

ACTA CARSOLOGICA	30/2	20	279-291	LJUBLJANA 2001
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COBISS: 1.01

## **BISHOP HERVEY AT TRIESTE AND IN SLOVENIA, 1771**

### **ŠKOF HERVEY V TRSTU IN SLOVENIJI 1771**

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Prejeto / received: 1. 10. 2001

**Izveček**

UDK: 551.44(497.4)(091):929 Hervey F.A.  
044:929 Hervey F.A.

**Trevor R. Shaw: Škof Hervey v Trstu in Sloveniji 1771**

V prispevku sta v celoti objavljeni pismi Fredericka Augusta Herveya iz 1771. V njih poroča, da si je ogledal jame pri Postojni, Planini, Škocjanu in Pazinu maja 1771, preden se je v Istri pridružil Fortisu in z njim nadaljeval bolj znane raziskave v Dalmaciji. Po drugih virih je dokazano, da je Hervey na tem potovanju obiskal tudi jamo Vilenico ter jami pri Socerbu in Brtonigli. Omenja tudi dve določeni jami blizu izvirov Timave.

**Gljučne besede:** speleologija, zgodovina speleologije, Slovenija, Hrvaška, Italija, Istra, Postojna, Škocjan, Timava, Fortis, Hervey.

**Abstract**

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**Trevor R. Shaw: Bishop Hervey at Trieste and in Slovenia, 1771**

Two letters written in 1771 by Frederick Augustus Hervey are printed in full. They report that he saw caves at Postojna, Planina, Škocjan and Pazin about May 1771, before he joined Fortis in Istria and continued with him to Dalmatia and their better-known cave explorations there. From other sources it is shown that Hervey also visited the caves at Vilenica, Socerb and Brtonigla in the same journey. He mentions also two identified caves close to the Timavo springs.

**Key words:** speleology, history of speleology, Slovenia, Croatia, Italy, Istria, Postojna, Škocjan, Timavo, Fortis, Hervey.

## INTRODUCTION

Two letters of 1771, never previously published in full, show that the English Bishop of Derry, F.A. Hervey, visited caves in Slovenia and Istria. He says very little about them, and indeed his visits to some are known only from other sources, but the letters do cast more light on the cave interests of the man who later in the same year was to explore caves in Dalmatia with Alberto Fortis.

## HERVEY

Frederick Augustus Hervey (1730-1803) (Figs. 1-2) was a colourful and somewhat eccentric character who spent much of his life travelling in continental Europe. He had sufficient wealth not only for this travelling but also to be a patron of the fine arts. The same generosity caused him to pay the expenses of his fellow-traveller in Dalmatia, the naturalist Alberto Fortis (1741-1803). Like Fortis, Hervey had a considerable interest in geology, and specially vulcanology which caused him to climb Vesuvius several times (Dunlop 1891; Childe-Pemberton 1925; Ingamells 1997, 126-130).

Having been educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, he trained first as a lawyer and then became a priest.



*Fig. 1: Frederick Hervey in 1777 or 1778, painted in Rome by Pompeo Batoni.*

*Fig. 2: Frederick Hervey in later life, after he became the Earl of Bristol.*

He was made Bishop of Cloyne in Ireland in 1767 and a year later became Bishop of Derry (the Irish town now called Londonderry). As was not uncommon at that time, he spent long periods away from his diocese, leaving the work to his deputies, though he did do much good work there himself. When his brother died in 1779 Hervey succeeded him as the 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bristol. This, coupled with his extensive European travels, led to the immense number of hotels named the "Bristol" spread across Europe to this day. He was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1782.



## HERVEY AND THE KARST

Although the cave visits mentioned in the letter printed here (Hervey 1771) were made with an unidentified Italian who was certainly not Fortis, it was with Fortis that Hervey was closely associated in his dealings with karst. In April 1771 (Ingamells 1997, 903) they were both in the mountains near Vicenza, together with John Strange, the recipient of these letters. Hervey was in Trieste on 4 April when the first letter was written, describing the Timavo risings and two caves close to them. If the month of April given above for their visit to the mountains near Vicenza is correct, then that must have taken place after 4 April and before the journey in Slovenia described in Hervey's second letter dated, again at Trieste, on 29 May.

On 6 June Hervey is known to have been at Pula, in Istria, for that is where Fortis (1771a) found him at the start of their journey together across the karst to Rovinj. From there they continued by sea to Ancona and across the Italian mainland to Roma and Napoli, returning across Italy in time to sail to Dalmatia and arrive in Split by 26 July.

It was from there that they went on to see the big karst springs that form the sources of the Krka and Cetina rivers (Fortis 1774, 1778; Shaw, in press). The main rising of the Krka is in a cave beneath the 50 m high waterfall of Topolje, 4 km east of Knin. The two men went a little way upstream along the underground Krka in a boat, despite the fast current and the low roof. The Cetina rises at a group of large karst springs 18 km from the Krka source and near to the town of Vrlika. Some of the water previously flows through part of Gospodska pećina, a cave they explored together for several hundred metres.

### THE LETTERS

The two letters (Fig. 3) printed here are bound in a volume of letters written by various people to John Strange between 1771 and 1782. The volume is identified as Egerton MS.2001 in the British Library. According to the catalogue the letters in it start in 1773, the year of the ones bound at the beginning of the volume. The

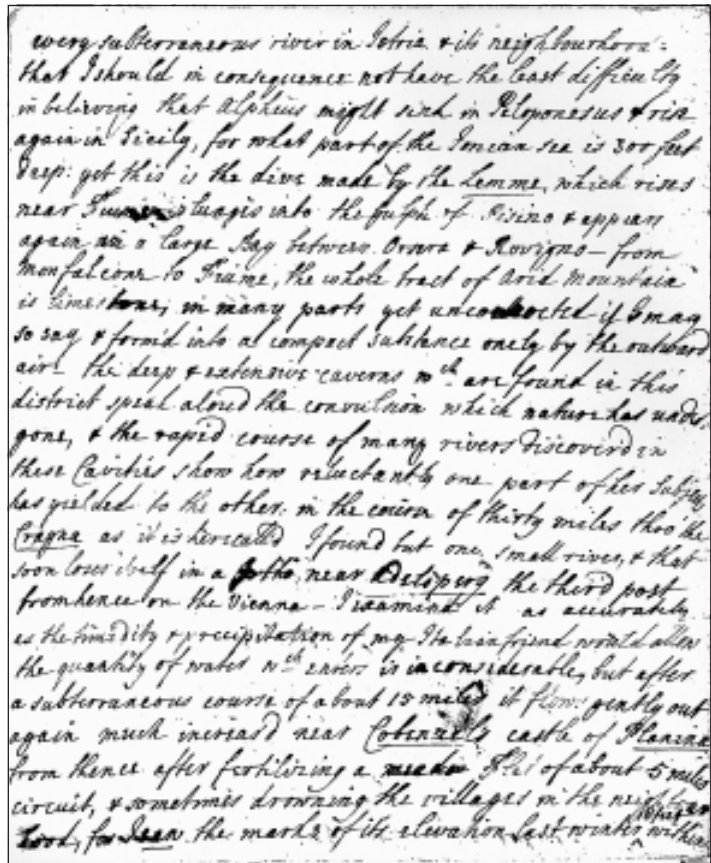


Fig. 3: The second page of Hervey's letter written on 29 May 1771 at Trieste, mentioning caves between there and Rijeka and also at Postojna and Planina. Reproduced, with permission, from British Library Egerton MS.2001, fol. 165v.

two Hervey letters that concern us here have no year written on them but are bound in sequence as if written in 1777 and are mentioned as of that year by Jovanović (1909). However in 1777 Hervey was not in Italy before September and the Slovene cave visits he describes in his second (May) letter are referred to in a Fortis (1771a) letter dated 13 June 1771, so it is certain that they were written in 1771 when he is known to have been in the region.

Each letter consists of a single sheet of paper folded into two, thus making two leaves or four pages, on one of which is written the address. Both were written at Trieste. The first letter (4 April) occupies ff.159-160, and the second (29 May) ff. 165-166. The leaves of the first measure 215 x 166 mm and of the second 239 x 196 mm.

The letters are written in ink and are both signed "F: D:" for Frederick Derry, the normal way for a Bishop to sign, with his first name followed by the name of his diocese. Parts of the letters were published, inaccurately, by Chidle-Pemberton (1925, 1, 110-112).

The John Strange (1732-1799), to whom they were written, had already spent much time in Italy where he had archaeological interests. He too was a Fellow of the Royal Society and by 1771 he was living in Venezia where, from 1773 until 1788, he was the British Resident or representative (Seccombe 1898: Ingamells 1997, 903-904). He is known to historians for the fact that some of the travellers he came to know wrote him long and informative letters, many of which are now in the British Library. Hervey's son John remained with Strange in Venezia during his father's 1771 excursion.

## THE CONTENT OF THE LETTERS

Hervey's two letters are printed here complete in the Appendix. The purpose of this section is to summarize them, comment on them, and explain some of the places, people and things he refers to.

The letter dated April 4 is concerned with his intention to travel on from Trieste to Fiume [Rijeka] and perhaps on to Cherso [Cres] also, and with advising Strange about the best route to take from Venezia to Trieste. He mentions the classical Karst between Monfalcone and Trieste, the Timavo risings at San Giovanni and two caves nearby, and the presence of a lake near Scardona [Skradin]. A note at the end of the letter adds that he intended to defer the Cherso journey in order to visit the mines at Idrija.

The next letter, dated May 29, does not follow on naturally from the first. It may be an addendum to a previous one, now missing, for it commences "I forgot to tell you that ...". Thus there is no certain indication whether or not he did go to Idrija, which may have been the subject of the missing letter. He had, however, been to "almost every subterraneous river in Istria", including the Gulph of Pisino [Pazinska jama]. In Slovenia, perhaps en route to Idrija, he saw the river sinking at Adelsberg [Postojna] and rising again at Planina where he stayed overnight. Its rising once again at Upper Laybach [Vrhnika] is mentioned but he may not have seen it. A reference to the sinking of the Recca [Reka, at Škocjan] suggests that he had been there, but "I say nothing to you of [it...] because its course is so well described by [previous writers]".

To return now to details in the first letter. Cherso [Cres], "opposite to" Rijeka is 18 km away at its nearest point. Hervey may have heard of it from his friend Fortis (1771b) who had been there the year before. "Lord Bute" was John Stuart, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Bute (1713-1792), who had

paid most of Fortis's expenses for that visit. The post-road from Trieste to Rijeka is the present road through Materija and Podgrad. The island of Osero is properly the close southern neighbour of Cres, now called Losinj, but Hervey's statement that it was only three miles from Rijeka suggests that he is referring to Cres itself. Three Austrian miles were equivalent to 23 km, not very different to the actual distance of 18 km; English or Italian miles would mean an even shorter distance. Fortis (1771b, 34-35) treats the two islands as one.

The "deep well" near the Timavo rising is the Pozzo dei Colombi (VG 227). The letter did give the depth to which this was plumbed but a tear in the paper has destroyed the figure he wrote. Cave divers in 1990 to 1993 reached a depth of 82 m in a water-filled tunnel running north from the bottom of the shaft (Crevatin et al. 1992; Fabbriatore 1994). The nearby "somewhat higher cavern of a greater depth" (than the vertical depth to which the "well" could be sounded from the surface) is VG 226, named by Bertarelli and Boegan (1926, 247) as Pozzo presso S. Giovanni di Duino, 53,5 m deep overall with a first pitch of 43 m.

The "Lake near Scardona" "beyond Osero" was at first suspected of being Vransko jezero beyond Osor on the island of Cres which Hervey intended to visit. But Scardona was a town near Šibenik in Dalmatia known to the Romans and now called Skradin. So the lake he refers to must be the Vransko jezero midway between Šibenik and Zadar. "Beyond Osero" evidently meant further down the coast after leaving Cres behind. Hervey's supposition that this lake was associated with the Ister river mentioned by Pliny seems to be confused. Pliny (1942, 95) does indeed refer to an Ister, believed by many ancient authors to be a branch of the Danube flowing into the Adriatic, but he places it firmly in Istria nearly 200 km away (Shaw & Macqueen 1998, 382-383).

Hervey's suggestion that, as his intended visit to the Idrija mine would prevent his planned visit to Osero, he might visit the island later with Fortis foresees the plans they made to do so in June and which were only stopped by the islands being then in quarantine (Shaw & Adam 2001).

The Hosteria Grande hotel in Trieste, at which the police commissioner was staying, was probably the same as the Locanda Grande which Cadell (1820, 1, 16) called "one of the best ... [with] a view of the sea". It was mentioned in the guidebooks up to 1880 (Baedeker 1880, 386).

The second of the two surviving letters deals almost entirely with karst. Unfortunately Hervey does not say which caves and springs amounted to "almost every subterraneous river in Istria & its neighbourhood". He names only those of Postojna, Planina, Škocjan and Pazin. His river Lemme, sinking at Pisino [Pazin] is the R. Foiba; Orsera is now Vrsar. Fortis (1771a), writing only 15 days afterwards while Hervey was with him, stated that he had been also to the caves of S. Servolo [Socerb], Corgnal [Vilenica] and Verteneglio [Mramorica]. So, as Hervey omits mentioning these himself, it is possible that he also saw Črna jama, the other cave in Slovenia that was shown to visitors at that time.

The "thirty miles" that he travelled in Cragna [Crain or Carniola] is equivalent to 228 km if they are Austrian miles. This is more than the distance from Trieste to Planina and back, and does not preclude his going to Idrija also, as intended.

The unidentified Italian who was with him in Postojna was probably the artist, Bitio (Ingamells 1997, 126). "Cobenzel's castle" at Planina is Haasberg, now in ruins, which was owned by Count Ludvik Cobenzl at that time (Smole 1982, 596). It is interesting that Hervey was observant enough to notice that much more water emerged from Planinska jama than had flowed into Postojnska jama, though he did not suggest that this might be caused by water coming from Cerkniško jezero.



Rather than describe the way in which the Reka water sinking at Škocjan was thought to rise again as the Timavo, he cites Imperato (probably Ferrante Imperato, 1550-1625) and also Giovanni Fortunato Bianchini (1719-1779) (Casini 1968), whom he evidently knew as a friend. Imperato is reported by Catinelli (1830, 390) to have dropped floating matter into the river at Škocjanske jame but it did not reappear at the Timavo spring. This floating material, in three successive experiments, was dry seaweed, pine needles with cypress leaves, and chaff. Imperato's statement was contained in a letter written by him to Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605) and was evidently first published by Bianchini (1754, LXXXIX - XC; see also Gruber 1781, 157). It was not included with his remarks on underground water in his own book of 1599. Bianchini himself (1754, XLI - LXXXI) argued for the connection on the grounds that the rates of flow of the two rivers varied in the same way.

Hervey's mention of the river Alpheus sinking in southern Greece and reappearing in Sicily refers to the statement by Strabo (63 BC - 20 AD) that this was proven by the water of a karst spring in Sicily being discoloured by the blood of bulls sacrificed at Olympia (Strabo 1924, 75). Pliny (1949, 353) repeated this a few years later.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*I am grateful to the British Library for making Hervey's letters available for study, and for allowing them to be reproduced. Egizio Faraone identified the two caves close to the Timavo spring. Alenka Čuk and Nadja Adam of the Notranjski Muzej helped to locate the lake near Scardona.*

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APPENDIX

LETTERS WRITTEN BY FREDERICK AUGUSTUS HERVEY  
TO JOHN STRANGE IN 1771

(The original letters are part of Egerton MS.2001 in the British Library. Words underlined in the originals are printed here in italics.)

[f.160v]

A Monsieur, Monsieur Strange  
Gentilhomme Anglois  
a  
Venice

[f.159]

Trieste April 4<sup>th</sup>

I did not receive y<sup>r</sup>. letter of the 22<sup>d</sup>. my dear Sir 'till yesterday upon our arrival here & am much concern'd at the unfavourable account you send me of y<sup>r</sup>. own & M<sup>rs</sup>. Strange's health. the seeing you here therefore or at Osero would give me double satisfaction, as a proof of y<sup>r</sup>. recovery, & as a testimony of y<sup>r</sup>. friendship. I shall set out on Monday next with my horses for *Fiume* a Small town on the Peninsula of Istria opposite to Cherso, & which is no more than a day's Journey from hence but would not advise you or Lord Bute to venture to Trieste by Land as the Torrents are dangerous & the Inns miserable, unles you go up as high as Udine & then you are in no danger from either, but may with early rising reach Trieste from Udine in one day. there is likewise a Post road from hence to Fiume within [f.160] three miles of Osero. I was much delighted with my ride from Monfalcone here thro' the barren spot that can be imagin'd : but to me it was replete with Philosophical Objects. The Carso an Arid mountain which reaches the whole way has all the air of the most impenetrable solidity, & yet from the various earthquakes it has suffer'd is every where hollow. the fountains of the Ti[mavo\*] rise very quietly : near them is a deep well of [\*] fathom, & somewhat higher a large Cavern of a greater depth : the whole mountain is limestone: the baths of Monfalcone which in Pliny's time were in an Island are now separated from the Sea by a Hillock of Limestone. they are of the warmth of Bath Water, & do not rise in the Bath but *descend* from a Subterraneous Spring nearer the Sea.

beyond Osero is a Lake near Scardona generally suppos'd to be form'd by the interception of the old branch of the *Ister* whose existence is denied by Pliny tho' asserted by all the other Ancients. I wish we m<sup>t</sup>. visit it together & Padre Fortis of the Party : I have writ to him but not heard from him

y<sup>ts</sup> &c F:D:

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\*paper torn away

[f.159v] (since I writ last night I have had an offer of going to the Mines at Idra, w<sup>ch</sup>. makes me defer my journey to Ossero, so that possibly we may visit it together. The Commissario della Polizia of this place seems to be an able Man : he is lodg'd at the *Hosteria Grande*, so that you will have much satisfaction in him - on recollection the Road from Treviso from [=to] Udine is very good, & that from Udine hither Excellent.

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Pray Sir be so good as to send the inclosed to M<sup>r</sup>. shanahan [.] papa does not know where he is at Present, but begs you would be so kind as to find him out and send the letter to him. Pray give my compliments to Dear M<sup>rs</sup> Strange whom I am sorry has been so ill.

[f.166v]

A Mons<sup>r</sup>.  
Mons.<sup>r</sup> Strange  
Gentilhomme Anglois  
chez M<sup>r</sup>. Richie  
Venise

[f.165]

Trieste May 29<sup>th</sup>

I am truly mortified my dear friend at missing the pleasure of seeing you, & can not easily conceive how so enthusiastick a Naturalist as y<sup>r</sup>.self could relinquish so important an object as Osero. at present a Suspected vessel or two has laid on it an Embargo for all travellers which has depriv'd me of the Pleasure of seeing Padre Fortis to whom I am infinitely indebted for the readiness in w<sup>ch</sup>. he w<sup>d</sup>. have engag'd in this expedition : if you See him pray do justice to my Sentiments towards him on this occasion. I can not sufficiently acknowledge the civilities w<sup>ch</sup>. my Son received from you & M<sup>rs</sup>. Strange but I am so accustom'd to these tokens of friendship from you both, & that w<sup>ch</sup>. I feel for both is so sincere that I look at them rather as my due than works of supererogation on your side. you shall certainly hear of me from Rome, if any thing interesting, but it is a Place I am sick of & w<sup>d</sup>. not go twenty miles to visit but on my Son's account who has a real relish for architecture, & for the sake of some Irish records w<sup>ch</sup>. are to be found there onely: adieu I heartily wish you as Moderate a Stewing at Abano [thermal baths] as may Consist w<sup>th</sup>. y<sup>r</sup>. health.

F:D:

I forgot to tell you that I have visited almost [f.165v] every subterraneous river in Istria & it's neighbourhood: that I should in consequence not have the least difficulty in believing that Alpheus might sink in Peleponesus & rise again in Sicily, for what part of the Ionian sea is 300 feet deep : yet this is the dive made by the *Lemme*, which rises near Fiume & lunges into the Gulph of Pisino & appears again in a large Bay between Orsera & Rovigno. from Monfalcone to Fiume, the whole tract of Arid Mountain is limestone in many parts yet unconcocted if I may so say & form'd into a compact substance onely by the outward air. the deep & extensive caverns w<sup>ch</sup>. are found in this district speak aloud the convulsion which nature has undergone, & the rapid course of many rivers discover'd in these Cavities show how reluctantly one part of her Subjects has yielded to the other : in the course of thirty miles thro' the *Cragna* as it is here call'd I found but one small river, & that soon loses itself in a Grotto near *Adelsperg* the third post from hence on the Vienna. I examin'd it as accurately as the timidity & precipitation of my Italian friend would allow [.] the quantity of water w<sup>ch</sup>. enters is inconsiderable, but after a subterraneous course of about 15 miles it flows gently out again much increas'd near *Cobenzel's* castle of *Planina*: from thence after fertilizing a Flat of about 5 miles circuit, & sometimes drowning the villages in the neighbour hood, for I saw the marks of it's elevation last winter 18 feet up within [f.166] the walls of my bed chamber it again quietly takes its progress under ground, reappears near old Naupertus or upper *Laybach* flows afterwards in to the *Savus*, thence into the Danube & So into the Black Sea. I say nothing to you of the famous Timavus, which is nothing more than the *Recca* diving every now & then like the *Planina* River because it's course is so well described by my friend & Physician *Bianchini* of Udine & so much better by *Imperati* of the *cinquecento*, but I wonder how so diligent & so eager a Suitor to Nature can so long interrupt

y<sup>r</sup>. courtship, or fancy that  
you can either win or woo her

within the blank walls of your closet. come forth then my dear friend, leave y<sup>r</sup>. books & sibylls leaves & open the g. volume of Nature : there let us read together the Principal & leading Facts of her history, unbiass'd by any System & unaw'd by any authority. when you have done this for some years, perhaps you may be admitted to form a System of y<sup>r</sup>. own & so be y<sup>r</sup>.self quoted as authority

## ŠKOF HERVEY V TRSTU IN SLOVENIJI 1771

### Povzetek

Prvič sta v celoti objavljeni pismi o obisku jam v Sloveniji in Istri, ki ju je napisal F. A. Hervey, ki je kasneje istega leta prečkal del istrskega krasa skupaj z A. Fortisem in šel z njim dalje do velikih kraških izvirov Krke in Cetine v Dalmaciji. Tam sta skupaj raziskovala jame, kot je opisal Fortis (1774) v svoji knjigi. Pomembno je, da se je Hervey toliko zanimal za jame, da jih je nekaj obiskal že predtem istega leta.

Hervey (1730 - 1803) je bil škof v Derryju na Irskem, a je večino svojega življeja preživel na potovanjih po Evropi. Bil je precej bogat in je Fortisu kril stroške za nekaj potovanj. 1779, po smrti njegovega brata "3. bristolskega earla", je postal "4. bristolski Earl".

Jame, o obisku katerih poroča v svojem pismu z datumom 29. maj 1771, je obiskal bodisi proti koncu aprila ali maja. "Obiskal sem skoraj vse podzemeljske reke v Istri in njeni okolici". Na Kranjskem "sem našel samo majhno reko, ki se kmalu izgublja v jamo pri kraju Adelsberg [Postojna] ... Raziskal sem jo tako natančno, kot sta dovoljevali moja plahost in prenatrpanost mojega italijanskega prijatelja [verjetno umetnik Bitio, gotovo pa ne Fortis] dovoljevali. Količina vode, ki teče v jamo, je neznatna, toda po podzemeljskem teku okoli 15 milj, ko priteče spet mirno na površju blizu gradu lastnika Cobenzel [Haasberg] pri Planini, je močno narasla ...". Pismo govori tudi o jami pri Pisinu [Pazinska jama] na Hrvaškem, in o reki, ki ponika pri Škocjanu. V pismu, ki ga je napisal Fortis petnajst dni kasneje, je potrjeno, da je Hervey obiskal tudi jamo Vilenico, Socerbsko jamo in Mramorico (pri Brtonigli na Hrvaškem), tako, da je bil morda tudi v drugih, kot npr. v Črni jami.

Hervey omenja tudi poročilo o poizkusih F. Imperata okoli 1600, da bi dokazal povezavo med Reko pri Škocjanu in izviri Timave s pomočjo plovcev, ki jih je spuščal v ponor. Zapisal je tudi, da je to prav tako dokazal njegov "prijatelj" Bianchini (1754).

Herveyevo starejše pismo, napisano 4. aprila, govori o klasičnem Krasu med Monfalconom (Tržičem) in Trstom - "suha gora ... [ki] je vsa votla". Blizu izvirov Timave je videl "globok vodnjak" [Pozzo dei Colombi, VG 227], zraven pa "malo više zelo globoko jamo" [Pozzo presso S. Giovanni di Duino, VG 226].