

VERONESE EASTERS WHAT WERE THEY?



Left: *Veronese Easters.* Battles in Via Mazzanti, Verona, close to Piazza delle Erbe (Market Square). 17 April 1797. **Tablet by Silvano Mezzatesta.**

Right: *Veronese Easters.* The Castelvecchio clock tower falls to the broadside bombardment by the cannons brought in by the Veronese people. The cannon is aimed by an imperial gunner in the brown uniform, who had been freed from prison and joined the popular insurrection. Assisting him are a regular Venetian gunner in the gunmetal-grey uniform and a bombardier of the volunteer gunners. From Castelvecchio, senior Venetian military officer Leonardo Salimbeni, a Jacobin and a traitor, waves a white handkerchief in an attempt to mislead the Veronese besiegers and fellow citizens, calling on them to come closer only to then deceitfully kill them using a cannon loaded with shot. 18 April 1797. **Tablet by Giuseppe Rava.**

What were the insurrections (*insorgenze*)?

These constituted a real great war of the people, fought in Italy against Napoleon's French revolutionary troops. It is estimated that at least **200-250 thousand** people died between 1796 and 1814, well more than the number of deaths that occurred during the so-called *Risorgimento*, the Italian unification (a mere 6,262 according to Gaetano Salvemini's estimates) or the so-called *Resistenza*, the Italian resistance movement of 1943-45 (less than 30-thousand). This at a time, in the 18th Century, when the Italian population was just one third the size that it was in 1943-45.

What were the *Veronese Easters*?

Having erupted on Easter Monday, 1797, hence the name, these constituted the most important popular insurrection in northern Italy against Bonaparte and the military invasion initiated in 1796 by post-revolution France with the aim of plundering the Italian Peninsula and exporting the false principles of the French Revolution to this Country. The traditional Italy, Catholic, peaceful and extremely wealthy thanks to its ancient, human-scale States, was thus destroyed.



Veronese Easters celebration Committee

Via Mentana, 24 - 37128 VERONA

Tel. 329/0274315 - 347/3603084

www.traditio.it - pasqueveronesi@libero.it

Self-published - Resp. Maurizio-G. Ruggiero - 18th June 2018

When did the *Veronese Easters* erupt?

From 17 to 25 April 1797, after 10 months of French occupation of the neutral territories of the Serenissima Republic of Venice, of which Verona was part at the time. A heroic fight was put up in the town and countryside of Verona against the most powerful war machine of the times: if Venice itself and the Austrian Empire had come to its aid, the entire Venetian land would have risen up and the Napoleonic conquest would have come to nought.

Why did the insurrection erupt?

In defence of the legitimate Government of the Venetian Republic and the Catholic religion, which were being systematically defiled by the French troops (see www.traditio.it, *Pasque Veronesi* page, a brief history in Italian, German, English, French and Spanish).



Left: *Veronese Easters*. At Croce Bianca (or White Cross) between Verona and San Pietro in Cariano, the Venetian and Veronese Authorities inspect thousands of Valpolicella soldiers and volunteers willing to defend their territory against the French-Jacobin hordes to the last man standing, 24 March 1797.

Tablet by **Giorgio Sartor**.

Below: *Veronese Easters*. French soldiers being attacked by Veronese people and Venetian soldiers along the *Canale dell'acqua morta* (now a street known as *Interrato dell'acqua morta*) in the Veronetta district. Tablet by **Giuseppe Rava**.

How many died?

2,105, including the entire Venetian garrison guarding Verona at the time, all of whose members were deported to the concentration camps in France set up by the “liberators of humanity” and from which less than one third of them ever returned. However, the Veronese people inflicted a bitter military defeat on the French Army: at least 500 killed (as against 350 Veronese fighters); 2,400 taken prisoners, including 500 soldiers



provincia
verona



Comune
di Verona



amia
Gruppo AGSM



Left: Veronese Eaters. The French garrison that occupied Verona surrenders to the *Provveditore di Comun* or Municipal Superintendent, Count Francesco Emilei. The prisoners were led to the Palazzo Pubblico or Municipal Building that currently serves as the offices of the Verona Provincial Administration. 17 April 1797. **Tablet by Beniamino Delvecchio.**

Right: Veronese Eaters. The people of Verona clamber down from the rooftops and smash through the windows of the houses to attack the French revolutionary troops, who were obliged to surrender. Here at Palazzo Malaspina, near San Fermo too. **Tablet by Giuseppe Rava.**

and another 900 civilian staff members of the Napoleonic army, as well as another 1,000 French soldiers admitted to the town's hospitals and guarded by the Veronese people themselves to protect them against any possible revenge attacks.

Were there any revenge attacks?

The mayor at the time, Count Francesco Emilei, was executed by firing squad at Porta Nuova, together with a number of other patriots and a 72 year-old Franciscan Priest, Father Frangini, who died a saintly death. Bishop Avogadro was arrested and avoided being put to death by a single vote. Caravan loads of priceless art treasures were pillaged and sent off to France. The Italian Jacobins, who were the French collaborators banned all religious processions, the ringing of bells, funerals and even Carnival celebrations. They tore down all the lions of San Marco, the Serenissima monument that was located in Piazza Bra (Bra Square), all the noble families' coats of arms and the portraits of the former city Rectors, and they very much wanted to change Verona's name to *Egalitopoli* (in other words, *the City of Equality*). They also very much wanted to knock down the Scaliger Tombs because they were built under the auspices of a non-democratic Government, burn all the confessionals, kill off all the religious leaders by firing squad and deport all the Venetian patriots en-masse to Guyana. No private property, churches, convents or sacred icons (stolen to be held to ransom or melted down into ingots to be sent back to France) were spared. The relics of the Saints were lost forever. **The Austrian Imperial Army's arrival in Verona on 21 January 1798, now finally liberated of French revolutionaries and Jacobins, was triumphantly heralded by the local population.**



Above: French revolutionary troops confiscate and send off to Paris the natural history collection that included the renowned prehistoric fishes and Bolca fossils collected by Count Giovambattista Gazzola. None of these were ever returned. **Tablet by Achille Capaldo.**

Bottom left: Verona. The Lion of Saint Mark mounted on a column in Piazza delle Erbe (Market Square) being taken down by the municipalists (the Jacobins of the Municipality) to the dismay and anger of the local population. The Jacobins even defiled the glorious icon of St. Mark. 6 May 1797. **Tablet by Francesco Bonanno.**

Bottom right: The Imperial Army's triumphant entrance into Verona and the keys of the town being handed over to the Austrian aulic General, Baron Wilhelm von Kerpen. 21 January 1798. **Tablet by Mariano Zardini.**

