

# Abstracts

Andrea Di Michele

*Fascist Wars and Divided Memories in South Tyrol*

The article considers how participation in the Fascist regime's wars in Ethiopia (1935–1936) and Spain (1936–1939) was elaborated within a particular regional context. The case in question is South Tyrol (Alto Adige), a border region annexed to Italy after the First World War and inhabited by a population with a German-speaking majority, which was subjected to a policy of Italianisation by the Fascist government. The analysis concentrates on the one hand on the impossibility for German-speaking war veterans to remember in public their participation in those conflicts, which were either passed over in silence or used to demonstrate the 'inalterable' otherness of the German South Tyrolese in contrast to Italy and Fascism. On the other hand, the article examines the parallel difficulty of the Italian population in coming to terms with that same past, as demonstrated in the awkward relationship towards Fascist monuments and street-naming policy in the provincial capital of Bolzano / Bozen, where certain streets were explicitly renamed to commemorate the Fascist regime's colonial epoch.

Sebastian De Pretto

*The Abyssinian War as seen by three South Tyrolese Soldiers and the pictorial propaganda of the Istituto Nazionale Luce*

The article analyses two contrasting views of the Abyssinian War by undertaking a comparative analysis of different images taken by South Tyrolese soldiers during their military service in Ethiopia and photographs made by the regime's cinematographic organisation, the Istituto Nazionale Luce. In doing so, it becomes evident how the state-authorised institute documented the attack on the Abyssinian Empire from the viewpoint of fascist ideology. By looking at how the amateur photographers positioned themselves in relation to the official view, it is possible to recognize differences and similarities between the two viewpoints and to assess the extent to which the three South Tyrolese soldiers identified with – or distanced themselves from – this colonial war.

Markus Wurzer

*'Travel Guide for Africa'. Colonial Narratives of Violence, Foreignness and the Self among South Tyrolese soldiers in Abyssinia*

No less than 1,118 South Tyrolese men took part in the Italian war against Abyssinia (1935–1941), two of whom were Andrä Ralser (1911–1983) from Sterzing and Karl Mauracher (1910–1942) from Kastelruth. Both of these men kept diaries throughout their wartime service in Africa. First of all, the article compares the two texts with regard to their form, language, content and function. It then examines the questions as to what experiences of violence the two diarists underwent, how they experienced the foreignness of Africa, and how they viewed their role as South Tyrolese in the Italian army. The investigation of these two examples aims to show how the South Tyrolese perceived the war in Abyssinia and how these perceptions differed from or resembled one another.

Davide Zendri

*Volunteers from Trentino in the Corpo Truppe Volontarie – from Spain back to Italy*

No less than 527 volunteers from Trentino participated in the Spanish Civil War as part of the *Corpo Truppe Volontarie* (Corps of Voluntary Troops) and the social composition of this group represented a cross-section of the contemporary male population. Recruited by contact persons from the local Fascist party, the volunteers enrolled for a variety of ideological, economic, cultural and personal reasons, among which the appeal to irredentist volunteers must also be recognised. The campaign in Spain proved long and hard for this group: around 240 were wounded and 38 died. When they returned to Italy in 1938 and 1939, both the regime and local institutions greeted them as heroes. Around a third of these men were called up again during the Second World War, and many of them were captured as prisoners-of-war. After the armistice of 8th September 1943, some of this group enrolled in the ranks of the Fascist Italian Social Republic, but others became partisans and fought against the combined forces of Nazi Germany and the Italian Social Republic. The fall of the Fascist regime led to the removal from public memory of a war that could no longer be recounted openly, owing to its fiercely ideological nature. Memory of the Spanish conflict survived only among war veterans' families and in the occasional street or town-square name. However, in recent years, this painful episode in Italian contemporary history has slowly come to light through new historical research.

Enzo Ianes/Lorenzo Vicentini

*“One doesn’t defend a cause by staying at home”. Biographical paths of Anti-Fascists from Trentino in Spain*

The attempted coup by Spanish generals on 19th July 1936 marked the start of the Spanish Civil War, which officially concluded on 1st April 1939. Over the course of the conflict, tens of thousands of anti-fascist volunteers from abroad arrived in Spain to support the republican cause against the generals, who were backed by Mussolini and Hitler. Among these volunteers were at least 69 people born in Trentino and this article reconstructs the part of their life-stories which led them to choose to fight in Spain. For the most part, this choice developed through the experience of emigration and exile in France, Belgium and Switzerland, where they had arrived during the 1920s and 1930s. After the end of the Spanish Civil War, the Trentino anti-fascist volunteers began an odyssey that saw them again persecuted and imprisoned, whether in French internment camps, Italian prisons or German concentration camps. Yet, there were also a few who continued the anti-fascist war among the partisans in France, Belgium or – after the armistice of 8th September 1943 – the mountains of Trentino.

Joachim Gatterer/Friedrich Stepanek

*Internationalism and the Region: On the difficult Incorporation of Anti-Fascist Veterans of the Spanish Civil War in Regional Memory Discourses in Tyrol and South Tyrol*

The article sheds light on the biographies of Tyrolean and South Tyrolean members of the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War and compares them with the official image of anti-fascist resistance in the region. The authors demonstrate that the commitment on behalf of the Spanish Republic was largely removed from the regional history of resistance. They identify the reasons for this situation as lying both in the ideological circumstances of the Cold War and in the predominance of a spatially narrowly focused tradition of local history-writing. However, the life-histories of the International Brigade members substantially expand the regional history of resistance by making evident the existence of an early form of socialist anti-fascism, whose history involved precisely the spiritual and physical overcoming of the region.

Gerhard Fouquet

*Death on the Journey to Rome – Narrators and Speaking about the ‘good Death’ of Count Wilhelm III of Henneberg (1480)*

On the 26th May 1480 Count Wilhelm III of Henneberg-Schleusingen died in Salurn / Salerno on his way home from Rome to Thuringia. Two eye-witness reports and numerous letters to family members bear witness to his last days. The text of the noble courtier Christoph Marschalk is a unique one of its kind and it is analysed here with regard to its exemplary form in speaking about what makes a ‘good death’. As such, the text also makes clear how much social and religious pressure was exerted on the dying person himself, as well as on the person tasked with recoding the ‘good death’ of a powerful person. The article demonstrates the literary work involved in conveying the moment of dying and the ‘correct’ comportment of the dying person. This is evident in the topoi and details that fill Marschalk’s description, as well as in the reported speech of the dying count and the people surrounding him. At the same time, this literary process transcribed the existentially alien experience of death.

Giuliano Tonini

*The Fortunes of Shakespeare on Theatre Stages in Bolzano / Bozen from the end of the seventeenth to the start of the twentieth Century*

Over the course of the last of fifteen opera seasons between 1784 and 1798 promoted by the patron Anton Melchior von Menz (1757–1801) during the carnival period in the salon of the Merchant Palace (Palazzo Mercantile / Merkantilgebäude) in Bolzano / Bozen, two operas were staged in January 1798. Both of these opera centred on the stories of young couples: in the first case, Lischen and Jürge, who were caught up in the stormy events of the first Tyrolean insurgency against invading French troops, in an opera by the Bavarian composer, Franz Bihler. The second couple was Shakespeare’s celebrated Romeo and Juliet, in a three-act opera with music by Nicola Antonio Zingarelli and a libretto by Giuseppe Maria Foppa, with the Bozen production taking place barely two years after its successful 1796 premiere in Milan. This formed the beginning of the fortunes of Shakespearean theatrical subjects on Bozen’s stages and became a recurring trend across the entire nineteenth century. The article analyses the reception of Shakespeare in a town belonging at the time to the Austro-German cultural area, but which maintained close commercial and cultural relations with northern Italy.