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Early Modern Provincial Identity in the Border Area between the Venetian Republic and the Hereditary Lands of the Austrian Branch of the House of Habsburg

This article focuses on some problematics regarding the early modern provincial identity in the area along the border between the Venetian Republic and the hereditary lands of the Austrian branch of the House of Habsburg. The Friulian provincial identity is studied in the context of the internal conflicts in the Friulian society and the conflict between the Venetian Republic and the House of Habsburg (for example anti-Venetian sentiment of the Friulian feudal nobility, which was expressed mostly in indirect ways, but the most revealing are private historiographical documents).

Keywords: Venetian Republic, House of Habsburg, provincial identity, early modern period, Friuli, County of Gorizia

In the early modern period, the area along the border¹ between the Venetian Republic and the hereditary lands of the Austrian branch of the House of Habsburg, was marked by a specific historical development in which the idiosyncrasies of the Mediterranean intertwined with those of the continental world and in which the elements of the Italian, Slavic and German cultures blended together. The Habsburg-Venetian border influenced the everyday life of the local inhabitants. Border areas are characterized by encounters, exchanges and contaminations with cultural differences, specific rituals of the authorities and illegal practices.² In these often marginal areas (understood in their geographical as well as in social, cultural, economic, linguistic, etc. connotations)

1 On the differences of meanings of the terms border, frontier and boundary see: Pier Paolo Viazzo, *Frontiere e 'confini': prospettive antropologiche*, *Confini e frontiere nell'età moderna. Un confronto fra discipline*, ed. by Alessandro Pastore, Milano 2007, 21-44.

2 Alessandro Pastore, *Introduzione*, *Confini e frontiere nell'età moderna. Un confronto fra discipline*, ed. by Alessandro Pastore, Milano 2007, 10.

emerge and develop the most innovative and significant social phenomena which can be of key importance for research work.³

This article focuses on some problematics regarding the early modern provincial identity in the aforementioned border area. In recent years, discussions about the concept of identity have proliferated, while the term has been analysed and subjected to critique.⁴ As pointed out by Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, „identity’ and cognate terms in other languages have a long history as technical terms in Western philosophy, from the ancient Greeks through contemporary analytical philosophy. They have been used to address the perennial philosophical problems of permanence amidst manifest change, and of unity amidst manifest diversity“.⁵ Proceeding from the modernist paradigm which asserts that nations and nationalisms are the products of modernity,⁶ the article represents a case study of a specific collective identity in a border area.⁷

After the Venetian Republic rose on the ruins of the exhausted Patriarchate of Aquileia in 1420 to assume power over Friuli and the Habsburg dynasty in 1500 subjugated the neighbouring County of Gorizia, which the Counts of Gorizia had successfully wrenched from the secular rule of the Patriarchs of Aquileia, the Isonzo River basin became the scene of confrontations between the two powerful state formations. Many unsolved issues soon led to the first Habsburg–Venetian War (1508–1516/21) as part of the War of the League of Cambrai and to the second Habsburg–Venetian War or the War of Gradisca one hundred years later (1615–1617). The inability of the said states to clearly demarcate the borders until the mid-18th century contributed to a considerable spread of brigandry and banditry, as well as strife and bitter feuds between the inhabitants of some villages that fell under different state jurisdictions.

Under such conditions, the inhabitants of Venetian Friuli and the Habsburg County of Gorizia, who shared similar usages and customs as well as ways of life, developed complex and often vaguely intertwined collective identities. A valuable source for the reconstruction and study of early modern collective identities in the border area

3 Guglielmo Scaramellini, Osservazioni su linee di confine e regioni di frontiera, *Confini e frontiere nell'età moderna. Un confronto fra discipline*, ed. by Alessandro Pastore, Milano 2007, 118.

4 Stuart Hall, Kome treba „identitet“?, *Reč. Časopis za književnost i kulturu, i društvena pitanja*, 2001, n. 64/10, 215–233. On different uses of the term identity and also of its abuse see: Rogers Brubaker, Frederick Cooper, Beyond „identity“, *Theory and Society* 29/2000, 6–9.

5 R. Brubaker, F. Cooper, Beyond „identity“, 2.

6 In the framework of the modernist paradigm there are different interpretations of the factors at the basis of the construction of the nations: see for example Benedict Anderson, *Zamišljene skupnosti: o izvoru in širjenju nacionalizma*, Ljubljana 1998; Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nazioni e nazionalismi dal 1780. Programma, mito, realtà*, Torino 2002; *L'invenzione della tradizione*, ed. by Eric J. Hobsbawm, Terence Rangere, Torino 1987; Ernest Gellner, Nacionalizem, *Študije o etnonacionalizmu*, ed. by Rudi Rizman, Ljubljana 1991, 239–265; Ernest Gellner, *Nazioni e nazionalismo*, Roma 1985.

7 An integral study on modern collective identities of Friuli and the County of Gorizia, based on the research of historiographical sources: Neva Makuc, *Historiografija in mentaliteta v novoveški Furlaniji in Goriški*, Ljubljana, 2011.

if Friuli and the County of Gorizia is a large volume of preserved contemporaneous historiographical works, comprising not only provincial histories, city chronicles, collections of biographies of the Patriarchs of Aquileia, epic poetry, and the like, but also historiographical contents from „katapans“⁸ and private historiographical documents (especially diaries) intended solely as family reading. In correspondence with the latest findings that historiography is first and foremost a cultural product of a certain period and that the humanistic historiography of the early modern Italy was a complex phenomenon influenced by the political needs of the ruling elites,⁹ the study of the historiographical sources was primarily based on a social context which ascribed meaning to individual works.

In Friuli, provincial identity which, roughly speaking, bound together the population in the territory between the Livenza River in the east, the Alps in the north, the Isonzo River in the west and the littoral under the Venetian rule in the south, was first formed no later than at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, but probably somewhat earlier. This period witnessed the creation of provincial histories that conveyed the history of Friuli from the earliest times onwards, revealing a particularly strong provincial identity. The first provincial history, *De vetustate Aquileiensium patrie*,¹⁰ written by the famous humanist Marc'Antonio Cocchio, better known as Sabellico (1434-1506), was published as early as 1482 or 1483. Although Sabellico was born in a small town Vicovaro near Rome, he spent several years teaching in Udine. Given that his work received financial assistance from the city, it is no coincidence that the author placed special emphasis on its significance and role in the history of Friuli. For this reason, Sabellico's writings did not receive wide acclamation across Friuli. Just the opposite could be said of the history *Commentariorum Aquileiensium libri octo*, which was published in Venice in 1521. Its author, jurist Giovanni Candido (c. 1450-1528) from Udine, tried to put an end to the bitter dispute between the two most important

8 In Friuli, the term „katapan“ is used to denote a necrology of a fraternal organisation, a parish, a monastery or a college. Sometimes they contain not only lists of names but also biographical data of persons, their families, intercessions, and exceptionally even genuine historiographical documents.

9 It is important to avoid imposing modern-day definition of history writing to humanistic historical works and to go beyond the attitude to reduce the study of new approaches of humanistic historiography to the question of critical methods. In the recent years, especially after the publication of important contribution of Gary Ianziti, *Humanistic Historiography under the Sforzas. Politics and Propaganda in Fifteenth-century Milan*, Oxford 1988, and Gary Ianziti, *Writing History in Renaissance Italy. Leonardo Bruni and the Uses of the Past*, Harvard, Cambridge 2012, fresh perspectives have begun to come on stream: Riccardo Fubini, *Storiografia dell'umanesimo in Italia da Leonardo Bruni ad Anno di Viterbo*, Roma 2003; numerous contributions in *Reading and Writing History from Bruni to Windschuttle. Essays in Honour of Gary Ianziti*, ed. by Christian Thorsten Callisen, Farnham, Burlington 2014.

10 In accordance with their humanistic aim to revive the ancient spirit as well as perhaps splendour, which Friuli had experienced as part of the Aquileian area, Sabellico and some of his contemporaries referred to Friuli with designations that associated it with the said area and the tradition of the Patriarch of Aquileia.

Friulian towns, Udine and Cividale del Friuli, as to which of the two was of a more venerable age, by assigning antique origin to both.¹¹ His work found a significant and receptive audience. Later emerged a number of historico-geographical descriptions of Friuli (e.g. *Descrittione della nobilissima Patria del Friuli* (Udine 1604) by the notary Ercole Partenopeo (c. 1530-1615), *Descrittione della nobilissima patria del Friuli* (Udine 1897) by the ecclesiastical dignitary Girolamo di Porcia (1531-1601)), as well as a number of provincial histories (*Rerum Foro-Julienisium ab orbe condito usque ad annum Redemptoris Domini Nostri CCCCLII libri undecim* (Utini 1659) by the doctor Enrico Palladio degli Olivi (c. 1580-1629), and *Historie della Provincia del Friuli* (Udine 1660) by the priest Giovanni Francesco Palladio degli Olivi († 1669)).

Friulian provincial identity drew its inspiration from the splendour and glory of the former Patriarchate of Aquileia, which had been a cohesive force in the development of Friulian provincial identity and was regarded by Friulian feudal lords (so-called „castellans“) as the golden era, especially due to the power and influence the then nobility wielded over the political life. However, despite the fully-formed provincial identity, the 15th and 16th centuries entered into Friulian history as a period of profound divisions among the inhabitants, precipitated by the hatred between two clans: the Zamberlani and the Strumieri. The former, led by the extremely influential nobleman Antonio Savorgnan (1458-1512), advocated the interests of the Udine urban and rural population and supported the Venetian authority, whereas the Strumieri incorporated a major part of feudal nobility with a strong pro-Habsburg stance.¹² The divisions culminated in the uprising of 1511, after which the province remained engulfed by a wave of score-settling and „honour vengeance“ („vendetta honorata“) for the next fifty years.¹³ By the end of the 16th century, the hatred that emanated from the divisions between the Zamberlani and the Strumieri clans disintegrated into innumerable personal altercations and vendettas. The violent atmosphere also reached the lower strata of society and was reflected, among others, in many more or less violent disputes between villages.¹⁴

Friulian feudal nobility formed the most violent group within the framework of Venetian „Terraferma“, finding it unacceptable to be completely removed from political life and process under the Venetian rule. The actual authority was concentrated in

11 Latin original: Giovanni Candido, *Commentariorum Aquileiensium libri octo*, Venetiis, 1521, book I; Italian translation: Giovanni Candido, *Commentarii de i fatti d'Aquileia*, Venetia 1544 (facsimile: Bologna 1969), 18.

12 For further details on this subject, see: Edward Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring. Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance*, Baltimore, London 1993; Furio Bianco, *1511. La crudel zobia grassa. Rivolte contadine e faide nobiliari in Friuli tra '400 e '500*, [S.l.] 2004.

13 This problem is fully dealt with in: Claudio Povolo, *L'Intrigo dell'Onore. Poteri e istituzioni nella Repubblica di Venezia tra Cinque e Seicento*, Verona 1997, 103-190.

14 Aleksander Panjek, Gli usi del bosco nelle Alpi Giulie in età moderna. *Comunità e questioni di confine in Italia settentrionale (XVI-XIX sec.)*, Milano 2007, 145; Furio Bianco, Strutture comunitarie, boschi e confini nella montagna friulana. *Comunità e questioni di confine in Italia settentrionale (XVI-XIX sec.)*, Milano 2007, 169.

the hands of the Venetian oligarchy. Moreover, its values and the way of life differed drastically from the commercial mentality and oligarchic regime of the Venetian Republic, within the boundaries of which Friulian nobility had little hope to be bestowed with lustrous titles and important functions they justifiably expected to receive in the Habsburg territory, where many noblemen moved from Venetian Friuli.

Contemporary historiographical works, which were almost exclusively written by members of the Strumieri clan, shed light on the anti-Venetian sentiment. The most revealing are private historiographical documents, intended exclusively as family reading. These unpublished documents bore as much importance as the published ones, by allowing the authors to express their opposition to the Venetian rule freely, sometimes even vulgarly, and without fear. A splendid example is the diary entries of Gregorio Amaseo (1464-1541) from Udine,¹⁵ who expressed strong indignation over the Venetian rule. As one of the leaders of the Strumieri clan, he rebuked the new burdens that Venice had imposed on Friuli and attended Friulian deputations delivering various petitions and complaints to Venice. As for the new imposts that the Venetian authorities introduced in 1535, he facetiously added that soon enough the Venetians would levy so many taxes and fees that the subjects would not even be able to „mount their own women“ unless they had paid duties and obtained prior permission („presto presto ne metteriano tante servitù et gravezze, che non potessimo quodammodo montar pur le nostre donne senza pagarli gabella et senza sua licentia“).¹⁶

Girolamo di Porcia wrote openly against the Venetian authorities as well. As a member of a powerful feudal family that fervently resisted the Venetian rule before Venice liberated Friuli, he described Friuli through nostalgic references to the period of the Aquileian Patriarchate. He exalted the role of the then Friulian Parliament, which had brought together the representatives of the nobility, clergy and cities and which was, though not dissolved, completely excluded from the political decision-making under the Venetian rule. The nostalgic memory of the former importance of the said assembly was preserved in the castles and city palaces of the old castellan families. Porcia presented his pessimistic evaluation of the current situation in Friuli already in the introduction to his work, by stressing that the province prided itself on many time-honoured noble families, which had all grown impoverished and despondent. He concluded his work by summarising that the situation in which Friuli found itself was absolutely miserable compared to the time when the Friulian Parliament had the authority and freedom and the castellans performed the most important military tasks – hence compared to the storied period of the temporal rule of the Aquileian Patriarchs. In former times, many castellans were cardinals, patriarchs, bishops and abbots, and

15 Amaseo's notes were published only in the 19th century, together with the diary of his brother Leonardo and the notary from Udine, Giovanni Antonio Azio, under the title *Diarii udinesi dall'anno 1508 al 1541* (Venezia 1884).

16 G. Amaseo, L. Amaseo, G. A. Azio, *Diarii udinesi*, for example 354.

in his days, the nobility was reduced to poverty and misery while numerous commons were becoming rich and famous.¹⁷

Girolamo was not the only member of the aforementioned family to express his anti-Venetian sentiments. Similar assertions were made by the patron and scholar Jacopo di Porcia († 1538), who did not hide his affinity for the old forms of government and in his private correspondence distanced himself from the „Serenissima“, the republic of merchants.¹⁸

Some authors expressed their disagreement with the Venetian rule by chronologically concluding their descriptions of events prior to the time when Friuli fell under the Venetian Republic. In works such as *De antiquitatibus Carneae libri quatuor* of Fabio Quintiliano Ermacore (c. 1540-1610)¹⁹ and several manuscripts of Marc'Antonio Nicoletti (c. 1537-1596), the chronological account only covered the period up to 1420, when Friuli fell under the Venetian rule.²⁰ The approach adopted by Friulian historiography was no novelty. It is impossible to avoid a comparison with the famous treatise *Historia Langobardorum* of the Lombard from Cividale del Friuli, Paul the Deacon from the 8th century, which only reached back to 744, most likely to omit the description of the period of Lombard history, which led to the definite collapse of the Lombard state in 774.²¹ In modern Friuli, Paul's work met with a remarkable reception and it is safe to assume that it also served as an inspiration to modern Friulian authors.

It might also be reasonable to ascribe the anti-Venetian polemic to the author(s) of the so-called *Chronicon Spilimbergense*, who reported on the events in the Spilimbergo area as well as the Patriarchate of Aquileia between 1241 and 1489.²² The document

17 Girolamo di Porcia, *Descrizione della Patria del Friuli*, Udine 1897, 11–12, 91. Porcia also expressed his dissatisfaction with the Venetian rule indirectly in some other segments. With regard to agricultural produce and wood, he stressed that they would have sufficed to sustain the entire population of Friuli, had they not been sent towards Belluno and to Venice (G. di Porcia, *Descrizione della Patria del Friuli*, 15). See also: Cesare Scalon, Introduzione, *Nuovo Liruti. Dizionario biografico dei Friulani. 2. Letà veneta*, ed. by Cesare Scalon, Claudio Griggio, Ugo Rozzo, Udine 2009, 58-59.

18 Silvano Cavazza, Le scuole e la vita culturale dal medio evo al cinquecento, *La chiesa concordiese 389–1989. II. La diocesi di Concordia – Pordenone*, ed. by Carlo Guido Mor, Pietro Nonis, [S.l.] 1989, 107; Giuseppe Trebbi, Iacopo di Porcia, feudatario e umanista, *Studi in onore di Giovanni Miccoli*, ed. by Liliana Ferrari, Trieste, 2004, 133-134.

19 In the 18th century, Ermacore's approach was also adopted by Niccolò Grassi (1728-1789) in his *Notizie storiche della provincia della Carnia* (Udine 1782).

20 Furthermore, in his *Estratti dagli Annali di Cividale del Friuli dal 1384 al 1419*, Nicoletti also wrote that the Venetians were the enemies of the Aquileian Church and Friuli, and spared no means in order to bring it under their rule (Marcantonio Nicoletti, *Estratti dagli Annali di Cividale del Friuli dall'anno 1176 al 1385*, Udine 1862, 28-29).

21 Bogo Grafenauer, Pavel Diakon in njegova „Zgodovina Langobardov“, in: Pavel Diakon (Paulus Diaconus). *Zgodovina Langobardov (Historia Langobardorum)*, Maribor 1988, 304; Bogo Grafenauer, Langobardsko obdobje zgodovine Italije, in: Pavel Diakon (Paulus Diaconus), *Zgodovina Langobardov (Historia Langobardorum)*, 306, 316.

22 *Chronicon Spilimbergense*, originally written in the necrology of St. Mary's Church in Spilimbergo, was compiled from the manuscript transcription, which is kept in the Biblioteca Guarneriana in San

mainly focuses on the descriptions of military events and contains no indication of Friuli's transition under the Venetian rule. The chronicler(s) may also have considered or, better yet, hoped that this was only a temporary situation, by pointing, among others, to the attempt of the Aquileian Patriarch to win back his territories with the assistance of the Hungarian army in 1431 while simply omitting the data on the Venetian conquest.²³

On the other hand, although many published historiographical works praised the Venetian Republic, a more dedicated reading often reveals a covert anti-Venetian polemic. In the period under discussion, it was much safer for the authors to talk about the Venetian Republic with – albeit despondent – deference, as no one dared openly oppose the Venetian rule. An illustrative example is once more offered by Candido's *Commentariorum Aquileiensium libri octo*, published in Venice in 1521. In this work, the author pointed to the noble origins, devout Christianity and accomplishments of the Venetian Republic, which had won countless victories against the „Illyrians“ (Southern Slavs), Pisanis, Genoeses, and other enemies. No other state had come as close to the Roman grandness as the Venetian Republic. The aforementioned praise should be understood as a mere rhetorical strategy which in no way reflected the author's Strumierian values. As one of the leaders of the Strumieri clan, Candido barely escaped death in the uprising of 1511. He also maintained in his work that Venice could have fended off the Ottomans and conquered almost the entire world, had it devoted more of its resources to the sea rather than the continent. There is perhaps a ring of disappointment in these words over the fact that the policy of Venice, whose sole objective was once to maintain control of the sea, had at some point redirected its expansionist ambitions to the continent and subjugated Friuli in addition to other territories of „Terraferma“. Candido also stressed as many as three times that Venice emerged on the ruins of Aquileia. Aquileian and hence Friulian nobility, as he argued, came to this area seeking refuge from Attila's Huns.²⁴ With this legendary tradition, he aimed to expose the role of Friulians in the subsequent rise of Venice. Similar correlations between the beginnings of Venice and Friulian immigrants from the Huns, Lombards or other so-called barbarian peoples were also drawn by other Friulian writers: for example, the notary and parish priest Hercole Partenopeo (c. 1530-1615), who even described Friuli as the mother of nearly all members of the Venetian Senate, and the aforementioned Marc'Antonio Nicoletti.²⁵

Daniele del Friuli (Ongaro collection, No. 274), and published in Udine in 1856 (edited by Giuseppe Bianchi) and Spilimbergo in 1998 (in Latin original and Italian translation). All trace has been lost of the original „katapan“ (Mario D'Angelo, Introduzione, *Chronicon Spilimbergense. Note storiche su Spilimbergo e sul Friuli dal 1241 al 1489*, ed. by Mario D'Angelo, Spilimbergo 1998, 8-10).

23 *Chronicon Spilimbergense*, 66-70.

24 G. Candido, *Commentariorum Aquileiensium libri octo*, books III, IV, VII, VIII.

25 Hercole Partenopeo, *Descrittione della nobilissima Patria del Friuli*, Udine 1604 (facsimile: Bologna 1978), 7, 92; Marcantonio Nicoletti, *Leggi e costumi dei Furlani sotto diciotto Patriarchi d'Aquileia*, Pradamano (Udine) 1927, 1, 30-33.

With time, the opposition to the Venetian rule lost its significance, as the latter took firm roots, while the memory of the former grandness and importance of Friulian nobility slowly faded. Former proud Friulian castellans gradually turned into provincial lords. In the 17th and especially the 18th century, many historiographical works from the area of Venetian Friuli disclosed an honest devotion to the Venetian rule, which should bring serenity and peace to Friuli. There also appeared a metaphor of Friuli as a „safe haven“ under the Venetian rule, as opposed to the scene of former internal disputes.²⁶

The systematic study of the sources confirms the assumption that provincial identity was one of the strongest collective identities in Friuli and the County of Gorizia. It also reveals that contemporaries regarded the provincial community as a group of individuals bound together by specific administrative-political and social factors. Historiographers, who almost exclusively belonged to the Italian cultural and linguistic community, were aware that the said community was a result of the former growth of various peoples and linguistic groups. Therefore, provincial identity transcended not only linguistic but also supposedly ethnic differences. In other words, the local population also embraced the Slavic- (or, more accurately Slovenian-) speaking inhabitants of the County of Gorizia and eastern Friuli. Both the early medieval Slavs and modern Slovenian-speaking population were attributed various so-called origins (Hunnish, Vandalic, Scythian, and the like); in general, the Friulian compatriots were regarded as descendants of different, including so-called barbarian, peoples. Although the contemporaries stressed the specific character of the border area, the provincial identity transcended linguistic and supposedly ethnic differences. The Slovenian community was nevertheless accepted as „our inhabitant“ („nostra habitatrice“), as pointed out by the notary from Cividale del Friuli and a great authority on the Slovenian population and its customs, Marc'Antonio Nicoletti.²⁷ Slovenian-speaking local population had for centuries coexisted with the Roman- (mostly Friulian-) speaking population.

The situation in the County of Gorizia, which had been part of Friuli in the medieval times, was somewhat more complex. This was already stressed by contemporaries who noted the specific character of the multilingual County of Gorizia positioned at the crossroads of the Italian, German and Slovenian world. An interesting portrait of the population of Gorizia or, more accurately, Gorizian nobility, was given by the Venetian envoy Lorenzo Contarini, who in his correspondence of 1548 described the Gorizian nobleman Niccolò della Torre as one of those servants and courtiers of King Ferdinand who were half German, half Italian and hence worse than the rest

26 For example Gio. Francesco Palladio degli Olivi, *Historie della Provincia del Friuli*, Udine 1660 (facsimile: Bologna 1966-1972), vol. II, 3–4; Girolamo De Renaldis, *Memorie storiche dei tre ultimi secoli del Patriarcato d'Aquileia (1411–1751)*. *Opera postuma*, ed. by G. Gropplero, G., Udine 1888, 5, 75–78, 245–250.

27 Marco Antonio Nicoletti, *Il Ducato del Friuli durante la dominazione dei Longobardi e dei Franchi*. *Historia inedita di Forovigilio ovvero sia Cividale*, Pradamano (Udine) 1928, 46.

(„servitori et cortigiani di Sua Maestà, quali sono mezzo tedeschi e mezzo italiani, li quali sono peggio delli altri“). They were always the first to reveal Venetian manoeuvres and initiate territorial claims.²⁸

Many authors pointed to the multilingual character of the County of Gorizia. Gerolamo di Porcia, for instance, wrote that the local customs regarding dress as well as food and drink were German. He added that the local inhabitants familiarly and ordinarily used three languages – German, Slavic and Italian („Li costumi così nel vestire, come nel mangiare, e bere sono Tedeschi; per il più usano familiarmente, ed ordinariamente tre lingue Tedesca, Schiava ed Italiana [...]“).²⁹ His somewhat over-generalised presentation of the customs and languages in the County of Gorizia was most likely based on the bewilderment of a visitor from the western parts of Venetian Friuli at the county’s unique environment. A highly accurate depiction of the linguistic situation in Gorizia may be found in the manuscript *L’Aquila leone di Gorizia, ossia il Contado Principato goriziano, uno degli incliti immediati stati del Sacro Romano Impero*, compiled about 1480 by the jurist Gaspare Brumati († 1711) from Cervignano del Friuli or Villesse. He stated that all strata of the population spoke Slovenian and Italian, and that everyone understood each other, albeit without any tendency to develop a more sophisticated expression, as both languages were slightly barbarised due to the mixing of the population („De loro etiam gradi e maggiori rispettivam(en)te. Usano come anco s’è per avanti esposto da Goritia verso il Cragno à drittura et attorno la lingua Schiava e da Goritia verso il Friuli, la Forlana, l’una e l’altra, per la mischianza degl’Habitatori aventitij coli più antichi e degl’usanti una lingua cogl’usanti l’altra men pure e per così dire barbarizzanti“).³⁰

The County of Gorizia, which had been formed along the midstream of the Isonzo River and in the Karst, passed under the Habsburg rule after the death of the last Gorizian Count in 1500. Gradually and especially after the War of Gradisca in the early 17th century, a unique Gorizian provincial identity was formed that partly overlapped with Friulian identity, but mainly drew on the memory of the once powerful County of Gorizia. Unlike the preceding period, when the border did not actually separate the Venetian and Habsburg subjects, the war gave the inhabitants of Venetian Friuli a sense of belonging to only one of the warring sides. The period until the 19th century also witnessed a long series of disputes between the inhabitants of individual villages

28 Silvano Cavazza, Donatella Porcedda, *Le contee di Gorizia e Gradisca al tempo di Marco d’Aviano, Marco d’Aviano Gorizia e Gradisca dai primi studi all’evangelizzazione dell’Europa. Raccolta di studi e documenti dopo il convegno storico-spirituale del 14 ottobre 1995*, ed. by Walter Arzaretti, Maurizio Qualizza, [S.l.] 1998, 89.

29 Porcia, *Descrizione della Patria*, 87.

30 Gaspare Brumatti de Jacomino e Sigisberg, *L’Aquila leone di Goritia ossia il Contado principato goriziano uno degli incliti immediati Stati del S.R.I. colla sovranità commune a prencipi imperiali. Dalla maestà cesarea di Leopoldo primo suo conte prencipe dominato e per diversi governato* (manuscript: Attilio Hortis Civic Library, Trieste), speech II, folio 38r.

that belonged under different state authorities.³¹ These divisions were also directly reflected in historiography, most notably in *Commentari della guerra moderna passata nel Friuli, et ne'confini dell'Istria, et di Dalmatia* by the jurist from the Habsburg Gradisca d'Isonzo, Biagio Rith di Köllenberg (c. 1565-after 1629), and *Historia della ultima guerra nel Friuli* by the jurist Faustino Moisesso (1582-1625/26) from Udine. The said works shed light on different, i.e. Venetian and Habsburg, political views of the same war. Both were marked by an explicitly propagandist character. They were, not coincidentally, published in Italian and thus accessible to a large audience. The authors drew on their own experience and known facts, as well as letters and contemporary reports. Rith, who had collaborated in the defence of the domestic fortress, published his work in 1629 in the Habsburg Trieste.³² The mere fact that one of his dedications was intended for Emperor Ferdinand II speaks volumes about the author's pro-Habsburg stance. Moisesso, on the other hand, dedicated his work to the Venetian „provveditore“ Francesco Erizzo and published it in Venice in 1623. He maintained that the Venetian Republic had every reason to start the war, which was forced upon it by the audacity of the Uskok pirates, in order to defend its right to the sea, which she had legitimately dominated for centuries.³³

During the War of Gradisca, it became clear that both Gorizian nobility and rural population loyally supported the Habsburg side.³⁴ According to Rith, Habsburg subjects exhibited an almost natural hatred („odio, quasi naturale“) towards the Venetian Republic, which apparently arose even in children. He presented the Venetian Republic as a seemingly gentle, but in fact cruel and inhuman, while the Habsburg ruler had no equal in his devoutness and benevolence.³⁵ In addition, Rith described Habsburg subjects as „ours“ („nostri“) and Venetian subjects as „enemies“ („l'inimico“). In regard to the steadfast loyalty that the rural population felt for the House of Habsburg, Moisesso pointed to the pro-Habsburg atmosphere in the town of Villesse and the venge-

31 E.g. Palladio, *Historie*, vol. II, 181; Carlo Morelli di Schönfeld, *Istoria della Contea di Gorizia in quattro Volumi compresavi un Appendice di note illustrative*, Gorizia 1855 (facsimile: Mariano del Friuli 2003), book III, 50.

32 Maybe the work had been published once more previously. Another edition of the work was published in 1631 (Silvano Cavazza, Rith Biagio, letterato, *Nuovo Liruti. Dizionario biografico dei Friulani. 2. Letà veneta*, ed. by Cesare Scalon, Claudio Griggio, Ugo Rozzo, Udine, 2009, 2148). The Latin version of his work is partly preserved and it was edited in *Studi Goriziani* vol. I, Gorizia 1923, vol. IV, Gorizia 1926.

33 Faustino Moisesso, *Historia della ultima guerra nel Friuli. Libri due. Con le figure del Paese doue si ha guerreggiato, et vna tauola de nomi di alcune persone spetialmente in essa guerra interuenute et loro ationi, et auenimenti*, Venetia 1623, vol. I, 4, vol. II, 8, 85–88.

34 Giuseppe Trebbi, *Il Friuli dal 1420 al 1797. La storia politica e sociale*, Udine - Tricesimo 1998, 264–265, 270. Compare with: Biagio Rith di Colenberg, *Commentari della guerra moderna Passata nel Friuli, et ne'confini dell'Istria, et di Dalmatia. Divisi in otto libri. Nel principio de'quali vi s'appresenta vn Compendio d'alcune memorie antiche precedenti ad essa moderna Guerra*, Trieste 1629, 121–122, 222–223.

35 Rith, *Commentari*, 221–224.

fulness of Venetian soldiers, especially Lombard and Dalmatian horsemen, over the inhabitants of the said village, precisely due to the loyalty the inhabitants had shown to their enemies.³⁶

In Venetian Friuli, Moisesso continued, the unwavering support that many inhabitants gave to the House of Habsburg stemmed primarily from the lack of their affinity for the Venetian Republic. Their negative attitude was, as some argued, based on the contacts they had with exiles who criticised the Republic of San Marco as unjust and vicious. Gorizian nobility, which was seen as a debaucherous lot, tried to persuade the inhabitants that they lived a happy and free life under the Habsburg sceptre. This perception was reinforced by the fact that many noble Venetian subjects offered their services to the Habsburgs.³⁷ Later, in the 18th century, Maria Theresa's reform efforts to consolidate the state authority enhanced the population's loyalty to the ruling House of Habsburg even further. Gorizian historiographers and most particularly Carlo Morelli di Schönfeld (1730–1792), the author of the most important work of Gorizian historiography, *Istoria della Contea di Gorizia*, demonstrated genuine devotion to the ruling House of Habsburg while still, to some extent, regarding the Venetian Republic as a hostile state.

The Habsburg–Venetian border, which cut through the once united region, also gave rise to complex issues of belonging to different states and provinces. A revealing example of switching identities is the Gorizia-born priest Giovanni Giacomo d'Ischia (1620/1630–1688), who, throughout his life, remained torn between his faithful adherence to the Habsburg House and at least apparent, if not downright genuine, loyalty to the Venetian Republic. He wrote a number of historiographical works. In early works, he presented himself as a Gorizian nobleman („nobile goriziano“), and later on, in for example *La scena de' tragici amori longobardici, Historia della principale Contea di Goritia*, as a Friulian nobleman („nobile friulano, Nobile Furlano“). Although this may have perhaps been merely a consequence of his moving to Venetian Palmanova, there is most likely a deeper meaning behind it that reveals the suppressed truth. What may seem to be an inconsequential detail ought to be treated in the light of two facts: firstly, Ischia was born in Gorizia as a Habsburg subject and later moved to Venetian Friuli, where he advanced from chaplain to dean of the monastery church in Palmanova. Secondly, from 1620 onwards, offices in Palmanova were reserved for those who were Venetian subjects by birth, which was not true in Ischia's case. It is perhaps behind this advancement that the suppressed truth lied, i.e. that he was by birth a Habsburg subject.³⁸ Ischia's sense of provincial and hence state belonging obviously underwent a „minor correction“. It was most likely his personal decision to present himself as a Friulian nobleman; he chose to embrace Friulian identity, which in broader terms also

36 Moisesso, *Historia*, vol. I, 132-133.

37 Moisesso, *Historia*, vol. I, 38, 53-57, 197-200.

38 Silvano Cavazza, *Dva načina pisanja goriške zgodovine v 17. stoletju*: Gian Giacomo D'Ischia in pater Martin Bavčer, *Goriški letnik*, N. 25-26, Kromberk 1998-1999, 245-246.

included Gorizian identity, rather than use the designation Gorizian nobleman, which would inevitably imply his subordination to the ruling House of Habsburg. It should also be borne in mind that Ischia lived in a period when the memory was still very much alive and painful of the War of Gradisca, which had wreaked havoc on the border area and its population. The fact that Ischia was born a Habsburg subject and later became a Venetian one was reflected in some sort of dual state identity. In his works, he praised both hostile state formations. He devoted very little attention to the War of Gradisca, even though it took place only a few years before he was born and left a strong mark on the atmosphere for decades after the war. Perhaps Ischia wanted to retain a neutral position and refrain from dwelling on the disagreements between the two states that shaped his destiny. Since all three works on Habsburg–Venetian relations date back to the 1680s, they devote many words of praise to both the House of Habsburg and the Venetian Republic, often embellished with baroque flourishes. Ischia extolled Leopold I as the most sublime European monarch („[il] più sublime Monarca di Europa“) and Venice as the Queen of the Sea and a wonder of the world („Regina del Mare, e meraviglia del Mondo“) as well as the world’s greatest republic („la maggiore Republica del Mondo“), which shall forever remain magnificent and invincible („sempre grande, e sempre inuitta“). In correspondence with his dual political identity, he also praised the alliance which in 1684 united the Habsburgs and Venice with Poland against the Ottoman Empire.³⁹

In the 17th-century County of Gorizia, Friulian provincial identity and its somewhat younger counterpart still partly overlapped and intertwined but gradually grew more distinct. Nevertheless, they remained strongly tied to one another. Little wonder, then, that Gorizia was often designated „Austrian Friuli“ („Friuli austriaco“) until the 19th century. Gorizian authors used this designation in place of the established name Gorizia when they wanted to stress that this part of Friuli fell under the Habsburg rule. The aforementioned desire arose from the Habsburg claims to the rest of Friulian territory, which was under Venetian rule.

The 18th century closed with a shift in western mentality, a change in the attitude towards life, family, the sacred, and the like. Society sank into a „crisis of its deepest and ostensibly most firmly rooted structures“. ⁴⁰ Towards the end of the 18th century, collective identities witnessed the emergence of thought and ideas that in the course of the following century led to the establishment of national identities. The origins of mentality which no longer linked Italian identity only with geographical and cultural factors but brought it into the field of ethnic origin, were also observed in the historiography

39 Gio. Giacomo d’Ischia, *Historia della principale Contea di Goritia Nella Prouincia Foro-Iuliense, O’ siasi Racconto Crono-Stemmatografico di que’ Prencipi Conti*, Udine 1684 (fascimile: Gorizia 1899), XIV, 52; Gio. Giacomo d’Ischia, *Il Re de’ capitani Rodolfo Conte d’Habsprgo, Primo del nome imperatore de’ Romani e re’ della Germania il Vittorioso. Fondatore dell’immortal Casa d’Austria Regnante, Storici felicissimi presagi*, Udine 1684, 29-31.

40 Michel Vovelle, *Ideologije in mentalitete*, Ljubljana 2004, 132.

under discussion, especially the monumental work *Della geografia antica del Friuli* by the jurist and erudite Paolo Fistulario (1703–1779) from Udine. Just as many of his predecessors, Fistulario expressed negative prejudice against both contemporary Germans, whom he described as scathing and bestial people, as well as the ancient Greeks, and asserted his belief in the superiority of Italian civilisation. However, unlike his predecessors, he transcended the division between Italy and the so-called barbarian world on merely cultural basis and moved it to the field of biological origin. Previous authors regarded themselves and their fellow countrymen as the heirs of the Roman civilisation and descendants of different ancient peoples, whereas Fistulario – regardless of certain inconsistencies – fervently maintained that he and his compatriots, Friulian noblemen, had the Italic origin. He ardently tried to persuade the Friulians to honour the legacy of the ancient Italic peoples and raise the awareness that they belonged to the „immortal Italian stock“ („propria e immortal stirpe Italiana, più colta certamente e più nobile, e dai naturali nostri antichissimi e generosi antenati“).⁴¹ Italian patriotism, which had for centuries based on cultural and geographical factors, began to be associated with ethnic origin, thus serving a prelude to the rise of nationalism in the 19th century. Italian identity gradually took on new connotations. The subsequent period, in which the latter also acquired a specific political meaning combined with the aspiration to unify Italy, ushered in a new era of Italian Risorgimento.

SAŽETAK

Počeci modernog provincijskog identiteta u graničnom području između Mletačke Republike i nasljednih zemalja austrijske grane Habsburgovaca

Ovaj se članak bavi nekim problemima koji se tiču početaka stvaranja suvremenog pokrajinskog identiteta u području duž granice između Mletačke Republike i nasljednih zemalja austrijske grane Habsburgovaca. Vrijedan izvor za rekonstrukciju i proučavanje suvremenih identiteta zajednica u graničnom području Julijske krajine (Furlanije) i okruga Gorice jesu brojna onodobna historiografska djela koja ne sadrže samo dokumente, kao što su pokrajinske povijesti, gradske kronike, zbirke biografija akvilejskih patrijarha, epska poezija i sl., već i historiografske sadržaje iz nekrologa i historiografske dokumente (osobito dnevnike) koji su bili namijenjeni isključivo za čitanje u krugu obitelji. U skladu s Garyjem Ianzitijem koji je zaključio kako je historiografija, prije svega, proizvod kulture određenog razdoblja, proučavanje povijesnih izvora u razdoblju humanizma temeljilo se prvenstveno na društvenom kontekstu koji je davao smisao pojedinačnim dokumentima. Talijanski historiografi iz razdoblja humanizma koristili su se izvorima kako bi poslužili točno određenim potrebama vladajuće politike.

⁴¹ Paolo Fistulario, *Della geografia antica del Friuli dalle età più remote sino a tempi di Costantino il grande memorie*, Udine 1775, 192.

Pokrajinski identitet u Julijskoj krajini razmatra se u kontekstu unutrašnjeg sukoba u furlanijskoj zajednici i sukoba između Mletačke Republike i Habsburgovaca (npr. protu-mletačko raspoloženje furlanijskog plemstva koje se izražavalo ugl. na neizravan način, ali o kojemu najbolje svjedoče privatni historiografski dokumenti). Granica između Mlečana i Habsburgovaca koja je presjekla nekoć jedinstveno područje, također je potakla složeno pitanje pripadnosti različitim državama i pokrajinama (ogledni primjer takve promjene identiteta jest svećenik Giovanni Giacomo d'Ischia (1620/1630–1688) koji se rodio u Gorici).

Sustavno proučavanje izvora potvrđuje pretpostavku da je upravo pokrajinski identitet bio jedan od najjačih zajedničkih identiteta u Julijskoj krajini i okrugu Gorice te otkriva kako su suvremenici smatrali pokrajinsku zajednicu skupinom pojedinaca povezanom posebnim administrativno-političkim i društvenim čimbenicima. Situacija u modernom okrugu Gorice koji je u srednjvjekovlju bio dio Julijske krajine, bila je nešto složenija. Premda su suvremenici zabilježili (i isticali) osobit karakter tog višejezičnog područja koje se smjestilo na križanju romanskog, germanskog i slavenskog svijeta, provincijski je identitet nadišao jezične i moguće etničke razlike.

Ključne riječi: Mletačka republika, Habsburgovci, pokrajinski identitet, rano moderno doba, Julijska krajina, Furlanija, Gorički okrug, Gorica