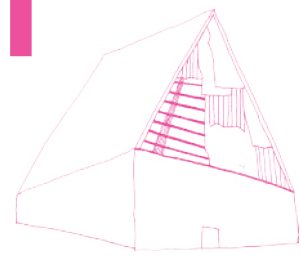


ŽIVA POT

Solvitur ambulando
Is solved by walking



The paths that surround the village of Topolò, some of which have now been made accessible to walkers and tourists by our association, have a history that stretches back over the centuries and that cannot be reconstructed chronologically. Those that can be walked on today are only a small part of the network that connected the village with the surrounding areas and with the various properties, and they bring a novelty that has never occurred before compared to the recent past, the end of the 1940s: they are paths in the woods. Where today we see trees, so everywhere, we have to imagine, and it is not easy, pastures, meadows, sheep tracks, paths visible to the naked eye, from above and below, some paved, often with stone steps and with a system of dry-stone walls at the edge, which transformed the landscape into a spectacular terraced landscape.

Landscape and environment are our most precious collective asset, they have a primary cultural value, fundamental for the quality of our lives. The forest in Topolò has taken up almost all the space, but at the same time it invites us to visit it along the old tracks of its paths.

A big thank you goes to the few residents who, over the last few decades, have made it possible, with their selfless work, for some of the paths not to be suffocated by the forest: this has facilitated our task, which in some cases has only been one of finishing, in others of reopening. Their memories and stories linked to their lived experiences or to ancient narratives, some of which we report in these pages, were also fundamental.

Pot uodé WATER PATH — — →

1. Mill path

Starting from the village, there are four paths leading to the remains of two mills along the Koderjana stream, all of which lead to a road below the village, which is an obligatory way to reach both what we colloquially call "the mill" and "the old mill." For the first mill, the two shortest paths start from the parking lot (at Potok) and from the small square where goods are unloaded and loaded for those living in the lower part of the village.

The path starting from Potok is the old route that led to the village of Seuza below. When you reach the road, turn left and in a few minutes, you will reach the signposted entrance to the short path leading to the mill. The place is characterised by the stone ruins of two buildings and was inhabited and used until 1956. This fundamental service was not only used by the inhabitants of Topolò, but also by those of the village of Trusgne, who descended here from the opposite side of the mountain. The place is presented with a succession of three small waterfalls that create as many emerald pools: a Plitvice in miniature, which serves, today as it did in the past, as a triple swimming pool for those who visit Topolò in the summer. Older people still remember the immediate vicinity of the mill, which at the time had no forest, as a beautiful garden lovingly tended by the owner. For the kids of the 1950s it was the Topolò beach!

Our path leads to the first of the waterfalls; to admire the other two one can easily cross the stream on foot and reach the opposite bank. Descending from the road, on an outcrop of rock facing the remains of the mill, you can appreciate the sculpture created by the Dutch architects of Studio Wild: a work inspired by the cultural and natural landscape of the place.

For the second path, enter the village by following the southern edge of the village towards the valley. Having reached a small square, the entrance is easily visible thanks to some stone steps leading to a house with a balcony and fixtures painted in bright red and yellow. On the way down, you can admire the remains of the terracing system that surrounded Topolò and some vegetable gardens that are still in use. At the crossroad, turn right, cross a small bridge with an iron railing and, after a few metres, take the path described above on the left, which leads to the mill. Before this last stretch, a look to the right allows you to admire the remains of buildings and terraces that, according to legends, constitute the first settlement of Topolò. The whole area was known by the toponym Log.

2. Old Mill path

Of the so-called 'old mill', at 20th century, not much is known. The only recollections date back to stories at the beginning of the 20th century. Today, only two moss-covered walls are visible beside the watercourse. The real spectacle is provided by the waterfall of the Koderjana stream, of considerable size, which with its uninterrupted thud also marks the soundscape of Topolò. Also remarkable is the covering of trees and boulders with mosses of various shades of green, from dark to bright.

To reach this place, you can either continue along the road after visiting the first mill, or, from the car park, cross all the lower village; pass the open-air cinema square and the last houses of Topolò until you enter the forest. The path, which also leads to Stamorčak, descends gently. Along the way, on the right, there are two paths leading to the main road.

The first is steeper and more direct, while the second is gentler and leads through a forest of white hornbeams. At the crossroads, turn left and continue for a few minutes, skirting the stream and leaving on the left a spectacular erratic boulder in the shape of a ship's prow. This area was known by the toponym Malinšče. A ship that got stranded on the rocks of the sea of Topolò in ancient times. Having passed a bend, we can see on the right the entrance to the section that, entering the woods, leads to the waterfall and the remains of the mill. One last curiosity: is it possible that only the boys of Topolò did not have a football pitch? There was: continuing for about two hundred metres along the road, ignoring the entrance leading to the waterfall, you come to Ran Log, a levelled meadow that had that function.

3. Path to Stamorčak and Kralj Matjaž Cave

From the car park, walk through the lower village, past the open-air cinema square and the last houses of Topolò and go into the forest. The path descends along dry-stone walls to the left and, preceded by the sound of a waterfall, arrives at a shady and "magical" place, Stamorčak. The name of the place is also that of the first of the two streams that here meet, and which can be crossed by two bridges. The dominant feature of the place is the gurgling of the water as it meanders through a maze of pathways carved between the large flat stones, creating a "liquid vibraphone" effect that is much appreciated by musicians working at Topolò Station. The place has also given rise to many legends relating to apparitions and mysterious voices attributed to the mythical Krivapete, creatures of the woods and waterways, recognisable by their long greenish hair and backward-twisted feet. Few believe that some the grooves in the rock under the second bridge are their footprints. The Stamorčak area has always been used by the women of the village for washing and rinsing their bedclothes and for washing and drying the softer cob leaves, used to make straw mattresses. In the past, when it was still allowed, the village boys would go hunting for crayfish in the pools. "Ju tu tuj" was the call, sung repeatedly, to bring them out of their hiding places.

A 15-minute walk will take you to the spectacular cave of Kralj Matjaž. King Matjaž is a legendary king from the traditions of Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, and other Balkan countries; his legend has pre-Christian origins and over the centuries has gradually been linked to a real king: Matthias Corvinus of Hungary, who lived in the 15th century. It is said that he is sleeping in this cave and that his awakening would lead to immense catastrophes. We therefore recommend silence. From the cave, which cannot be visited inside and where there is also said to be a small lake, take the trail back to the village of Topolò.

Pot pašnikov PASTURES PATH →

Javoršca - Neiwiller path

This trail starts at the end of a cross-country road that begins at the cemetery of Topolò and ascends north of the village towards Slovenia. The entire area was, in the period of domination of the Serenissima, used as community pasture, where there grew only chestnut trees, the "gold of the valleys", each with its own owner. The proposed path leads to the woods through a beech forest and reaches the locality of Javoršca (a phyto-toponym identifying an area rich in maples). Several large and regularly shaped holes can be seen in the ground: these were the kùote, used for turning wood into charcoal. Javoršca is a border place par excellence. For decades, a red-painted stone and pole visually marked the border between East and West, Yugoslavia and Italy. Also engraved in the rock is a St Andrew's cross that probably marked the border between the Republic of Venice and the Hapsburg possessions. The place has a beauty that is both harsh and gentle at the same time, characterised by a watercourse that from rock to rock creates several small waterfalls. After World War II and until the collapse of Yugoslavia (1991), the area was intensively patrolled on both sides and everyone in Topolò remembers the feared graničariji, the Yugoslav border guards who walked the strip separating the two worlds armed with machine guns and dogs on a leash. Today it is an open and peaceful border with the Republic of Slovenia, and Stazione di Topolò has decided to dedicate the path to a "frontier" artist, Antonio Neiwiller, a man of theatre, who died in 1993, and whose spiritual testament, "For a clandestine theatre", has been the manifesto of our cultural adventure since its first edition.

Pot procesije PROCESSION PATH →

This path, which starts at the parking lot below the village (Potok) and leads back to the village in a loop, was used for auspicious rites (processions, singing, blessing of the fields) to promote the harvest season. The date, in Topolò as in many other places, was 25 April, St Mark's Day, in the early hours of the morning.

Two small wooden crosses embedded in the ground still survive as a reminder of these events.

Along part of this path run the more recent dry-stone walls, which are more imposing than the older ones. The choice of this path for religious processions is due to the fact that it included fields belonging to both the families of the upper village (Gorenje) and those of the lower village (Dolenje); this division was experienced in the past in a much more marked way than now. In fact, near this path there was also an open space, for the Dolencij, which housed the traditional kries (bonfire) on the night of St. John, a tradition that was very much felt and is still preserved in some villages of the valley. The Gorenjij prepared their own bonfire above the church so that the two were within sight. The intensity and size of the two fires were, of course, a source of competition.



solvitur ambulando

It is time to start to listen.
It is time to keep silent within.
It is time to be mobile and light,
to become lighter to get on the way.
It's time to live with the debris and
the horror to find a meaning.
Before long even the mediocre will say it.
But I am talking of more perilous roads,
of riskier commitments,
of deeds pondered over in solitude.
The only moral possible
is that which you can find,
day by day
in your open-secluded place.
What sense does it make if only you survive.
One need to be able to contemplate,
but also to be travelling.
One need to be attentive,
mobile,
unprejudiced and inspired.
A nomadism,
a condition,
an adventure,
a freeing process,
a struggle,
a grief,
to communicate among the debris.
One need to use all means available,
to find the deep moral
of his own art.
Visible places
and invisible places,
real places
and imaginary places
will people our way.
But goods are goods
and their rule will be
always ready to wipe out
the work of
those who have found root
sand look far.
Past and future
do not exist in the everlasting present
of consumption.
This is one of the horrors
with which we have been long living
ad to which we still have not
given and adequate answer.
One must set free of oppression
and reconcile with mystery.
Two are the roads to follow,
two are the forces to make coexist.
Politics alone is blind.
Mystery, which is dumb,
by itself becomes deaf.
A clandestine art
to stay open,
to be travelling but
to leave traces behind,
to build places,
to join restless travellers.
And if it occurs to someone,
one day, to draw the map,
of this itinerary,
to retrace the places,
to examine the traces,
I hope that it will be only
to find a new beginning.
It is time that art finds other forms
to communicate in a universe
in which everything is communication.
It is time that it leaves the abstract time
of the market, to reconstruct
the human time of necessary expression.
One need to invent.
A stable can become
a temple and
magnificently remain a stable.
Neither God, nor an idea,
can save us but only a vital relationship.
It is needed another glance
to give sense to what
barbarously dies every day
confirming itself.
And as the master says:
"Remembering everything.
Forgetting everything."

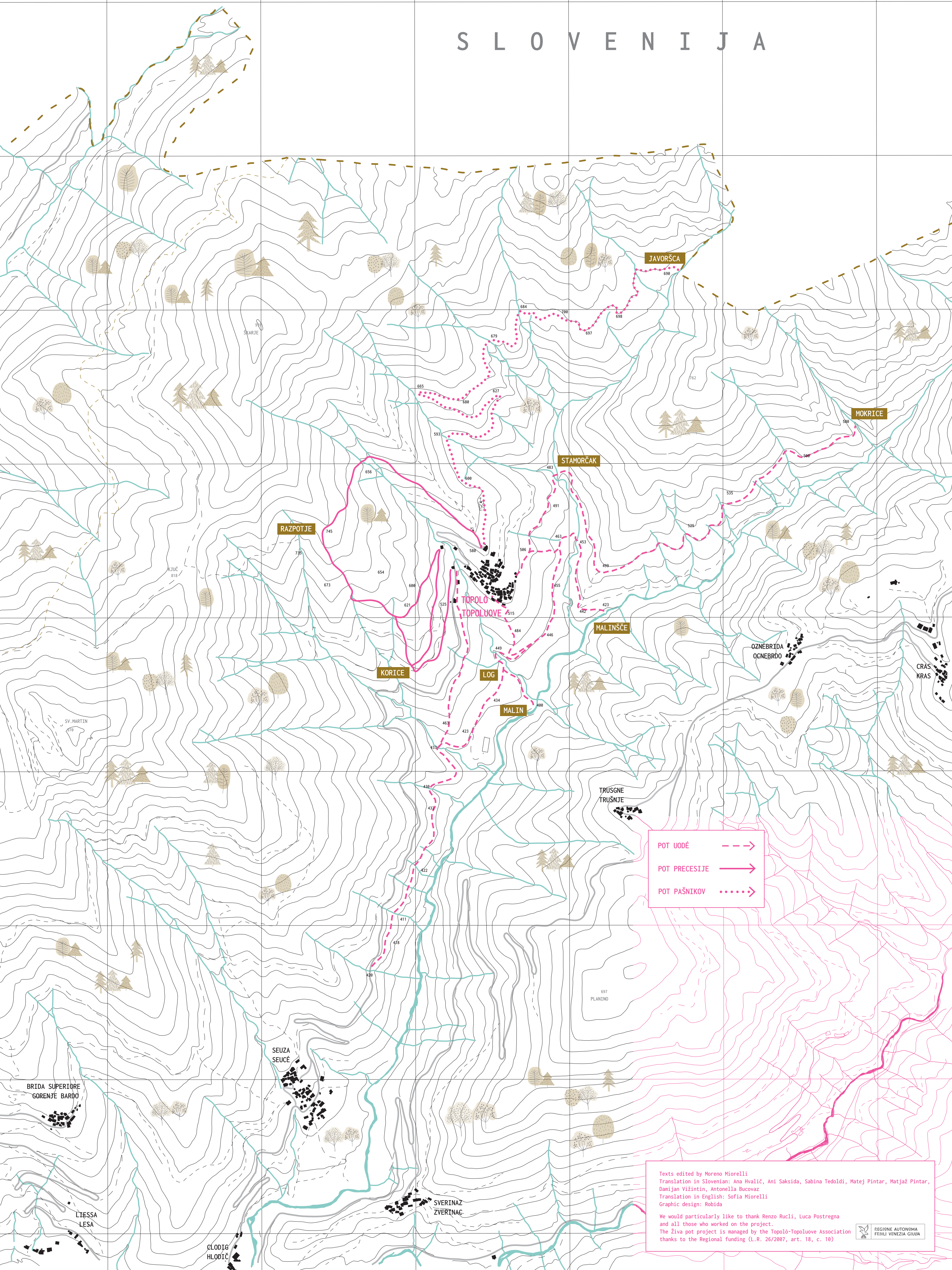
Antonio Neiwiller

For a clandestine theatre

Dedicated to T. Kantor, 1993.

Stories told by Renzo Rucli, Italo Rucli, Angela Gariup, Silvia Bucovaz.

SLOVENIJA



POT UODÉ	---
POT PRECEŠIJE	—
POT PAŠNIKOV	...

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