

BRIDGES
ITALY - HUNGARY

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MOVEMENT OF MEN, GOODS AND CULTURES
IN TWO AREAS OF EUROPE.
HUNGARY AND SOUTHERN ITALY BETWEEN
THE 15TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

edited by
Paola Avallone e Mónika F. Molnár



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The bridge's outline shown on the cover is the Chain Bridge of Budapest, Hungary.

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A MARITIME “IDYLL”.
INFRASTRUCTURES, CAPITALISM, MARITIME MODERNITY
AND REPRESENTATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE DURING THE
“HUNGARIAN IDYLL” IN FIUME (RIJEKA), 1868-1914*

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During the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, and leading up to the First World War, Fiume (Rijeka) – or more precisely, the city and its territory (*Fiume Város és Kerülete*) – witnessed a remarkable surge in technological advancements and economic prosperity. This was primarily due to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise (*Ausgleich*) of 1867, which restored Hungarian sovereignty over the city. This newfound control led to significant state investments and the implementation of impressive infrastructure projects. These initiatives transformed a small secondary port into one of Europe’s most “modern” maritime *entrepôts* and industrial cities.

The following pages aim to illuminate the unique facets of this “modernity”, which assumed a distinctly maritime character in the case of Fiume. We will delve into the moral implications of the Hungarian investment in Fiume and the features of the so-called “idyll”. We will also explore the evolution of the Fiume logistics hub, both in terms of railway and maritime infrastructure. In the third part of the chapter, we will analyse the city’s maritime sector and its transition from sailing to steam navigation from a quantitative point of view. Finally, we will examine how the representation of (modern) maritime everyday life took shape in Fiume.

1. “To the sea, Hungarians! To the sea!”

Lajos Kossuth, journalist and hero of the Hungarian national cause, probably understood before others that every great transformation, whether historical, political, economic, or

* The chapter was written in the framework of the NextGenerationEU Project “Ondine. Women’s Labour and Everyday Life on the Upper and Eastern Adriatic Waterfronts, mid-19th century–mid-20th century” (funded by EU; CUP E53C22002420001). P.I., Erica Mezzoli; Hosting Institution, Department of History, Humanities and Society – Tor Vergata University of Rome.

cultural, necessarily entailed a change in thinking and acting in space. And, equally necessarily, in the modern era, that new conception of space had to gain a maritime horizon¹. In our case, the Hungarians did not have to conquer anything. It had all been granted long ago: after the proclamation of the free port in 1719 by Charles VI, his daughter, Empress Maria Theresa, declared the city of Fiume and its district *corpus separatum* annexed to the crown of Hungary in 1779.

1.a *The maritime horizon*

For Kossuth, “winning the sea” meant (re)discovering that element and making it coherent within one’s political, economic and national project. But the sea was and remained simply an essential and unavoidable fact: “All Hungarians should come here when they are old because the road leads here, to our beach, our beach!”² In that context, Fiume was simultaneously a showcase and a development laboratory for the nation: “The bay of Fiume [is] like an enormous gate, opened by the Almighty to make the name of the Hungarians known and respected in the distant parts of the world where it is still unknown, and to intertwine the Hungarians with the civilisation of the outside world, to feel here at home, big, free and glorious”³.

However, from Budapest or the Pannonian plains to Fiume and the sea, one first had to get there. In Kossuth’s time, the only way was to travel along the Louisiana road, which connected Fiume to Karlovac (Carlstadt), the construction of which began in 1808 at the hands of General and *grenzzer* Filip Vukasović and ended in around 1811 by Napoleon’s troops. A train would have been needed, but there wasn’t one, and the railway still had to be built. Everything would have been opposed to the railway enterprise, especially nature. The latter, as is known, is stepmother in those places. There, even the trees with their branches implore Heaven for some benevolence. The mountains, the Dinaric Alps, were created on purpose by God’s wrath to hinder the Hungarian Prometheus in his ordeal⁴. This should have moved and given impetus to every “real” man. After all, there was the unique opportunity to win over nature, surpass the work of the frontier hero Vukasović and, finally, come face to face with Leviathan⁵: “Anyone who is not thrilled at the sight of this face of eternity, those who fail to draw a drop of that virile determination that makes men into titans, can bury trust itself. Life is no longer for him”⁶.

¹ SCHMITT 2002, 59, 70, 73, *et passim*.

² KOSSUTH 1846.

³ KOSSUTH 1846.

⁴ KOSSUTH 1846.

⁵ SCHMITT 2002, 18-24 *et passim*.

⁶ KOSSUTH 1846.

However, the question was not reduced to a mere aesthetic matter. At that juncture, it was not just about the possibility of affirming one’s masculinity and determination, nor of reaching one’s national shores. In the 1840s, the question arose both in geopolitical terms – and therefore also of political economy – and of relations between Hungarians and Croats. In that context, the railway would have represented both the engagement between the Danube and the Adriatic – and therefore, between the Hungarians and the world – and the long-awaited wedding ring that would finally cement the union between Hungarians and Croats⁷. Thus, net of the economic aspect, on the threshold of 1848, the question of building the railway to reach Fiume adopted a crucial political and national significance since it represented a fundamental piece in the framework of the unification of the Magyar territories or those to be Magyarized.

One final aspect to consider is central for understanding nineteenth-century humanity, particularly within the German cultural sphere of influence. In conclusion of the article, Kossuth stated: “The new era has created new needs. We need a train to Fiume!! Within this decision lies one of the keys to the future of our country”⁸. That was the “spirit of the times”, the *Zeitgeist*, against which it was impossible to rebel, otherwise the fulfilment of the national mission could have been fatally compromised. At that point in time, that was the absolute priority.

It must be said, however, that Fiume was not only within the Hungarian national horizon. By the end of August 1848, the Croatian Ban Jellačić occupied Fiume, expelling the Hungarian authorities from the city. The Croatian season of Fiume lasted until 1868 when, following the “Hungarian-Croatian reconciliation”, Fiume was reunited with Hungary again as *separatum coronae adnexum corpus*⁹. But now everything was different, and more changes were to come. In 1867, there was the *Ausgleich*, and the Empire became “dual”: Cisleithania under Austrian control and Transleithania under Hungarian control.

1.b *The “idyll”*

As we will see in more detail later, that was the moment in which Budapest was able to keep the “promises” of the 1840s: the railway and new port infrastructures were built, works

⁷ KOSSUTH 1846. The railway construction to reach Fiume was not the subject of a single Kossuth intervention on *Hetilap*. Along with the dispute around the so-called Anti-Corn Law, the railway to/from Fiume was the other most discussed topic in the magazine’s pages. HARASZTI 1961. Furthermore, the issue was also the subject of extensive correspondence between Kossuth and the Bavarian engineer Franz Kreuter, see *Kossuth Lajos* 2006.

⁸ KOSSUTH 1846.

⁹ On the Croatian period and the Hungarian-Croatian “Compromise” of 1868, see KLEN 1988, 211-230; POLIĆ 2010.

that stimulated an astonishing commercial and industrial development of the city. From the realisation of those major infrastructures – implemented thanks to constant injections of financial resources by the state – the “Hungarian idyll” of the city began, that is, forty years of growth and development, dramatically interrupted only by the outbreak of the First World War.

That “idyll” in Fiume took on the contours of a maritime and industrial epic, but also – given the city’s suitability for “modern” times – the tourism sector experienced a remarkable expansion¹⁰. There was not even a lack of large- or largest-scale industry, which, in Fiume, was characterised by its genderless nature, i.e. it employed both female and male workers depending on the processes. In 1910, the tobacco factory, one of the largest in Europe, employed around 1,171 workers – predominantly women; while the *Whitehead & Co.* torpedo factory employed approximately 727 workers – almost exclusively men¹¹. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Fiume was an industrial centre of primary importance within the Empire and Europe. In 1901, together with the nearby village of Sušak (Sussak), it had around 36 production plants and large business venues (Fig. 1).

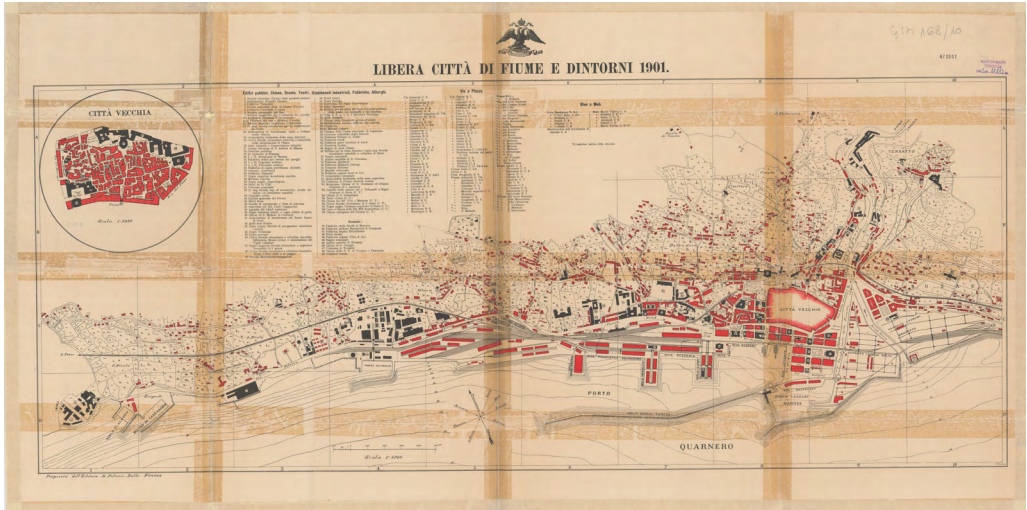
Given the socio-occupational pattern – i.e. the significant access to paid work, including industrial, of women and the extensive employment of men in the maritime sector – and the flexibility – i.e. autonomy – of the city’s political and governance framework, the municipal services did not fail to distinguish themselves for their foresight¹². For example, to meet the needs of workers, the city markets – particularly the fish market – stayed open

¹⁰ On this occasion it is impossible to account for the complete parable of Fiume’s economic development during the “idyll”. For a summary in English see PELLETS *et al.* 2018; for details, see the expanded Hungarian edition PELLETS *et al.* 2021; in Italian see ZUCCONI 2008, 45, 55-60 *et passim*; ANDREOTTI 1992.

¹¹ *1910. évi népszámlálás 3* 1914, 606. According to the 1910 census, approximately 20% of the population of Fiume was employed in industry (9,844 units). Women represented almost a third of that workforce (2,882 units). *1910. évi népszámlálás 2* 1913, 916.

¹² Likewise, the enormous questions relating to the peculiarities of the Fiume city government and the links between wage-employment conditions, gender relations and family *ménage* of the subaltern classes in maritime urban contexts also go far beyond the scope of this modest contribution. As regards the first, in extreme synthesis, suffice it to say that in 1872, with the “Statute of the Free City of Fiume and its District” (*Statuto della Libera Città di Fiume e del suo distretto*), the Fiume *enclave* managed to guarantee itself vast political autonomy and immense administrative freedom which allowed it to deal with every contingency quickly and effectively. The second question is even more complex and would require separate treatment. It concerns the result of the interrelationships between female wage labour and the impoverishment of the maritime urban proletariat – whose wages were often not enough to cover food – on the one hand, and the frequent absence of the “sole” male breadwinner – and (therefore) also the intervention of a connected informal welfare and social control system – on the other. After a walk in Fiume sailortown, Kőrösi portrayed those circumstances through the following “sketch”: “Many put food on the table by fishing. In sailor families, the father or husband often remains absent from home for long months. However, it is rare for the wife to fail in marital fidelity for fear of nosy neighbours and gossip.” Sándor Kőrösi in FRIED 2005, 56.

Fig. 1. Libera Città di Fiume e dintorni [Free City of Fiume and its surroundings], 1901.



Source: Military History Institute and Museum (Budapest),
Hungary: Military History Archives – Map Collection, G I h 168/10, no. 11 813.

until late evening¹³. But, above all, it should be noted that already in the master plan of 1873, the Municipality had provided for the construction of the “infant nursery” (i.e. daycare). This project came to fruition in 1883 when the nursery was built after Princess Clotilde of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha¹⁴.

The “idyll” naturally also resulted in a significant increase in the population: from 1869, the first year of renewed Hungarian sovereignty, to the threshold of the First World War, the productive population residing in Fiume and its surroundings almost tripled (Table 1).

Table 1: Civilian population present in the city of Fiume and its surroundings
(*Fiume Város és Kerülete*), 1869-1910.

1869	1880	1890	1900	1910
17,884	20,981	29,494	38,057	48,492

Source: *1910. évi népszámlálás* I 1912, 871.

¹³ FRIED 2005, 57.

¹⁴ ZUCCONI 2008, 77-79.

The arithmetical increase in the number of inhabitants also resulted in an increase – perhaps in geometric proportion – in the complexity of the religious and ethnic-linguistic composition of the city population. We know that the imperial censuses, particularly those of 1910, concealed substantial pitfalls regarding the attribution of nationality based on linguistic data¹⁵. In this regard, particular caution should be reserved for the urban subaltern classes, and specifically for women who, as Catherine Horel observes, despite a low level of education, for economic and working reasons, could not afford the luxury of being monolingual as, instead, was often the case for bourgeois housewives¹⁶. However, in the various population censuses, the data relating to the Hungarian language appears of considerable interest for our case. They seem to indicate that the Hungarians heeded Kossuth's exhortation, that some of them had indeed chosen the sea, and that, on the other hand, some “sea-folk” – the *Fiumani* – had somehow opted for Hungary. In this regard, as per the data in Table 2, in thirty years, the number of native speakers of Hungarian or those who had some knowledge of the language increased twenty-fold.

Table 2: Knowledge of the Hungarian language in Fiume and surrounding areas (*Fiume Város és Kerülete*), 1880-1910.

	Hungarian native language	NOT Hungarian native language - NO knowledge of the Hungarian language	NOT Hungarian native language - YES knowledge of the Hungarian language	Knowledge of the Hungarian language (native or non-native speakers)
1880	383 (2.1%)	[17,401 (97.2%)]	100 (0.5%)	483 (2.7%)
1890	1,062 (5%)	[19,232 (91.6%)]	687 (3.8%)	1,749 (8.3%)
1900	2,842 (7.2%)	34,360 (88.2%)	1,753 (4.5%)	4,595 (11.7%)
1910	6,493 (13%)	39,069 (78.4%)	4,244 (8.5%)	10,737 (21.5%)

Source: *1891. I. rész.* 1893, 140; *1910. évi népszámlálás* 1 1912, 42.

As for the question of the identities of the city and the hegemonic ambitions of some, much has already been written. Here, we will rely on the words of the Austro-Venetian Heinrich von Littrow – who we will meet again later – a man of multiple talents and the first regent of the Maritime Government of Fiume:

¹⁵ As regards the discussion about data collection according to the *Umgangssprache* (language of use) – criterion adopted in Austria – or *Muttersprache* (native language) – parameter used in Hungary – see VIVANTE 1984, 160-170. More specifically on Hungary, see MARÁ CZ 2012.

¹⁶ HOREL 2023, 76.

If one wants to explain the origin of these people,
 We mean their nationality,
 It is difficult to explain thoroughly here,
 Because so much is still unexplained;
 They are good-natured, friendly and modest,
 and can tolerate others as well.

One searching for suitable comparisons in vain,
 Liburnians, they are finally alone after all,
 They love Italy’s customs and traditions
 And definitely want to be full-blooded Hungarians:
 If ethnographers classify here,
 they will probably lose their time¹⁷.

2. Building the Fiume “system”

Once the issue relating to the status of Fiume was resolved, in 1871, the Andrassy government passed a law that allocated 13 million forints for the construction of the new port of Fiume¹⁸. It was clear that the modest Fiumara port no longer seemed suited to the times. However, the decision to build new port infrastructure was not simply a response to the desire to catch up or, in the words of Thomas P. Hughes, to correct the Hungarian technological and infrastructural “reverse salient” within the framework of the imperial economy¹⁹. It is also, in fact, necessary to emphasise that those years were marked by the construction of major port infrastructures also on other coasts of the Mediterranean basin. For example, we recall the case of nearby Trieste. In the Austrian city, the construction of the *Porto Nuovo* – the current *Porto Vecchio* – began in 1868 and was finally completed in 1887. Naturally, the reason for such engineering zeal lay in creating the maritime engineering work par excellence of those years, the Suez Canal, whose completion in 1869 gave an unprecedented boost to global trade. In that context, it was a question of first imagining and then creating a logistics complex capable of supporting the volume of maritime and land commercial traffic expected to pass through the city in a few years. Thus, the city’s commercial centre of gravity moved from east to west. Furthermore, the project of the Hungarian Railway Directorate of 1870 envisaged both the enlargement of the port and the construction of a common railway

¹⁷ HEINRICH 1877, 16. For the Italian translation of the cited passage, see STELLI 1995, 40.

¹⁸ ZUCCONI 2008, 25.

¹⁹ On the concept of “reverse salient” in modernisation and technological development processes, see HUGHES 2012.

station for the Austrian railway line – which would have connected the city to Vienna via San Pietro del Carso (Pivka) – and for the Hungarian line – towards Budapest via Carlstad (Karlovac) – in a single integrated intermodal logistics system “vu la grande communauté qui dans une ville maritime existe entre les Gares et les Ports”²⁰.

On the eve of the First World War, the Fiume “system” occupied the entire coastal stretch of the city and a part of that of nearby Sušak. It consisted of 6.3 km of banks equipped with mobile cranes, 61 hectares of padded land, more than 62 hectares of water surface protected by breakwaters, 19 warehouses equipped with lifts with a capacity of 13,800 wagons of goods, outdoor warehouses on which approximately 6,000 freight wagons could be stored, a railway network of more than 60 km with 230 switches and 94 turning platforms. This entire logistical compound was served by electricity and the water network. There was also a fire prevention system and a disinfection apparatus (Clayton). Of course, towing and rescue services were also present. In this well-equipped logistical space, there was the railway station, the *Magazzini Generali* (General Warehouses), the main port, the *Gabriele Baross* timber port, the *Mandracchio*, the oil port, the floating dock basin, the *Danubius* shipyard and, finally, the torpedo factory – a jewel of port engineering of the time.

2.a *The Alföld-Fiume railway station*

Even just a few years prior, the approach to the intervention possibilities was completely different. Certainly, even before the Hungarian Railways (*Magyar Államvasutak*, MÁV) project, there were plans to connect the city to the railway line and proposals to improve and expand the port. However, a holistic – or systemic – vision of Fiume’s infrastructural and logistical issues as a commercial *entrepôt* was not considered.

Regarding the question of the railway, in 1868, a special commission was formed composed of representatives of the government and the city to discuss the best site on which to build the station of the Alföld-Fiume railway (*Alföld–Fiumei Vasút*), which was already under construction²¹. The railway should have been directly connected, bypassing the Budapest railway belt, to the Liburnian port with the Great Hungarian Plain to facilitate as much as possible the export of Transleithan gold: cereals.

²⁰ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár (MNL), Közmunka és Közlekedésügyi Minisztérium, 1867-1888 (K 173), Útépítészeti, vízépitészeti és vasúti szakosztály, box (b.) 1317, *Port et Gare de Fiume. Rapport de Mr Pascal directeur des travaux maritimes à Marseille*, Marseille 24 January 1871.

²¹ *Alföld-Fiumei Vasút* was a nineteenth-century Hungarian private railway company founded to connect the port of Fiume to Alföld by rail. Construction works began in the early 1860s but were interrupted in 1871. The portions that were actually built were Oradea-Békéscsaba-Szeged-Subotica-Osijek. The segment to connect Osijek to Fiume was never built due to a lack of capital.

At that time, the Alföld-Fiume line was not the only railway infrastructure that interested the city. Their other interest lay in the Fiume-San Pietro del Carso (Pivka) segment, which, in addition to joining Fiume with the Cisleitan half of the Empire, connected the Hungarian port to Abbazia (Opatija), a seaside and health resort which was proving to be increasingly popular in Central European high society²². However, in 1868, the priority was strictly national and concerned literally Hungary’s material construction as a state. Therefore, neither the connection with the *Südbahn* (Southern Railway) – whose construction work had yet to begin, incidentally – nor specifically that of the port infrastructure was the subject of discussion. In that circumstance, the reason of state and those of the national economy prevailed. Consequently, even the proposals for engineering intervention followed those logics²³.

Schematically, we can say that there were two options that most polarised the positions of the commission members. The first wanted the construction of the railway station on the delta of the Récina River (Eneo, Rječina); the second, on the contrary, in contiguity with the port structures of the Fiumara canal. For example, Defence Staff Captain Gustavo de Döpfner stated he was in favour of the first proposal, believing that, for strategic reasons, the station should be located precisely “à la sortie de la rue de Louise [the Louisiana road], comme sur la plus direct ligne de jonction avec le territoire intérieur”²⁴. Achilles Thommen, the representative for the Hungarian Ministry of Public Works and Director of Works of the railway, was the most energetic opponent of this possibility. Thommen considered it a priority that the station on the Alföld-Fiume railway be built in direct communication with the port to facilitate as much as possible the transport, transit and unloading procedures of goods from wagons to ships and all other embarkation and disembarkation procedures²⁵. Other solutions could have met the needs of passenger traffic, but not goods traffic. At that time, “le discargements direct est indispensable, parce que l’exportation de la Hongrie consistant en matières premières, elle ne peut supporter ni frais de porteur, ni frais de magasinage”²⁶. But above all, as in his words, Thommen’s proposal, “est basé sur les observations suivantes: Il faut tenir compte des communications de la voie ferrée avec la ville, de la voie avec la

²² On Abbazia (Opatija) as the “Austrian Nice” or the “Brighton on the Mediterranean” and on its rail connection see MODRICH 1891; VASKO-JUHÁSZ 2018; VASKO-JUHÁSZ 2020.

²³ In this regard see SCHULZE *et al.* 2012.

²⁴ MNL, K 173, Útépítészeti, vízépítészeti és vasúti szakosztály, b. 1317, *Protocol de séance*, [Fiume] 3 and 4 February 1868.

²⁵ *Ivi.*

²⁶ MNL, K 173, Útépítészeti, vízépítészeti és vasúti szakosztály, b. 1317, *Procès-verbal des délibérations de la commission au sujet de l’emplacement de la gare de Fiume, pour le chemin de fer Alföld-Fiume; séances du 3 et du 4 Février 1868*, [Fiume, 3 and 4 February 1868].

mer et de la ville avec la mer”²⁷. Therefore, for the man of the railway, the imperatives of the reason of state and the national economy represented necessary conditions but were not sufficient to motivate the project to create a logistics district for Fiume. According to his intentions, intermodality for eminently economic purposes was not enough. In his plan, the railway had to join the port, but in accordance with the city and its economic and cultural relationship with the sea. Today, we would say that, besides being economically advantageous, the project should have been sustainable both from a social point of view and from the perspective of the city’s immaterial culture.

2.b *The intervention of Hilarion Pascal*

At the time of the Directorate of Hungarian Railways project, the venture to build a direct connection between Fiume and the Great Hungarian Plain failed due to lack of funds. It was replaced with the less ambitious but decidedly more feasible plan, which envisaged Fiume’s “simple” connection with Carlstad (Karlovac) to reach Zagreb and Budapest. In the meantime, however, work on the Fiume-San Pietro del Carso section had also begun, and at that point, some of the resolutions adopted by the special commission of 1868 had to be reconsidered. For example, the decision that there should be a seamless space including the train station and the port certainly had to be called into question since:

Les études des relations et des circonférences à Trieste nous ont décidé à séparer la gare du port, c’est à dire à créer entre la gare et les quais une place accessible pour tout le monde.

Il nous semble très-dangereux qu’on place la gare tout-près du quai de port, et de monopoliser de cette manière en faveur d’une entreprise (des chemins de fer) une grande partie de ces établissements très-couteux qui dussent servir à des intérêts publics. (...) il faut qu’on rende la place aux manipulations du port accessible aux voitures publiques et qu’on la fournisse de voies ferrées pour la mettre en communication d’un part avec les magasins des négociants et d’autre part avec la gare même. (...) La séparation de la gare du port acquerra aussi une importance particulière, dès que la ligne de Carlsstadt-Fiume sera remise aux mains d’une société privée²⁸.

In the meantime, one of the maritime “starchitects” – or rather “star-engineers” – of

²⁷ *Ivi.*

²⁸ MNL, K 173, *Útépítészeti, vízépítészeti és vasúti szakosztály*, b. 1317, Buda 15 December 1870.

the time entered the scene: Hilarion Pascal, the chief engineer of the port of Marseille²⁹. He became involved at the invitation of the Hungarian Ministry of Public Works between 1869 and 1870 when the Railway Works Directorate sent him its project to get his expert opinion. In discontinuity with what was discussed by the special commission of 1868, the new project provided for the construction of a common railway station for the two railway lines (Fiume-San Pietro del Carso and Fiume-Carlstad) and the creation of new port structures, all to be built to the west of the old port. Pascal accepted the Ministry’s request, and in May 1870, he went to Fiume to carry out his investigations. During the mission, Pascal studied all the papers: the resolutions of the special commission of 1868 and two other intervention projects on the port alternative to those of the Directorate of Works for the railway³⁰. But above all, he spoke and consulted with multiple parties, in particular asked for “l’avis des marins, des Ingénieurs, des commerçants et d’autres notables, qui ont tout répondu à notre appel avec le plus grand empressement”³¹. The result of these talks was a series of proposed variants to the original project – which Pascal, overall, approved – and a road map for realising the various works. The first of these was a common station for the two railway lines on the site proposed by the Ministry. And so it was. In 1873, the city was finally connected to the railway, first to the *Südbahn* and then to the Hungarian one, with enormous benefits for commercial traffic³². Then, it was the turn of the port, the construction of which began in 1872. In this regard, it must be said that, as a whole, the intervention plan for the port by the Railway Works Directorate was indeed very far-reaching and, perhaps, too ambitious for the volume of the maritime traffic that Fiume was managing at the time³³. Thus, Pascal proposed beginning with the lengthening of the breakwater named after Empress Maria Theresa, the construction of the Szápáry bank and the widening of the Adamich pier³⁴.

All other expansion works on the port facilities would have to wait for Fiume to establish itself as a maritime *entrepôt* and for the imperial and international economies to recover from the *Gründerkrach* of 1873.

²⁹ Regarding the port works designed or supervised by Hilarion Pascal see: BARTOLOTTI 2020; HASTAOGLOU-MARTINIDIS 2011; HASTAOGLOU-MARTINIDIS 2020.

³⁰ MNL, K 173, Útépítészeti, vízépítészeti és vasúti szakosztály, b. 1317, *Port et Gare de Fiume*, Marseille 24 January 1871.

³¹ *Ivi*.

³² In 1872, the value of import-export by sea and land was almost 26,000 florins; in 1874, it reached nearly 38,000 florins (ca. +46%). *Rapporto* 1875, 21.

³³ In 1872, the import-export value of Fiume’s maritime trade was just under 19,000 forints. *Rapporto* 1875, 22.

³⁴ MNL, K 173, Útépítészeti, vízépítészeti és vasúti szakosztály, b. 1317, *Port et Gare de Fiume*, Marseille 24 January 1871.

3. 1891: a watershed year

As we will see from the data analysed in this part of the chapter³⁵, 1891 can be considered a turning point in Fiume's maritime history, particularly in relation to the evolution of vessel operations' characteristics. To understand the latter statement, it is necessary to keep in mind that in Fiume, two forces acted simultaneously and found a strong acceleration in the 1890s: the transition from sailing to steam navigation and a profound structural reorganisation – both maritime but above all terrestrial – of mobility within the Kingdom of Hungary.

Taking a step back for a more prospective vision of the issue, more generally, we can say that 1891 was when the Empire began reorganising the maritime services. In that year, the Hungarian government suspended subsidies to Lloyd – which therefore ceased to be *Österreichisch-Ungarischer* to remain only *Österreichischer* until 1919 – and both Trieste and Fiume lost their free port status (B.L.I. 1891 no. 76). The latter circumstance had different implications for the two Upper Adriatic ports. After initial uncertainty, in Trieste, thanks to some forms of “compensation” – i.e. tax breaks for five years in favour of the industrial plants that would be built in the city³⁶ – that occurrence was the driving force behind an extraordinary industrial development. Otherwise, since it did not have an import trade of the magnitude of that of Trieste³⁷, the abolition of its status as a free port barely impacted Fiume's commerce. What did have a decisive influence on the trade of the Liburnian port was the completion of the process of nationalisation of the railway network on Hungarian soil – which also occurred in 1891 – and the manipulation of railway tariffs, which greatly encouraged the export of Transleithan agriculture products through the port of Fiume³⁸.

As for the question of nationalisation, it is crucial to clarify the situation in many continental European countries at the time: the railway connectivity system built on countries' national soil had been constructed – and was managed – by banks and companies that were often non-national and/or with extensive foreign financial participation, mainly French³⁹. This was also the case in Hungary, which found itself with a railway network

³⁵ The selection of data that will be presented is part of a dataset referring to vessel operations in Fiume and the Hungarian-Croatian Littoral between 1879 and 1917, currently being published with the Croatian Social Science Data Archive (CROSSDA) of Zagreb (Croatia).

³⁶ PANJEK 2003, 310.

³⁷ In this context, a significant exception relates to oil imports. The oil refining industry was highly advanced in the Kingdom of Hungary. At the end of the 1880s, the country possessed 11 oil refineries, among which the one in Fiume (founded in 1882) was the largest and most important. *Bollettino* 1891, 243.

³⁸ LAMPE *et al.* 1982, 299-300.

³⁹ See HERTNER 2006.

largely built and managed by the Austrian State Railway Company (*Österreichische Staats-Eisenbahn-Gesellschaft*), which, despite its name, had absolutely nothing to do with the state. The company was founded in 1855 as a syndicate between one of the infrastructure investment giants of the time, the French *Crédit mobilier*⁴⁰, and the Viennese banking houses *G.G. Sina* and *Arnstein&Eskeles*⁴¹. Thus, a large part of the railway network in the Austro-Hungarian Empire remained under French financial control until the nationalisations ended in Hungary in 1891 and Austria in 1909⁴².

Regarding tariffs, the Hungarian railway administration introduced special tariffs, reducing freight rates for direct import and export transport to and from Fiume. This was a significant development that directly impacted Fiume’s maritime trade. Additionally, cumulative tariffs for export were also implemented, with the Hungarian government compelling state-subsidised shipping companies and state railways to jointly conclude agreements on cumulative freight rates for transporting essential goods. On the eve of the First World War, the cumulative tariff contained the rates for 72 types of goods and 150 ports where the steamers of the *Adria* and *Ungaro-Croata* companies stopped and all the stations in the interior of Hungary. This cumulative and reduced sea-land freight system greatly benefited Hungarian exports through Fiume, helping to keep the overall traffic volume competitive with that of Trieste⁴³.

As we see from Figure 1, alongside the progressive decline in traffic from sailing vessels, we witness a leap forward in overall traffic (+57%) in the period 1895-1900, i.e. the moment in which the fruits of the aforementioned rail tariff pattern were ripening.

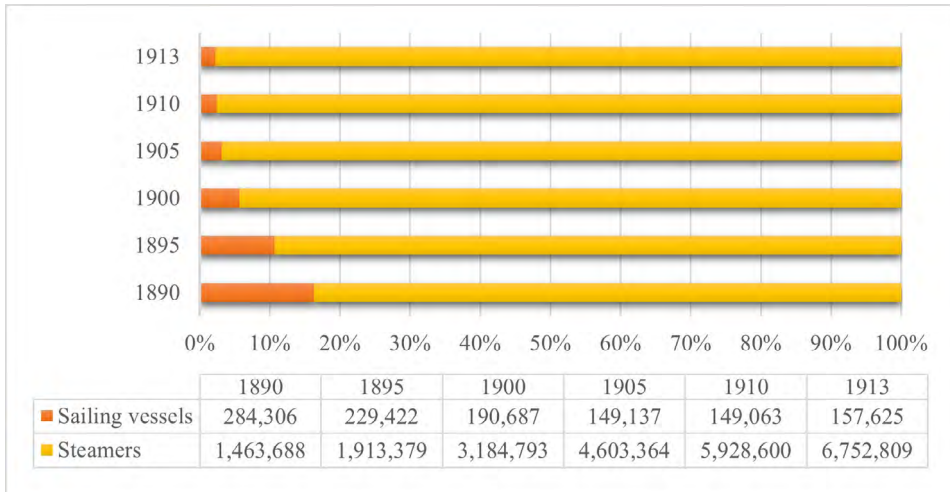
⁴⁰ The *Crédit Mobilier* (full name *Société Générale du Crédit Mobilier*) was a French universal bank established in 1852 by a Napoleon III decree by the Pereire brothers. It specialised in financing domestic and foreign heavy industry, public works and railways. As with many other financial entities of the time, its ascendant parable ended with the Panic of 1857. After the withdrawal of the Pereire brothers in 1867, the company was liquidated in 1870. See AYCARD 1867; CAMERON 1961, 134-144.

⁴¹ In 1883, the company was named Privileged Austro-Hungarian State Railway Company (*privilegierte österreichisch-ungarische Staatseisenbahn-Gesellschaft*) and, after the nazionalisation of 1909, Imperial-Royal State Railways (*k.k. Staatsbahnen*; kkStB).

⁴² HERTNER 2006, 19; CAMERON 1961, 217-228.

⁴³ BABICH 1923, 23-24. About Gábor Baross’ railway tariff policy and the Hungarian zone system, see NEMÉNYI 1891.

Fig. 1. Shipping movement in Fiume (arrivals and departures, loaded and empty vessels; GT).



Source: *Jahrbuch* vol. 1, 211; Id. vol. 3, 266; Id. vol. 8, 246; vol. 13, 253. *Annuaire* vol. 18, 242; Id. vol. 21, 192.

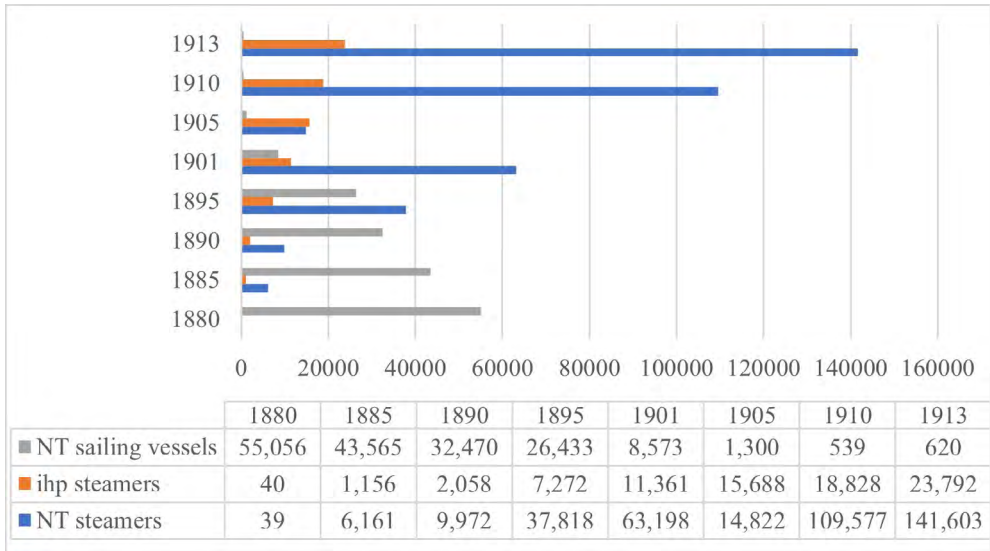
Fig. 2 tells us another side of the story. It clearly shows us the physiognomy of the epochal transition between the age – and even civilisation – of sailing navigation and that of steam in Fiume. It was an overall quick process that only took about ten years to complete (1885-1895), and the definitive overtaking of the new order over the old occurred in the first half of the 1890s. In those few years, as we see from the data, the net tonnage (NT)⁴⁴ of steamers registered with the Port Authority of Fiume almost quadrupled.

The transition from sail to steam was not dictated by the times only. Likewise, exports were not determined solely by the impactful rail tariff scheme. Like the Austrian government, the Hungarian government also decided in 1893 to approve a law subsidising tramp trade (*navigazione libera-szabad tengerhajózási*; law XXII/1893). The law provided for a purchase premium based on the NT for the first fifteen years of ownership of the vessel and a subsidy in relation to voyages undertaken (*migliatico*) in the interest of national trade⁴⁵. As we can see from Fig. 3, the law immediately reinvigorated Fiume's ocean-going navigation, which had begun to languish in the decade 1880-1890. In 1895, Fiume's ocean-going vessels' NT exceeded the figure of 60,000, which would more than double on the eve of the First World War.

⁴⁴ The NT was used as a parameter since it is the only constant data in all the sources analysed.

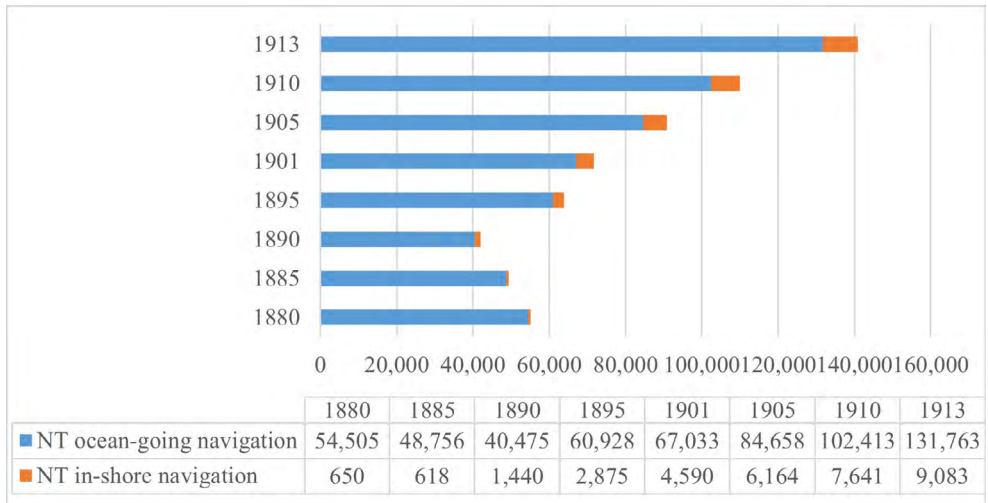
⁴⁵ *Évkönyv – Annuario* 1894, 265.

Fig. 2. Fiume Vessels, 1880-1913 (NT).



Source: Source: *Statistica – Statistik* 1880, 10; Id. 1885, 9. *Évkönyv – Annuario* 1891, 209; Id. 1896, 242; Id. 1902, 248; Id. 1906, 294; Id. 1911, LXX; Id. 1914, LV.

Fig. 3. Types of Navigation, 1880-1913 (NT).



Source: *Statistica – Statistik* 1880, 10; Id. 1885, 9. *Évkönyv – Annuario* 1891, 209; Id. 1896, 242; Id. 1902, 248; Id. 1906, 294; Id. 1911, LXX; Id. 1914, LV.

The final figures of this limited but telling selection of data about vessel operations in Fiume in the last decades of the nineteenth century concern aboard maritime labour. As we can observe from Figure 4, in just over thirty years, the turnover of the aboard workforce was almost complete in Fiume. If the transition from sailing to steam meant an epochal change which, among others, resulted in the so-called “collapse of distance”, the shift from sea-salty sea dogs to industrial sea[wo]men was equally far-reaching in anthropological terms⁴⁶. From that point on, maritime work on board not only expanded in numerical terms, but also became increasingly permeable to the demands of ashore communities and, finally, opened up to many other professions and gender identities.

4. “Greetings from Fiume”. Representations of (everyday) maritime modernity

In *Les Mots et les Choses*, Foucault traces the beginning of modernity in the gaze of Diego Velázquez, who represents reality by looking at/representing himself and looking at us simultaneously in his *Las Meninas* (1656). The subject of the painting is not the Infanta of Spain, her maids, or the reigning couple in the background. The actual subject of the painting is a “game of mirrors”: the painter works and looks at us and, at the same time, looks at our gaze on the reality represented. Here, Man’s gaze becomes the measure of all things. Therefore, in other words, according to the French philosopher, modernity begins when the Man who *speaks, lives, and works* – the practices par excellence of the modern episteme – simultaneously becomes the subject and object of his knowledge in a concrete and daily dimension. From that moment on, the gap between reality and its representation ceased to be a clear space, and the (mere) representation of the real began to be problematised as such – actually, much more in its relationship with the representing subject than with the represented object⁴⁷.

In this sense, postcards are not trivial and “cheap” representations of reality. They are powerful catalysts of emotions and social connections, embodying a sense of democratic and non-classist inclusivity. As Lydia Pyne observes, due to the vastness of their production and circulation, they represent the most common type of artefact that humanity has historically exchanged. Their success is probably because they are a formidable storytelling tool: thanks to them, everyday life becomes a narrative capable of connecting aesthetically, but above all emotionally, sender and recipient⁴⁸. In this way, in addition to defining the identity –

⁴⁶ On the characteristics of the transition from sail to steam workforce, see DAVIDS *et al.* 2023.

⁴⁷ FOUCAULT 1966.

⁴⁸ When *Correspondent-Karten* (postcards) entered the market in Austria in October 1869, almost three million pieces were sold in just the first three months of circulation. PYNE 2021, 9-11, 17.

today we would say the “brand” – of a city⁴⁹, they became the first global social connection infrastructure (i.e. social network)⁵⁰ capable of becoming the placeholders of democratic and non-classist “affective geographies”⁵¹, but also vehicles of (portable) cultures⁵² of work and production. And there’s more. Much more.

In the case of Fiume, in the passage from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, postcards and tourist guides tell us that, perhaps, the paradigm of the “new mobilities”⁵³ is not so new after all and that the so-called “transient nature” does not belong only to the contemporary tourist⁵⁴. It was also a characteristic of the inhabitant/worker in the context of maritime modernity, such as that of Fiume at the dawn of the twentieth century. As Cesare Casarino suggests, the substance of nineteenth-century maritime modernity is the constant dialectic, which, in practice, translates into a constant crisis, where processes of construction and destruction follow one another without respite until the definitive collapse of the system⁵⁵. The materiality of this maritime modernity is an open construction site on a shore teeming with humanity and trafficked by freight wagons (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Fiume, 1904.



Source: Rijeka City Library (Rijeka-Fiume), Croatia (via Europeana - CC BY-NC-ND).

⁴⁹ KISIEL 2021, 300.

⁵⁰ PYNE 2021, 13 and 18.

⁵¹ MILNE 2014, 307.

⁵² On postcards as tools of “portable cultures”, see LURY 1997.

⁵³ On the “new mobilities” paradigm, see SELLER *et al.* 2006.

⁵⁴ See THURLOW *et al.* 2010.

⁵⁵ In the words of Walter Benjamin, *wirklich Ausnahmezustand* (real state of emergency). CASARINO 2002, 1-17, particularly 3.

4.1 *The tourist guides*

Heinrich von Littrow also noted in his *Fiume und seine Umgebungen* (trans.: Fiume and its surroundings), the first modern tourist guide to Fiume published in 1884, that “Fiume’s port is destined to remain unfinished”⁵⁶. It is interesting to note that in the same year, *A Quarnero: Fiume és Abbazia* (trans.: The Kvarner: Fiume and Abbazia) by Géza Kenedi was also published. After staying between Fiume and Abbazia for health reasons, the author, lawyer and journalist gave the Hungarian public an illustrated account of the “exotic” wonders of Kvarner.⁵⁷ Like modern Velázquez, they both represented what they saw and portrayed themselves simultaneously. One, Kenedi, was a “simple” tourist in Fiume and, therefore, reported the local marvels to an audience of other potential “simple” tourists. On the contrary, the other author presents a somewhat different profile. An officer of the Austrian Navy, von Littrow was among those who contributed to the transition of the navy from the Venetian-Austrian *milieu* to the actual Austro-Imperial one in the post-1848 period. Arriving in Fiume in the aftermath of the *Ausgleich*, he was first Captain of the Port and later regent of the Maritime Government for the Hungarian-Croatian Littoral (*Magyar Királyi Tengerészeti Hatóság iratai-Pomorska oblast za ugarsko-hrvatsko primorje*)⁵⁸. Therefore, not only was he a “local”, but also

⁵⁶ STELLI 1995, 107. Original edition of the tourist guide: VON LITROW 1884.

⁵⁷ KENEDI 1884.

⁵⁸ Heinrich von Littrow was born in Vienna in 1820. Educated at the Marine College (*k.k. Marine Kollegium*) in Venice, he began sailing as a cadet of the Austrian Navy on warships in the Mediterranean. Later, he returned to the *Kollegium* in Venice as a professor of German stylistics, mathematics and nautical science. During this second stay in Venice, von Littrow became friends with the poet Heinrich Stieglitz, but the events of 1848 separated their destinies: Stieglitz, sympathetic to the cause of the Venetian patriots, remained in Venice with the insurgents; von Littrow moved to Trieste and, under the command of Franz Gyulai, began to dedicate himself to the project of re-organisation of the navy. Between 1849 and 1861 he published many specialist works, among which we highlight: the “German Marine Dictionary” (*Deutsches Marine-Wörterbuch*, 1849?), the “Seamanship Manual” (*Handbuch der Seemannschaft*, 1859), and finally the “Nautical Dialogues in Italian, French, English and German to be used in nautical schools and for the practical life of the seafarer” (*Seemännische Gespräche, italienisch, französisch, englisch und deutsch, zum Gebrauche fi nautische Schulen und fitr das praktische Seeleben*, 1861). Having now become frigate captain and member of the Geographical Society of Vienna, from 1857 to 1863, von Littrow assumed the direction of the prestigious Imperial Royal Nautical and Commercial Academy (*k.k. Handels- und Nautische Akademie*) of Trieste. Captain von Littrow distinguished himself in the Austrian port as a tireless cultural animator. Starting in 1858, he promoted and organised the “scientific-popular” evening lessons and, from the following year, appeared as a member of the *Schillerverein* of Trieste. In 1864-1867, he was Captain of the Port Authority, first of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and then of Segna (Senj). In 1867, he finally arrived in Fiume, first to take command of the Port Authority and later to be a Maritime Inspector and the Regent of the Maritime Government. In 1870, he published, both in Italian and German, “Fiume considered from the maritime side” (*Fiume in maritimer Beziehung*), a real port and maritime development programme for the city. After retiring in 1880, he moved to Abbazia, where he passed away in 1895. STELLI 1995, 23-59.

a seafarer, a technician and a man of institutions. In “Fiume and its surroundings”, he gave equal weight to both the indications regarding the historical-cultural attractions and those of a technical-infrastructural and institutional nature. In particular, the guide gave ample space to the description of the port and its furnishings (two parts of the volume), the Zvir – the source of the city’s drinking water supply – and, finally, a very detailed list of buildings and public bodies, and also of all the factories and associations⁵⁹. Thus, von Littrow accompanied the visitor in discovering the attractions of Fiume. However, he also wanted – and had to – mediate the tourist’s actions in an institutional, social, economic and productive space increasingly marked by modern industrial capitalism. It is, therefore, evident that a trip or visit to Fiume at the end of the nineteenth century did not in any way represent a pop version of the aristocratic travel scheme in vogue only until a few decades earlier. Meanwhile, the steam and steel of the Second Industrial Revolution had fundamentally contributed to the new spatial physiognomy of the modern world economy. In that context, people travelled increasingly for pleasure or economic needs rather than a pure thirst for knowledge. In any case, this last dimension of mobility was gradually becoming a *pendant* of the first two. When von Littrow put down on paper what he thought was worth seeing in Fiume, in reality he was talking to himself. He was addressing that relatively new anthropology of professionals, businessmen – and businesswomen – that (maritime) modernity had created and who were momentarily in the city for professional reasons or just in transit. Like the bizarre bourgeois who, from a tourist postcard, with his hat, trench coat, briefcase and umbrella, greets us in mid-air above the port of Fiume, raised aloft perhaps by a gust of Bora or perhaps by the urgency of its many professional commitments after “A trip to Fiume” (Fig. 3)⁶⁰. Anyway, we can count that lovely gentleman among those in the city to conquer the most “authentic” spirit of modernity as a founding element of their transnational – and capitalist – collective class consciousness⁶¹.

⁵⁹ The guide comprises eleven descriptive parts of the city, three of which concern suggestions for day trips or trips lasting a few days. Also, between eleven and twelve illustrations are present. Of particular interest is the fact that among the appendices of the volume, together with the arrival and departure times of trains and steamships, there are indications on the city fish market with the names of the fish in Italian.

⁶⁰ As regards “professional tourism”, it is worth pointing out that, to celebrate the city’s reunion with Hungary, the XIV Congress of Hungarian Doctors and Naturalists was held in Fiume in September 1869. In his communication, Vincenzo de Domini, Director of the Nautical-Commercial College of Fiume, hoped that “to Fiume, given its notoriety as a pleasant, industrial, maritime and commercial [city], rightly so should we also add the reputation of being cultured and hospitable!” On that occasion, to celebrate the event and best greet those welcome guests, the Municipality published the “Historical-Natural, Statistical and Health Topography of the City and the Fiume District” (*Topografia storico-naturale, statistica e sanitaria della Città e del Circondario di Fiume*) to be included as a “gadget” in the conference folder/bag and to be distributed to conference attendees. STELLI 1995, 75; DE DOMINI 1869, 118; *Topografia* 1896.

⁶¹ See MACCANNELL 1976.

Fig. 3. Ein Ausflug nach Fiume [A trip to Fiume], 1904.



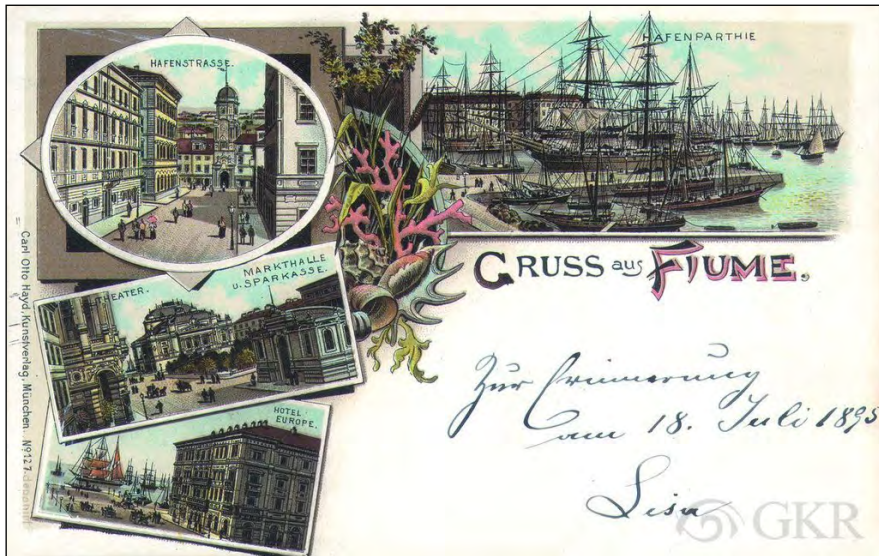
Source: Museum of Zempléni (Szerencs), Hungary (inventory no. 0131293).

4.2 City pride

As Catherine Horel points out, in imperial public discourse, the authorities often proclaimed confessional and linguistic diversity as a positive characteristic, and, in this sense, there was also a form of marketing of cities as multicultural places⁶². Thus, even in the case of Fiume, it is easy to find places of worship of different religions or confessions represented on vintage postcards. However, more often, the most immortalised subjects were others. An excellent example of an “overall view” of the Liburnian port is in Image 4, where in some cameos, the subjects considered most “authentic” and representative of the city are

⁶² HOREL 2023, 454 and 457.

Fig. 4. Gruss aus Fiume [Greetings from Fiume], 1895.



Source: Rijeka City Library (Rijeka-Fiume), Croatia (via Europeana - CC BY-NC-ND).

portrayed: the banks, the *Hafenstrasse*, the market square with the theatre and finally, the Hotel Europa. The *hôtellerie* is another frequent theme: a service explicitly aimed at all that come and go of various humanity that could be found in an industrial port of the time. A recurring pair of elements represented was constituted by the building of a public institution together with a means of steam locomotion⁶³, as in the case of Image 5, which portrays a steamer of the *Ungaro-Croata* Company and the headquarters of *Adria*, i.e. the Hungarian flag companies. An explicit declaration of (double) belonging to the maritime-industrial modernity of the time.

The force of nature, as a fundamental element of daily maritime life capable of influencing the activities connected to navigation in a non-secondary way, also found space in this type of representation. This is the case with Image 6, which depicts a vessel at the mercy of the Sirocco, a wind notorious in Kvarner – and throughout the Upper Adriatic – for harbingering storms, rough and unpredictable seas, and dark clouds. Dark like the trail of smoke left behind by a small steamship, which, in a postcard from 1914, is portrayed

⁶³ Another interesting example is that of the postcard which portrays the building of the Imperial Royal Navy Academy (*k.k. Marineakademie*), on *Hungaricana*: <https://gallery.hungaricana.hu/en/OSZK-Kepeslap/1412493/?list=eyJmaWx0ZXJzIjoeyJTT1VSQ0UiOiBbIktUX09TWksiXX0sICJxdWVye-SI6ICJmaXVtZSJ9&img=0> [30 June 2024].

Fig. 5. Fiume. Riva Szápáry [Fiume. Szápáry bank], [1900-1910].



Source: Wikipedia (CC).

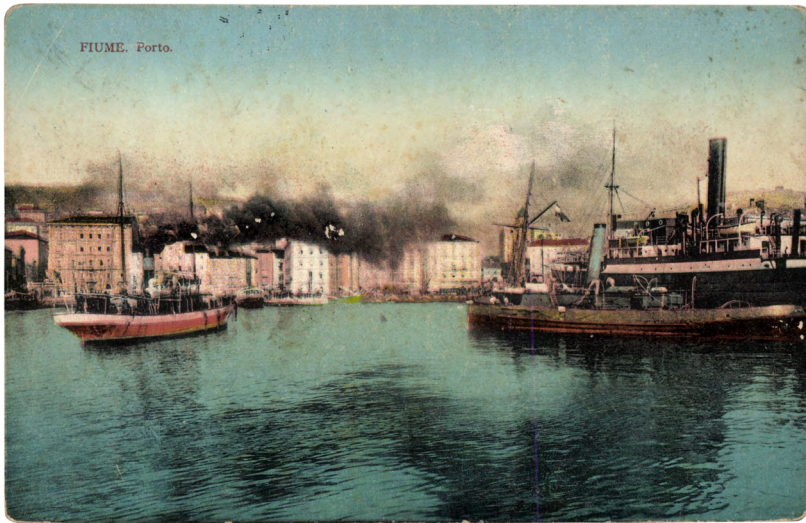
Fig. 6. Sirocco nel Quarnero. Fiume [Sirocco in the Kvarner. Fiume], 1904.



Source: Museum of Zempléni (Szerencs), Hungary (inventory no. 0131041).

leaving the port of Fiume towards other shores (Fig. 7). The image is moving; the intention is to give the observer the impression of movement – precisely as the Futurists were doing at that moment and, perhaps, also anticipating the great epochal transition to come.

Fig. 7. Fiume. Porto [Fiume. Harbour], 1914.



Source: Museum of Zempléni (Szerencs), Hungary (inventory no. 0131226).

Yet, at least for the case of Fiume, what was “worth” portraying and circulating seems to have been something else. Alongside views of the port and its facilities from every possible angle, panoramas of industrial contexts represent a relevant share of the “picture-postcard” images. Factories, cisterns, and smoking chimneys are widespread subjects, often taking care to include the railway track and telegraph poles in the image. Such as in the case of Image 8 – an image that seems to have come from the brush of Rousseau Le Douanier – where the mineral oil refinery is flanked by both the railway and the electrical (or telegraph) pylons. An interesting aspect is that, in these industrial landscapes, the human figure is almost always absent. When included in the image, it is presented very minimally; one might say “sweetened”, as if not to want to steal the show from the protagonist, that is, the industrial plant itself or the product. This is the case of Image 9, which served both as a postal post and as an advertisement for the Cocoa and Chocolate Factory of Fiume. Here, the human element is “global” and “lunar”. The picture’s most concrete and real elements are the fumigating factory and, on the back of the postcard, indicating that the product is “Medically Recommended!!”

Fig. 8. Fiume. Fabbrica Olii Minerali [Fiume. Mineral Oils Factory], 1913.



Source: Rijeka City Library (Rijeka-Fiume), Croatia (via Europeana – CC BY-NC-ND).

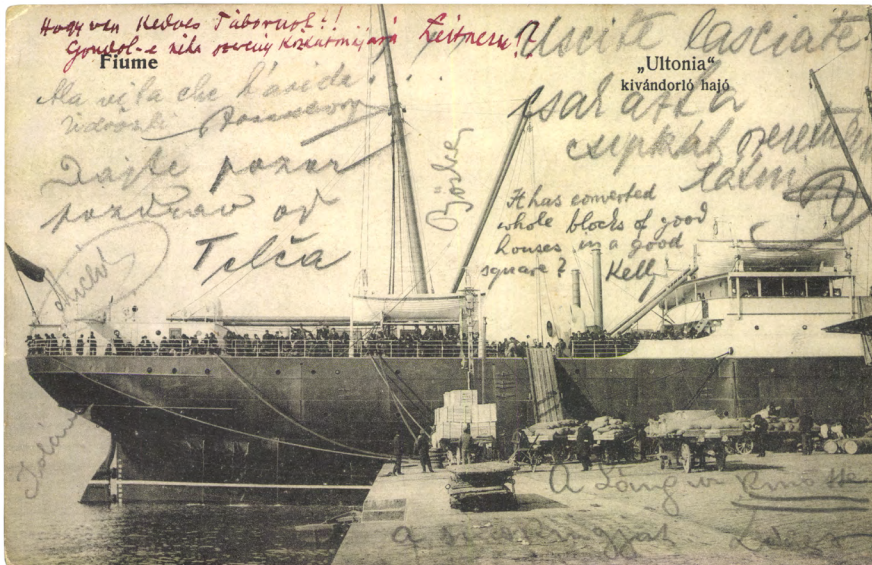
Fig. 9. Fiumei Cacao- és Csokoláde-Gyár [Cocoa and Chocolate Factory of Fiume], [1900-1910].



Source: Museum of Zempléni (Szerencs), Hungary (inventory no. 0048230).

A final theme that can be traced is what, in some way, we can define as “human services”, in particular, towards the subordinate classes. In tourist postcards, we can also find images of the New Institute of the Poor (*Nuovo Istituto dei Poveri*)⁶⁴ or of the baths which in Fiume functioned as both bathing establishments and public baths. This is the case of the *Quarnero* Municipal Bath, a structure designed and dedicated mainly to the working classes for their health and personal hygiene⁶⁵. Finally, there was also room for the representation of hope for a better future or, at least, a less miserable one than the present. Ships used for overseas emigration were another popular subject among *souvenirs* from Fiume. In Image 10, we can see *Ultonia*, one of the *Cunard* steamers that managed the emigration service from the Kvarner port⁶⁶. The postcard shows the image and words of women and men portrayed at the extreme limit of their context of origin, ready for a decisive “sea change”. Ultimately, in Fiume at the turn

Fig. 10. Fiume. ‘Ultonia’, kivándorló hajó [Fiume. Ultonia, emigration ship], 1906.



Source: National Széchényi Library (Budapest), Hungary: Research and Special Collections Division – Collection of Small Prints and Posters, F450.

⁶⁴ See: <https://gallery.hungaricana.hu/en/SzerencsKepeslap/1196445/?list=eyJxdWVyeSI6ICJGaXVtZSAifQ> [30 June 2024].

⁶⁵ *Fiume: Bagno comunale Quarnero*, 1914 – Rijeka City Library, Croatia https://www.europeana.eu/item/2058617/https___sveid_locloudhosting_net_files_original_0855a6630f07b-29503de5597fc6778d1_jpg [30 June 2024].

⁶⁶ In Fiume, emigration to North America was managed by the British company *Cunard*. In this regard, see KLINGER 2011.

of the century, the daily horizon was not only that which “trivially” represented reality or, in other words, the *status quo*. It was also what allowed us to perceive the potential of new lives.

5. Conclusion

It would not be an exaggeration to claim that, in the maritime sector, the Industrial Revolution – particularly the second – functioned as a sort of reverse circuit system. In that period, steel and steam came between the sea and man and, in the words of Carl Schmitt, “the Leviathan transformed from a large fish into a machine”⁶⁷. Thus, those who already enjoyed a great and long maritime tradition, such as the English and the French, and who at the time were also experimenting with significant processes of industrialisation and mechanisation, from “children of the sea”, became “machine builders”⁶⁸. It was the exact opposite for the Hungarians. By becoming “machine builders”, they became familiar with the maritime element. It must be said that they suffered a certain delay compared to other European contexts, in particular in comparison to their Austrian “consort” – and this was due to multiple reasons that go well beyond the scope of this small contribution. However, this did not prevent them from catching up and making Fiume one of Europe’s most dynamic and interesting maritime centres in the period leading up to the First World War.

An empire, in a sense, can be compared to a system. The same goes for a port. Both entities, within the framework of the hierarchical relations that regulate their relationships, are inserted within an even higher-level system, that of the global economic flows of the time. At the time of the Compromise of 1867, Hungary was still an economically backward country, especially compared to Austria. Nonetheless, a politically emancipated country needs modern infrastructure, a national industrial economy, adequate institutions and communication networks. This is even more valid in our case, a context in which the general economic trend was largely influenced by *gesamtmonarchisch* (pan-monarchic) dynamics, which equally involved both monarchies as a single entity (i.e. system). In that framework, “backwards” became synonymous with “uneconomic”, a characteristic that Hungary could no longer afford as a politically independent state, as part of the imperial structure or as an economic actor that aspired to act within the great and interrelated capitalist system of the time. The connection of Fiume to the railway and the construction of new port infrastructures responded precisely to the need to fill that technical and economic gap –

⁶⁷ SCHMITT 2002, 101.

⁶⁸ SCHMITT 2002, 102.

the “reverse salient” – with the Austrian half of the Empire and, ultimately, with the rest of the “modern” world, which is regulated by the mechanisms of industrial capitalism.

Engineers were the great developers of the structures that underpinned states, empires and economies of nineteenth-century industrial capitalism. Their intervention practices, as in the case of Hilarion Pascal, seem far from those of the typical self-referential and visionary narratives on modernity of classical liberalism⁶⁹. The connection to the railway and the construction of the port were not simply “handed” to the city of Fiume. Thanks to Pascal’s “mediation” and “translation” work, they were negotiated and modelled according to the needs of those who would take advantage of the infrastructures. In this way, the technological and infrastructural modernity that characterised the city between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was not something that was simply “dropped from above” thanks to the will of enlightened governments and huge investments – two elements which, however, did form part of the equation. Rather, it was an example of “reflexive modernisation”, that is, a process in which “progress” (i.e. technological change/ advancement) is not a factor that impacts society from the outside but, on the contrary, is actively participated in and guided from within⁷⁰.

Like other cultures, that of modernity also need to be communicated. To do this, one can write books, articles or songs. Or it can be communicated through painting and sculpting. Some find politics and acting in civil society to be the most helpful way. Nonetheless, at the turn of the nineteenth century, in a mobility hub such as a port, there was nothing better than an image to circulate: a postcard. A low-cost medium that did not require significant effort to compose the message but was no less effective in communicative terms. We would simply describe them as “easy” in everyday life. Yet, as a source for studying everyday life during the golden period of industrial capitalism, postcards still pose significant critical issues in interpretive terms. They are, in fact, capable of introducing a very insidious variable into the historian’s analytical work: emotions. In other words, it still remains a mystery as to what relationship could possibly exist between a stay in an industrial port such as Fiume, a postcard depicting a port crane and the message “Much love”.

⁶⁹ See MARS DEN *et al.* 2005.

⁷⁰ On the notion of “reflexive modernisation” in the context of technological processes, see BECK 1995.

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