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The Social Lives of Monuments. Transforming Material Legacies of Colonialism, Fascism, and National Socialism

edited by
Birgit Kirchmayr, Markus Wurzer and Heidrun Zettelbauer

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Contents

Birgit Kirchmayr / Markus Wurzer / Heidrun Zettelbauer
The Social Lives of Monuments: Transforming Material Legacies of Colonialism, Fascism, and National Socialism. Editorial 269

Articles

Markus Wurzer
Tegetthoff on the Move. Affordance and Appropriation of a Monument in the Context of Colonialism, Fascism, and Democracy, 1877–2023 . . . 275

Mirco Carrattieri
From Fascist Monument to Symbol of Resistance: The Bronze Transformations of Mussolini's Statue in Bologna 301

Friederike Odenwald / Julian zur Lage
Transformations of an Inaccessible Monument: The Colonial and National Socialist Site of Memory in Hamburg Jenfeld 325

Birgit Kirchmayr
The Nibelungen Bridge in Linz: Urban Infrastructure with a Troubled History 361

Abstracts 391

Reviews

Birgit Englert
Bernhard Bouzek (Hg.), Free Nelson Mandela! Geschichte der Anti-Apartheid-Bewegung in Österreich – Festschrift für Walter Sauer zum 70. Geburtstag 395

Wolfgang Meixner
Sabine Pitscheider, Arbeitseinsatz im Reich. Zwangsarbeit in Tirol 1939–1945 398

Authors 401

Birgit Kirchmayr / Markus Wurzer / Heidrun Zettelbauer

The Social Lives of Monuments: Transforming Material Legacies of Colonialism, Fascism, and National Socialism. Editorial

In recent years, new attention has been drawn to the material legacies of contested pasts, and, in particular, two different developments have influenced related debates in the field of contemporary history. Firstly, the loss of contemporary witnesses of the National Socialist regime, the Second World War and the Shoah – whose stories had shaped scientific as well as public memory discourses for decades – has led to an increased scholarly engagement with the material remnants of National Socialism and fascism, and towards a new sensitivity in dealing with "contaminated sites"[1] or objects[2] of memory culture. Secondly, the global Black Lives Matter movement with its origins in protests against racially motivated police violence has enabled critical reflections on the ongoing presence of the colonial past in monuments, museums and street names and has thus opened a democratic space for a new debate on public space in general.[3] In addition to the generational change that is inscribed in such approaches, the contemporary memory boom[4] as well as other impulses from Cultural Theory such as the spatial turn[5] and new materialism[6] have further increased this new

1 Martin Pollack introduced the term 'contaminated sites' in 2014, see: *Kontaminierte Landschaften* (Wien–Salzburg: Residenz Verlag, 2014). Since then, numerous variants of the term have been used to describe not just memory landscapes, but also other places or topoi with a violent past. Cf. for example: Ingrid Böhler et al. (eds.), *Ver/störende Orte: zum Umgang mit NS-kontaminierten Gebäuden* (Wien–Berlin: Mandelbaum, 2024).

2 Cf. for example: Monika Sommer et al. (eds.), *Hitler entsorgen: Vom Keller ins Museum.* Ausstellungskatalog hdgö (Wien: Haus der Geschichte Österreich, 2021).

3 Cf. for example: Vera Egbers et al. (eds.), *Architectures of Colonialism. Constructed Histories, Conflicting Memories* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2024); special issue on "Public Spaces, Heritage and Memory Cultures of European Colonialism," *Journal of Modern European History* 23 (2025) 3: 286–389.

4 Ljiljana Radonic and Heidemarie Uhl (eds.), *Gedächtnis im 21. Jahrhundert. Zur Neuverhandlung eines kulturwissenschaftlichen Leitbegriffs* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016).

5 Moritz Csáky (ed.), *Kommunikation–Gedächtnis–Raum: Kulturwissenschaften nach dem 'Spatial Turn'* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009).

6 Katharina Hoppe and Thomas Lemke, *Neue Materialismen zur Einführung*, 3rd. ed. (Hamburg: Junius, 2023).

epistemological interest, sharpening the awareness that spaces and materials – be they buildings, memorials, architecture or infrastructures – are by no means neutral, but produce meanings through social practices. Such approaches share the assumption that, depending on the context of use, the meanings assigned to materiality are interdependent and can be affirmed, modified or rejected.[7]

Following Arjun Appadurai's perspective as developed in *The Social Life of Things*[8], this special issue of *zeitgeschichte* aims to investigate different facets and characteristics of the social lives of monuments in public urban spaces. For the purposes of this issue, we adopt a broad understanding of 'monuments' as built structures that commemorate a person, a historical event or a certain time period. Accordingly, the assembled contributions address a wide range of examples, ranging from memorials to architecture and infrastructure. They are dedicated to case studies ranging from Germany, Italy, Austria and Croatia, span the period from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries and examine the histories and specific conditions of the construction and use of monuments that, in the above-mentioned sense, are linked to contaminated histories of both totalitarian and colonial regimes. In particular, the individual articles focus on the sociocultural afterlives of material relicts in urban spaces, on histories of appropriation, newly inscribed meanings or associated protest cultures. The case studies thus demonstrate that materiality in public space is integrated into diverse, often unexpected contexts in the course of specific social biographies of materiality. With this in mind, this special issue focuses on different case studies in which the contexts, processes and conflicts around monuments are meticulously analysed – including aspects of their erection, their embeddedness in different frameworks of meaning and processes of physical and cultural transformation, dismantling or rebuilding at other sites. The aim of this volume is thus also to critically discuss aspects of perception, adoption and re-interpretation by certain social groups, as well as transformations of meanings across different historical situations and major political turning points in contemporary history.

In his article, Markus Wurzer traces the eventful history of the Tegetthoff Monument, which was originally erected in Pula in 1877, relocated to Venice after the First World War and reinstalled in Graz in 1935. Wurzer demonstrates how the monument was repeatedly reinterpreted and put to service in different political regimes – from the monarchy and fascism to democracy. The article's focus lies on the diverse forms of appropriation and reinterpretation by state actors as

7 Stuart Hall, "Encoding / Decoding," in *Culture, Media, Language*, edited by Stuart Hall et al. (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 128–138; John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (London: Hyman, 1989).

8 Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The social life of things. Commodities in cultural perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

well as by the urban population, including protest actions, artistic interventions and everyday use.

Mirco Carrattieri examines the history and transformation of the equestrian statue of Mussolini, erected in 1927 at Bologna's stadium. He traces the monument's creation as a symbol of fascist power, its destruction during the regime's collapse and its postwar reinterpretation. The bronze was repurposed for a monument to the Resistance, marking a dramatic shift in public memory. Carrattieri shows how the statue's remnants became objects of political appropriation and myth, especially among neo-fascist groups.

Friederike Odenwald and Julian zur Lage analyse the former Lettow-Vorbeck barracks in Hamburg Jenfeld as a central, yet materially and symbolically hard-to-access site of German colonial and fascist memory. Starting from its inauguration in 1939 as a Wehrmacht complex marked by colonial iconography, the authors trace how colonial warfare in German East Africa and the 'Askari myth' were inscribed into the site and later reappropriated by the Bundeswehr. Focusing on post-1990 conflicts around projects such as the proposed *Tansania-Park*, the article examines ongoing struggles over interpretation and decolonisation.

Birgit Kirchmayr analyses the Nibelungen Bridge in Linz as a National Socialist prestige and infrastructure project (1938–1941). She highlights its propagandistic staging as a heroic Nibelung monument and the probable use of forced labour and granite sourced through concentration camps and shows how the bridge, although prepared for demolition in 1945, was preserved and subsequently served as a tightly controlled border between the US- and Soviet sectors. Recast in postwar debates as an everyday 'problem case' due to its status as a heavily used traffic route, it is interpreted as a neglected site of memory that requires explicit and permanent historical contextualisation.

In their combined perspectives, the contributions to this special issue demonstrate how the material legacies of colonialism, fascism and National Socialism in public space crystallise social conflicts over interpretation, responsibility and remembrance. By following the social lives of monuments and infrastructures in different urban contexts, this volume seeks to foreground the mutual entanglement of materiality, power and memory and to inform ongoing democratic debates on how to engage critically with these enduring material presences.

Articles

Markus Wurzer

Tegetthoff on the Move. Affordance and Appropriation of a Monument in the Context of Colonialism, Fascism, and Democracy, 1877–2023

The statue of Wilhelm von Tegetthoff, a nineteenth-century Austrian naval officer, in Graz was removed in 2013: during a routine inspection, local experts discovered that the bronze statue was in danger of collapsing due to corrosion. The monument was then dismantled as quickly as possible, extensively and expensively restored, and finally re-erected in 2016. During this time, the city of Graz saw a highly emotional, political debate about the meaning of monuments in public spaces.[1]

In recent years, historians have highlighted the importance of monuments for the cultural memory of a society.[2] Research has focused on monuments from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, especially those commemorating the First and Second World War, Nazi rule, and the Holocaust, exploring their creation, design, and thus also their official attribution of meaning.[3] Other scholarship deals with more recent debates on monuments, especially those that have arisen in the context of the global Black Lives Matter movement.[4] Researchers have thus far dealt with two particular moments in the lives of monuments: their construction on the one hand and their questioning, dismantling, or democratic reactivation in the face of a memory-political debate on the other. There has been little engagement with the transformation of monuments beyond that, perhaps

1 Jürgen Angerer, "Die 'Tegetthoff-Kontroverse' 2013 bis 2016: Politische Auseinandersetzungen um Erinnerungskultur am Beispiel des Denkmals für Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff in Graz," Master thesis, University of Graz, 2021, 95–98.

2 Heidemarie Uhl, "Aus dem Lot. Denkmäler und reflexive Erinnerungskultur," in *Open Call: Handbuch zur Umgestaltung des Lueger-Denkmals*, edited by Arbeitskreis zur Umgestaltung des Lueger-Denkmals in ein Mahnmal gegen Antisemitismus und Rassismus (Wiener Neudorf: flyeralarm.at, 2011), 38–44.

3 See, for example: Stefan Riesenfellner and Heidemarie Uhl (eds.), *Todeszeichen: Zeitgeschichtliche Denkmalkultur in Graz und in der Steiermark vom Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart* (Wien–Köln–Weimar: Böhlau, 1994).

4 See, for example: Winfried Speitkamp (ed.), *Denkmalsturz: Zur Konfliktgeschichte politischer Symbolik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997); Juilee Decker (ed.), *Fallen Monuments and Contested Memorials* (London: Routledge, 2024).

due to their assumed invisibility in public life outside of those moments.[5] In this article, however, I extend this selective interest and take a diachronic perspective in my analysis of the Tegetthoff monument in Graz, focusing on various forms of its appropriation from "above" and "below". In doing so I focus not only on the moments of its foundation in 1877 and questioning in 2013 but also on other meaningful practices in between. In this article, I therefore ask who has engaged with the Tegetthoff monument at which times and in what ways, and what meanings emerged from these social practices?

In my analysis I draw on theoretical frameworks provided by the material turn[6] in general and by Arjun Appadurai's "The Social Life of Things"[7] in particular. Appadurai argues that objects do not simply exist but rather produce meaning through their appropriation. Objects have an affordance: that means that there are anticipated forms of appropriation and use.[8] A monument, for instance, is generally meant to be looked at, to be admired, and serves as a site for commemorative ceremonies. In my contribution, however, I will demonstrate that the Tegetthoff monument also saw other forms of appropriation that rejected its dominant affordance.

This article is structured in two sections. Firstly, I will introduce the person Wilhelm von Tegetthoff, but not simply retell his biography, because the existing biographical material is dated and repetitive (see below). Instead, I will attempt to read it against the grain and critically examine the production of the memorial figure. To this end, I will draw primarily on biographical works from the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the second part, I will explore the various social practices surrounding the Tegetthoff monument. For this purpose, I draw on newspaper articles from the ANNO database, archival materials in the Graz City Museum, City Archives, and Federal Monuments Office in Graz as well as visual documents of the Universalmuseum Joanneum in Graz.

5 Robert Musil, *Nachlass zu Lebzeiten*, 24th. edition (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2004), 62.
6 Tony Bennett and Patrick Joyce (eds.), *Material Powers: Cultural Studies, History and the Material Turn* (London: Routledge, 2010).
7 Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, 12th. edition (United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
8 Rob Withagen and Harjo J. de Poel et al., "Affordances can invite behavior: Reconsidering the relationship between affordances and agency," in *New Ideas in Psychology* 30 (2012) 2: 250–258.

I. Against the Grain: Revisiting Tegetthoff's Biography

On 7 April 1871, on the very evening when Wilhelm von Tegetthoff died of pneumonia at the age of 44 in Vienna, daily newspapers throughout the Habsburg Empire printed their first obituaries for the navy's vice admiral. The *Wiener Abendpost* stated that "there will be an opportunity later to pay tribute to the achievements of the deceased. For today, we must content ourselves with briefly recalling the key moments of his life"[9]. The obituary then traced his life from his birth as the son of a major in Maribor/Marburg in 1827 to his graduation from the Naval Academy in Venice in 1845 and his following promotions. The two "key moments" of his life were considered to be the naval battle at Heligoland in the North Sea during the German-Danish War in 1864 and the battle at Vis/Lissa in the Adriatic Sea during the Third Italian War of Independence in 1866. These events were followed by promotions to the top of the Austro-Hungarian navy, lastly to vice admiral, and, in 1868, he was appointed head of the naval section in the Imperial War Ministry and the navy's commander-in-chief.[10]

In the following decades, countless pages were written about Tegetthoff's life, however mostly in the 1880s[11] – after the Viennese Tegetthoff monument was erected– and the first two post-war decades after 1945.[12] While he was celebrated as the "hero of our navy"[13] in the former period, after the Second World War the focus was on finding new role models for the still young Austrian republic, so that in 1952 Peter Handel-Mazzetti and Hans Hugo Sokol described Tegetthoff as "a

9 "Telegr. Depeschen des Pester Lloyd," *Pester Lloyd*, 8 April 1871, 3; Unless otherwise stated, all translations are my own.

10 Ibid.

11 Josef Jelem, *Wilhelm von Tegetthoff: Lebensbild eines österreichischen Seehelden* (Wien: Rauch, 1880); Wilhelm Du Nord, *Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff* (Salzburg: Heinrich Dieter, 1884); Peter Asolani (ed.), *Unser Held Tegetthoff: Gedenkschrift über Leben und Wirken des verewigten Admirals Wilhelm v. Tegetthoff zur Feier der Monuments-Enthüllung in Wien* (Wien: Im Selbstverlag des Gründungs-Comité zur Errichtung eines Unterstützungs-Vereines für ausgediente Marine-Veteranen, 1886); Fedor Geréni and Edmund Ullmayer, *Wilhelm von Tegetthoff: Ein Festblatt zur Enthüllung seines Monumentes in Wien am 24. September 1886* (Wien: Gresser, 1886); Adolf Pasker, *Gedenkschrift zur Enthüllungsfeier des Tegetthoff-Monuments: Dem Andenken des grossen Seehelden, des begeisterten Kämpfers für Oesterreichs Ehre, des genialen Organisators und ruhmreichen Führers, weiland Wilhelm Freiherr von Tegetthoff, k.k. Vice-Admirals* (Wien: Veteran, 1886); Max Wirth, *Der Held von Lissa: Geschichtliche Erzählung aus dem Leben eines Admirals für die reifere Jugend* (Reutlingen: Bardtenschlager, 1888).

12 Peter Handel-Mazzetti and Hans Hugo Sokol, *Wilhelm von Tegetthoff: Ein großer Österreicher* (Linz: Oberösterreichischer Landesverlag, 1952); Ulrich Schöndorfer, *Wilhelm von Tegetthoff* (Wien: Bergland, 1958); Friedrich Wallisch, *Wilhelm von Tegetthoff* (Wien–München: Herold, 1964).

13 "Vice-Admiral von Tegetthoff," *Neue Freie Presse,* 7 April 1871, 18.

great Austrian"[14] and the Federal Ministry of Defence in 1971 in a "tribute" on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his death as a "role model" for "contemporary Austria"[15].

A comparative reading of his biographies demonstrates that they are very similar in terms of content and structure. Later authors took their cue from their predecessors. The result is a highly standardized narrative that divides Tegetthoff's life into four parts: his childhood and early career, the battle of Heligoland in 1864, the battle of Vis/Lissa in 1866, and, finally, his rise to the navy's top ranks. His life is presented as a remarkable success story without resistance, failures, or detours. The outdated and repetitive state of this research makes it all the more necessary to read Tegetthoff's biography against the grain and to situate his career within broader military, political, and colonial contexts rather than simply reproducing the established heroic narrative. Considering a broader perspective, it appears that the basis for Tegetthoff's meteoric rise in the navy was the fact that, during the First Italian War of Independence against the Habsburg Empire in 1848–49, many Italian-speaking officers (and sailors) resigned from the Austrian navy and joined the Piedmont-Sardinian navy. Of the former 5,000 or so navy personnel, only 72 officers and around 700 sailors are said to have remained loyal to the Habsburg Empire.[16] The Austrian fleet was therefore in urgent need of new officers (and sailors), which is why young, newly trained personnel rose unusually quickly through the ranks;[17] at the same time, German replaced Italian as the navy's language of command.[18]

Additionally, Tegetthoff benefited from the fact that the 1850s marked a "new and decisive era in naval development"[19] in Austria. As a result of the battles for Venice in 1848–49, the Austrian Minister of War planned to expand the fleet.[20] The so-called Fleet Commission, which was convened to devise the corresponding plans, declared in its mission statement that the goal must be to upgrade the small fleet so that "Austria's flag … would now always be visible at

14 Handel-Mazzeti and Sokol, *Wilhelm von Tegethoff*.

15 Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung (BMLV), *Vizeadmiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff: Eine Würdigung des grossen österreichischen Flottenführers zum 100. Jahrestag seines Todes am 7. April 1871* (Wien: Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung, Abteilung Bildung und Kultur, 1971), 6.

16 Renate Basch-Ritter, *Österreich auf allen Meeren: Geschichte der k.(u.)k. Kriegsmarine von 1382 bis 1918* (Graz–Wien–Köln: Styria, 1987), 51.

17 Antonio Schmidt-Brentano, "Wilhelm von Tegetthoff (1827–1871), Admiral," *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon (ÖBL) 1815–1950* 14 (2013), 228.

18 Basch-Ritter, *Österreich*, 51.

19 Karl Gruber, *Seemacht unter rot weiß roter Flagge*, vol. 1 (Wien: Österreichischer Milizverlag, 2005), 55.

20 Hans Hugo Sokol, *Des Kaisers Seemacht: Die k.k. österreichische Kriegsmarine 1848 bis 1914* (Wien–München: Amalthea, 1980), 34, quoted from: Gruber, *Seemacht*, 52.

sea"[21]. This policy was particularly promoted by Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, the brother of Emperor Franz Josef I, who became commander-in-chief of the navy in 1854 at the age of 22. This new policy was reflected not least in the professionalization of personnel training, investments in port infrastructure (the transformation of Pula/Pola into the major naval port from 1850 onwards), and the modernization and enlargement of the fleet: the era of wooden sailing ships came to an end, and that of steam-powered, heavily armoured iron ships began.[22] In this context, Tegetthoff belonged to a generation of young naval officers who supported the archduke in his reform plans (which were not without resistance) and who were thus able to rise to the navy's highest positions.[23]

According to Renate Basch-Ritter, the archduke's goal was "to lead the Austrian navy to exceed its current limitations and towards a military, commercial, scientific, and technical flourishing that would have an impact beyond the Adriatic Sea across all oceans"[24]. He therefore intensified combat training and began sending ships on missions beyond the Adriatic to demonstrate Austria's new naval presence around the globe.[25] Austria's nascent imperialist gunboat diplomacy, which aimed to assert its own economic and power interests over smaller states by means of warships,[26] advanced Tegetthoff's career, too, as it offered young officers like him opportunities to 'prove themselves' in corresponding missions.

Between 1850 and 1852, for example, Tegetthoff was deployed "to protect Austrian merchant shipping in the troubled Greek-Turkish waters"[27], namely in the eastern Mediterranean Sea including the Levant, respectively.[28] In 1855, he was sent to the Black Sea on a steamship to bring "order" to the "desolate conditions at the mouth of the Danube near Sulina"[29] – essentially to protect the Danube shipping trade, which was important for Austria and had been affected by the Crimean War (1853–56). In 1858, he was sent to the Moroccan coast to search for Austrian merchant ships that were believed to have been lost. Two years later, he was to take part in an "international fleet demonstration"[30] off the Syrian coast, to protect the Christian population from Druze violence in Le-

21 Gruber, *Seemacht*, 55.
22 Ibid.
23 Basch-Ritter, *Österreich*, 53–54.
24 Ibid., 53.
25 Friedrich Wallisch, *Die Flagge Rot-Weiß-Rot: Männer und Taten der österreichischen Marine in vier Jahrhunderten*, 2nd., rev. edition (Graz–Wien: Styria, 1956), 89.
26 Heinz Britsche, *Kanonenbootpolitik* (Berlin: Militärverlag der DDR, 1984).
27 BMLV, *Vizeadmiral*, 8.
28 Basch-Ritter, *Österreich*, 54–55.
29 BMLV, *Vizeadmiral*, 8.
30 Ibid., 10.

banon.[31] Two years later, as commander of the Levant squadron, he represented Austrian interests in the context of the Greek Revolution (1862).[32]

His activities at the mouth of the Danube in 1855 in particular aroused the interest of Ferdinand Maximilian.[33] Tegetthoff was convinced that the archduke would lead the navy, which he believed had previously been neglected, into a promising future.[34] Like him, Tegetthoff was convinced that the fleet needed to be modernized with steam propulsion, steel armour, and modern weapons,[35] and that Austria should strive for naval supremacy through modern dreadnoughts rather than coastal defence through forts and small fleet units. Tegetthoff later pursued this policy when he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Navy and Head of the Naval Section in 1868. The power of these two positions allowed him to pursue his fleet programme against all opposition,[36] laying the foundation for a navy that participated in European imperialism through countless and varied voyages.[37]

Meanwhile, in the mid-1850s, Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian became Tegetthoff's "most benevolent patron"[38] and repeatedly entrusted him with special tasks: in 1860, for example, he appointed Tegetthoff as his adjutant, in which role he accompanied the Archduke to Brazil.[39] Three years earlier, he had commissioned his officer, who was now rapidly climbing the career ladder, to conduct explorations in the Red Sea in anticipation of the opening of the Suez Canal, which was under construction at the time, in order to find suitable locations for the establishment of bases in what would soon become the world's most strategically important sea lane. After several months of travel, Tegetthoff finally recommended the occupation of the island of Suquṭrā/Socotra for the establishment of a colony. He had already negotiated an offer to purchase it with the local elites for 100,000 guilders. His patron, Ferdinand Maximilian, who had colonial ambitions, strongly supported this suggestion, but his brother, the emperor, rejected it – apparently due to a lack of money and interest.[40]

31 Eugene L. Rogan, *The Damascus Events: The 1860 massacre and the destruction of the old Ottoman world* (London: Penguin Books, 2024).
32 BMLV, *Vizeadmiral*, 10.
33 Basch-Ritter, *Österreich*, 54–55.
34 Gruber, *Seemacht*, 55.
35 BMLV, *Vizeadmiral*, 8.
36 Schmidt-Brentano, "Wilhelm von Tegethoff," 228.
37 For a list of the navy's "long-distance voyages," see: Heinrich Bayer von Bayersburg, *Die k. u. k. Kriegsmarine auf weiter Fahrt 1889–1980* (Wien: Bergland, 1958).
38 BMLV, *Vizeadmiral*, 8.
39 Ibid.
40 Markus Kaiserseder, "Die österreichischen Missionsstationen im Sudan zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts – Wegbereiter eines Kolonialismus?," Master thesis, University of Vienna, 2013, 31.

Renate Basch-Ritter judges that "Tegetthoff's career was unprecedented"[41]. That may be true, but it is not solely due to his abilities, as his biographies tend to suggest. They focus exclusively on his activities and rapid successive promotions without placing them in a larger historical context – such as the imperialist gunboat diplomacy of 'Western' states. His biographers have thus far presented Tegetthoff as a master of his own destiny who left his mark on history. In fact, however, his rapid rise was linked to other, larger historical developments: in addition to the reorganization of the navy, this included a change in naval doctrine, which envisaged a much more active navy with a presence across the world's oceans to enforce the imperialist interests of the Habsburg Monarchy, as well as his proximity to Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, who favoured Tegetthoff by sending him on prestigious voyages in the context of his colonial ambitions and by ensuring promotions and other privileges.

II. Appropriating Tegetthoff through Space and Time, 1877–2023

When Tegetthoff died on 7 April 1871, an author wrote in *Die Presse* just two days later that "if anyone deserves a monument, it is this important man"[42]. In fact, the first initiatives for a memorial quickly appeared in the daily newspapers. The municipal council of the deceased's birthplace, Maribor/Marburg, was the first to pass a resolution to this effect.[43] On 18 April, just eleven days after Tegetthoff's death, the *Wiener Zeitung* announced that even the emperor himself, "following his heart", had decided to fund "a monument in bronze" in Pula/Pola, "the central point of the navy"[44]. The design proposed by Viennese artist Carl Kundmann (1838–1919) won the competition, and he was then commissioned to create the monument, with the imperial and royal art foundry Röhlich-Pönninger in Vienna carrying out the metal die casting.[45] After around five years of work, the bronze figures were completed in early July 1877[46] and were then put on

41 Basch-Ritter, *Österreich*, 56.

42 "Wilhelm v. Tegetthoff," *Die Presse*, 9 April 1871, 2.

43 "Denkmal für Tegetthoff," *Prager Abendblatt*, 12 April 1871, 3. Since money had to be raised for the monument first, it was not erected until 1883. See: Igor Grdina, *Wilhelm von Tegetthoff. In bitka pri Visu 20. Julija 1866* (Maribor: Umetniški Kabinet, 2016), 130. In 1886, the third and largest Tegetthoff monument in the monarchy was unveiled at Praterstern in Vienna, see: Wilhelm M. Donko, *Österreichische Marinedenkmäler: Ein historischer Reiseführer zu den Denkmälern der k.(u.)k. Kriegsmarine in aller Welt* (Berlin: epubli, 2019), 52.

44 "Nichtamtlicher Theil," *Wiener Zeitung*, 18 April 1871, 1–2.

45 Markus Zechner and Renate Standhartinger, "Ein 'heldenhafter' Patient aus Bronze: Zur Restaurierung des Tegetthoff-Denkmals in Graz," *Historisches Jahrbuch der Stadt Graz* 47 (2017): 373–391, 373, 375.

46 "Theater, Kunst und Literatur," *Morgen-Post*, 16 May 1872, 3; "Stimmungs-Bericht," *Jörgel Briefe*, 7 July 1877, 1.

display for a very short time in the foundry in Vienna before being loaded onto trains and transported directly to Pula/Pola via the recently opened railway line.[47]

After it had become apparent in 1848/49 that the Austrian fleet in Venice was too exposed, the decision was made in 1850 to build a new main naval port in the natural bay of Pula/Pola on the Istrian coast. In the following decades, the navy transformed this "fishing village"[48], which had only around 3,600 inhabitants in 1857, into the second-largest garrison town in the monarchy with around 60,000 inhabitants in 1910,[49] which boasted a railway station, tramway, theatre, electric lighting, coffee houses, schools, hospitals, running water, etc.[50] South of the historic city centre, where traces of antiquity had also been preserved, the navy built its own district west of Zaro Hill along the coast. Within a few years, an "implanted colony"[51] consisting of barracks, shipyards, warehouses, administrative buildings, a naval hospital, a monument to Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian (constructed one year before Tegetthoff's[52]), a naval church, and cemetery were built here.[53] On Zaro Hill, which, according to contemporaries, dominated the harbour entrance,[54] an observatory and the Hydrographic Office were built in 1871 to produce weather reports for the navy.[55]

On this hill, in the park directly in front of the aforementioned naval buildings, the navy levelled an area for the foundation of the monument. The location was chosen so that the monument could be built in line with the staircase leading to the main entrance of the Hydrographic Office, from where the view over the harbour opens up.[56] On a massive marble base, whose stones were mined near Calignano,[57] construction workers put a bronze base about 3.2 metres high, on which they in turn placed a larger-than-life figure of Tegetthoff (circa 3.5 metres high and weighing 1.5 tons).[58] The approximately 7-metre-high monument was

47 "Tegetthoff-Monument," *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, 6 July 1877, 3; "Vermischte Tagesnachrichten," *Tagespost Graz*, 9 July 1877, 2.

48 Wilhelm M. Donko, *Pola/Pula: Ein historischer Reiseführer durch den ehemaligen Hauptkriegshafen von Österreich-Ungarn in Istrien (Kroatien)* (Berlin: epubli, 2015), 56.

49 Frank Wiggermann, *K.u.k. Kriegsmarine und Politik: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der italienischen Nationalbewegung in Istrien* (Wien: ÖAW, 2004), 280.

50 Donko, *Pola/Pula*, 56.

51 *Pola, seine Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft. Eine Studie* (Wien: Gerold, 1886), 66; quoted from: Wiggermann, *Kriegsmarine*, 22.

52 See: Donko, *Marinedenkmäler*, 288–308.

53 Donko, *Pola/Pula*, 42, 44.

54 "Enthüllung des Tegetthoff-Monumentes," *Grazer Zeitung*, 22 July 1877, 1.

55 Donko, *Pola/Pula*, 44.

56 Donko, *Marinedenkmäler*, 170.

57 Gerhard M. Dienes, "Die Errichtung des Tegetthoff-Denkmales in Graz am 1. Dezember 1935: Ein österreichisches patriotisches Fest," *Zeitschrift des Historischen Vereines für Steiermark* 73 (1982): 183–206.

58 Zechner and Standhartinger, "Patient," 378.

positioned so that the figure looks – in the words of naval historian Wilhelm M. Donko – "somewhat sternly, but very confidently [and] pensively"[59] at the naval port. The figure, standing with one foot forward, holds a telescope in its right hand, with a sabre dangling from its left side.[60] Four large plaques on the richly decorated bronze pedestal bear a text – exclusively in German, the navy's language of command – by Alfred von Arneth,[61] historian and then vice president of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna: "To Vice Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff, Emperor Franz Josef I, 1877. Fighting bravely at Heligoland, victorious at Lissa, he earned immortal fame for himself and Austria's naval power."[62] Around the bronze pedestal, Kundmann also gathered four seated bronze sculptures, each weighing 400 kilogrammes, bringing the total weight of the bronze elements to approximately 6.2 tons.[63] They depict allegorical figures, two men and two women, slightly larger than life-size, whose features symbolize war (sword), sea (trident), victory (laurel wreath), and glory (olive leaves).[64]

After its construction, the monument was finally inaugurated on 20 July 1877, on the eleventh anniversary of the naval battle at Vis/Lissa. According to newspaper reports, apart from the two archdukes Albrecht and Stefan, the ceremony on Zaro Hill was attended by representatives of the city of Pula/Pola, the Austrian shipping company Lloyd, and both the army and the navy together with troops and military bands. Other parts of the predominantly Italian- and Croatian-/Slovenian-speaking population of Pula/Pola apparently did not take part in the ceremony.[65]

The emperor, who had paid for the monument out of his personal pocket, was also not present. Instead, he asked Friedrich von Pöck, Tegetthoff's successor as naval commander and head of the naval section, to read a letter on his behalf: in it, he announced that he had donated the monument in order to "preserve the glorious memories of My Vice Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff for posterity", thereby not only "honouring their victorious leader" with regard to the navy but

59 Donko, *Marinedenkmäler*, 172.

60 Zechner and Standhartinger, "Patient," 375; Donko, *Marinedenkmäler*, 172.

61 "Arneth Alfred von, Historiker," *ÖBL 1815–1950* 1 (1954): 29.

62 "Die Enthüllung des Tegetthoff-Monumentes in Pola," *Tagespost Graz,* 22 July 1877, 5; "Tegetthoff-Denkmal," *Morgen-Post*, 3 April 1875, 3.

63 Zechner and Standhartinger, "Patient," 378.

64 Dienes, "Errichtung," 185; there is uncertainty about the identity of the allegories, both in the present and in the past: while Dienes might be right, since he refers to Kundmann's contract, Donko (*Marinedenkmäler*, 173) recognizes "peace" in the figure holding olive leaves. And according to the contemporary writer Josef Steiner-Wischenbart, the four figures represent "the god of war Mars, the evil demon, Austria, and the victorious Fortuna (luck)" (*Grazer Volksblatt*, 13 July 1898, 9–10).

65 "Die Enthüllung des Tegetthoff-Monumentes in Pola," *Tagespost Graz*, 22 July 1877, 5; "Enthüllung des Tegetthoff-Monumentes," *Grazer Zeitung*, 22 July 1877, 1; "Zur Tegetthoff-Feier," *Neue Freie Presse*, 21 July 1877, 3.

also "renewing My appreciation for their constant devotion and bravery"[66]. Thus, the emperor framed the honoree as a supranational military figure of identification, not only to pay tribute to the navy but also to legitimize his own rule.

2.1 Monarchist Affirmations: Expressions of Loyalty in Pula/Pola, 1877–1918

After the monument had been donated and given meaning by the emperor himself, the question arises as to how it was appropriated by other actors in the following decades. On the occasion of its inauguration, Franz Josef I turned the monument over to the care of the navy instead of the city administration (which was dominated politically by the Italian-speaking bourgeoisie). Consequently, the monument was used primarily by its new owner: according to newspaper reports, it was integrated into the so-called Vis/Lissa celebrations, in which the navy commemorated its victory over the Italian navy in 1866. These celebrations included, for instance in the context of the 25th anniversary in 1891, a field mass, a wreath-laying ceremony, and speeches at the monument.[67] Besides that, high-ranking military officials from Austria-Hungary, as well as from allied armies and navies, did not miss the opportunity to visit the monument and lay wreaths when in the port city.[68] The commemoration of Tegetthoff and his two most important battles not only served the purpose of ensuring that they would not be forgotten: With regard to the navy itself, I would argue that this remembrance was meant to strengthen the confidence of a still young and largely untested fleet, whereas, with regard to the wider Habsburg society, it was designed to persuade the monarchy's population that the state urgently needed a powerful navy capable of operating on a global scale.

At the same time, reports in travel magazines and postcard production made the monument part of the city's canon of landmarks. For naval officer Josef Lehnert, just one year after its construction, the monument was "the symbol of Pula, its most beautiful adornment and most sacred place"[69]. In 1890, Dillinger's travel magazine suggested that travellers to Pula/Pola should visit not only the ancient sites in the city's centre but also the naval district with its monuments to

66 "Zur Tegetthoff-Feier," *Neue Freie Presse*, 21 July 1877, 3.

67 "Zum Gedenktage von Lissa," *Das Vaterland*, 22 July 1891, 4; Josef Steiner-Wischenbart, "Die Lissafeier in Pola," *Grazer Volksblatt*, 13 July 1898, 9–10.

68 "Besichtigung," *Oesterreichischer Soldatenfreund*, 27 June 1890, 6; "Der Gedenktag von Helgoland," *Wiener Zeitung*, 16 May 1914, 7.

69 Josef Lehnert, *Um die Erde: Reiseskizzen von der Erdumseglung mit S.M. Corvette Erzherzog Friedrich in den Jahren 1874, 1875 und 1876* (Wien: Hölder,1878), quoted from: Donko, *Pola/Pula*, 77.

Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian[70] and Tegetthoff[71]. When a railway workers' choir visited the port city just one year later, it followed Dillinger's route visiting "the magnificent amphitheatre, the Temple of Augustus, the monument to Emperor Maximilian of Mexico, and the Tegetthoff monument"[72]. Other associations, most of them with links to the navy, followed suit. They organized group trips for their members, which always included a visit to both the "old" and the "new" Pula/Pola with the Tegetthoff monument as a permanent fixture.[73]

Contemporary images of the monument, especially postcards, give an impression of its affordance as determined by the emperor, the artist, and the navy: the monument was surrounded by a circular lawn decorated with low bushes, which was in turn surrounded by a low decorative fence. Benches were placed at the edge of the walkway surrounding the site, inviting visitors to linger and, of course, to look at the statue from a distance and thus to admire the vice admiral.[74] However, not everyone complied with this affordance, as photographs show that the fence was later raised, although this apparently did not prevent visitors from climbing over and posing at the foot of the monument for a photo (see fig. 1) that – in my reading[75] – was meant to affirm the sailors' physical presence in Pula/Pola.[76] In addition, the "lonely and remote Monte Zaro" is said to have served young cadets as a site to "meet up with the local, fiery [Italian-speaking] signorine", whereby – at least according to ex-officer Reinhold Merkt's memories – the lovers would have looked up at Tegetthoff "with shyness and fear"[77].

Contemporary photographs, postcards and drawings of the monument[78] show only naval personnel and their families as visitors and no other city residents such as Italian-speaking bourgeoisie or Croatian-/Slovenian-speaking workers. This gives the impression that the site was primarily conceived as an exclusive space for the navy rather than for the city's entire population. In general, the city's population consisted of three groups: the predominantly German-speaking navy as well as Croatian-/Slovenian-speaking and Italian-

70 Constructed in 1876 by naval officers, see: Donko, *Marinedenkmäler*, 288–308.

71 "Pola," *Dillinger's Reisezeitung*, 10 October 1890, 10.

72 "Epilog zur Reise des Eisenbahn-Gesangvereins," *Die Presse*, 21 June 1891, 11.

73 "Sonderzug Linz-Pola," *Linzer Tages-Post*, 17 May 1909, 5; "Der Stapellauf des 'Viribus unitis'," *Die Zeit*, 26 June 1911, 3; "Erste Lehrerreise des österreichischen Flottenvereins," *Oesterreichische Land-Zeitung*, 10 August 1912, 10.

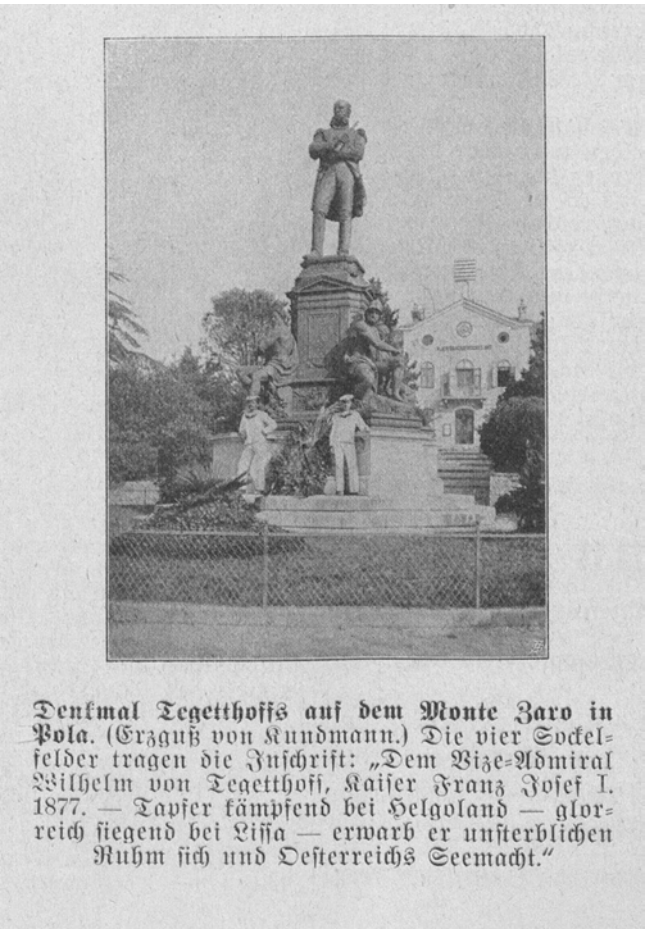
74 Donko, *Marinedenkmäler*, 175–176, 180.

75 Research on private photo albums supports this interpretation; see: Cord Pagenstecher, "Private Fotoalben als historische Quellen," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 6 (2009) 3: 449–463, 453.

76 "Denkmal Tegetthoffs auf dem Monte Zaro in Pola," *Salzkammergut-Zeitung*, 14 April 1912, 19.

77 Reinhold Merkt, "Tegetthoffs Denkmal und Grabstätte in Graz," *Oedenburger Zeitung*, 25 September 1937, 3.

78 For instance, in: Donko, *Marinedenkmäler*, 175–176.



Denkmal Tegetthoffs auf dem Monte Zaro in Pola. (Erzguß von Kundmann.) Die vier Sockelfelder tragen die Inschrift: „Dem Vize-Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff, Kaiser Franz Josef I. 1877. — Tapfer kämpfend bei Helgoland — glorreich siegend bei Lissa — erwarb er unsterblichen Ruhm sich und Oesterreichs Seemacht."

Fig. 1: Two sailors pose behind the fence with the monument in Pula/Pola in 1912. Source: *Salzkammergut-Zeitung*, 14 April 1912, 19.

speaking groups, with the latter also dominating the city politically. Frank Wiggermann writes that the military and civilian populations remained distant from each other until the First World War: "the hoped-for assimilation process did not take place, the city did not identify with its main employer; on the contrary, since the turn of the century, the boundaries between the individual groups had become more pronounced".[79] In January 1908, for example, the

79 Wiggermann, *Kriegsmarine*, 22: According to the 1910 census, 50,291 people lived in Pula/Pola, of whom 26,784 identified themselves as belonging to the Italian, 9,507 to the Croatian, 3,298 to the Slovenian, 9,067 to the German, and 1,635 to other language groups.

Lavanttaler Bote reported on "the conditions in Pola"[80], where "anti-German" and "anti-Austrian" demonstrations by Italian nationalists – thus, demonstrations against the navy dominated by German-speaking officers – took place daily. However, as far as can be ascertained from daily newspapers, these protests did not take place at the Tegetthoff monument but elsewhere in the city, which is surprising since German-speaking officers such as the aforementioned Josef Lehnert considered the memorial a landmark that identified the area as "Austrian" and "threaten[ed] with the magical power of a Gorgon's head those who dare to derive justification for political unrest in a highly treasonous manner from the existence of ancient Roman monuments on Istrian soil"[81], by which he meant the Italian-speaking irredentists.

The conflict between the Italian-speaking bourgeoisie and the German-speaking navy culminated in 1912 with the installation of a local dictatorship (*Regierungsdiktatur*), whereby the latter ended municipal autonomy and took over the administration of the city.[82] The conflicts between the groups did not cease with the outbreak of the First World War. On the contrary, in the autumn of 1914, in response to the war against Serbia, the political authorities launched a wave of arrests that led to the imprisonment of several hundred Serbian- and Croatian-speaking individuals. Six months later, with Italy's declaration of war, the authorities targeted Italian-speakers. For example, civil servants were dismissed from their posts, and Italian street names were changed.[83] To counter this political pressure, in 1916 the non-German-language groups in Pula/Pola used the Tegetthoff monument for the first time to publicly demonstrate their loyalty to the Habsburg family. *Die Zeit* reported that "on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the battle of Lissa, the Dalmatians living in Pola laid an artistically crafted silver laurel wreath at the Tegetthoff monument, bearing the following inscription: 'To Admiral Tegetthoff, the immortal hero of Heligoland and Lissa, the great symbol of a glorious memory'."[84] At the beginning of 1918, Italian forces succeeded in occupying Pula/Pola and taking over the Austro-Hungarian fleet anchored in the harbour. In the Treaty of Saint-Germain, signed in September 1919, the city, like the whole of Istra/Istria, was awarded to the Kingdom of Italy.

80 "Die Zustände in Pola," *Lavanttaler Bote*, 25 January 1908, 1–2.
81 Lehnert, "Erde," quoted from: Donko, "Pola/Pula," 77.
82 Wiggermann, *Kriegsmarine*, 279–302.
83 Ibid., 317–318, 333.
84 "Die Lissafeiern," *Die Zeit*, 22 July 1916, 5–6.