

Historical Cartography and Sustainable Tourism Development. Reconnecting Trento and the Fersina Stream through the Retrieval of Environmental and Cultural Heritage

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Abstract: Within the context of postmodern tourism, the importance of preserving and enhancing environmental and cultural assets of destinations is increasingly being recognised as one of the keys to sustainable long-term development of territories. The paper focuses on the complex diachronic relationship between the town of Trento, in the Trentino-Alto Adige region, and its watercourses, and, in particular, on its connection with the Fersina stream. The aim is to raise locals' and visitors' awareness of a largely forgotten urban water landscape, and to implement the town's existing cultural and environmental tourist offer. This is achieved through the revival of collective memory of the fundamental role of water for the development of Trento and through the requalification of the stream and its network of canals, which once brought water to different parts of the city-centre. For such purpose, the validity of cartography and other geo-historical sources has been acknowledged; maps are particularly useful sources for retracing territorialisation processes, and rediscovering past territorialities and related landscapes. Accordingly, we have carried out a geo-historical analysis of cartographic representations of the town, shedding light on the past widespread presence of water within urban space and making some proposals for the enhancement and communication of such heritage.

Keywords: Historical Cartography, Fluvial Landscapes, Fersina Stream, Trento, Urban Canals

1. Introduction

Much of the post-Second World War period witnessed an unchallenged desire for unlimited economic growth and well-being (Bramwell, Lane, 1993). Such boom facilitated the transition from modern to mass tourism (Battilani, 2001), as 'golden hordes' of tourists (Turner, Ash, 1975) stormed destinations, accelerating their Consolidation and Stagnation (Butler, 1980). During the last decade of the Twentieth Century, thanks to a "remarkable time-space compression" (Urry, 2002, p. 23), mass tourism became global and an increasing number of destinations hit tipping points (Goodwin, 2017). As a result, however, over the past few decades, debates on the environmental, socio-economic and cultural impacts of tourism on destinations and their inhabitants have progressively emerged.

In the search for alternatives to mass tourism, to protect destinations, safeguard their unique features and promote more sustainable forms of development, the value of environmental, historical and cultural heritage of territories has increasingly been acknowledged. Indeed, long-term success of tourist destinations is dependent upon stakeholders' and communities' knowledge about a territory, including its related territorialisation processes and resulting landscapes, as well as upon their willingness to preserve it and the memory of its past. In such respect, historical cartography, among other geo-historical sources, plays a fundamental role. The analysis of cartographic representations, which should always be contextualised in terms of the time, space and purpose of

their production (Rombai, 2010), can contribute to the recovery of obliterated heritage, as well as to the implementation of conscious forms of resource management and the prediction and solution of present and future territorial issues (Dai Prà, Gemignani, Tanzarella, 2013). Their validity also applies to the tourism domain. Indeed, rediscovering past human landscapes through the interpretation of iconographic and symbolic elements found in maps can help build cultural and historical attractions for responsible travellers looking for authentic experiences and willing to gain deeper knowledge of visited destinations. Attracting such types of visitors, who are generally more aware of their actions and respectful of the environmental and cultural assets of a territory, as opposed to tourists who are merely looking for leisure and entertainment, can boost sustainable development of a given territory.

In the light of the above considerations, the paper aims to assess the potential of historical maps for rediscovering and enhancing often neglected and forgotten territorial heritage. To such end, we have chosen the currently marginalised Fersina stream in Trento, in the Trentino-Alto-Adige region, as our case study. As we will argue in the following paragraphs, the stream offers a cultural water landscape, which, however, people no longer perceive as such, as inevitably happens when territories undergo rapid and massive physical, climate, cultural and social changes (Visentin, 2019). Analysing the diachronic relationship between the town and water, through cartographic documentation testifying the role such element had in past territorialisation processes, and subsequently highlighting and promoting it, has a twofold

objective. On the one hand, the goal is to revive inhabitants' collective memory of the past centrality and socio-economic value of the Fersina stream and of its ancient network of artificial canals, known as *rogge*. These brought water to many different parts of the town but have gradually disappeared since the 19th Century (Cagol, Nequirito, 2005) and their traces can today only be found in a few street names, such as *via Roggia Grande*. On the other hand, by restoring a mostly forgotten part of the town's identity, another objective would be to draw more responsible travellers to Trento and reinforce its positioning on the tourist market as a sustainable and cultural destination, by enriching its existing offer. Accordingly, we will make some proposals for the enhancement of the Fersina fluvial landscape, not just with respect to the stream itself but also including the city-centre and its former canal system.

2. A Geo-Historical Analysis: Mapping the Waters of Trento

The current relationship between Trento and the Fersina stream – as well as that with the Adige River, the major watercourse passing the town – exemplifies the common disconnection between contemporary cities, towns and villages – with their respective communities – and water. In the past, however, the two watercourses were central elements of the urban landscape of Trento, even though their perception has not been exclusively positive. As Lucio Gambi (1972) recalls, between the second half of the 16th Century and 1882 the Adige River caused almost one hundred and fifty floods in the urban settlements along its course, and the Fersina stream too is “sadly known for its fatal overflows into the town of Trento” (Battisti, 1899, p. 135). Between the 18th and the 19th Centuries, several hydraulic interventions were carried out to protect the town from the potential danger of water, the most relevant of which being the rectification of the Adige River, completed in 1858. With respect to the Fersina stream, as early as in the 16th century, two prince-bishops of Trento, Bernardo Clesio and Cristoforo Madruzzo, had attempted to find a solution to its frequent floods, by building a new streambed further away from the city-centre (Tanzarella, 2015). This did not solve the issue and, in the upcoming centuries, the regulation of the course of the stream caused several disputes between Trento and the town of Pergine Valsugana, in the Sugana Valley, on the construction, reconstruction and further raising of the weir of Ponte Alto. Such artificial barrier would, according to the community of Trento, protect the town from the disruptive force of water, but, according to that of Pergine, potentially jeopardise the safety of the latter, as the stream might take new, alternative routes¹. However, water has also been “a basic resource for agriculture (irrigation), industrial production (watermills, factories) and [the supply of] public services (the

production of energy, water distribution through aqueducts)” (Dai Prà, Gemignani, Tanzarella, 2013, p. 248), as well as fundamental for pastoral activities (Franceschini, 2016). Like in nearby Rovereto, where the urban presence of water drawn from the Leno stream was once fundamental for the town's proto-industrial economic system and, in particular, for its silk production (Dapor, 1988; Frisinghelli, 2020), several urban canals with water from the Fersina stream enabled the daily performance of economic, productive and social activities. Indeed, in Trento, since the 16th Century and up to the 1830s, several mills functioned thanks to the motive power of water. Afterwards, the progressive disappearance of the canals, which can be linked to the development of new technologies no longer relying on water, to concerns about the spread of illnesses and to the need for larger streets, has left the town dehydrated, gradually erasing the material and immaterial heritage related to water, as well as its collective memory.

Geo-historical documents testify such changes in the urban and fluvial landscape of Trento, which are the result of the abovementioned acts of space appropriation (Casti, 1998). In particular, cartography helps us retrace them and, thus, explain the town's and its inhabitants' progressive loss of contact with water. Indeed, especially large- and very large-scale maps enable the reconstruction of “geo-anthropological structures, marks from the past, practices and vocations, which have affected the evolution of a territory and which often risk being obliterated due to the complexity of present transformations” (Dai Prà, 2013, p. 18). Among the multiple historical maps highlighting the past importance of the Fersina stream and its canal system, as well as, of course, that of the Adige River, we made a selection of a few significant representations, considering their time of production and the visibility of the addressed territorial transformations.

One of them is the 1581 bird's eye perspective map *Tridentum. Trient* (Figure 1), included in the fundamental editorial project *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* by Georg Braun and Franz Hogenberg – the first great book of the world aimed at representing all main 16th Century world cities². The town of Trento was among them, since it had hosted several sessions of the famous Council of Trento, as the off-scale and central representation of the San Vigilio Cathedral in the map clearly recalls. The map, which measures 53x41 cm and is kept at the Historical Archive of the Public Library³, documents the *forma urbis* of Trento at the time of its production. Its richness in details and decorative elements offers a highly descriptive representation of the town-walls, of the buildings – the most important of which, such as the

¹ For further information on the disputes between the Trento and Pergine communities, see Tanzarella, 2015.

² The book was published in Cologne in six volumes, between 1572 and 1617 and the map of Trento is in the third volume, edited in 1581.

³ A scanned copy of the map is available on the Biblioteca Digitale Trentina (Trentino Digital Library) website: <https://bdt.bibcom.trento.it/Iconografia/4291#page/n0> [10/08/2021]

Buonconsiglio castle, the Dome and the Palazzo delle Albere, are significantly larger in proportions – and of land use. Within the urban space, the canals carrying water from the Fersina stream are clearly visible, running through many streets; the largest one, the *Roggia Grande*, crossed *Piazza Duomo*, the main square overlooked by the Dome. The detail of navigation on the Adige river is also noteworthy and highlights how water was not only a resource for many proto-industrial activities, but also served transportation purposes, as goods – mostly wood from the Fiemme valley – were carried to Verona and Venice on rafts.



Figure 1: *Tridentum. Trient*, Georg Braun, Franz Hogenberg, 1581. Source: Archivio Storico Trentino, Carte e Vedute.

Another precious source of information is the map entitled *Corso della Fersina dal origine sino alle sue foci con la delineazione di tutti gli Influenti, Valli laterali, Monti, Piani di Campagna, co' suoi profili di Livellazioni dell'alveo, rispettivi ripari, e piani suddetti*, drawn by engineer Gian Bartolomeo Scotini in 1771. It is located at the Venice State Archive, measures 155x76 cm and consists in a watercolour and ink representation of the course of the Fersina stream from its origin in Lake Erdemolo, in the Lagorai mountain chain, to its outlet in the Adige River. Its purpose was to support the claims of the community of Pergine Valsugana during one of its three major litigations with the town of Trento about the construction and dimensions of the weir of Ponte Alto. Indeed, through his representation, engineer Scotini wanted to reinforce his assertion that an obstruction of the original course of the stream could cause a diversion of the latter into the Sugana valley, while only providing a temporary solution to the flood problem in Trento⁴. The

scale of representation is about 1:22.000, which inevitably makes the map less detailed than a planimetry of just the town of Trento would have been. However, the detail of the map in Figure 2, picturing the final part of the stream, still provides a clear portrait of the situation concerning the presence of canals within the urban space. Only two of them – are still visible, as the many others depicted in the 1581 map had already been covered.

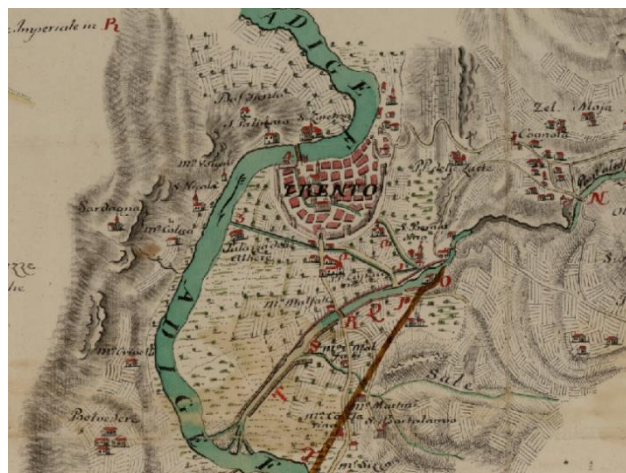


Figure 2: Detail from the map *Corso della Fersina dall'origine sino alle sue foci [...]*, Gian Bartolomeo Scotini, 1771. Source: Archivio di Stato di Venezia; digital copy provided by the Centro Geo-Cartografico di Studio e Documentazione (GeCo).

Finally, the most accurate and precise representation is the one comprised in the Austrian cadastre, which was established by Francis I of Austria. In 1817, the Emperor ordered the creation of “a map of every municipality [of the Empire] representing its size and limits, each and every land surface, the different types of crops, landowners, natural and artificial boundaries” (1824)⁵. The resulting cartographies are “extraordinarily precise and detailed instrument[s] for [gaining] knowledge of territories” (Gilardi, 2013, p. 111) and of the various dynamics that affected them and their communities. Indeed, cadastral maps accurately portray the use of lands and buildings, the plans and the topography of urban and rural areas. In addition, their large scale facilitates georeferencing and drawing comparisons with current maps and aerial photographs. The map of Trento, made between 1853 and 1861, measuring 58x71 cm, is preserved at the *Libro Fondiario e del Catastro* (Land Register) of Trento. It provides a snapshot of the ongoing transformations of the Trento water landscape, depicting

Pontalto and the controversy between Trento and the Valsugana community].

⁴ ASCTn, Pretorio 7451, “*Relazione sulla natura e qualità del torrente Fersina e suoi affluenti ed insieme parere dell'ingegnere Giovanni Bartolomeo Scotini intorno la proposta Serraglia a Pontalto controversa fra signori Trentini e comunità di Valsugana*” [Reporting on the nature and quality of the Fersina stream and its tributaries and assessment by engineer Giovanni Bartolomeo Scotini concerning the proposal for the construction of the weir of

⁵ Even though cadastral maps of the entire Austrian Empire started to be created in 1817, the Tyrol area was not represented until 1853. The reason for this delay is to be attributed to the resistance of landowners and the ruling class of Tyrol, who did not want their possessions to be mapped down, lest they must pay their taxes based on their possessions and not on their role in society. This new principle is what characterised the cadastre as modern (Gilardi, 2013).

both the rectifying process of the Adige River and the artificial canals that were still visible at the time, which have been highlighted in blue (Figure 3).

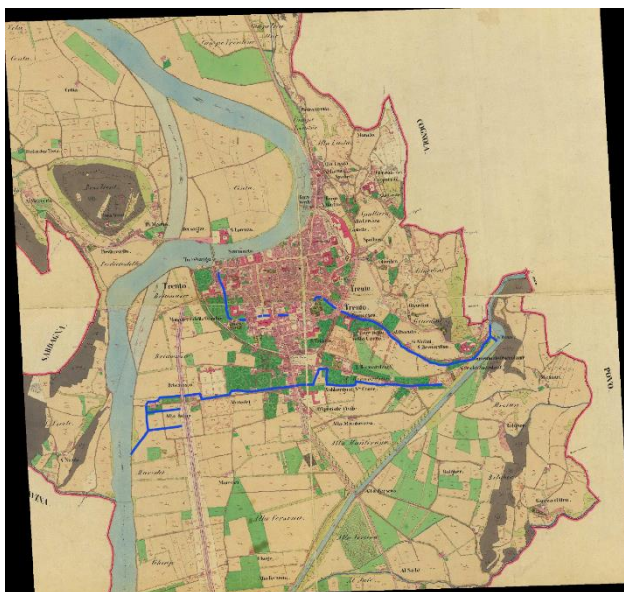


Figure 3: Georeferenced Austrian cadastre, Trento, 1853-1861. Source: Libro Fondiario e del Catasto. Elaboration by Carolien Fornasari.

A comparison of the above-mentioned representations – a mere selection among the numerous maps highlighting the past relationship of the town with water – with current aerial photographs, such as the 2015 orthophoto available on the Portale Geocartografico Trentino⁶, is the most immediate and effective way of conceiving the loss of importance of the stream and its canals. Indeed, the cartographic representations document very well the progressive covering of the latter, which, today, are no longer visible.

However, other geo-historical sources, such as iconographic and archival documents, also provide evidence of the strong bond Trento once had with water. For instance, several early 20th-Century postcards⁷ picture women doing the laundry in the urban canals – thus highlighting their social centrality – or the gorge of Ponte Alto with its impressive waterfall, which had been a point of interest for both locals and visitors since the beginning of the 19th Century. In addition, the presence and importance of water were also testified by the promulgation of “several local laws that were issued to ensure the proper maintenance of canals and avoid the pollution of water flowing from many fountains located in the squares and streets” (Cagol, Nequirito, 2005, p. 202).

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<https://patn.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=fe12fe24998b450ea54a722f16e88329> [01/08/2021]

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https://bdt.bibcom.trento.it/Iconografia?progetto=Cartoline+del+Trentino&q=roggia&_sort_0_sort_by=data&_sort_0_sort_order=asc&_sort_0_limit=10 [01/08/2021]

3. “Rehydrating” the Town: Proposals for the Retrieval and Enhancement of Past Water Landscapes

The geo-historical analysis of the transformations of the urban landscape of Trento, of which only an outline could be presented, has highlighted the town’s loss of connection with water. Some critical aspects with respect to the current state and common perception of the Fersina stream can be summarised in a few key words: *marginality*, *dehydration* and *amnesia*. As a consequence of the above-mentioned territorialisation processes, today both locals and visitors tend to perceive the stream as a marginal element of the urban landscape, a mere axis dividing the southern neighbourhoods of the town from the city-centre and a transit space with no real history or identity. This is partly due to the appearance of the stream itself, whose channelized bed and other artificial elements outweighing environmental ones such as fauna and flora make it a highly anthropic landscape (Figure 4). The co-existence of soft mobility and car traffic is also a problem along the stream, since only the right bank has a pavement and the existing cycle path is incomplete and frequently interrupted.



Figure 4: the Fersina stream near Ponte Cavaleggeri. Photograph by the authors.

However, the main cause underlying the perception of the stream as peripheral and disconnected from the town is, in fact, the dehydration of the city-centre, following the covering of the once crucial system of canals that supplied water to mills and other production facilities. Such process has deprived the stream of its once central role and this has resulted in a widespread amnesia of the former presence of water within urban space.

Hence, proposals for the enhancement of the addressed fluvial landscape, which target both inhabitants and tourists, aiming at the (re)discovery of such annihilated connection with water, should not only focus on the watercourse itself. We have envisaged two sets of interventions, along the stream and within the city-centre. With respect to those addressing the urban axis of the stream, from the hydroelectric plant of Ponte Cornicchio to the Adige River, their aim would be to turn a currently highly anthropic transit area into a sort of *greenway*, a

model for urban enhancement introduced by Tom Turner (1995) that combines functionality, aesthetics and respect for the environment. Such model draws from a series of differentiated and more specific archetypes, previously postulated by American architect and design theorist Christopher Alexander (1977), among which are so-called *blueways* and *cycleways*. *Blueways* identify urban rivers or streams that are no longer “channelized [and] encased in concrete” (Turner, 1995, p. 269), but to which access is enabled, while still leaving some areas closed-off, for wildlife to develop undisturbed. Clearly, such concept could only be applied partially to the addressed case study since the stream needs to stay channelized for most of its urban part. Only near its confluence with the Adige River, could there be more freedom of action. Renaturalising that area, in the sense of making it look more similar to its original state by recreating a delta and a wetland, would support the well-being of several animals and plants, as well as attract visitors of Trento interested in environmental tourism. In addition, such intervention would compensate the anthropic impact of the planned construction of a new hospital in that area. In other locations along the stream, less revolutionary forms of requalification could be envisaged. For instance, right at the beginning of the urban trait, near the “Galileo Galilei” high school, an abandoned and neglected strip of land on the left side of the stream, which is hard to reach because of the steep bank and the fence separating it from the road, could be made accessible as a gathering and relaxation area. The idea could be replicated in other spots, such as near the Cavalleggeri bridge (*Ponte Cavalleggeri*) or at the confluence with Rio Salè, a small left-bank tributary of the stream (Figure 5). The different areas could be connected by creating a *cycleway*, which would implement the existing, but partial and discontinuous, cycling path, thus contributing to solving the issue of soft mobility along the stream, to the benefit of both inhabitants and visitors.

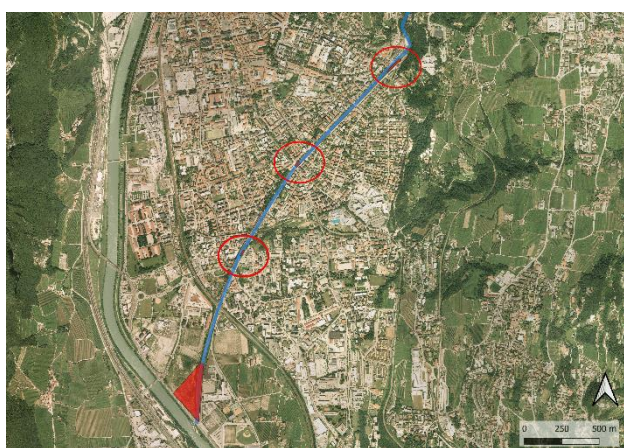


Figure 5: Enhancement proposals along the Fersina stream. Elaboration by Carolien Fornasari.

However, in the wake of the above made considerations on the past importance of water and on the current amnesia of its widespread presence across the town,

enhancement initiatives aimed at increasing locals' awareness of past urban territorialities shaped by the stream, as well as at incrementing cultural tourism, cannot be limited to the axis of the stream. Instead, they should focus greatly on the city-centre, where the loss of contact with water has been even more evident and hardly any trace of it has remained (except for some street names, the high number of fountains and a small uncovered piece of canal near *Piazza Venezia*, whose original connection to the Fersina stream is, however, mostly ignored). The creation of a cultural itinerary following the ancient route of the canals would be the most immediate and effective way of restoring collective memory of the addressed historical and cultural heritage and of its related socio-economic practices, enabling visitors to learn about important aspects of the town's identity. Retracing the ancient water network would obviously be the first step to undertake. The canals were drawn on the 2015 orthophoto on the basis of the three previously analysed cartographic representations; the Austrian cadastre, was particularly helpful, as georeferencing it using QGIS enabled us to superimpose it on the current aerial photograph (Figure 6).

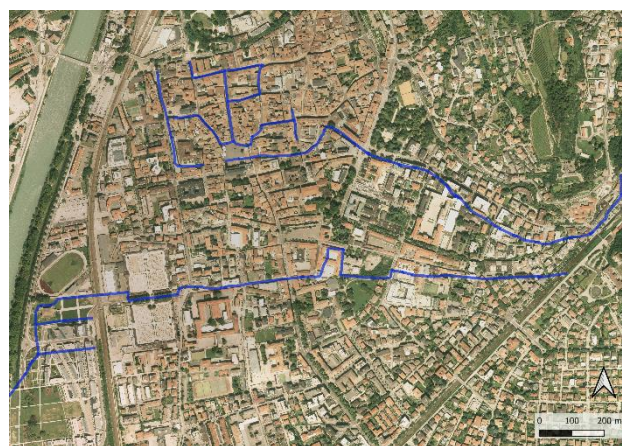


Figure 6: Retracing of the old network of urban canals on the 2015 orthophoto. Source: Portale Geocartografico Trentino. Elaboration by Carolien Fornasari.

Following the retrieved routes of the canals, information panels could be placed in several areas and streets of the city-centre, such as in Via Grazioli, Via Roggia Grande, Via Dordi, Via Belenzani, Via Cavour and several others, highlighting the function and use of water in those locations. They would include both textual descriptions in different languages – Italian, English and German – and geo-historical cartographic and iconographic sources, as visual aids are particularly effective communication tools. A map of the entire urban itinerary would also be added to each panel, in which various points of interest would be marked and numbered. This could enable visitors that are not familiar with the town to orient themselves and get an idea of how the itinerary is structured. Moreover, people might casually come across one of the panels, learn about the itinerary and then follow the suggested route or plan the activity for another time.

An additional proposal for uncovering the past water landscape of the town and making the itinerary more appealing, which, however, would require some feasibility studies, as well as higher investments in both time and resources, could be to restore the physical presence of water in some parts of the town. One location could be *Piazza Duomo*, the main square, where different marble paving still shows where the *Roggia Grande* once flowed (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Piazza Duomo, Trento. Photograph by the authors.

The idea of reminiscing the presence of water in such spot is not new, as in 2008, artist Anna Scalfi installed twenty-two functioning washing machines along the ancient route of the canal, to recall its function, i.e. that of a place where women used to gather to do their laundry⁸. In 2012, architect Michele Anderle resumed the concept; he suggested the reopening of the canal and presented a rendering of what the square would look like⁹. The realisation of such project, which never saw the light, could be reconsidered as part of a larger enhancement proposal of the water landscape of Trento, such as the above-suggested creation of a cultural historical itinerary. Indeed, an information panel in such central location, explaining the social and economic dimension of water in the town's main square, today a highly frequented area by both locals and visitors, would give the other less-known locations of the itinerary, to which the project would be linked, more visibility. Another key spot where water could possibly resurface is *Palazzo delle Albere* (Figure 8) currently constrained between the railway track linking Bolzano and Verona, the graveyard, the stadium and the modern neighbourhood “Le Albere”, but once a princely countryside residence owned by the prominent Madruzzo family. Gaudenzio Madruzzo, the father of prince-bishop Cristoforo Madruzzo, had it built between the late 15th and the early 16th Centuries (Gorfer, 1990). The Palace

hosted several key figures of the bishopric of Trento, until, at the end of the 17th Century, it “lost its relevance and slowly but inevitably declined” (Dai Prà, Allegri, 2016, p. 73) following the extinction of the cadet branch of the family. It was once a *locus amoenus* surrounded by gardens and orchards. A long tree-lined lane flanked by a brook, whose water came from the Fersina stream, linked it to the town. Along it were watermills and a sawmill (Imperadori, 2017). The moat around the building, filled with water from the stream (*Ibidem*), was used as a hatchery, as fish dishes used to be served to the princes and clergymen that often gathered at the Palace during the Council of Trento (1545-1563). Refilling the moat would not only partially recreate the past appearance of the Palace, and restore its lost connection to the Fersina stream and, thus, to the rest of the town, but, most importantly, it would also serve our purpose of reviving the lost memory of the capillarity of water within the town.



Figure 8: Palazzo delle Albere. Photograph by the authors.

4. Communicating the Fersina Stream Heritage to Visitors

Enhancing the Fersina stream, and re-establishing the memory of its past water landscape, needs the support of effective communication and promotion strategies targeting both inhabitants and tourists and making them aware of the existence of such historical and cultural assets. While information panels placed in different parts of the town, reminding people where water once flowed, are effective *in loco* promotion tools, other channels that are able to reach potential visitors before their stay should also be used. The main organization responsible for marketing Trento as a tourist destination is the Trento, Monte Bondone, Valle dei Laghi Tourist Board (APT - *Azienda di Promozione Turistica*), whose mission is to promote the environmental, cultural and historical heritage of the town and its surroundings, as well as to inform and assist tourists before, during and after their stay. Its main communication channels with potential and actual visitors are the official website “Discover Trento”

⁸ The contemporary art installation, entitled *Celata (sotto la piazza scorre una roggia)* was part of Manifesta 7, the seventh edition of the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, held in Trentino and South Tyrol between 19th July and 2nd November 2008.

http://www.comunicati.net/comunicati/arte/arti_figurative/59857.html [13/08/2021]

⁹ <https://www.giornaletrentino.it/cronaca/trento/riportate-l-antica-roggia-in-piazza-duomo-1.832195> [13/08/2021]

¹⁰ and social media (especially Instagram¹¹ and Facebook¹², on which the official pages are more active, compared to YouTube and Twitter). The website offers detailed information on the town, its attractions, events and services, as well as on accommodation and restaurants. The section “Art and Culture”, lists all main historical and cultural points of interest, including the Buonconsiglio castle, the Cathedral, a number of other churches and museums. However, it does not include the two watercourses, nor does it mention the town’s history with its hydric dimension. In the “Urban Trekking” page, a guide containing fifteen different itineraries is available, but, again, none of them centres around the Fersina stream, its canal, or the relationship of the town with water in general. Among the guided tours promoted on the website for the summer of 2021, however, one entitled *Sulle tracce della storia di Trento. La città sul fiume* retraces the history of Trento, referring to it as the “town on the River”. This is a sign of the rising interest of destination managers towards differentiating the existing cultural tourist offer by including experiences focused on the bond between the town and water. However, the initiative, albeit an important first step towards promoting a largely forgotten part of Trento’s territorial heritage, is a sporadic event, offered only a couple of times over the entire summer. A structured Fersina themed urban itinerary does not yet exist. As we suggest in this paper, one could be designed following a thorough geo-historical analysis of cartographic, iconographic and archival documentation, whose value for conscious and sustainable territorial planning has been stressed. The route could then be promoted on the website, along with the other themed itineraries, on social media and on the official app “My Trento”.

5. Conclusion

Reconnecting Trento and the Fersina stream, by retrieving the town’s obliterated environmental and cultural water-related heritage through some of the proposals presented in this paper, would undoubtedly help increasing the appeal of the destination for responsible travellers, interested in learning about the history and culture of visited places and, thus, generally respectful of their material and immaterial assets. In this sense, the study of cartographic representations of the past territoriality of the town – with, in our case, a focus on the transformations of the Fersina stream water landscape, including the urban canals – could boost long-term sustainable tourism development in Trento, by implementing its existing cultural offer. In addition, it could contribute to the inversion of the generalised trend of rapid visits to the town by tourists on their way to

renowned mountain destinations in Trentino or South Tyrol, and prolong the length of stays. Indeed highlighting lesser-known aspects of the town’s identity, among which its connection to the Fersina stream is but one example, could be a strategy to decongest other highly frequented destinations.

The presented research is only at its preliminary stage but offers interesting perspectives for future developments. For instance, further cartographic documents could be taken into consideration and more attention could be paid to other geo-historical sources, such as photographs and archival texts. Moreover, the analysis could be complemented with environmental and hydrological studies, useful to better establish the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the Fersina stream and of possible actions aimed at its requalification. Finally, the adoption of a multi-scale approach would be beneficial, as the analysis would no longer be limited to the urban trait of the stream, but also address its entire catchment basin, and, possibly focus on the urban settlement of Pergine Valsugana and on its relationship with water.

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¹⁰ <https://www.discoverrento.it/chi-siamo> [14/08/2021]

¹¹ <https://www.instagram.com/discoverrento/> [14/08/2021]

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/Trento.MonteBondone.ValledeiLaghi> [14/08/2021]

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