

# Review of: "Ungaretti: the Soldier and the Poet"

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**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.

The core of this essay is a descriptive effort to contextualise the poetry of Giuseppe Ungaretti, Italy's pre-eminent war poet, in the context of his wartime service. The author presents a very considerable number of interesting ideas and an enormous amount of information, establishing a detailed chronological overview of Ungaretti's wartime career and its links to his poetic works.. The sections of the paper where the author closely analyses the poems themselves are interesting and thoughtful. Unfortunately they are buried in an enormous mass of excess and unnecessary detail on a vast range of often completely irrelevant topics. Not every single piece of background detail that the author has read needs to go into the paper! Rather than making it clearer for the reader, this mass of detail and numerous lengthy quotations makes it much harder to follow the crucial elements of the analysis. This is a great shame since the heart of the paper is actually interesting and worth reading.

The paper is also trying to do far too much. It would be considerably stronger if it picked out just a few key elements to focus on. At present, it reads more like the basis for an entire book-length biography than a research article which is presenting an article. If the author wants to turn this into a book, then the level of detail would be great; for a research article, it needs vigorous pruning. There could well be the basis for three separate papers here. For example, if the author is most interested in the question of the location of the poems' composition and the mis-identification of Lokvica, this could form the basis for a paper; if the question of ethnic and national identity is the main theme, then this material could be edited to form a paper focused on that topic. Yet a third possible paper might be composed focusing on Ungaretti's network of relationships with other intellectuals and writers at the time. To try to do all three of these things at once is frankly confusing.

There is no introduction, the article simply plunges into a biographical study. Again, for a book this might work, for a research article there ought to be a clear introduction which sets out what the stakes of the article are, introduces the main argument and explains to readers why they should care about the topic. An introduction should also set out the methodological and theoretical approach which the author has applied.

Overall as a work in progress this piece shows that the author's project has considerable potential, however it is some way off being ready to publish.

