conceptions of public consumption in the historic coffee houses of Trieste, which are associated with turn-of-the-century Central European life and a literary clientele including James Joyce, Italo Svevo, and Umberto Saba. Among the oldest of the coffee houses is Caffé degli Specchi (Café of Mirrors) located on Piazza Unità. Established in 1839, the café was the gathering place for the well-heeled bourgeois clientele frequenting the central business district (Botteri 5). In 2013, it remains a place "to see and be seen." The café consciously promotes associations with its Habsburg past. Its logo, inserted in mosaics in the pavement, displayed on the back of each chair at the tables on the piazza (clearly visible on the café's website), and emblazoned on the canopies, features the two-headed Habsburg eagle alongside Trieste's halberd. Each emblem is enclosed in a circle and joined in a larger blue circle (the color of the sea), atop of which sits the city's San Giusto castle. The café's website claims that it "has been witness to and lived through all local and Central European events" (*Caffé degli Specchi*).

Beyond the coffee house culture, various culinary traditions in the city reflect the persistence of Habsburg tastes and influences. A short walk from Caffé degli Specchi, on Via Diaz, is the Pasticceria Penso, opened in 1918 when the city came under Italian control, advertising its "selection of typical Triestine sweets" including "putizza, presnitz e pinza, fave, marzapani, krapfen, sacher, dobos, rigojanci. . . ." (*Pasticceria Penso*). The assortment is a list of Habsburg favorites reflecting the diverse culinary inspirations of the empire. Of particular interest with respect to Habsburg nostalgia in Trieste is *presnitz* (fig. 3). According to some accounts, presnitz was first created in 1832 for Emperor Ferdinand I and his wife the Empress Maria Anna, a princess of Savoy. Others, including the proprietors of Penso, suggest that it was

Fig. 3. Presnitz. Photo by the author.

developed in honor of the Habsburg Empress Elisabeth's visit to the city to stay at Miramare castle. In both of these accounts, the name *presnitz* derives from the Italian or Triestine reinterpretation of the words "preis prinzessin," or princess's prize, awarded to the cake in a competition honoring the sovereign's visit. Others suggest that the name of the cake came from the Slavic term *presnec*, a term meaning "unleavened," and characteristic of a traditional Jewish method of preparing pastry (Gente del Fud Garofalo).

The rich lore associated with pastry and its evocation of the multiethnic and cosmopolitan currents of the Habsburg empire extends throughout Central Europe. Scholar Richard Wolfel used the layered Dobish torte as a metaphor of Munich's city life and a way to illustrate the layered history and aims of Munich's tourism. The Dobish torte, however, was appropriated by

Munich, its inventor being a Hungarian chef named Dobos, whose name translates to "drummer," which calls to mind the hard layer of caramel atop the cake that must be cracked through for the cake to be enjoyed (Szapor).

If in fact the *presnitz* produced in Trieste was inspired by Sissi's visit, it likely was developed on the same impulse that inspired the invention of the *Mozartkugel* chocolate confection in Salzburg in 1890. The confection, deliberately created as a nostalgic reminder of the city's musical heritage, was intended to promote the romance and glamour of the past and of the monarchy. The *presnitz* cake of layered dough rolled around a mixture of chocolate, nuts, raisins, and various candied and/or dried fruits (depending on the recipe) would have fit the tastes and aspirations of the time, the years at the end of the nineteenth century when foods were developed and marketed throughout the empire to attract audiences to particular luxury items (Steward 167). Regardless of *presnitz*'s origins, its survival, marketing as a Habsburg product, and continuing popularity, like that of other typically Central European desserts in Trieste, attests to the continuing resonance and even romance of Habsburg life and tastes in the Adriatic city.

Popular Culture/Performance

Trieste's integration in Central European literary currents is perhaps the best documented of the city's links to the Habsburg monarchy and fin-de-siècle culture. Nostalgia for the culture that inspired such literary icons as James Joyce, Italo Svevo, and Umberto Saba permeates accounts of Trieste from literary scholar Joseph Cary's *A Ghost in Trieste* to popular writer Jan Morris's *Trieste and the Meaning of Nowhere*. At the end of the twentieth century, Cary admits that he was drawn to Trieste to discover the Habsburg city of the literary decade of 1905 to 1915. Spurred on by visions of James Joyce's *triste Trieste* (sad Trieste) (10), Cary felt himself to be a "ghost" searching the city for the ghosts of its famous writers (4–5). Jan Morris's account reflects classic notions of nostalgia as she refers to homesickness for Trieste (16), which was never really her home, and to a lingering sense of Trieste as "an allegory of limbo, in the secular sense of an indefinable hiatus" (21). She attributes the notion of "nowhereness" expressed in her title to Austrian critic and writer Hermann Bahr's 1909 description of the city as a place that made him feel comfortable in its nowhereness (17). She describes Miramare castle as a "ro-

Fig. 4. Publicity for *Elisabeth*. Photo by the author.

mantic idealization of the empire itself, a mock fairy-tale fortress," "a monument of hubris" that offers "seductive illusions of permanence" (39).

Modern cultural productions, though lighter in tone, also seem to harp on the tragedy of the Habsburgs and the melancholia of the memory of their rule. The popularity of the recent revival of the musical *Elisabeth*, dedicated to the Habsburg empress, testifies to the force of popular nostalgia for the Habsburg empire and the taste for melancholy. The musical was originally produced in Vienna in 1992 and first staged in Trieste at Miramare Castle in 2004. In January 2012, *Il Piccolo* announced fourteen performances in Trieste, an "exclusive national engagement" in Italy from April 26 to May 6, 2012. The performances were at the Politeama Rossetti theater, a venue in the center of the city not on the periphery or at Miramare. The newspaper claimed that the public was certain to receive with "great enthusiasm" the musical that had prompted standing ovations in Munich ("Una Sissi da standing ovation che ad aprile sarà a Trieste," January 5, 2012). In April, the theater announced, "Finally the Empress Sissi has arrived" (Il Rossetti). Placards, signs, posters, and playbills littered the city (fig. 4). City buses bore advertisements for the production. The bookstore and coffee shop Illyteca on Piazza Verdi, located in front of the Verdi theater and just a stone's throw from Piazza Unità, dedicated their windows to displays of publicity for "Das Musical Elisabeth," "the true story of the Princess Sissi." The "true story" was not a joyous tale of a fairy princess, and the musical reflected this. A character representing the empress's assassin anarchist Luigi Lucheni takes on the role of narrator, and tragedy lurks in the background in the omnipresent specter of death on the stage.

The city's relationship to "Sissi," who traveled through Trieste and stayed at Miramare before embarking on journeys abroad, provides a means for the Adriatic Italian city to be integrated into the popular culture of Central Europe and to partake in the Europe-wide promotion of what might be termed the "cult of Sissi." Trieste is included on the itinerary for the "Sisi Strasse," a cultural route and a kind of pilgrimage trail that stretches across Europe including sites in Bavaria, Austria, Hungary, Switzerland, and Italy. The iconic figure of the empress, known for championing ethnic minorities in the monarchy, perhaps best embodies Trieste's romantic views of the Habsburg world that evoke nostalgia for the past and spur contemporary hopes for revitalization in a unified Europe.

Conclusion

Doreen Massey has suggested that "[i]dentities of places are inevitably unfixed . . . because the social relations out of which they are constructed are . . . by their very nature dynamic and changing." The identity of a place is produced "by laying claim to some particular moment/location in time-space when the definition of the area and social relations dominant within it were to the advantage of that particular claimant group" (169). In the case of Trieste, nostalgia lays claim to the Habsburg past. It is not simply a sentiment reflecting retrograde fantasies, nor is it a heuristic device to explore too-easily-dismissed intuitive judgments or impressions of lands as sites of contestation. Rather, it is a way to frame the "identity of place," an ocular on the Habsburg perspective in the final decades of the monarchy's rule, often overlooked in the twentieth century due to the "absence of claimants," in other words the disappearance of the Habsburgs and Habsburg supporters. They disappeared in the morass of competing ethno-nationalist identities in the successor states, but their vision has been revived some ninety years later in aspirations for greater European integration and expansion of the European Community.

Nostalgia in Trieste serves as the foundation for conceptions of and perspectives on realities that transcend common assumptions of frontiers or borderlands as spaces where "groups" are presented as "both objects and generators of intense violence" (Omar and Weitz 1). Such conceptions reflect the assumptions of well-worn paths and familiar tropes of historical inquiry relating to twentieth-century nation-state systems and power relations. However nuanced in the case of Trieste and Habsburg lands, these nation-state models are predicated on the notion that the outmoded empire had no chance in the struggles over the nationality question as the rise of the nation-state was seen as inevitable in the modern world (see Sked 175–77).

Invoking the Habsburg past, Trieste avoids the dangers associated with contested nation-oriented sentiments and territorial claims invested with contemporary biases and prejudices. The Habsburgs offer no competing political claimants in the twenty-first century. Recognition of the importance of nostalgia and of the study of its contours and implications offers a means to explore links to a mythologized past and to a real role in commercial Europe. Nostalgia predicated on "cultural intimacy," a sense of "common social context," and perhaps even a feeling of "complicity" in the revival of a glorified past (Boym 42-43) is put to use in the service of the present. Understanding

the contours of nostalgia in Trieste helps to explain the city's successes and failures in defining its role in the emerging unified Europe, successes evident in the increased international attention garnered by the city relegated to the margins of Europe during the Cold War but now attractive and perhaps even trendy as an important component of the multiethnic, diverse Adriatic zone.

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