

**ABOUT THE NAME AND THE HISTORY OF  
THE REGION KRAS**

O IMENU IN ZGODOVINI POKRAJINE KRAS

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**Izvleček**

UDC 001.4 : 551.44

**Kranjc, Andrej: O imenu in zgodovini pokrajine Kras**

Avtor podaja zgoščen pregled, kako je iz antičnega pokrajinskega imena "Carusadus (Carsus)" nastalo slovensko ime "Kras" in iz njega mednarodni strokovni termin "kras (karst)". Meni, da pokrajina Kras ne potrebuje pridevnika "matični" ali "klasični", pač pa bi "matični kras" moral obsegati, če že ne vsega slovenskega dinarskega krasa, vsaj ves primorski in notranjski kras.

Ključne besede: krasoslovje, zgodovina krasoslovja, imenoslovje, Slovenija, Kras.

**Abstract**

UDC 001.4 : 551.44

**Kranjc, Andrej: About the Name and the History of the Region "Kras"**

A condensed review how from the antique regional name "Carusadus (Carsus)" the slovene name "Kras" sprang up and from it the international professional term "Kras (Karst)". The author thinks that the region Kras does not need the adjective "Mother" or "Classical", but "Mother Karst" must include, if not the whole slovene dinaric karst at least the karst of Littoral and Notranjska.

Key words: karstology, history of karstology, terminology, Slovenia, Kras.

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## ABOUT THE NAME AND THE HISTORY OF THE REGION KRAS

In the ancient Greece and Rome the karst phenomena were well known:

- Zeus passed its childhood in the cave on Mt. Ida,
- Hermes hid the cattle stolen from Apollo in the cave,
- in the Greek mythical underground Styx and Letho rivers flow,
- the Romans shouted at the entrances to the potholes during the Lemuraliae: "Mundus subterraneus patet!" if I mention some small points of interest only.

Two karst phenomena from the actual Kras were famous in particular - Reka sinking into Škocjanske jame and Timavo karst springs which were already mentioned by the authors before Christ.

The landscape named Kras entered the history by the Roman assault upon this area in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. (178 and 177) (Curk 1976) and by its occupation and later annexation into the Roman Empire. Kras and karst peculiarities were mentioned among the navigation itineraries - periplos (Pseudoskilax's Periplos from the middle of 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) (Suić 1955). Posidonios of Apameia (135-50 B.C.) studied Timava springs and mentioned Škocjanske jame (Baucer 1663; Clozier 1972), Vergilius (70 - 19 B.C.) mentioned these resurgences in Eneida, the martyr St. Servus (Socerb) (killed in 284) lived in the Sveta jama cave near the actual castle of Socerb.

The classical name of the actual Kras should be "Carusadus, Mons Carusad, or Karusad, Carsus" (Gams 1973; Linhart 1788) and similar forms which have for sure the pre-indoeuropean root "ka(r)a/ga(r)a" - stone (Rostaing 1974). Carniola, Carnia, Karavanke Mts. etc. have probably the same origin. The ancestors of actual Slovenians, Slavic tribes came over the Eastern Alps and Pannonian plain and reached the Vipava valley about the year 600, and for the year 804 we know the Slavic peasants were settled already in Istria and peaceful as well as aggressive contacts with old (romanised) inhabitants were reported (Paulus Diaconus 1988) and that surely contributed to the preservation of the topographic name as well.

The oldest known slovene form of the name Kras is "Grast" in the chart of 1177 (Kos 1915) where we meet the early slovene liquid metathesis "kar-" into "kra-" (Gams 1973). What were the boundaries of the Kras in the Antiquity is hard to delimitate, but probably the area was not a lot different than the actual Kras is: between the Adriatic and the Vipava valley, between the Friuli plain and Čičarija, Brkini and Pivka. The inhabitants were called "Kraševci" and it was, according to Valvasor equally wide term as Pivčani, Notranjci or Gorenjci.

With New Age, when sciences, discoveries, travels began to flourish, when the print was discovered, Kras was becoming more and more known. First were geographers, cartographers, cosmographers, and topographers (Aistingerus, Cluverius, Mercator, Merian, Münsterus, Ortelius), scientists of the epoch (Agricola, Baucer, Faber, Kircher) and the travellers (Brown) who published the descriptions of Kras and its phenomena, later the predecessors of nowadays sciences as geographers, geologists, and hydrographers (Kranjc 1989).

The geographical, geopolitical, and political situation during 16. - 19. centuries were the reason why just Kras became the synonyme for the "karst phenomena" and not some other part of the Europe and specially of the Balkans, were such phenomena are often more important and more typically and spectacularly developed:

- part of Kras, Istria and the Triest were Habsburg (Austrian) domaine, Triest got the status of "free port" in 1719;
- most of Istria and Dalmatia were Venetian territory;
- the inner part of Balkans was in Otoman Empire, with unsafe and dangerous border regions;
- the lowest passes between the Middle Europe and Danube regions connecting them with Adriatic Sea go across Kranjska (Carniolia) karst.

For the passengers, who travelled from Middle Europe across the Eastern Alps towards Triest, the only possible route passed Kras and there was the only authentic "karstic" landscape during the whole journey. In that time Kras was barren, rocky, deserted land, hot and dry in summer, with icy "burja" (=boreal) wind and snow-drifts in winter leaving a deep impression on the passengers. Kras passes can not be compared with the Saint-Bernard pass, but also on Kras the passengers had to wait appropriate weather, had to take water and food, and were happy when the blue sea and Triest emerged in front of their eyes.

So the original and specially the German form of the Slovenian Kras, Karst respectively, entered the common description of a special kind of landscape and slowly appeared in the international scientific terminology, with variations according to different languages: Karst and Carso. Karst is one of the rare types of relief, which is called after the regional name. One who contributed a lot that the "karst" entered the international terminology, was without doubt Jovan Cvijić with his fundamental work "Das Karstphänomen", published hundred years ago (1893).

Among the scholars who essentially contributed to the understanding of our karst and to putting into force its name we must mention at least two who were interested in the karst hydrology in particular. In 1599 Father F. Imperato tried to prove, to ascertain respectively by the help of floaters the connection between Reka, sinking into Škocjanske jame and the Timavo springs. The Jesuit A. Kircher (1678) is the author of the idea of "hydrophilatia", it means huge underground water basins which are fed by siphons from the sea and drain the water to big karst springs and are also the reason for the floods on the karst poljes. His hypothesis is supported by two examples from our karst: Cerknjsko polje and Timavo springs, the water flowing below the Timavus Mons, being a part of Pennine Alps and an example of direct outflow of hydrophilatium into the sea (Kranjc 1992).

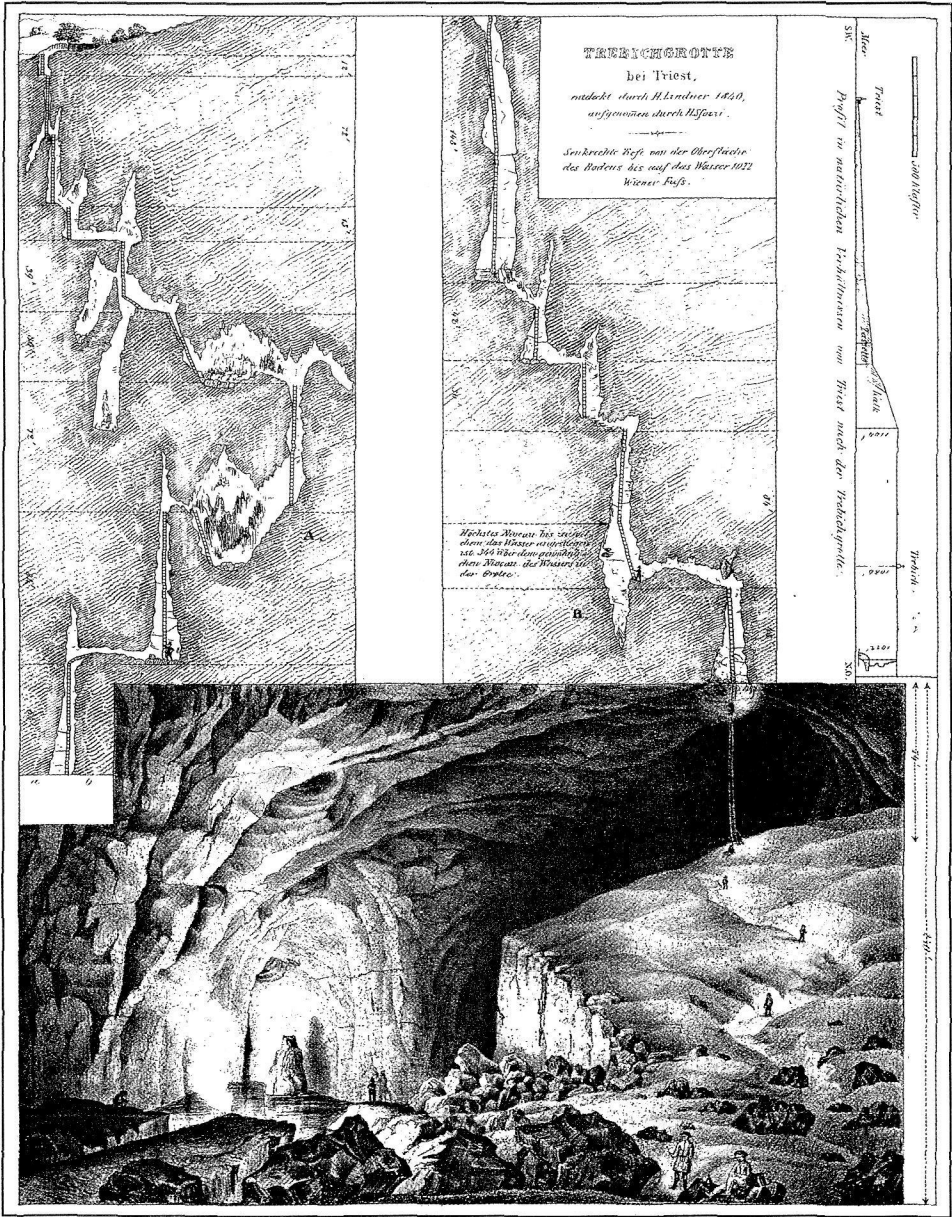
I shall not extra speak about the Valvasor's work I'd like to mention only that he may be



Sl. 1.: Izsek iz karte W. Laziusa - A. Orteliusa "Goritiae, Karstii, Chazeolae, Carniolae, Histriae et Windorium Marchae Descrip(tio) 1561, 1573", na kateri sta narisani tek Reke in vas Škocjan "ubi Recca flu, absorbetur, et in Timaii fontibus erumpit" ter zapisano ime "Karst".

Fig. 1: A part of W. Lazius's - A. Ortelius's Map "Goritiae, Karstii, Chazeolae, Carniolae, Histriae et Windorium Marchae Descrip(tio) 1561, 1573", where the Reka river flow and the village Škocjan are drawn "ubi Recca flu, absorbetur, et in Timaii fontibus erumpit" and the name "Karst" is written.

Tafel III.



Sl. 2.: Brezno Labodnica, priloga III Morlotovega dela "Über die geologischen Verhältnisse von Istrien" (1848).

Fig. 2.: Grotta Trebiciana, the 3<sup>rd</sup> annex to Morlot's work "Über die geologischen Verhältnisse von Istrien" (1848).

considered as the author of the first "comprehensive" Kras description and not only of single karst phenomena and curiosities which, obviously, are not missed in his topography (Kranjc 1990).

The work of B. Hacquet, his *Oryctographia Carniolica* (1778, 1781, 1784, 1789) in particular, although in other works too he treats karst, and his importance for the understanding of karst, slovene Kras and karstology in general are not yet valued by the same way as it was done by J. Wester (1954) for Hacquet as the first investigator of our Alps. On one hand Hacquet described in detail particular (actual) Slovene countries or their parts and on the other hand he is probably among the first who estimated karst as an exceptional phenomena, as a geological and hydrological speciality. By detailed review of his work one must find out in which degree he speaks about "karst" phenomena, about "karst" rocks as a general conception and the positive answer should place him among the first considering karst as a phenomenon and not only as a regional or single curiosity.

In 19<sup>th</sup> centry the geologists and the geographers essentially contributed that the regional name Kras entered the general geological and geomorphological terminology. A. v. Morlot (1848) speaks in the commentary to his geological map of Littoral and Istria about "karst limestone" (Karstkalk) and about "karst landscape" (Karstland) (Fig. 2). A. Schmidl (1854) writes about the characteristic orographic shape "terraced mountains of Kras" including the whole Istria and Dalmatia. J. Lorenz (1858) too states in his works that it is not correct that the name "Kras" is given to the area between Vrhnika and Triest only as the Liburnian "Kras" is not the least different. W. Urbas (1874, 1877) distinguishes within the Slovene karst the karst of Primorska, Notranjska and Dolenjska.

Thus in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century Kras became on the dinaric landscape the synonym for the "karst landscape" and later synonym for each area on the limestone or for any landscape or phenomenon which are karstic or similar to karst. Beside correct expressions of the lava tubes or caves in ice we frequently meet the word karst on the glaciers or in lava, which is wrong but indicates the continuing process of widening the conception of karst. E.A. Martel, considered by mostly French speaking circles, according to my view unduly, as the initiator of modern speleology and science about karst, did not like the neologismes and he strictly refused the use of the adjective "karstic" for the occurrences and processes on limestone. Instead of today generally used "karstification" and "phénomènes karstiques" he wrote about the "phénomènes du calcaire" (Martel 1894). In spite of his great authority, also out of France, he did not succeed: today on the whole world we speak about karst, almost all civilized nations use for karst and karst processes the terms derived from the name of our Kras with exception of Chinese who use for the process of "karstification" the chinese expression "to gnaw at the stone".

In the Slovene speaking former Austrian lands, in Slovenia respectively, there remained two partly unsolved questions connected to term "kras".

The laymen often have problems to distinguish "Kras" and "kras" (the name of the country and the name of the phenomenon). Despite the name of the country has to be written in capital first letter, misunderstanding can occur. Therefore frequently the descriptors as "Tržaški" (= Triestin), "Tržaško-komenski" (Triest-Komen) and similar were added, after the Second War omitting the name Triest. In the sixties the geographers suggested the

solution and introduced the expressions as "Classical" or "Mother" Kras ("klasični" or "matični" kras) (Radinja 1966). Trying to stress the original country Kras (where the word derived from), i.e. original Kras, Kras in proper sense of meaning, Kras strictly speaking, Karst "proprement dit" as say the French, the idea is good and would be used mostly when we write in a foreign language as the foreigners, the experts included (who anyway used the form "karst") hardly distinguish between Kras and kras. Unfortunately these two adjectives, "classical or mother" are more and more frequently used when we write about the landscape Kras in the Slovene language which is superfluous as we have only one region Kras and there could not be a doubt about which area we write.

The second question includes the extent, the limits respectively of "classical" or "mother" karst. When it comes to Kras the matter is clear. By using the words "classical" or "mother" in connection with Kras we make ourselves a bad turn, according to my view, as we narrow the "classical karst", which should be from the universal point of view the reference karst to the region Kras where many a "classical karst phenomenon" is missed. For the describers and explorers in the past centuries up to the First World War "classical Karst" meant all the karst of Carniola, this is the area which is called nowadays the "Slovene Dinaric Karst". In the oldest topographies as well as in the "classical" karstological works three "classical" karst phenomena are mostly known from the Carniola: Kras, Cerknjiško jezero and Postojnska jama. I do not see the reason why we should like to cancel the last two from our "classical Karst" hence I submit: Kras should remain Kras only (if it is necessary an explanation in a foreign language we may use "strictly speaking", "proprement dit" etc., while "classical karst" and "Mother Karst" should mean the "Slovene part of the dinaric karst". In the time of "classical" explorations of the actual Slovene karst, the town Pivka, f.e. was still called Šempeter na Krasu (St. Peter on Karst). That my opinion about the "Mother Karst" is shared by the foreign karstologists is the best evidenced by the fundamental work of the history of cave science written by T.R. Shaw (1992).

Translated by Maja Kranjc

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## O IMENU IN ZGODOVINI POKRAJINE KRAS

### Povzetek

Kraški pojavi kot tudi naš Kras so bili v antiki že dobro znani, s Krasa ponikanje Reke v Škocjanske jame in izviri Timave. Kras je prišel v zgodovino z rimskimi napadi na te kraje v 2. stol. pr. n. št. pod imenom Carusadus, Mons Carusad, Carsus in podobnimi oblikami iz predindoevropskega korena "ka(r)a/ga(r)a" - kamen. Predniki današnjih Slovencev so dosegli Vipavsko dolino okoli l. 600 in za l. 804 vemo, da so se slovenski kmetje naseljevali v Istri in imeli stike s staroselci, kar je pripomoglo h kontinuiteti topografskih imen. Najstarejša znana slovenska oblika za Kras je "Grast" zapisana 1177.

Geografska, geopolitična in politična situacija od 16. do 19. stoletja je bila vzrok, da je ime Kras postalo splošni pojem, termin za "kras" in za "kraške pojave ter procese": Kras je bil pod Avstrijo oziroma Habsburžani, Dalmacija pod Benečani, notranjost Balkana pa pod Turki; najnižji prevali med Jadranom in Srednjo ter Podonavsko Evropo vodijo preko kranjskega Krasa. Popotniki in učenjaki so pričeli opisovati to pokrajino in njene značilnosti ter kraške pojave, v 18. in 19. stoletju pa so strokovnjaki te pojme širili tudi na druge podobne pokrajine.

Med slovenskimi pisci je danes težnja, da se imenu Kras dodaja razne pridevke, predvsem Matični ali Klasični. Menim, da je to nepotrebno, saj ne smemo pozabiti, da je Kras le eden. Pač pa bi moral "Matični ali Klasični kras" po mojem pomeniti "slovenski dinarski kras" ali vsaj pokrajino med Ljubljanskim Barjem in Jadranom, med Furlansko nižino in Blokami, saj so "klasični" kraški pojavi v svetovnem smislu Cerkniško jezero, Postojnska jama in Kras.