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HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT
OF THE SLOVENE
WESTERN FRONTIER

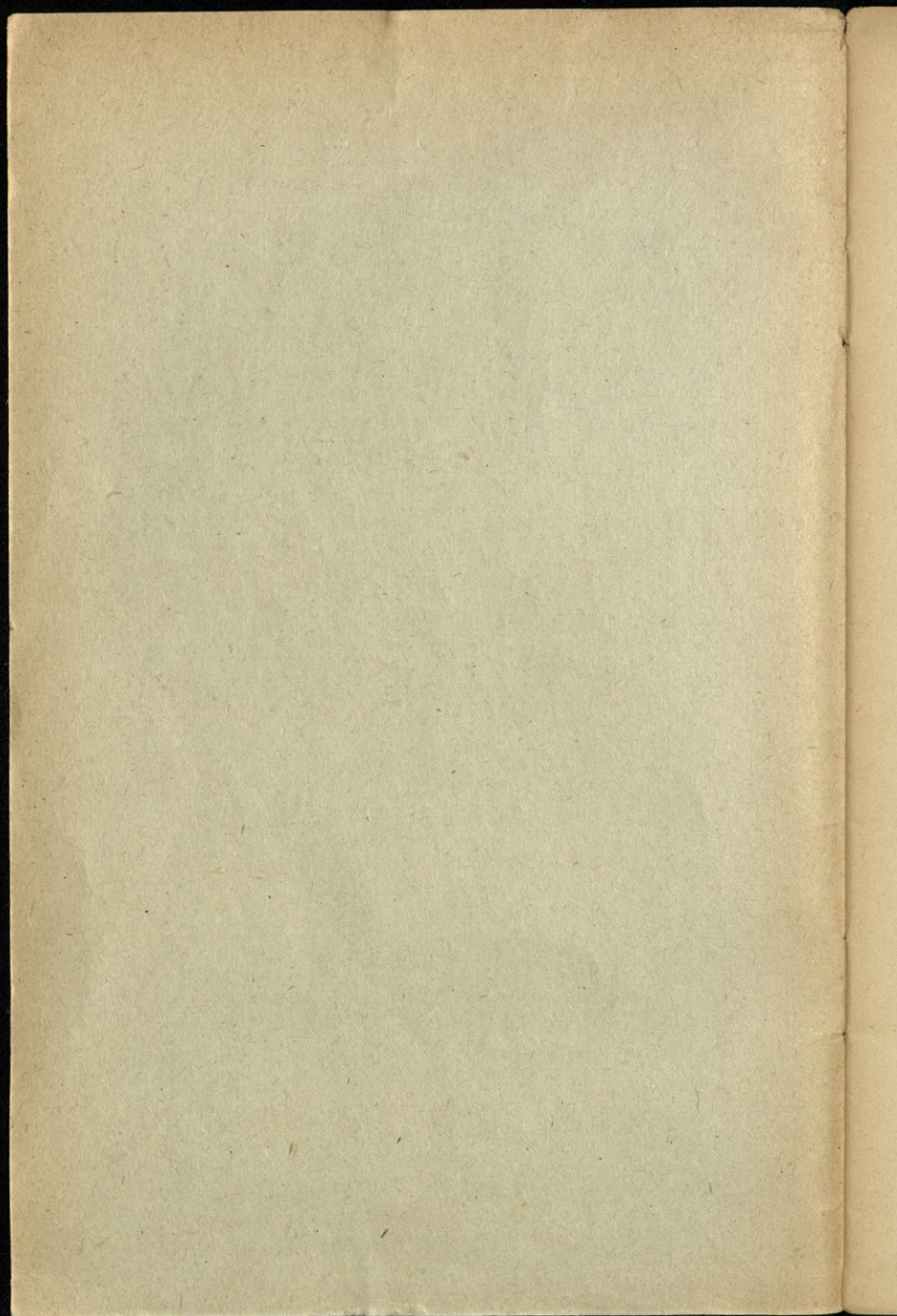
by

MILKO KOS

Professor of History in the University of Ljubljana
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LJUBLJANA, 1946

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SECTOR: NORTHERN ISTRIA

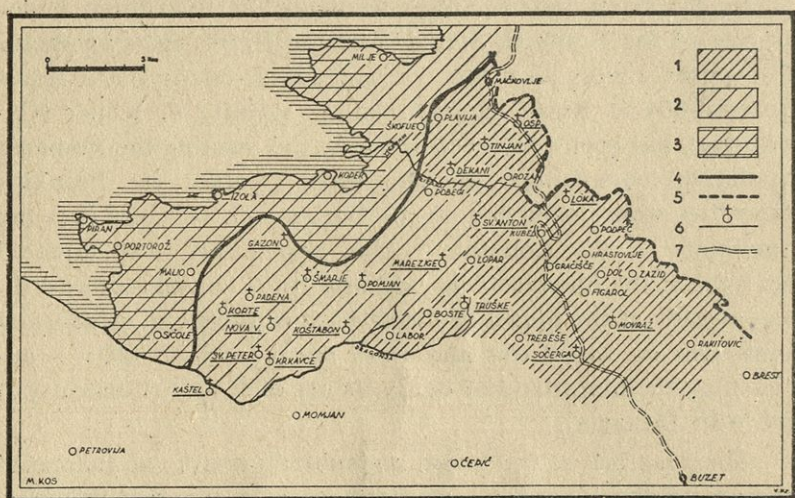
About the year 600 history for the first time mentions the presence of Slavs in Istria. Slovenes, Avars and Lombards then jointly attacked the territory of this province which, at that time, was under the rule of Byzantium.

In 788 Istria passed from the hands of Byzantium under the rule of the Frankish State. From the Frank era a summary of the proceedings at a law court meeting, taking place about the year 804 at Rižan (Risano) in the vicinity of Koper (Capodistria), has been preserved to us. At the meeting the Romanic population complained of the Slavs, whom the Frankish authorities were colonizing on the Istrian soil. It seems that the complaints of the Romanic Istrian population were directed also against the Slovenes who, coming from the east and north-east, already at the outset of the seventh century had established themselves on the Karst and were now — about 800 — approaching the hinterland of the harbours of Koper (Capodistria) and Milje (Muggia).

The year 788, at the latest, undoubtedly marks an increased pressure of the Slovenes towards the sea in the northern part of Istria. Istria then passed under the Franks. Yet it can be observed that the Slovenes, when they began immigrating into the back parts of the Littoral of northern Istria, did not, for the most part, approach the coastal towns. They settled down at some distance of the towns, on the territory which in coming centuries did not belong to the inner district of the towns but was placed under the direct authority of the Emperor or, as some put it, of the Crown. Therefore the oldest Slovene villages in this area are to be found on the territory belonging to the Crown and not in the municipal districts of the hinterland of the town of Koper (Capodistria). They are scattered in a wide circle chiefly on both sides of the road leading from Trieste to Buzet (Pinguente). Yet it can be safely said that already in the high Middle Ages (in the thirteenth century) a weak infiltration of the Slovenes into the coastal

towns proper (Koper [Capodistria], Isola, Piran [Pirano]) was taking place.

The scope of the old colonization, concluded in the thirteenth century, and of the following younger Slovene colonization into the hinterland of Koper (Capodistria), Isola and Piran (Pirano) may be reconstructed with the aid of the history of the Church, the political history, the nomenclature and linguistics. The frontier between the two colonizations is represented approximately by the frontier between the territory



Historical development of the Slovene western frontier

Sector: Northern Istria

1. Old Slovene colonization territory (up to the 13th century). — 2. Younger Slovene colonization territory (from the 13th century). — 3. Mixed Slovene-Italian linguistic territory. — 4. Frontier between the territory of the Latin liturgy and the old Slav liturgy. — 5. Frontier of the Venetian part of Istria (till 1797). — 6. Parishes of the old Slav liturgy. — 7. Road Trieste-Buzet (Pinguente).

of the town of Koper (Capodistria) on one hand and the former Crown lands in the hinterland on the other. The frontiers between the parishes in the more distant hinterland and those nearer to the coast approximately coincide with the frontiers between the two colonizations. The findings of the historians are confirmed by the linguistics. The Slovene idiom in the eastern region, on the former Crown territory mainly, differs

from the type of dialect used in the immediate hinterland of Koper (Capodistria), on the territory of the younger Slovene colonization.

The greater part of the Slovene population established themselves on the territory of the younger Slovene colonization in the hinterland of the towns of Koper (Capodistria), Isola and Piran (Pirano) only from the thirteenth century on. At that time the Republic of Venice, master of Koper (Capodistria) since 1270, systematically began to fill this territory with Slovenes. Archives from the fourteenth century that have been preserved to us, tell the story of the colonization of Slavs in the Venetian held region of Koper (Capodistria). A special „chief for the Slavs“ (*capitaneus Sclavorum*) to deal with Slav matters, was elected from the ranks of the townsmen of Koper (Capodistria). His was the care for the territory populated by Slavs, he was supposed to know their customs and language as nearly all of them, such is the wording of the source, speak Slavonic and do not understand very much of any other language.

The national structure of the hinterland of the Littoral of northern Istria, whose bases had been laid already in the early and high Middle Ages, was given towards the end of the Middle Ages by the younger Slovene colonization the outlines which all up to this day have remained essentially unchanged. The agricultural hinterland is Slovene, a narrow strip of territory running alongside the coast is nationally mixed, the coastal towns Koper (Capodistria), Isola and Piran (Pirano) are predominately Italian yet the destination point of a steady process of Slovene infiltration, rather weak in the early stages but growing in strength from the end of the Middle Ages, especially in the course of the last century.

Reports from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries sent by Venetian officials to Venice and reports submitted in the course of centuries by the Bishops of Koper (Capodistria) to Rome, confirm the above statements and draw a picture of the national structure which essentially corresponds to that of to-day. I shall quote some of the more important statements contained in these documents.

The chief official of Koper (Capodistria) Mauroceno wrote on October 13, 1560: "to provide for a satisfactory order and

administration... si potrebbe dare... al capitano de Schiavi la cura di quelli del territorio, perchè a lui spetta tal carico, et lui come pratico delli costumi et della lingua, che quasi tutti parlano schiavo, et non intendono gran fatto altra lingua, li ridurrebbe meglio al esercizio et disciplina predetta' (Atti e memorie della Società istriana, VI, 1890, 73).

The chief official of Koper (Capodistria) Giovanni Francesco Sagredo reports on February 14, 1598, that the territory of Koper (Capodistria) counts 43 villages and... "anime 4873; di questi huomeni dagli anni 18 sin li 50 numero 1235; sonno tutti questi chiamati sotto nome de Schiavi, et hanno un capitano gentiluomo della città per privilegio de' cittadini. Il qualle in occasione di vacantia vieme elletto da rapresentanti suoi che a quel tempo si ritrovano a quel governo, et de lei confermato. Ha questo carico di proteggerli, diffenderli et procurar che non li venghi fatto qualche estorsione, et ha di provvisione dalla camera fiscal ducati 156 all' anno..." (Atti e memorie della Società istriana, VII, 1891, 107).

The part ob the Koper (Capodistria) diocese comprising the countryside is divided up in 15 parishes, whose inhabitants all speak the Slavonic language and religious services are celebrated in the same language (*Dioecesis tota ruralis dividitur in quindecim parochiis... Incolae omnes sunt linguae Illyricae, in eoque idiomate celebratur*, report of the Bishop of Koper (Capodistria) to Rome, December 1633. L. Jelić, *Fontes historici liturgiae glagolito-romanae*, XVII, 28).

All peasants of the Koper (Capodistria) district speak Slav (*villici totius provinciae sunt linguae Illyricae*; report of the Bishop of Koper (Capodistria) to Rome, May 14, 1637, Jelić, *Fontes*, XVII, 31).

The priests of the province of Koper (Capodistria) know only the Slav language. Whenever the bishop delivered a sermon in Italian or made comments to the Latin in Italian, they did not understand him, because their knowledge of Italian was deficient (report of the Bishop of Koper (Capodistria) to Rome, April 23, 1658, Jelić, *Fontes*, XVII, 47).

The population of the countryside parishes speak only Slav. In the town, however, the Slav language is not cultivated or else do the inhabitants not know it (*cum enim omnes pa-*

rochiaes rurales tali dumtaxat idiomate utantur, quod hic in urbe et in oppidis Pyrrhani et Insularum negligitur, imo nescitur; report of the Bishop of Koper (Capodistria) to Rome, June 18, 1693, Jelić, Fontes XVII, 65).

All inhabitants of the countryside parishes are Slavs, they know and speak only Slav. The parsons to the rural parishes have to know Slav, which is known and innate to the entire population of the countryside (Plebium vero forensium incolae, utpote omnes genere Slavi, seu Sclauonici, non aliam linguam, quam Sclauonicam aut Illiricam callent ac loquuntur . . . parochi ruralium plebium tenentur callere linguam Sclauonicam, quam universo populo forensi familiarem et congenitam innui; report of the Bishop of Koper [Capodistria] to Rome, October 23, 1699, Jelić, Fontes, XVII, 66).

Similar reports of the Bishops of Koper (Capodistria) are known from the years 1691, 1693, 1696, 1699, 1705, 1709, 1711 (Jelić, Fontes, XVII, 64, 65, 66, XVIII, 4, 6, 8).

The celebration of religious services in old Slav was a matter of custom established with the Slovene parishes and churches of the Koper (Capodistria) district, already in the Middle Ages. There were Italian parishes only at Koper (Capodistria), Isola and Piran (Pirano); in all remaining divine services were celebrated in old Slav. The ritual books and the books dealing with ecclesiastic administration were all compiled in Slav, too. Reports of the Bishops of Koper (Capodistria) to the Holy See in Rome, on their part, confirm this fact (for instance reports from 1623, and 1633, Jelić, Fontes, XVII, 13, 28). In 1461 in the town of Koper (Capodistria) a Franciscan monastery was founded to the explicit purpose of celebrating religious services in Slav for the townsmen of the Slav language and especially for people of the countryside, for the peasants, the soldiers on duty in the town and the inhabitants of the surroundings of the town. The historian Ireneo della Croce from Trieste, writes in his work *Historia di Trieste* (1698, page 613), that mass at Koper (Capodistria) is celebrated in Slav . . . ove li RR. PP. del Terzo Ordine di S. Francesco, ogni mattina a buon' hora, per la comodità degli operarii della Campagna nella chiesa di San Tomaso, eelebrano la Santa Messa in quell'idioma, come io stesso testimonio oculato posso attestare e d'haver anco

visto de' Breviarii stampati in tal idioma e carattere in tutto differente da gl'altri.

Owing to the shortage of priests capable of the Slav ritual — a priest knowing only the Latin ritual language made an impossible figure in the Slav parishes — the Bishops of Koper (Capodistria) were at great pains to initiate in the town a clerical seminary for the training of priests in the old Slav ritual. In 1710 idea was actually realised (Jelić, Fontes XVII, 28, 31, 64, 65, 66, XVIII, 4, 6, 7, 8).

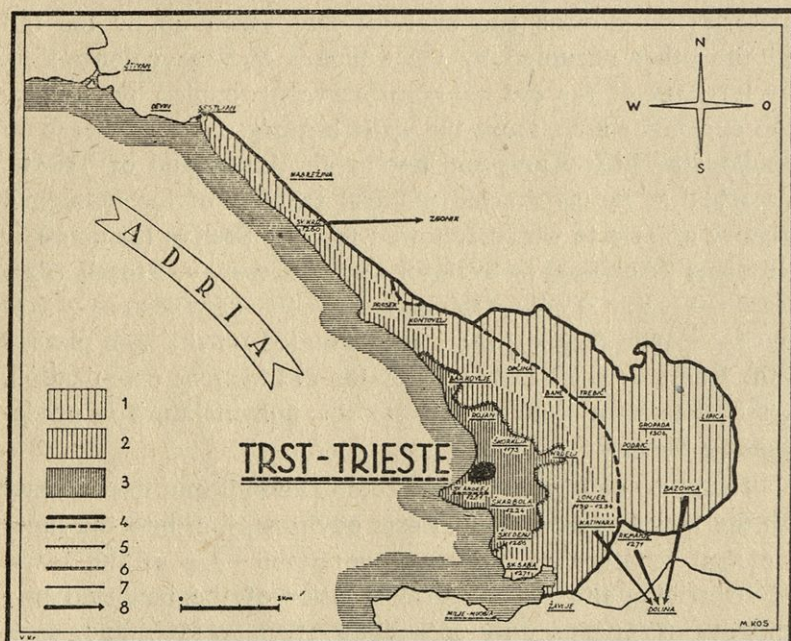
SECTOR: TRIESTE AND ENVIRONS

In Trieste and environs we have to distinguish two different territories of Slovene colonization: that taken up by the old and the other occupied by the younger Slovene colonization. The territory of the old colonization was occupied by the Slovene currents which, from the sixth century onwards, began to populate the high Karst and hereby the hinterland of Trieste. It reached as far as the old political frontier of the municipal territory of Trieste which followed the line Sesljan (Sistiana) — Nabrežina (Aurisina) — Sv. Križ (Santa Croce) — Prosek (Prosecco) — Opčine (Villa Opicina) — Trebič (Trebianico) — Katinara — Žavlje (Zaule); the places situated on the high plateau of the Karst were all embraced by the old Slovene colonization. In the distant environs of Trieste the nomenclature is predominantly Slovene.

The currents of the Slovene colonization began to penetrate into the lower parts of the Trieste environs, i. e. into the inner municipal territory of Trieste, beyond the edge of the Karst and overriding the old political frontier of the medieval municipality of Trieste, only at a relatively later date and, so it seems, at a somewhat slower rate.

Yet, way back in the high Middle Ages already the Slovenes started establishing themselves in the lower parts of Trieste environs, i. e. on the inner municipal territory of Trieste and in the town itself. In the villages of the lower environs of Trieste one comes across family names that are undoubtedly Slav, already from the twelfth century on. It may be safely assumed that their bearers were Slovenes. Moreover, the Slovenes were directly mentioned among the inhabitants of those places. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries such cases were growing in number. To-day those villages mostly form parts of the town of Trieste. Beginning with the thirteenth century we meet with persons having Slovene names in Trieste itself. A document from 1202, enumerating 361 inhabitants of

Trieste, represents the first written evidence of Slovene elements in Trieste. At that time those 361 inhabitants of Trieste swore allegiance to the Doge of Venice. Among them there were 32 Slav christian names or surnames. Even if we admit that some of them are distorted, there remain 20 christian names or



Historical development of the Slovene western frontier

Sector: Trieste and environs

1. Slovene colonization territory in the upper environs of Trieste. — 2. Slovene colonization territory of the lower environs of Trieste. — 3. Territory of the City of Trieste of to-day. — 4. Frontier of the territory of Trieste (with variants). — 5. Frontier of the City of Trieste of to-day. — 6. Mostly Roman settlements (Trieste till the 18th century). — 7. Slovene villages round Trieste (the year at the name indicates the first appearance of the Slovenes in this place). — 8. Borders of parishes of some towns in the past.

surnames that are Slav beyond any doubt and therefore demonstrate that their bearers were Slavs. Furthermore, there can be no doubt about it that many of the inhabitants with Romanic, or Germanic christian names or surnames were of Slav origin, too. Names on our list having the surname Sclauo de-

monstrate that it was quite possible that in spite of their names those people were Slavs; the names are not Slav, the surnames, however, undoubtedly show that those people were of Slav origin (Joannes Sclauo, Walter Sclavo). It is less probable that persons with Slav names or surnames were not of Slav origin.

We may therefore safely assume, taking all this into account, that in 1202 out of the 361 counted inhabitants of the town of Trieste at least 30 were Slavs, that is 8,31 per cent. P. Montanelli (*Il movimento storico della popolazione di Trieste*, 1905) reckons that in the thirteenth century Trieste had some 4.800 inhabitants. There were among them, according to the above calculation, some 400 inhabitants whom we may classify as Slovenes.

The inhabitants of the town of Milje (Muggia) swore allegiance to Venice at the same time (1202) as the inhabitants of Trieste. Among 211 inhabitants registered six bear Slovene christian names or surnames, that is 2,84 per cent.

The year 1382, when Trieste moved under the rule of the Austrian Habsburg, marked the beginning of a stronger afflux of Slovene elements to Trieste and its environs. The common dynastic and political allegiance, shared henceforth by the town of Trieste and its hinterland consisting of the Karst, the greater part of Istria and Carniola, spelled a tightening of ties and relations with those regions in the hinterland and inaugurated a flow to Trieste of numerous new settlers, seeking economic and other advantages. Slovenes prevailed among the newcomers. Economic traffic, which from 1382 on converged to Trieste and its port to an ever greater degree and which the inhabitants of Trieste themselves were directing to their town, conveyed to the structure of the population of Trieste a new note, a note that evidently bore the sign of the strengthening of the Slovene elements. On the other hand, of course, these elements were continuously absorbed by the Romanic population.

A list similar to that from 1202 has been preserved to us from the year 1468. Among 257 members of the municipal Council of Trieste there were at least 30 people, i. e. 11,67 per cent, who had Slovene names or surnames, pointing out at their Slav origin. According to the same calculation and considering

that Trieste, at that time, counted a total of 7000 inhabitants, there were some 817 Slovenes among them.

A further list of members of the Trieste municipal Council from 1510 yields, checked and operated in the same way, the following result: 221 persons, among them 28 with Slovene names or surnames, that is 12,67 per cent; among the population totaling 7000 therefore 887 Slovenes (Kandler, *Storia del consiglio dei patrizi di Trieste*, 64, 81).

It is very interesting to compare these figures with those of the present time. In 1910 in the town of Trieste itself, leaving out the suburbs, altogether 160.993 inhabitants were counted, 12,6 per cent of them were Slovenes. This percentage almost exactly corresponds to the number of Slovenes living in the inner town of Trieste in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The demographic structure of Trieste and its environs bore all up to the recent time, the following principle features: until the eighteenth century the town was confined to the approximate area which to-day is called the old town. In the Middle Ages the number of inhabitants never exceeded the figure 9000. Beginning with the Middle Ages already, the town represented the principal destination point of a weak flow of immigrants coupled, at the same time, with the absorption of the Slovenes by the Romanic element. The Slovene immigration became ever stronger since in 1382 the town came under the rule of the Austrian Habsburg, then masters of an already large hinterland. The environs of the town, however, which began immediately outside the city walls, in the course of centuries became more and more Slovene until, finally, they were wholly Slovene. All up to the eighteenth century, when Trieste started spreading out to all sides, breaking the narrow bonds of the medieval town, the state of things exactly corresponds to the picture given us by the historian Ireneo della Croce, who lived in Trieste in the seventeenth century, in his work *Historia di Trieste* (1698, pages 552, 565): "To-day the town of Trieste is on all sides surrounded by Slovenes. Immediately outside its walls the entire population of the villages and estates of the territory of Trieste serve themselves exclusively of the Slovene language" (*hocgidi la citta di Trieste attorniata da ogni canto dai Sclavi, ovvero Schiavi, mentre subito fuori delle sue*

mura tutti gl'habitatori de'villagi, e possessioni del territorio di Trieste, non parlano altro idioma che Schiavo). And again: "Up to this day the peasants of its territory outside the town do not speak any other language except Slovene" (sin' a giorni nostri tutti i contadini del suo territorio fuori della città, non parlano altro idiome che 'l sclavo).

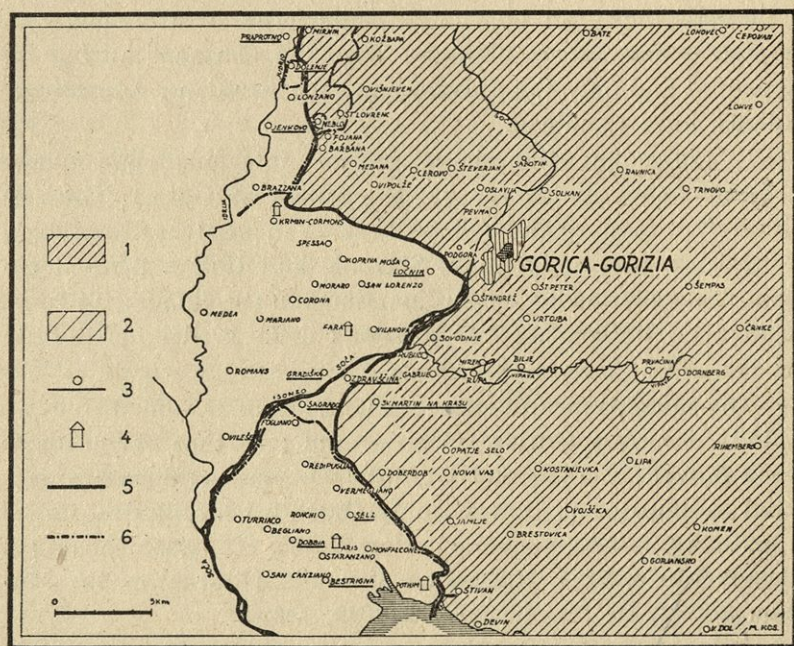
SECTOR: THE GORICA (GORIZIA) AREA

At the beginning of the seventh century the Slovenes commenced to penetrate in the direction of the north-eastern part of Italy and to pass across the frontiers of the Lombard Friulian Duchy, which at that time comprised those regions, also in the area between the northernmost point of the Adriatic bay and the summits of the Julian Alps. The exact time of their appearance on the banks of the river Soča (Isonzo) and on the borderline between the Alps and the Karst on one hand and the Friulian plain on the other, is not known to us. At any rate, here the Slovenes were brought to a stand by the military defence line — *limes* — erected by the Lombards, also on this sector of their territory, with the purpose of protecting their country against enemy raids. We know that Krmin (Cormons), Farra near Gradisca, Aris near Tržič (Monfalcone) and the castle Potium at the northernmost point of the Adriatic, were strongholds of that line in the area of Gorica (Gorizia).

We have no data to show us the shaping of the Slovene ethnographical frontier in this area in the course of centuries following the breakdown of the Lombard State (774); in the course of the ninth century, i. e. in the Frank era and during the period of the Hungarian onslaughts which set in towards the close of the ninth century and continued beyond the middle of the tenth century. It may be safely assumed that once the Hungarian attacks have ceased, i. e. from the second half of the tenth century on, the Slovene afflux and the Slovene elements generally, greatly increased in strength. In the process of the colonization planned by the Patriarchs of Aquileia which began in the tenth century, Slovene peasant vassal colonists were sent deep into the interior of the Friulian plain.

At that time history for the first time brings up the name of Gorica. In 1001 it is mentioned as „the village which in Slovene is called Gorica“. The place was receiving a great deal of non-Slovene colonists, especially since in the eleventh

century it came under the rule of a German noble family, that in turn was given by it the title of the Counts of Gorica. Nevertheless the Slovenes, as christian names, surnames and statements of origin demonstrate, always represented a high percentage of the population and of the newcomers. These mostly recruited themselves from among the adjacent Slovene



Historical development of the Slovene western frontier

Sector: The Gorica Area

1. Continuous Slovene linguistic frontier. — 2. Younger Slovene colonization. — 3. Formerly Slovene now Friulian resp. Italian villages. — 4. Positions of the former Lombard lines. — 5. Slovene-Romanic (Italian-Friulian) linguistic frontier. — 6. Ancient Austro-Venetian frontier (1420—1797).

neighbourhood, yet many of them arrived from Carniola and other Slovene regions. From the thirteenth century on the Romanic element at Gorica (Gorizia) became stronger as noblemen, bankers, merchantmen, tradesmen and Jews from Friuli, Carnia, Tuscany and other parts of Italy arrived to establish themselves in the town. The Germans, too, were quite numerous at Gorica (Gorizia) in the Middle Ages. They came into the town for

the most part with the afflux of German noblemen, particularly from Carinthia, and as members of the suite of the Counts of Gorica (Gorizia), their officials, knights, attendants etc. Nonetheless, the Slovenes and the Friulians, respectively Italians, remained the prevailing nationalities.

Such a relationship of nationalities at Gorica (Gorizia), created by the development in the course of the Middle Ages, in modern times, all up to the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, underwent no changes. Then the Germans all but disappeared and only the Slovenes and the Friulians, respectively Italians, have remained.

In 1567 count Hieronim Porcia, later on Pope's nuncio at Graz, writes in his report that people at Gorica (Gorizia) within their families and ordinarily serve themselves prevalingly of three languages: German, Slavonic and Italian („per il più usano famigliarmente ed ordinariamente tre lingue: Tedesca, Schiava ed Italiana“. — *Descrizione della P. del Friuli fatta nel sec. XVI.*, Udine, 1897, page 87).

The Dutchman and subsequent librarian Hugon Blotius in 1571 describes Gorica (Gorizia) and tells that people there speak Slovene, Italian and German, whereas sermons are delivered in Italian and Slovene only (*Loquitur hic illyrice, italice et germanice. Sed conciones tantum italice et illyrice habentur*). *Glasnik Muzejskega društva za Slovenijo* (Journal of the Museum Society of Slovenia), XX, 1939, 308.

A report from 1590 states that the entire population at Gorica (Gorizia) speak Slovene and Italian, the upper classes in addition to both languages also German (Carniola 1913, 2).

The Friulian historian Palladius writes in his Friulian history, published in 1659, that the inhabitants of Gorica (Gorizia) in addition to the Friulian and Italian languages, serve themselves of the German and Slovene languages (*Rerum Feroiuliensium libri XI*, 1659, page 14).

In the Gorica (Gorizia) region, outside the town itself, the ethnographical frontier between the Slovenes on one side and the Friulians-Italians on the other, has remained throughout centuries nearly unchanged, stable, and there has been no interpenetration. True, a few Slovene villages in the plain and on its edges surrounded by Romanic villages, turned Romanic

in the course of centuries. Their number, however, was small. The territorial disposition of the two nationalities, taken as a whole, is clear-cut. The Slovenes are confined to the Karst and the Brda hills, they reach the river Soča (Isonzo) below Gorica (Gorizia).

Between the sea and the river Soča (Isonzo), in the southern part of the Slovene - Friulian linguistic frontier in the Gorica (Gorizia) area, the delimitation between the two nationalities has been undoubtedly influenced by the former frontier between the Republic of Venice and Austria that, for nearly 400 years (1420—1797), followed the line of the present ethnographical frontier. North of Krmin (Cormons), too, as all signs indicate, the former Austro-Venetian frontier decisively contributed to the fact that some villages to the west of it, i. e. on Venetian territory, have turned Friulian, whereas those east of the former political frontier, on Austrian soil, have remained Slovene up to this day. Between the Karst and the Brda hills above Gorica (Gorizia) the river Soča (Isonzo) has allways been, and remains so to-day, the stable and satisfactory natural frontier between the two nationalities.

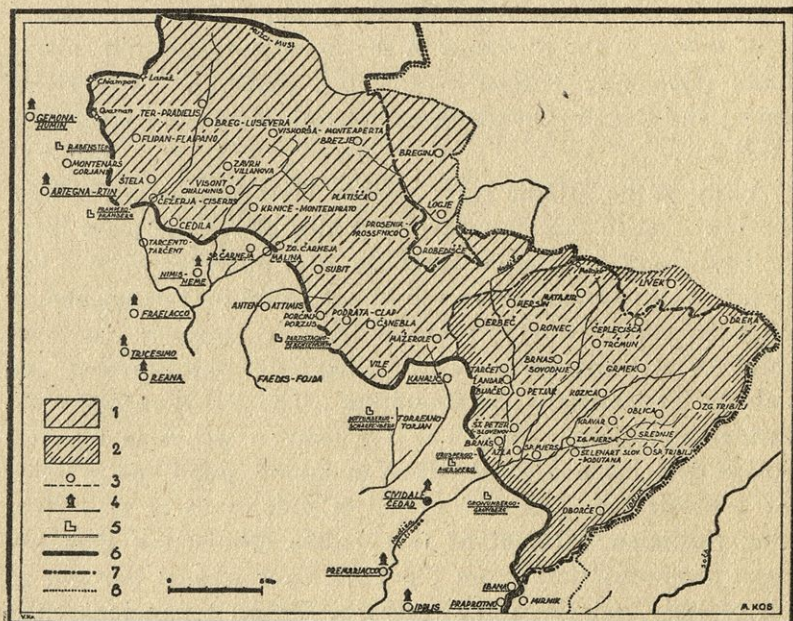
In the south the district of the river Timavo represents the ancient political and ethnographical frontier territory. Way back in the year 350 B. C. the Greek geographer Pseudo-Skylax mentions the river Timavo as forming the frontier between the Istrians and the Venets. In the Lombard era the territory of the Friulian Duchy reached up to that line. In the twelfth century the boundary of the Aquileia - Friuli territory ran beyond Devin (Duino) to Sosljan (Sistiana), where the territory of the municipality of Trst (Trieste) began. The lands of the seigneurs of Devin (Duino), themselves a part of the Karst, bordered with Friuli on the Timavo river. These lands were peopled with Slovenes and from the second half of the sixteenth century on, they formed politically a part of Carniola. On the opposite bank of the river Timavo, however, the population was Romanic (and still is so to-day); politically they were first under the rule of the Patriarchs of Aquileia and from 1420 till 1797 under that of the Doges of Venice.

SECTOR: VENETIAN SLOVENIA

The colonization of the territory which is to-day called — after the Slovenes — Venetian Slovenia, began in the seventh and eighth centuries, at the time of the onslaughts of the Slovenes and Avars on Lombard Friuli and during the period of fighting between the Slovenes and the Lombards. Those onslaughts and fights began about the year 611 when the Avars — undoubtedly assisted by the Slovenes — defeated the Lombards, besieged and took the capital of the Lombard Duchy of Friuli — Čedad (Cividale). The attacks by the Avars inaugurated Slovene thrusts into Friuli. Those thrusts were made partly for the purpose of conquest and colonization, partly, however, were aimed at plundering. In 664 probably the Slovenes even intended to conquer the capital of Friuli Čedad (Cividale), yet at Brišče (Brischis), at the bridge across the river Nadiža (Natisone) north of Čedad (Cividale), the Lombards inflicted a defeat upon them. That defeat, so it seems, kept Slovene thrusts away from the Friulian plain for some time, but was not sufficient to put an end to them. At the outset of the eighth century the Slovenes took up the offensive against the Lombards in the direction of the Friulian plain. They penetrated with their herds of cattle ever deeper into the Friulian plain. In the tendency to settle down for good they intruded themselves upon the Friulian herds-men and a conflict arose. Frontier attacks and disputes resulted, about the year 705, in a state of war between the Slovenes and the Lombards that ended with a heavy defeat of the Lombard-Friulian army. The success enabled the Slovenes to draw closer to the Friulian plain. In 720 fresh Slovene-Lombard clashes took place already in the middle of the plain itself, near a place called Lavariano, south of Udine, the present capital of Friuli. Those clashes were undecided. The Slovenes therefore did not succeed in conquering the plain. Still, their successes made it possible for them to establish themselves in the mountainous regions called to-day Venetian Slovenia, in the hills Brda above

Gorica (Gorizia) and on the rivers Soča (Isonzo) and Nadiža (Natisone). Here they have remained up to this day.

The fact that a continuous Slavo-Romanic linguistic frontier has established itself just on the edge between the mountains and the plain, on this sector too, is due to the existence of the



Historical development of the Slovene western frontier

Sector: Venetian Slovenia

1. Territory of the Venetian Slovenes. — 2. Territory of the Venetian Slovenia (Schiavonia) — (Banka Landra and Mjersa) with judicial and administrative autonomy in the Venetian period. — 3. Formerly Slovene, now Friulianized villages. — 4. Positions of the Lombard limes (6th—8th century). — 5. Castles of the German feudals in the Middle Ages. — 6. Slovene-Romanic linguistic frontier. — 7. Austro-Italian State frontier (1866—1918). — 8. Austro-Venetian frontier (1420—1797).

so-called Lombard limes, i. e. the military defence line with fortified castles, gorges and freemen — in Lombard called arimans — settled according to a defence plan. Those military defence positions barred to the Slovenes the way into the Friulian plain. They were erected along the present Friulian-Slovene frontier at Čedad (Cividale), Ipplis, Neme (Nimis), Rtin

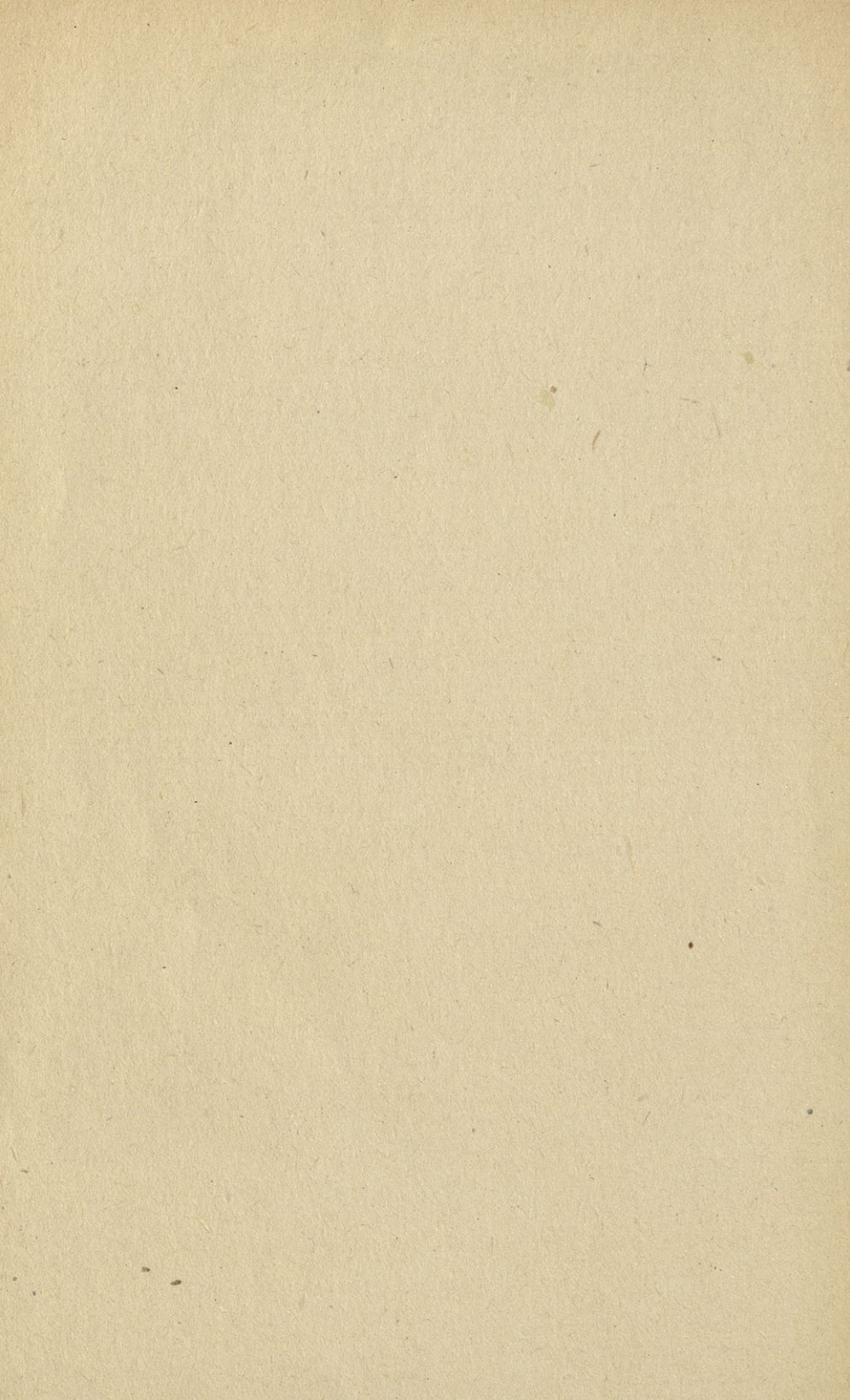
(Artegna), Humin (Gemona) and at some other points marked on the enclosed map.

In the course of the coming centuries the Slovenes, it is true, have lost the villages in the Friulian plain, where they had been systematically colonized by foreign feudal lords from the tenth century onwards; they have moreover lost a few places in the frontier district between the Friulian plain and the mountains, but in the main the Slovenes in the mountains and hills above Humin (Gemona), Tarčent (Tarcento), Fojda, (Faedis), Neme (Nimis) and Čedad (Cividale), have firmly held their ground up to this day.

Early in the Middle Ages already their neighbours became conscious that in the mountains and hills above the plain there live a people of a different language, of a different walk of life and different customs. From the Middle Ages on the neighbours called the places situated there as „among Slovenes“ (in Sclabonis), or else the places were called after the Slovenes „de Sclabons“ respectively „Sclabonorum“. The Venetian historian, traveller and statesman Marin Sanuto writes in his description of a journey on Venetian mainland, published in 1483, that „outside the doors of Čedad (Cividale) there is a river called Rosimian, affluent of the Nadiža (Natisone); they say that it separates Italy from Slovenia; so I was at the end of ends of Italy“ (et fuera di la porta di Cividale è una aqua chiamata el Rosimian, va nel Nadixon, la qual, ut dicitur, parte la Italia da la Schiavania; ergo in fino a la fin de l'Italia son stado. Itinerario di Marin Sanuto per la terra ferma veneziana, Padoa 1847, 139). The river Rosimian separates the Brossano suburb of Čedad (Cividale) from the inner town. This corresponds to an early mentioning of Slovenes at Čedad (Cividale) (for instance, in 1327, Mattia Sclavo de Porta Brossana, Bianchi, Documenti per la storia del Friuli II, 95) and a note from 1510, telling that in a suburb of Čedad (Cividale) they speak only Slovene.

Venetian Slovenia did not send her deputies to the medieval body of representatives of the upper classes of Friuli, the so-called Friulian Parliament. Also generally she was not counted as a part of the "Friulian homeland" (Patria del Friuli), but was considered as a special unit with special military defence tasks and was even given, owing to her alien population, autonomy in admi-

nistration and judicature. Parts of the present Venetian Slovenia, the valleys which above Čedad (Cividale) open into the Nadiža (Natisone) valley, enjoyed till the end of the Venetian era and partly even beyond it, a special autonomy in judicature and administration. At public meetings the population in a democratic way settled their internal affairs, at popular meetings of the vicinity or else at meetings of a wider scope, uniting the population of two valley deaneries or banks, that of Landar (Antro) and of Mjersa (Merso). Once, or if need was, several times during the year a meeting of the presidents of all Slovene vicinities took place. All sources use for this tiny autonomous country the term *Slovenia* (Schiavonia) and make a clear distinction between it as „una nazione diversa e separata“ and Friuli.



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