CULTURAL FAULT LINES
EXPLORING TRIESTE & ISTRIA

FRIDAY 14 – THURSDAY 20 APRIL 2023 (7 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£3075

- **Discover Trieste, one of Italy's most interesting, but 'least' Italian cities**
- **Explore the wonderful Istrian Peninsula**
- **Remarkable blend of Habsburg & Venetian history**
- **Marvellous selection of monuments & art across the centuries**
- **Very good local food & wine**
- **Centrally located 5* & 4* hotels in Trieste & Rovinj**

Rovinj, Istria

OVERVIEW

Your first question might well be is Trieste Italian? Or perhaps, is Istria Croatian? The answer to both is an ambiguous yes, *and* no. Trieste and its immediate southerly neighbour, Istria, rest on important cultural and geopolitical fault lines. Both fell successively under Venetian and Habsburg domination for much of the last millennium. Together with their ancient Roman and Byzantine predecessors, all have left an indelible mark on the coastal towns and idyllic villages of the Istrian Peninsula - from Trieste and the Slovene Littoral in the North, to Pula at its southern Croatian tip. This cultural mix is still felt today in the political detritus of the last century, indeed of the last few decades, as Yugoslavia disintegrated. Language, religion and cuisine straddles three worlds: Italy and the Mediterranean, Slovenia and Mittel Europe, plus Croatia and the Balkans. Our visit will explore these varied histories, seen against a diverse selection of buildings representing these three nations along the northern Adriatic.

Trieste and the Istrian Peninsula developed rapidly following Julius Caesar's conquest of the Veneti and the Istri tribes and its subsequent consolidation under the Emperor Augustus, as seen in the many Roman remains at Trieste and Pula. Trieste is a city of strong contrasts: though now in Italy, it is not Italian in either looks or culture. It is more a place shaped by the Habsburgs who controlled Trieste for centuries until 1918, a veritable 'Vienna-on-Sea'. Rapid economic growth in the nineteenth century, based on Habsburg administrative reforms consolidated Trieste's status as a 'free port' within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Its commercial network attracted Italian, Balkan, Greek and German-speaking merchants, even an Irish writer called James Joyce - all contributing to the city's unique cultural 'feel'. Enlightened businessmen founded major shipping and insurance companies whilst embellishing the city with palaces and art collections, all of which we shall encounter in this handsome and fascinating city.

Venice's dominant role in Istria's history is literally 'carved' into the very fabric of beguiling coastal towns and inland hilltop villages. Classical loggias, handsome piazzas, splendid churches and secular buildings shaped from brilliant white Istrian limestone all proudly sing of the beauty of 'Venice'. Rovinj, where we shall also stay, Porec and Piran are testament to Venice's tenacious grip of its Adriatic possessions, which inevitably dissolved with the arrival of Napoleon and the end of Venetian independence.

In Trieste we stay at the **5* Grand Hotel Duchi D'Aosta,** perfectly situated in Piazza dell'Unita' D'Italia, Trieste's iconic main square facing the Adriatic. Handsome palazzi, piazzas full of bars, restaurants, shops and most of what we plan to visit are within easy walking distance. The **4* Hotel Adriatic** is located in the heart of the stunning coastal Istrian town of Rovinj, overlooking the charming waterfront and surrounded by restaurants and bars.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Friday 14 April – We fly from London's Heathrow to Venice, arriving in the afternoon and transfer by coach to **Trieste** staying for three nights at the **5* Grand Hotel Duchi D'Aosta**. In the evening there will be a group dinner in a local restaurant – wine, water and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Saturday 15 April – We begin at **Borgo Teresiano**, an ensemble of neoclassical spaces and buildings developed during the rule of the Empress Maria Teresa. After a coffee break, we visit the **Cathedral of San Giusto** and the nearby **Citadel,** both dominating the city from their lofty hill-side perch. Nearby, there is also the small, very interesting **Archaeological Museum**, where there is a memorial to the founder of art history, the eighteenth-century scholar J J Winckelmann, tragically murdered in Trieste in 1768. After lunch (not included) we drive the short distance along the coast to **Castello di Miramare**, the seaside villa home of the ill-fated Emperor of Mexico, Maximilian of Habsburg. We return to Trieste where the evening will be free.

Day 3: Sunday 16 April – Our half day focuses on two nineteenth century 'house-museum' collections. The **Sartorio Museum** displays the paintings and decorative arts of one of Trieste's leading families, including works by G.B Tiepolo and Venetian artists working on the Istrian Peninsula. Likewise, the **Museo Revoltella** is the most important collection in the city, amassed by the Trieste businessman, Baron Pasquale Revoltella. Highlights include his sumptuous apartment and a modern art gallery with works from the last century. Lunch (not included) and the remainder of the afternoon will be free for private explorations. Later in the evening we meet for our group dinner.

Day 4: Monday 17 April – We leave Trieste and drive to the **Slovene Littoral** and the coastal town of **Piran**. Five centuries of Venetian rule have left an indelible mark on this delightful 'mini-Venice' perched on a partially walled spur of land. Our walk through the town will include a visit to the panoramic, baroque **Cathedral of St George.** After an early group lunch, we drive further southwards into **Croatia** and the **Istrian Peninsula,** arriving at **Rovinj** mid-afternoon. Following an **orientation walk** around the town, the evening will be free.

Day.5: Tuesday 18 April – We begin two days exploring **Istria** at the inland medieval village of **Beram** to view the late Gothic frescoes at the little **Chapel of Our Lady of the Rocks**. After coffee we continue to **Motovun.** This fortified panoramic hilltop town came under Venetian control in 1278, acting as a border check overlooking the strategic Mirna Valley below. Today the valley is blanketed with vineyards, one of which we shall visit for a wine-tasting. Following a group lunch in Motovun, we return to Rovinj where the afternoon and evening will be free.

Day 6: Wednesday 19 April – We travel to the tip of Istria to visit its largest city, **Pula.** Raised to the status of a Roman *colonia* in 46 AD, Pula's lasting architectural legacy is reflected in an array of ancient Roman buildings including some well-preserved **Roman gates**, the **Temple of Augustus** and Pula's **Amphitheatre,** one of the finest arenas in the Roman world. Following lunch (not included), we visit coastal **Porec.** In 553 AD, Bishop Euphrasius built an extensive ecclesiastical complex including a **Basilica** which has some of the finest Byzantine mosaics in the Balkans. We return to Rovinj where later in the evening we have our final group dinner in our hotel.

Day 7: Thursday 20 April – We leave Istria and travel into Slovenia to the **Vipava Valley** north of Trieste, where we have lunch in a renowned Michelin-starred restaurant. In the afternoon we continue to Venice Airport for our early evening flight to London's Heathrow.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £3075 **Without flights** £2885 **Deposit** £425 **Single Supplement** £435 (Double for Sole Use)

Hotels 3 nights with breakfast at the **5* Grand Hotel Duchi D'Aosta, Trieste** – DSU in Classic Rooms, Couples/two sharing in Superior Rooms & 3 nights with breakfast at the **4* Hotel Adriatic, Rovinj** – DSU in Atelier Rooms, Couples/two sharing in Piazza Rooms

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA468** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1420**, arrive Venice **1740**
Return: **BA469** Depart Venice **1830**, arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1950**

Price includes 3 dinners & 3 lunches with water, wine & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees & gratuities, services of Tom Duncan, James Hill and our local guide.

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners & 3 lunches

CICERONI TRAVEL
2 The Square, Aynho, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 3BL
Telephone **+44 (0) 1869 811167** Fax **+44 (0) 1869 811188**
Email **info@ciceroni.co.uk** Website **www.ciceroni.co.uk**