

NOVA KONTEKSTUALIZACIJA STAROG VRELA – KASIODOROVE *VARIAE* O KASNOANTIČKOJ ISTRI*



A NEW CONTEXTUALIZATION OF AN OLD SOURCE – CASSIODORUS' *VARIAE* ON LATE ANTIQUE ISTRIA*

Podaci iz zbirke *Različite poslanice (Variae epistulae)* italo-rimskog aristokrata, visokoga ostrogotskog dužnosnika i učenjaka Flavija Magna Aurelija Kasiodora Senatora (5./6. st.), koji govore o prilikama na istočnoj obali Jadrana u prvoj polovici 6. stoljeća već su poznati. Od prve cjelovitije ekonomsko-povijesne analize Kasiodorovih podataka o Istri u hrvatskoj historiografiji u članku Roberta Matijašića iz 1988. godine, „Kasiodorova pisma kao izvor za poznavanje kasnoantičke povijesti Istre (*Cass. Var. XII, 22, 23, 24*)“, prošlo je već više od tri desetljeća, pa ih je prikladno ponovno razmotriti i nakon što su se njima u međuvremenu bili pozabavili Andrej Novak u knjizi *L'Istria nella prima età bizantina* objelodanjenoj 2007. godine i, u najnovije vrijeme, Rajko Bratož u članku „La produzione e il consumo di alimenti nella provincia della *Venetia et Histria* al tempo de Goti orientali“ izišlu 2016. godine. Cilj je ovoga rada podatke iznova kontekstualizirati u širem istočnojadranskom okruženju te problematizirati prethodne zaključke. Polazeći od postojećih

Evidence from the collection of various letters (*Variae epistulae*) of the Italo-Roman aristocrat, Ostrogothic official of highest order and scholar Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator (fifth - sixth c.) that refer to conditions on the eastern Adriatic coast in the first half of the sixth century is already well-known in scholarship. From the first comprehensive economic-historical analysis in Croatian historiography of Cassiodorus' information about Istria in an 1988 article by Robert Matijašić „Kasiodorova pisma kao izvor za poznavanje kasnoantičke povijesti Istre (*Cass. Var. XII, 22, 23, 24*)“ [Cassiodorus' letters as a source for knowledge of the history of Istria in Late Antiquity (*Cass. Var. XII, 22, 23, 24*)], more than three decades have passed, so it is appropriate to reconsider them, particularly after they had also been discussed by Andrej Novak in his 2007 book *L'Istria nella prima età bizantina* and, more recently, by Rajko Bratož in his 2016 paper „La produzione e il consumo di alimenti nella provincia della *Venetia et Histria*

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rezultata, nakana je stvoriti relevantnu istraživačku sliku koja može pridonijeti boljem razumijevanju ekonomskog stanja u kasnoantičkoj Istri te biti podlogom za razumijevanje srednjovjekovnih prilika.

Ključne riječi: Istra, gospodarstvo, kasna antika, 6. stoljeće, Kasiodorove *Variae*

al tempo de Goti orientali”. The aim is to recontextualize the information within the broader area of the eastern Adriatic and problematize the previous conclusions. Starting from the existing results, the intention is to produce a relevant research addendum that can contribute to better appreciation of the economic situation in Late Antique Istria and be a basis for understanding the medieval conditions.

Keywords: Istria, economy, Late Antiquity, 6th century, Cassiodorus' *Variae*

Uvod

Onomu tko se bavi kasnoantičkom i ranosrednjovjekovnom poviješću ne treba predstavljati Kasiodora i njegovu zbirku službenih poslanica poznatih pod skraćenim nazivom *Variae*.¹ U posljednje vrijeme *studia Cassiodoriana* dobila je dodatan poticaj pojavom važnih monografija koje proučavaju upravo *Variae*, Christine Kakridi i Michaela Shanea Bjornliea.² Na to se nadovezuje i skorašnji, prvi cjelovit prijevod ove pozamašne zbirke, djelo skupine talijanskih stručnjaka i istraživača, kojemu se u najnovije vrijeme priključio i cjelokupan engleski prijevod.³ I u hrvatskoj su historiografiji Kasiodorove poslanice odavno prepoznate kao bogata spremnica podataka za rekonstrukciju prilika na istočnoj obali Jadrana u prvoj polovici 6. stoljeća. Ograničen izbor u odnosu na broj poslanica koje se mogu uzeti u obzir predstavili su u svojim zbirkama izvora Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski i Ferdo Šišić.⁴ U svoje su

¹ Standardna izdanja prema kojima se poslanice navode: *Cassiodori Senatoris Variae*, prir. Theodor Mommsen, Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi 12, Berlin: Weidmann, 1894; *Cassiodori Variarum libri XII*, u: *Magni Aurelii Cassiodori Senatoris Opera I*, prir. Åke J. Fridh, Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 96, Turnhout: Brepols, 1973.

² Kakridi 2008; Bjornlie 2013.

³ Flavio Magno Aurelio Cassiodoro Senatore, *Varie*, vol. 1-6, gl. ur. Andrea Giardina, ur. Andrea Giardina, Giovanni Cecconi, Ignazio Tantillo, Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2014-2017 (prvi svezak koji donosi uvod i komentiran prijevod prvih dviju knjiga *Variae* te šesti svezak s kazalom tek trebaju izaći iz tiska). *Cassiodorus, The Variae. The Complete Translation*, prev. M. Shane Bjornlie, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019. Cjelovitim je prijevodom moguće pribrojiti i najnoviji njemački prijevod šeste knjige *Variae* s opsežnim komentarom i uvodnom studijom Gatzka 2019. Prethodni su prijevodi na suvremene jezike bili parcijalni (iz niza su izuzeti prijevodi pojedinačnih pisama rasutih po raznim publikacijama), engleski: Hodgkin 1886; Barnish 2006; talijanski: Viscido 2005; njemački: Janus & Dinzlbacher 2010.

⁴ Kukuljević Sakcinski 1874: 2-3 (II = 3.23: Sirmijska Panonija; III = 3.24: Sirmijska Panonija; IV = 9.8: Dalmacija i Savija), pri čemu je koristio izdanje Kasiodorovih *Variae epistulae* iz 18. stoljeća (*Magni Aurelii Cassiodorii Senatoris... Opera omnia in duos tomos distributa*, tomus primus, Venetiis: Typis Antonii Groppi, 1729, 1-187); Šišić 1914: 144-148 (a = 4.49: Savija; b = 3.23: Sirmijska Panonija; c = 3.25: Dalmacija; d = 5.15: Savija; e = 9.9: Dalmacija i Savija), kojemu je na raspolaganju stajalo kritičko Mommsenovo izdanje. Rački

Introduction

Whoever deals with late antique and early medieval history will find it needless to present Cassiodorus and his collection of official letters known as *Variae*.¹ Recently *studia Cassiodoriana* received additional encouragement in two important monographs by Christine Kakridi and Michael Shane Bjornlie studying exactly *Variae*² as well as the recent, first complete translation of this extensive collection, by a group of Italian experts and researchers, and finally an integral English translation.³ In Croatian historiography Cassiodorus' letters have been recognized long time ago as a rich treasury of information useful in reconstruction of the circumstances on the eastern Adriatic coast in the first half of the 6th century. A selection of letters, limited in relation to possible number of letters that could have been considered was presented in the collection of sources compiled by Ivan Kukuljević Sakcinski and Ferdo Šišić.⁴ Tadija

¹ Standard editions for citing the letters: *Cassiodori Senatoris Variae*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi 12, Berlin: Weidmann, 1894; *Cassiodori Variarum libri XII*, in: *Magni Aurelii Cassiodori Senatoris Opera I*, ed. Åke J. Fridh, Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina 96, Turnhout: Brepols, 1973.

² Kakridi 2008; Bjornlie 2013.

³ Flavio Magno Aurelio Cassiodoro Senatore, *Varie*, vol. 1-6, ch. ed. Andrea Giardina, ed. Andrea Giardina, Giovanni Cecconi, Ignazio Tantillo, Roma: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 2014-2017 (the first volume brings an introduction and a translation with comments of the first two books of *Variae* and the sixth volume with an index is forthcoming). *Cassiodorus, The Variae. The Complete Translation*, translation by M. Shane Bjornlie, Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019. The most recent German translation of the sixth book of *Variae* with an extensive commentary and introductory study Gatzka 2019. Previous translations to modern languages were partial (translations of individual letters scattered in different publications were omitted from this list), English: Hodgkin 1886; Barnish 2006; Italian: Viscido 2005; German: Janus & Dinzlbacher 2010.

⁴ Kukuljević Sakcinski 1874: 2-3 (II = 3.23: Sirmian Pannonia; III = 3.24: Sirmian Pannonia; IV = 9.8: Dalmatia and Savia), whereby he used the edition of the 18th century Cassiodorus' *Variae epistulae* (*Magni Aurelii Cassiodorii Senatoris... Opera omnia in duos tomos distributa*, tomus primus, Venetiis: Typis Antonii Groppi, 1729, 1-187); Šišić 1914: 144-148 (a = 4.49: Savia; b = 3.23: Sirmian Pannonia; c = 3.25: Dalmatia; d = 5.15: Savia; e = 9.9: Dalmatia and Savia), who had a Mommsen's critical edition. Rački 1877 left them out,

historiografske narative o srednjovjekovnoj hrvatskoj povijesti iz njih izlučene podatke prvi konkretnije uključili Tadija Smičiklas i Ferdo Šišić, dok je Natko Nodilo u vlastitu, općem pregledu ranosrednjovjekovne povijesti, prvom i do danas najopsežnijem iz pera hrvatskog autora, posegnuo za poslanicama čak i mnogo opsežnije, ali slabo u vezi sa samim hrvatskim povijesnim prostorom.⁵ Nitko od njih nije izravnu pozornost pridao poslanicama povezanim s kasnoantičkom Istrom. Unatoč tomu što je Istra u tome prijelomnom razdoblju između antike i srednjega vijeka dobila u prvim desetljećima nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata marljiva i valjana istraživača u Branku Marušiću,⁶ tek je Robert Matijašić cjelovitije raščlanio glavninu poslanica iz Kasiodorove zbirke koje se bave Istrom, podvrgnuvši ih u studiji iz 1988. ekonomsko-povijesnoj analizi.⁷ Svoje je rezultate ugradio i u nedavno objavljen pregled kasnoantičke povijesti hrvatskoga povijesnog prostora, jedini takav priručnik u hrvatskoj historiografiji, a u njemu je zahvatio i poslanice koje u studiji nije obradio.⁸ Prije njega je Mate Križman prvi put u hrvatskome prijevodu objavio izbor Kasiodorovih poslanica koje se tiču istarsko-kvarnerskog prostora.⁹ U skorije vrijeme Andrej Novak pozabavio se Istrom u Kasiodorovim poslanicama, osobitu pozornost posvetivši gospodarskim i upravnim podacima.¹⁰ U najnovije je pak vrijeme o istarskoj proizvodnji hrane u ostrogotsko doba prema poslanicama, a u sjevernojadranskom kontekstu, pisao

Smičiklas and Ferdo Šišić were the first to include information from this work more specifically into their historiographic narratives while Natko Nodilo in his own, general overview of the early medieval history, the first and the most comprehensive such work to the present by a Croatian author, used letters even much more extensively, but insufficiently in relation to the Croatian historical area.⁵ None of them paid direct attention to the letters associated with late antique Istria. Despite the fact that Istria in that crucial period between antiquity and the Middle Ages had a diligent and proper researcher in Branko Marušić in the first decades after the Second World War,⁶ only Robert Matijašić analyzed more comprehensively most letters from Cassiodorus' collection dealing with Istria, subjecting them to an economic and historical analysis in the 1988 study.⁷ He incorporated his results into recently published overview of late antique history of the Croatian historical area, the only textbook of the kind in Croatian historiography, including also the letters that were not analyzed in the study.⁸ Before him Mate Križman published a selection of Cassiodorus' letters translated into Croatian relating to the Istrian area and Kvarner.⁹ Recently Andrej Novak dealt with Istria in Cassiodorus' letters, paying special attention to economic and administrative information.¹⁰ Rajko Bratož was the last to write about Istria in Cassiodorus' letters, concentrating on the food production in the Ostrogothic

1877 izostavio ih je, iako se poslanicama iz zbirke poslužio na dvama mjestima u svojem povijesnom komentaru (str. 180, bilj. 10; str. 224, bilj. 4).

⁵ Smičiklas 1882: 83-84; Nodilo 1900: 196-215, 266-269, 321-329, 351-355, 373-376, 381, ali samo 208, 215 u vezi s Dalmacijom i Panonijom; Šišić 1925: 168-170.

⁶ Iz opusa toga hrvatsko-slovenskoga arheologa valja izdvojiti dva monografska pregleda u kojima se autor dotaknuo (iako vrlo usputno) i Kasiodorovih *Variae*: Marušić 1960: 9 (Istra zasađena maslinama, proizvodi mnogo žita i obiluje vinogradima, a dolaze i strani trgovci = 12.22); Marušić 1967: 9 (pulski biskup Antonije/Antun = 4.44).

⁷ Matijašić 1988.

⁸ Matijašić 2012: 171-178, 183-184. Dotaknuo ih se i u Matijašić 1998: 1116-1117.

⁹ Križman 1979: 298-313; Križman 1997: 336-351. Doduše, ispušteno je pismo upućeno pulskome biskupu Antoniju/Antunu.

¹⁰ Novak 2007: 41-64.

although he used letters from the collection on two occasions in his historical commentary (p. 180, note. 10; p. 224, note 4).

⁵ Smičiklas 1882: 83-84; Nodilo 1900: 196-215, 266-269, 321-329, 351-355, 373-376, 381, but only 208, 215 in relation to Dalmatia and Pannonia; Šišić 1925: 168-170.

⁶ Two monographic overviews should be mentioned from the work of this Croatian and Slovenian archaeologist in which the author touched on (though very casually) Cassiodorus' *Variae*: Marušić 1960: 9 (Istria covered with olive trees, produces a lot of grain, abounds in vineyards, and is visited by foreign merchants = 12.22); Marušić 1967: 9 (bishop of Pula Antonije/Antun = 4.44).

⁷ Matijašić 1988.

⁸ Matijašić 2012: 171-178, 183-184. He touched on them in Matijašić 1998: 1116-1117.

⁹ Križman 1979: 298-313; Križman 1997: 336-351. Admittedly a letter addressed to the bishop of Pula Antonije/Antun was omitted.

¹⁰ Novak 2007: 41-64.

Rajko Bratož.¹¹ Nalazima i zaključcima o istarskom gospodarstvu u kasnoj antici, do kojih su došli Matijašić, Novak i Bratož, cilj je u ovom radu pružiti širu kontekstualizaciju u okviru privrednih tijekova na istočnojadranskoj obali pod ostrogotskom vlašću, također prema onome što je moguće doznati iz samih poslanica (ovdje se izostavlja arheološka kontekstualizacija koja je već valjano obrađena u Matijašićevim radovima, a nema joj se pridodati ništa temeljito novo, barem za južni dio istarskoga poluotoka¹²), te problematizirati spomen istarskoga proizvodno-poljoprivrednog obilja s obzirom na ideološko-propagandne namjere i ciljeve same zbirke.

Podaci o gospodarstvu Istre u ostrogotsko doba prema poslanicama

Izravni podaci o gospodarstvu Istre u ostrogotsko vrijeme sadržani su u jednoj poslanici koju je Kasiodor, tada prefekt pretorija Italije, najviši dužnosnik civilne provincijske uprave, uputio pokrajincima Histrije (12.22). U još trima poslanicama istaknuti su poljoprivredni proizvodi koji se mogu naći u Istri (12.23.1; 12.24.1; 12.26.3). Slijedom tih podataka, poljoprivredno-proizvodni *dossier* istarske oblasti prema Kasiodoru izgleda ovako:

Vrsta proizvoda	Poslanica
vino (<i>vinum</i>)	12.22.1; 12.23.1; 12.24.1; 12.26.3
maslinovo ulje (<i>oleum</i>)	12.22.1; 12.23.1; 12.24.1
pšenica (<i>triticum</i>)	12.22.1; 12.23.1; 12.24.1
riblji umak (<i>garum</i>)	12.22.4
ribe (<i>pisces</i>)	12.22.4
kamenice (<i>ostreae</i>)	12.22.4

¹¹ Bratož 2016.

¹² Doduše, prema novijim arheološkim nalazima, zaključuje se kako su mnoge vile tijekom 5. stoljeća u sjevernoj Istri bile napuštene, dok su vile u južnome dijelu Istre nastavile živjeti do 6. i 7. stoljeća, pa i kasnije (Žerjal 2010: 705 i ondje navedena literatura). Ovo ukazuje na to da Kasiodorova uljepšana slika istarske privredne snage i proizvodnih mogućnosti nije vrijedila za cijeli istarski poluotok.

period in the northern Adriatic context.¹¹ The aim of this work is to offer wider contextualization of the finds and conclusions about the Istrian economy in Late Antiquity reached by Matijašić, Novak and Bratož, within economic flows on the eastern Adriatic coast under the Ostrogothic rule, also in accordance with what one can learn from the letters (archaeological contextualization is left out as it has been thoroughly analyzed in the works by Matijašić, and nothing new can be added, at least for the southern part of the Istrian peninsula¹²), and to problematize the mention of Istrian productive and agricultural abundance having in mind ideological and propaganda-related intentions and aims of the collection.

Information on the economy of Istria in the Ostrogothic era according to the letters

Direct information about the economy of Istria in the Ostrogothic period is contained in a letter that Cassiodorus, praetorian prefect of Italy at the time, the highest official of the civic provincial administration, addressed to the residents of Istria (12.22). Three more letters mention agricultural products that can be found in Istria (12.23.1; 12.24.1; 12.26.3). On the basis of these data agricultural and productive *dossier* of the Istrian region according to Cassiodorus looks like this:

Product type	Letter
wine (<i>vinum</i>)	12.22.1; 12.23.1; 12.24.1; 12.26.3
olive oil (<i>oleum</i>)	12.22.1; 12.23.1; 12.24.1
wheat (<i>triticum</i>)	12.22.1; 12.23.1; 12.24.1
fish sauce (<i>garum</i>)	12.22.4
fish (<i>pisces</i>)	12.22.4
oysters (<i>ostreae</i>)	12.22.4

¹¹ Bratož 2016.

¹² On the basis of recent archaeological finds he concluded that a number of villas in northern Istria were abandoned in the 5th century, while villas in the southern part of Istria continued to exist until the 6th and 7th century, and even later (ŽERJAL 2010, 705 and the mentioned literature). This suggests that Cassiodorus' embellished image of the Istrian economic strength and productive possibilities was not valid for the entire Istrian peninsula.

Kao što je već bilo zapaženo u literaturi, tri proizvoda, vino, maslinovo ulje i pšenica, pojavljuju se u vezi s Istrom upravo tim redoslijedom u spomenutim poslanicama, izuzevši jedanput kad se navodi samo vino, u kontekstu nestašica koje su pogodile istočni dio provincije Venetije (12.26.3).¹³ Ovo bi se izostavljanje moglo objasniti okolnošću što je u predmetnoj poslanici riječ o nedostatku vina i pšenice; maslinovo se ulje niti ne spominje (umjesto toga govori se o mesu), dok se potrebna pšenica za vojsku osigurava iz državnih zaliha u Raveni (12.26.2: *Hinc enim, cum necesse fuerit, sufficientem tritici speciem destinavimus*: „Jer, bude li bilo potrebno, odavde ćemo namijeniti dostatnu stavku pšenice“). Preostao je još problem s vinom koji se rješava posebnom kupnjom iz Istre i to „kako se nađe na tržnici s prodajnom robom“ (*sicut in foro rerum venalium reperitur*), odnosno nabavkom po tržišnoj cijeni. Drugim riječima, budući da se od dviju među trima namirnicama, kojima prema svjedočanstvu *Variae* Istra obiluje, jedna niti ne spominje u vezi s ovom prehrambenom krizom, dok se manjak druge predviđa namiriti korištenjem središnjih resursa, nije nužno bilo navoditi sve tri, nego samo onu nenadoknadivu iz izravno dostupnih pričuva, pa se ovo niti ne može uzeti kao potvrda da je Kasiodor zabilježio neku drugu godinu kad je Istra ostvarila viškove u proizvodnji vina, odnosno da se ovdje ne podrazumijeva slučaj istarskoga obilja poznat iz triju prethodnih poslanica (12.22-24).

Na ovom mjestu prikladno je pozabaviti se dosad u historiografiji neriješenim kronološkim pitanjem o tome poklapa li se datacijski ova akcija središnjih vlasti s komutacijom poreza u podavanje u prirodninama i dodatnim prisilnim otkupom (*coemptio*) tih prirodnina te njihovim prijevozom, o čemu je riječ u tim trima poslanicama. One potječu vjerojatno iz jeseni 537.,¹⁴ a svakako su nastale poslije 1. rujna 537. jer se spominje „sadašnja“ prva indikcija (12.22.1) koja je trajala do 31. kolovoza 538. Može se doduše pretpostaviti da je nalog uslijedio u raniju jesen jer berba grožđa

As already noticed in the scholarly literature, three products, wine, olive oil and wheat, appear in relation to Istria exactly in this order in the mentioned letters, except for once when only wine is mentioned, in the context of shortages that affected eastern part of the province of Venetia (12.26.3).¹³ This omission might be explained by the fact that in the given letter lack of wine and wheat is in question, olive oil is not even mentioned (but meat instead) while the wheat necessary for the army was ensured from the state commodity reserves (12.26.2: *Hinc enim, cum necesse fuerit, sufficientem tritici speciem destinavimus*: “Since, if necessary, we shall supply sufficient amount of wheat from here”). The only remaining issue with wine is solved by buying it from Istria, “as it is found at the market with the rest of commodities” (*sicut in foro rerum venalium reperitur*), meaning it was bought at the market price. In other words since one of the victuals (out of two of three victuals that were abundant in Istria according to *Variae*) is not even mentioned in relation to this food crisis, while the lack of the other should be settled by using the central commodity reserve, it was not necessary to mention all three, but only the one that could not be supplied from directly accessible reserve, so that this cannot be interpreted as a confirmation that Cassiodorus recorded some other year when Istria had surplus in wine production, i.e. that the case of Istrian abundance known from the three previous letters is not implied here (12.22-24).

It is appropriate to deal with chronological question still unresolved in historiography about whether this action of the central government coincides with commutation of tax into payments in kind and additional forced purchase (*coemptio*) of these natural goods and their transportation, which is discussed in these three letters. They were probably written in autumn of 537,¹⁴ and definitely after September 1, 537 as “present” first indiction is mentioned (12.22.1) lasting until August 31, 537.

¹³ Matijašić 1988: 364, bilj. 15, koji govori o „istarskoj trijadi“. O ovoj nestašici v. i Bratož 2016: 142-143. Povoljne prilike u vezi s proizvodnjom žita, vina i maslinova ulja u Istri spominje i Soraci 1974: 59-60.

¹⁴ Krautschick 1983: 100-101, 106.

¹³ Matijašić 1988: 364, note 15, who speaks about the “Istrian triad”. About this shortage see Bratož 2016: 142-143. Favourable circumstances in relation to production of grain, wine and olive oil in Istria are also mentioned by Soraci 1974: 59-60.

¹⁴ Krautschick 1983: 100-101, 106.

i maslina pada u rujan i listopad, a sâm Kasiodor kaže da je za uspješan urod doznao iz svjedočanstva putnikâ (*commeantium attestatio*; 12.22.1), što podrazumijeva i protek određena vremena dok obavijesti nisu mogle pristići. Predviđena kupnja istarskog vina, da bi se nadoknadila oproštena količina iz gradova Konkordije, Akvileje i Forojulija (12.26.2), datira se u pravilu prije 537. godine, što bi značilo da je prethodila nalogu o komutaciji i prisilnom otkupu u Istri.¹⁵ U poslanici svome zamjeniku Ambroziju Kasiodor spominje neobičnu prirodnu pojavu – zamračenje Sunca koje je potrajalo gotovo godinu dana (12.25.2) – i njezin nepovoljan utjecaj na urod jer su proljeće i ljeto bili neuobičajeno hladni i sušni (12.25.3), dok je žetva prethodne godine bila bogata (12.25.4). Ta se pojava datira u 536. godinu, uz pretpostavku da ju je Kasiodor zabilježio ujesen te godine, pa bi dobra žetva tako potjecala iz 535. godine.¹⁶ Međutim, dodatna suvremena svjedočanstva protežu pojavu i na 537. godinu, čak do kraja lipnja te godine.¹⁷ Otuda je vjerojatnije da je Kasiodor

Admittedly one can assume that the order was issued in early autumn as harvest of olives and vine is done in September and October, and Cassiodorus himself states that he learned about the successful harvest from the testimony of the passengers (*commeantium attestatio*; 12.22.1), implying passing of certain period of time necessary for spreading the news. Assumed purchase of Istrian wine in order to make up for forgiven amount from the cities of Concordia, Aquileia and Forojulii (12.26.2) is usually dated before the year 537 which would mean that it preceded the order on commutation and forced purchase in Istria.¹⁵ In the letter to his deputy Ambrosius Cassiodorus mentions an unusual natural phenomenon – solar eclipse that lasted almost a year (12.25.2) – and its unfavourable influence on crops since spring and summer were unusually cold and dry (12.25.3), while harvest was rich in the previous year (12.25.4). This phenomenon is dated to 536, assuming that Cassiodorus recorded it in autumn of that year so that good harvest would date to the year 535.¹⁶ However additional contemporary testimonies stretch this event to the year 537, as late as late June of that year.¹⁷ Therefore it is more

¹⁵ Usp. Krautschick 1983: 101, bilj. 1 (koji poslanice 12.22-28 datira u jesen 537.); uz Matijašić 1988: 364. Marcone 2015: 289, datira poslanice 12.22-28 u 536./537. godinu, što slijedi i Bratož 2016: 141-144. Naprotiv, Barnish 2006 u svome prijevodu (175-182) poslanice 12.22-27 datira, poput Krautschicka, u jesen 537. godine.

¹⁶ Arjava 2005: 79-80. Tako ima i Bratož 2016, 141.

¹⁷ Ta svjedočanstva pružaju Prokopije iz Cezareje, koji pojavu datira desetom godinom Justinijanove vladavine, odnosno od kolovoza 536. do kolovoza 537. (Proc. Caes., *De bell.* 4.14.5-6) i Pseudo-Zaharija iz Mitilene (Ps.-Zach. Rh., *HE* 9.19), koji je, zajedno s još nekim fenomenima (trešnja zemlje, zamračenje Mjeseca, uzburkanost mora), smješta preciznije u vrijeme od 24. ožujka 536. do 24. lipnja 537. Izuzetak je na prvi pogled Ivan Liđanin (Lyd., *Ost.* 9c) koji spominje „nedavno proteklu“ četrnaestu indikciju (1. rujna 535. do 31. kolovoza 536.) i Belizarov konzulat (535.), ali također ističe da se pojava protegnula na gotovo godinu dana. Spomen „nedavno protekle“ četrnaeste indikcije naizgled bi upućivao na to da je Ivan Liđanin bilješku o pojavi načinio još tijekom petnaeste indikcije (31. kolovoza 536. do 1. rujna 537.), ali je poznato da je cijeli spis posvetio konstantinopolskom prefektu Gabrijelu koji je dužnost obnašao od oko 542. do 547. (Treadgold 2007: 261), dok u uvodu spominje perzijsko osvojenje Antiohije 540. godine kao jedan od poticaja za pisanje (Maas 2005: 91-92). S obzirom na kronološki odmak, izgledno je i da navedeni Belizarov konzulat pokriva i 536. i 537. godinu jer tada nisu bili imenovani novi konzuli. Čini se da ovo prije upućuje na zaključak kako je i Ivan Liđanin mislio

¹⁵ Cf. Krautschick 1983: 101, note 1 (who dates the letters 12.22-28 to autumn of 537); also Matijašić 1988: 364. Marcone 2015: 289, dates the letters 12.22-28 to the years 536/537, accepted by Bratož 2016: 141-144. On the contrary, Barnish 2006 in his translation (pp. 175-182) dates the letters 12.22-27 to autumn of 537, just like Krautschick.

¹⁶ Arjava 2005: 79-80. Same in Bratož 2016, 141.

¹⁷ These testimonies are provided by Procopius of Caesarea who dated this phenomenon to the tenth year of the Justinian's reign, from August 536 to August 537 (Proc. Caes., *De bell.* 4.14.5-6) and Pseudo-Zachariah of Mytilene (Ps.-Zach. Rh., *HE* 9.19) who dated it, together with some other phenomena (earthquake, lunar eclipse, heavy seas), more precisely to the period from March 24, 536 to June 24, 537. At first sight the exception is John the Lydian (Lyd., *Ost.* 9c) who mentions “recently passed” fourteenth indiction (September 1, 535 to August 31, 536) and Belisarius' consulate (535), but he also emphasizes that the phenomenon lasted for almost a year. Mention of “recently passed” fourteenth indiction would seemingly suggest that John the Lydian made a note on the phenomenon during the fifteenth indiction (August 31, 536 to September 1, 537), but it is known that the entire script was dedicated to the prefect of Constantinople Gabriel who was in office from around 542 to 547 (Treadgold 2007: 261), while in the introduction he mentions Persian conquest of Antiochia in the year 540 as one of impetuses for writing (Maas 2005: 91-92). Considering the chronological distance

o njoj pisao tek 537., osobito jer je očigledno da je u tom trenutku pojava prestala. Budući da spominje tri godišnja doba koja su bila pod njezinim utjecajem, zimu, proljeće i ljeto (12.25.3), moglo bi se uzeti kao izglednije da se to odnosi na razdoblje od prosinca 536. do lipnja 537. Iz toga bi proizašlo da je dobra žetva u Italiji bila 536. godine. To je naizgled u neskladu s oskudicom koja je, kako se obično misli, upravo te godine pogodila sjeverne oblasti Italije (Liguriju i Venetiju), a o kojoj svjedoče *Variae*.¹⁸ Ako je i datacija ove poslanice točna i ona potječe iz 536. godine,¹⁹ okolnosti upućuju na to da je nalog ostrogotskog kralja Teodahada kojim su se Liguranim i Venećanima stavljale na raspolaganje zalihe iz državnih skladišta uz povoljnu cijenu, bio povezan s nestašicom izazvanom ratom s Istočnim Rimskim Carstvom, a ne samim klimatskim poremećajem, pa se otuda niti ne može smatrati potvrdom da je 536. godine podbacila žetva. Dakle, uzevši sve navedeno u obzir, prirodna pojava koju je, pišući predmetne poslanice (12.22-26) ujesen 537., zabilježio i Kasidor trajala je otprilike od proljeća 536. do proljeća 537. i utjecala je na podbačaj uroda pšenice i grožđa u Italiji 537. godine, prouzročivši nestašice i glad. To je ostrogotske vlasti navelo da opreste Konkordanima, Akvilejanima i Forojulijcima

na razdoblje od 536. do 537. godine, odnosno zabilježio je da je pojava nastala u četrnaestoj indikciji i trajala gotovo godinu dana. Za izvore v. Arjava 2005: 79-80. U vezi s datacijom pojave u 536.-537. godinu usp. i Stothers & Rampino 1983: 6362; Koder 1996: 276; Meier 2004: 359-365; Woods 2010. O pojavi v. i Keys 1999 (datacija u 535. godinu), studije u *The Years without Summer* 2000 te Newfield 2018 (datacija u 536. godinu).

¹⁸ Cass., *Var.* 10.27.2-3. U literaturi se često navodi da su oblasti bile pogođene gladi (usp. Arjava 2005: 80; Bratož 2016: 142), međutim u tekstu je riječ o „budućoj gladi“, iako se domeće da je „premrsko da uz prepune žitnice stanovnik gladuje“, ali se spominje i da je hrana Liguranim i Venećanima uzeta s polja, što upućuje na zaključak da je žetva bila uredno obavljena. Vrijedi istaknuti da Bratož 2016: 141-142 vijesti Prokopija iz Cezareje (Proc. Caes., *De bell.* 6.20.17-21) o gladi u Emiliji, Tusciji, Picenu i sjeverno od Jadranskog mora, tj. u Venetiji, povezuje s lošom žetvom 536. godine, iako je odlomak u kojemu se ona spominje umetnut u događaje nakon što je vojskovođa Belizar potkraj prosinca 538. osvojio Urbino (Proc. Caes., *De bell.* 6.20.1).

¹⁹ Krautschick 1983: 95, 104 datira je u vrijeme od listopada 535. do studenog 536. godine.

likely that Cassiodorus wrote about it only in 537, particularly since it is evident that the phenomenon ceased at the time. Since he mentions three seasons that were under its influence, winter, spring and summer (12.25.3), it seems more likely that this refers to the period from December 536 to June 537 meaning that good harvest in Italy happened in 536. This might seem to be in contradiction with shortage that, as usually interpreted, hit northern areas of Italy (Liguria and Venetia) exactly in that year, as testified by *Variae*.¹⁸ If dating of this letter is correct, it also dates to 536,¹⁹ the circumstances suggest that the order by the Ostrogothic king Theodahad to provide reserves from state warehouses for the Ligurians and the Veneti at a very reasonable price was related to shortage caused by the war with the Eastern Roman Empire, and not the climate disruption, so it cannot be considered as a cause of poor harvest in 536. Taking all the aforementioned into consideration, the natural phenomenon that was recorded by Cassiodorus when he was writing the mentioned letters (12.22-26) in autumn of

it is more than likely that the mentioned Belisarius' consulate covers both 536 and 537 as new consuls were not appointed by that time. It seems that this suggests that John the Lydian referred to the period from 536 to 537, i.e. that he recorded that the phenomenon happened in the fourteenth indiction and lasted for almost a year. For sources see Arjava 2005: 79-80. In relation to dating of the phenomenon to 536-537 cf. also Stothers & Rampino 1983: 6362; Koder 1996: 276; Meier 2004: 359-365; Woods 2010. About the phenomenon see also Keys 1999 (dating to the year 535), studies in *The Years without Summer* 2000 and Newfield 2018 (dating to 536).

¹⁸ Cass., *Var.* 10.27.2-3. It is often stated in the scholarly literature that these areas were hit by hunger (cf. Arjava 2005: 80; Bratož 2016: 142), however the text discusses “future famine” although with a remark that it is “too outrageous that a cultivator should starve while our barns are full”, but it is also stated that the food was taken from the fields of the Ligurians and the Veneti indicating that the harvest was performed normally. It is worth mentioning that Bratož 2016: 141-142 associated information by Procopius of Caesarea (Proc. Caes., *De bell.* 6.20.17-21) about hunger in Aemilia, Tusciana, Picenum and north of the Adriatic Sea, in Venetia, with poor harvest in the year 536 although the passage where it is mentioned was inserted into events after the commander Belisarius conquered Urbino by the end of December of 538 (Proc. Caes., *De bell.* 6.20.1).

¹⁹ Krautschick 1983: 95, 104 he dates it to the period from October, 535 to November, 536.

dužne količine vina i pšenica za opskrbu vojske (12.26.3), odnosnu vojnu anonu (*annona militaris*), ali i da nalože mediolanskom biskupu Daciju da svoje gladne sugrađane nahrani zalihama iz državnih skladišta u Ticinu i Dertoni (12.27),²⁰ a u isti mah da manjak nadoknade dopremom iz Istre, primjenom prisilna otkupa (12.23.1), koja očito nije bila u tolikoj mjeri pogođena nepovoljnim meteorološkim uvjetima nego, „Božjim darom rodna vinom, uljem i pšenicom, hvali se ove godine [537.] plodnošću“ (12.22.1). Spomenom sintagme „Božjim darom“ Kasiodor je možda smjerao dodatno naglasiti izuzetnost dobra uroda u Istri koji je bjelodano bio potpunoma u neskladu s općim poljoprivrednim prilikama u toj godini.

Uz agrikulturne djelatnosti usredotočene na uzgajanje vinove loze, pravljenje maslinova ulja i uzgoj pšenice (posljednje je, po svemu sudeći, bila inovacija kasnoantičkog doba kako bi se dodatnom proizvodnjom zadovoljile i regionalne potrebe jer su uvriježena žitorodna područja, poput sjeverne Afrike i Sicilije, bila tijekom znatnog dijela 5. stoljeća izvan dohvata italskih vlasti)²¹, poslanice svjedoče i o marikulturnim aktivnostima u Istri koje su obuhvaćale ribolov, proizvodnju ribljeg umaka i uzgoj kamenica. Proizvodna snaga oblasti zasnovana na ladanjskim gospodarstvima (*villae rusticae*), osobito onima smještenima uz samo more (*villae maritimae*), zrcali se u spomenu *praetoria* u značajniju ladanja, ali s naglaskom na njihovu utvrđenost (12.22.5).²² U *Variae* se i neposredno upućuje na proizvodnu ulogu mjesnih posjednika (*possessores*), od kojih valja nakupovati potrebne namirnice koje bjelodano sami proizvode (12.23.1), a istarski se posjednici upravo i podrazumijevaju pod sklopom

537, lasted roughly from spring 536 to spring 537 and resulted in shortfall in wheat and grapes harvest in Italy in 537, causing shortages and hunger. This prompted the Ostrogothic administration to forgive the residents of Concordia, Aquileia and Foro Julii due amounts of wine and wheat for army supply (12.26.3), i.e. military grain supply (*annona militaris*), and also to order the bishop of Mediolanus Dacius to feed his hungry fellow citizens from the reserves stored in state warehouses in Ticino and Dertona (12.27),²⁰ but at the same time to refill the reserve by a shipment from Istria, by applying forced purchase (12.23.1), since Istria was not affected as badly by adverse meteorological conditions but “by the gift of God rich in grapes, olives and wheat, boasting fertility once more this year [537]” (12.22.1). By mentioning the syntagm “the gift of God” Cassiodorus might have attempted to additionally emphasize exceptionally good harvest in Istria that was obviously in complete disagreement with general agricultural circumstances in that year.

In addition to agricultural activities focused on making olive oil and growing vine and wheat (the latter was in all likelihood late antique innovation to satisfy regional needs as common grain-growing regions such as northern Africa and Sicily were out of reach of the Italian administration for most of the 5th century²¹), the letters also testify to mariculture activities in Istria such as fishing, fish sauce production and oyster farming. Production power of the region was based on countryside villas as hubs of large agricultural estates (*villae rusticae*), in particular the seaside villas (*villae maritimae*), which is reflected in mention of *praetoria* referring to countryside, but with focus on their fortification

²⁰ *Lib. pont.* 100, *Vita Silverii* 60.5 bilježi kako je mediolanski biskup Dacije izvijestio u Rimu, u vezi s velikom gladi „po cijelom svijetu“, da su u Liguriji majke jele svoju djecu. Silverije je bio papa od lipnja 536. do studenog 537., a Dacije je u Rimu bio potkraj 537. (*Proc. Caes., De bell.* 6.7.35).

²¹ Matijašić 1988: 365, bilj. 20. Ponešto drukčije MARCONE 2015: 289, koji navodi da je Istra kao regija tradicionalno proizvodila vino, žitarice i maslinovo ulje dobre kakvoće. No, kao što ističe Matijašić (*ibidem*), takva je žitna proizvodnja morala ponajprije služiti za zadovoljavanje mjesnih potreba.

²² O značenju pojma *villa* u kasnoj antici v. Basić 2012: 138-139; Basić 2014: 63-64, 68-69. Za značenjsko izjednačavanje termina *villa* i *praetorium* u kasnoj antici usp. Ripoll & Arce 2000: 64-65.

²⁰ *Lib. pont.* 100, *Vita Silverii* 60.5 records that the bishop of Mediolanum Dacius reported in Rome, in relation to great hunger “all over the world”, that in Liguria mothers ate their children. Silverius was pope from June 536 to November 537, and Dacius was in Rome by the end of 537 (*Proc. Caes., De bell.* 6.7.35).

²¹ Matijašić 1988: 365, note 20. Somewhat different in Marcone 2015: 289, who mentions that Istria as a region traditionally produced wine, grain and good quality olive oil. However as Matijašić emphasized (*ibidem*), such production of grain must have served primarily to satisfy the local needs.

„pokrajinci Histrije“ (*provinciales Histriae*; 12.22 titulum). „Niz prelijepih otoka“, za koje se kaže da se nadovezuju na istarsku obalu te štite brodove od pogibelji i obogaćuju zemljoradnike svojom plodnošću (12.22.5), najvjerojatnije se odnosi na otoke u Kvarnerskome zaljevu, ponajprije Krk i Cres.²³ Spomen zemljoradnika (*cultores*) upućuje na slabije razvijene proizvodne mogućnosti otočne poljoprivrede u odnosu na Istru, što je i razumljivo, ali je također i svjedočanstvo o korištenju dostupnih poljodjelskih resursa. Moguće je da je ustrojavanje zasebna upravnog područja *comitiva insulae Curitanae et Celsinae*, o kojem podatke pružaju *Variae* (7.16), bilo potaknuto i željom da se na otocima osigura nesmetana poljoprivredna proizvodnja, koliko god ona bila ograničena, odnosno da se lokalizirani poljoprivredni proizvodi učine lakše iskoristivima i bolje dohvatljivima pokrajinskoj ili središnjoj upravi u slučaju potrebe.²⁴ Ako je tomu tako, potez bi se mogao protumačiti kao dodatan pokazatelj brige središnjih vlasti da se proširi poljoprivredna osnovica, kao što se to uostalom može pretpostaviti i u vezi s Istrom kad je riječ o proizvodnji žita. Tà uzgoj je žitarica i u provinciji Dalmaciji bio ograničen na pojedine otoke poput Hvara, Lošinja i Unije te na dijelove zaleđa na prostoru Ravnih kotara, u dolini Neretve kao i na Livanjskom, Duvanjskom, Grahovskom i Sarajevskom polju, dok su se vino i maslinovo ulje u najvećoj mjeri proizvodili u okolini Salone, Narone i Jadera, na srednjodalmatinskim otocima te na poluotoku Pelješcu.²⁵

Osim proizvodnih djelatnosti, poslanice izravno ukazuju i na razvijenu trgovačku aktivnost. U *Variae* se izrijekom navode trgovci (*mercatores, negotiatores*), prvi koji dolaze izvan oblasti i kupuju mjesne proizvode (na njih se odnosi sklop *peregrinus emptor*), pri čemu Kasiodor žigoše „razmaženost kupaca“ (*ementum fastidia*; 12.22.2),²⁶ te drugi, od kojih, kao uostalom i od samih posjednika, Kasiodorov opunomoćenik Lovro (*Laurentius*)

(12.22.5).²² In *Variae* productive role of local landowners (*possessores*) is indirectly hinted at, since necessary victuals should be bought from them as they obviously produce food themselves (12.23.1), and the Istrian landowners are referred to by the term “provincials of Istria” (*provinciales Histriae*; 12.22 titulum). “The beautiful chain of islands” that are said to begirt the Istrian coastline, protect the ships from danger and enrich the cultivators due to their fertility (12.22.5), most likely refer to the islands in the Bay of Kvarner, primarily Krk and Cres.²³ Mention of the cultivators (*cultores*) indicates less developed productive possibilities of the insular agriculture in relation to Istria which is understandable, but at the same time it is a testimony of using accessible agricultural resources. It is possible that structuring of a separate administrative region *comitiva insulae Curitanae et Celsinae*, that is described in *Variae* (7.16), was also incited by a wish to ensure uninterrupted agricultural production on the islands, as limited as it might have been, i.e. to make localized agricultural products easily usable and more accessible to the provincial or central government if necessary.²⁴ If that is so, this move might be interpreted as an additional indicator of central government’s concern to expand the agricultural basis, as it can be assumed in relation to Istria when it comes to grain production. Cultivation of cereals in the province of Dalmatia was limited to certain islands such as Hvar, Lošinj and Unije, and parts of the hinterland in the region of Ravnih kotari, in the Neretva river valley and in the fields of Livno, Duvno, Grahovo and Sarajevo, while wine and olive oil were mostly produced in the surroundings of Salona, Narona and Iader, and on the central Dalmatian islands as well as on the Pelješac peninsula.²⁵

In addition to production activities, the letters directly suggest developed trade activity. Merchants (*mercatores, negotiatores*) are explicitly mentioned

²³ Gračanin 2015b: 50; Gračanin 2016: 255.

²⁴ Usp. i Gračanin 2015b: 50-51; Gračanin 2016: 255.

²⁵ V. Gračanin & Kartalija 2018: 357.

²⁶ Na još jednome mjestu u *Variae* spominje se nadasve razmažen, izbirljiv kupac (Cass., *Var.* 8.33.4: *emptor fastidiosissimus*). Za odnos prema trgovini i trgovcima u ostrogotsko doba prema *Variae* v. De Salvo 1993: 99-113.

²² On meaning of the term *villa* in late antiquity see Basić 2012: 138-139; Basić 2014: 63-64, 68-69. For semantical equation of the terms *villa* and *praetorium* in Late Antiquity cf. Ripoll & Arce 2000: 64-65.

²³ Gračanin 2015b: 50; Gračanin 2016: 255.

²⁴ Cf. also Gračanin 2015b: 50-51; Gračanin 2016: 255.

²⁵ V. Gračanin & Kartalija 2018: 357.

ima otkupljivati neophodnu robu (12.23.1). U potonjem slučaju možda se smije pretpostaviti da nisu slučajno trgovci navedeni prije posjednika jer se od njih očekivalo da imaju uskladištene mnogo veće količine proizvoda spremnih za prodaju. Na posljetku, oni su možda bili i prvenstvena ciljna skupina još jednoga Lovrina zadatka – prisilna otkupa (*coemptio*),²⁷ koji se u poslanici Histranima ne spominje tom riječju, već posredno, kao vrlo obilato prikupljanje potrepština koje se moraju tražiti, ali bez štete za pokrajince jer se u tu svrhu namijenila novčana naknada iz riznice (*Sed quoniam nobis in maiore summa sunt quaerenda quae diximus, tot solidos etiam de arca nostra transmisi-mus, ut res necessariae sine vestro dispendio uberrime debeant congregari*; 12.22.3). Da su u doba ostrogotske vlasti i *negotiatores* bili podložni prisilnu otkupu, svjedoči sâm Kasiodor koji bilježi kako je ta obveza bila nametnuta trgovcima u Apuliji i Kalabrijii.²⁸ Na tragu rečenoga, valja napomenuti kako je izneseno mišljenje da bi se istarske *negotiatores* moglo poistovjetiti s velikim posjednicima,²⁹ međutim to se ne čini vjerojatnim, barem ne u onoj mjeri u kojoj bi bila riječ o zaista velikim proizvođačima (latifundistima) jer, prema sadašnjem stupnju spoznaja, takvih veleposjeda u Istri, a niti u sjevernoj Italiji, nije bilo.³⁰ S druge strane, sasvim je izgledno da je među *negotiatores* bilo

in *Variae*, the first who come outside the area and buy local products (*peregrinus emptor* set relates to them) whereby Cassiodorus discloses “the caprices of a buyer” (*ementum fastidia*; 12.22.2),²⁶ and the second that are supposed to sell necessary goods, just like the landowners themselves, to the Cassiodorus' assignee Laurentius (12.23.1). In the latter case perhaps it is reasonable to assume that merchants were intentionally mentioned before the landowners since they were expected to have larger amounts of products ready to sell in store. Finally they might have been primary target group of another Laurentius' assignment – forced purchase (*coemptio*),²⁷ that is not mentioned under that term in the letter to the Histrians, but indirectly, as a very rich collecting of necessities that have to be required, but without any damage to the provincials as reimbursement from the treasury was intended for that purpose. (*Sed quoniam nobis in maiore summa sunt quaerenda quae diximus, tot solidos etiam de arca nostra transmisi-mus, ut res necessariae sine vestro dispendio uberrime debeant congregari*; 12.22.3). Cassiodorus himself testified that even *negotiatores* were subjected to forced purchase in the Ostrogothic period, and he adds that this levy was imposed on the merchants in Apulia and Calabria.²⁸ Along these lines it is worth mentioning that there is an opinion that Istrian *negotiatores* could be identified with large landowners,²⁹

²⁷ O *coemptio* usp. Karayannopoulos 1958: 97-98; Jones 1964a: 235, 254, 291; Jones 1964b: 840. Namet je služio namiri vojske, a u Istočnome Rimskom Carstvu ograničio ga je car Anastazije I. na slučajeve nužde i uz poseban carski nalog, izuzevši Tračku dijecezu gdje se primjenjivao kao standardna mjera zbog niska poreznog prihoda. O *coemptio* pod Ostrogotima u Italiji v. Soraci 1974: 95-98, posebno 94, bilj. 20 za istarski primjer.

²⁸ Cass., *Var.* 2.26; 2.38. Nakon rušenja ostrogotske vlasti, Justinijan I. je 554. godine propisao da se zalihe za vojsku imaju kupovati po tržišnoj cijeni u pokrajinama s viškovima, dok su u pokrajini Apuliji i Kalabrijii, gdje su posjednici radije pristali plaćati dodatan porez, prisilnim otkupom bili obvezani isključivo trgovci (Jones 1964a: 291; v. i Goffart 1989: 172). To je očito bila mjera naslijeđena i zadržana iz ostrogotskoga vremena.

²⁹ V. Novak 2007: 48, na temelju Ruggini 1995: 226.

³⁰ Matijašić 1988: 369, koji navodi da je u Istri prevladavao srednji i sitni posjed zasnovan na kolonatskom odnosu te zaključuje da se pod sklopom *provinciales Histriae* skriva velik broj poljoprivrednih proizvođača, a ne manja skupina velikih posjednika.

²⁶ An exceptionally spoiled, capricious buyer is mentioned once more in *Variae* (Cass., *Var.* 8.33.4: *emptor fastidiosissimus*). About the relation with merchants and trade in the Ostrogothic period in *Variae* see De Salvo 1993: 99-113.

²⁷ About *coemptio* cf. Karayannopoulos 1958: 97-98; Jones 1964a: 235, 254, 291; Jones 1964b: 840. This impost was used to cover the army costs, and it was limited in the Eastern Roman Empire by the Emperor Anastasius I to emergencies only, with a special imperial order, except for the Diocese of Thrace where it was applied as a standard measure because of low tax income. About *coemptio* under the Ostrogoths in Italy see Soraci 1974: 95-98, in particular 94, note 20 for the Istrian example.

²⁸ Cass., *Var.* 2.26; 2.38. After the collapse of the Ostrogothic rule, Justinian I prescribed in 554 that the army supply should be bought at market price in the provinces with surplus, while in the provinces of Apulia and Calabria where the landowners rather agreed to pay additional tax, only merchants were subjected to forced purchase (Jones 1964a: 291; see also Goffart 1989: 172). This was evidently a measure inherited and retained from the Ostrogothic period.

²⁹ V. Novak 2007: 48, on the basis of Ruggini 1995: 226.

krupnijih posjednika koji su mogli proizvoditi i za šire tržište, pa je na njih jednako primjenjiv i izraz *possessores*.³¹ Nipošto ih pak ne treba tražiti među službenom pokrajinskom elitom senatorskoga statusa, *honorati*, jer to nije odgovaralo njihovu statusu, pa ih vlasti ne bi svrstavale u *negotiatores*.³² I *possessores* i *negotiatores* očito su smatrani privrednom bazom pokrajine. Obje su skupine pokrivena pojmom *provinciales Histriae*, koji se odnosi na sve stanovnike pokrajine bez obzira na njihov društveni položaj i imovinski status,³³ ali su samo imućniji među njima bili vlasnici onih „ladanja koja nadugo i naširoko blistaju“ (*praetoria longe lateque lucentia*), što ih Kasiodor uzdiže u literarnoj maniri (12.22.5). Može se domisliti i da Kasiodor ne pravi funkcijsku razliku između pojmova *mercator* i *negotiator*.³⁴ No pravi je po

however this does not seem very likely, at least not to the extent where we would have really large producers (*latifundists*) as there were no such estates in Istria or northern Italy, judging from the present state of research.³⁰ On the other hand it is very likely that there were larger landowners among *negotiatores* who could have produced for the wider market, so the term *possessores* is equally applicable.³¹ On no account should they be looked for in the provincial elite of the senatorial rank (*honorati*), since that was not appropriate having in mind their status, so the authorities did not list them with *negotiatores*.³² Both *possessores* and *negotiatores* were evidently considered to be an economic base of the province. Both groups are included in the umbrella term *provinciales Histriae*, relating to all residents of the province regardless of their social or financial status,³³ but only the wealthier among them were owners of those “extensive residences scattered far and wide, shining like pearls” (*praetoria longe lateque lucentia*), as exalted by

³¹ Ovo djelomično izjednačavanje pretpostavlja i Novak 2007: 47.

³² Nasuprot tomu, Novak 2007: 48 pomišlja da bi *negotiatores et possessores* bili mjesna elita, senatori drugoga reda koji bi se skrasili u pokrajini i obnašali u njoj upravne dužnosti (v. i Novak 007: 39-40). Kasiodor u nekoliko poslanica zasebno spominje honorate, razlikujući ih od posjednika, no to čini kad je riječ o gradovima (Cass, *Var.* 2.17 titulum: Trident; 3.49 titulum: Katina; 4.8 titulum: Forojulij; 6.24 titulum: Neapol; 7.27 titulum: razni gradovi; 8.29 titulum: Parma; 9.5.1 teritorij gradova; 9.10 titulum: Sirakuza), međutim jednako će ih tako nazvati i pokrajincima, odnosno senatorima koji žive u pokrajini (Cass, *Var.* 6.21.3). Za ograničenja nametnuta senatorima u vezi s bavljenjem trgovinom i za njihovo vlastito staleško poimanje trgovine v. D'Arms 1980: 77-78, 85-86; D'Arms 1981: 20-25, 30-34, 37-38. Također i Kay 2014: 13-14. Dakako, postojali su razni, prokušani načini da se ta ograničenja zaobiđu u praksi, kao što i jesu bila zaobilazna, budući da je bogatstvo bilo jedan od bitnih elemenata staleške identifikacije, ali se ono temeljilo na vlasništvu nad zemljom (o elementima senatorske staleške identifikacije u kasnorimsko doba v. Näf 1995: 28-48). Dakle, *honorati* su ponajprije *possessores* (drukčije doduše Meyer-Flügel 1992: 303-304, ali v. Tantillo 2016: 305-307). Za pojmove *honorati* i *possessores* usp. Cecconi 2006: 44-54.

³³ Usp. i Gračanin 2015b: 52; Gračanin 2016: 257, za ostrogotsku južnu Panoniju i Dalmaciju.

³⁴ O funkcijskim obilježjima tih pojmova usp. Rico 2003: 419-425, koji zaključuje da su oni značenjski istovjetni, barem kad je riječ o pomorskoj trgovini. Uz istarski primjer, pojam *mercator* spominje se još svega dvaput u *Variae* (Cass., *Var.* 6.23.4; 7.9.3), dok je pojam *negotiator* bitno učestaliji (Cass., *Var.* 2.26: šest puta; 2.30: dvaput; 2.38: dvaput; 6.7.7: jedanput; 7.14.2: jedanput; 11.11.1: jedanput). Nekoliko puta se navodi i općenitiji izraz kupci (*ementes*; Cass., *Var.* 3.19.2; 6.23.4; 11.11.1; 12.22.2).

³⁰ Matijašić 1988: 369, who states that in Istria medium-sized and small estates were dominant, which were based on the colonate relations, and concludes that the syntagm *provinciales Histriae* refers to a considerable number of agricultural producers, and not a small group of large landowners.

³¹ This partial equation is assumed by Novak 2007: 47.

³² As opposed to this, Novak 2007: 48 considers that *negotiatores et possessores* might be local elite, second-class senators who would settle down in the province and perform administrative duties (see also Novak 2007: 39-40). In several letters Cassiodorus mentions *honorati*, distinguishing them from *possessores*, but he does this when discussing cities (Cass, *Var.* 2.17 titulum: Tridentum; 3.49 titulum: Catina; 4.8 titulum: Forojulii; 6.24 titulum: Neapolis; 7.27 titulum: various cities; 8.29 titulum: Parma; 9.5.1 territory of the cities; 9.10 titulum: Syracuse), however he will refer to them as the provincials or senators living in the province (Cass, *Var.* 6.21.3). About the limitations imposed on senators regarding practicing trade and their own class-related apprehension of trade see D'Arms 1980: 77-78, 85-86; D'Arms 1981: 20-25, 30-34, 37-38. Also Kay 2014: 13-14. Of course there was a number of ways to evade these limitations in practice, as had been done, since wealth was one of the important elements of class identification, but it was based on land possession (about the elements of senatorial class identification in Late Roman period see Näf 1995: 28-48). Thus *honorati* were primarily *possessores* (somewhat different in Meyer-Flügel 1992: 303-304, but see Tantillo 2016: 305-307). About the terms *honorati* and *possessores* cf. Cecconi 2006: 44-54.

³³ Cf. also Gračanin 2015b: 52; Gračanin 2016: 257, for Ostrogothic southern Pannonia and Dalmatia.

podrijetlu trgovine koja je na stvari, odnosno je li domaća (mjesna) ili tuđa (izvanpokrajinska). Budući da su, kako je već rečeno, *negotiatores* svrstani među *provinciales Histriae*, nema dvojbe da je riječ o lokalnim poduzetnicima. Jedan od njih možda je bio izvjesni Ivan (*Johannes*) za kojega se u *Variae* kaže da je salonitanskom biskupu Januariju prodao maslinovo ulje za uljanice, ali nije od njega dobio dogovorenu cijenu, zbog čega se pritužio kralju Teoderiku Velikom.³⁵ *Mercatores* su pak jasno prikazani kao trgovci koji stižu izvan pokrajine, što je već samo po sebi pokazatelj razvijenosti njezine poljoprivredne proizvodnje koja je bila kadra ostvarivati viškove.³⁶ Iz poslanice jasno proizlazi da su mjesni proizvođači i trgovci radije glavne prehrambene proizvode prodavali trgovcima tuđincima, ali se naznačava kako oni više ne pohode pokrajinu (12.22.2), pa sada *negotiatores* i *possessores* imaju priliku zaraditi od države, prodajući robu po cijeni koju bi ionako sami bili predložili, to jest po tržišnoj cijeni (12.22.3).³⁷ Obično se misli da bi ti strani trgovci opskrbljivali žitom (a zacijelo i drugim prehrambenim potrepštinama) sâm Rim, stoga što se njihov izostanak poklapa s vremenom kad je istočnorimski vojskovođa Belizar osvojio grad.³⁸ Barem načelno to ne isključuje i trgovce iz drugih pokrajina, uključujući i Emiliju u kojoj se nalazila kraljevska prijestolnica Ravena (Istra se naziva ravenskom Kampanijom, to jest prijestolničkom smočnicom; 12.22.3). Može se

Cassiodorus in a literary manner (12.22.5). We can add that Cassiodorus does not make functional difference between the terms *mercator* and *negotiator*,³⁴ but he does distinguish if the trade is domestic (local) or foreign (out of province). Since *negotiatores* were classified as *provinciales Histriae*, it is beyond doubt that these were local entrepreneurs. One of them might have been certain John (*Johannes*) who, according to *Variae*, sold olive oil for oil lamps to the Salonitan bishop Januarius, but he did not receive the payment they agreed on so he complained to the king Theodoric the Great.³⁵ *Mercatores* were clearly presented as merchants coming outside the province which is in itself an indicator of the developed agricultural production that could make surplus.³⁶ The letter clearly states that the local producers and merchants preferred to sell their products to foreign merchants, but it is denoted that they no longer visited the province (12.22.2), giving *negotiatores* and *possessores* an opportunity to earn money from the state, selling their goods at the price they would suggest anyway, that is the market price (12.22.3).³⁷ It is usually believed that these foreign merchants supplied even Rome with grain (and then definitely with other victuals) since their shortage coincides with the

³⁵ Cass., *Var.* 3.7. V. Gračanin 2016: 243-244, 244-245, 253, 261. Dakako, Ivan je mogao biti i dalmatinski *possessor* ili *negotiator*.

³⁶ Moguće je da se, barem posredno, još dvije poslanice odnose i na prilike u Istriji: Cass., *Var.* 1.34, upućena prefektu pretorija Italije Aniciju Probu Faustu Mlađemu, u kojoj je riječ o tome da bi zaliha žita trebala ponajprije koristiti provinciji u kojoj je uzgojena jer je pravednije da ta plodnost služi stanovnicima, a ne da se iscrpljuje revnom pohlepom trgovanja s tuđincima; te Cass., *Var.* 11.11, zapravo edikt o čuvanju cijena živežnih namirnica u Raveni. V. Ruggini 1995: 214-215, 283-285, 320-321; uz Novak 2007: 46, bilj 151; Vera 2015: 203.

³⁷ Po tržišnoj se cijeni kupuju i namirnice za Konkordane, Akvilejane i Forojuljice u Venetiji, također u sklopu prisilna otkupa (Cass., *Var.* 12.26.3).

³⁸ Ruggini 1995: 348-349; uz Matijašić 1988: 365; Novak 2007: 52.

³⁴ About the functional characteristics of these terms cf. Rico 2003: 419-425, who concluded that they are identical in terms of meaning, at least with regard to maritime trade. In addition to the Istrian example, the term *mercator* is mentioned on another two occasions in *Variae* (Cass., *Var.* 6.23.4; 7.9.3), while the term *negotiator* is significantly more frequent (Cass., *Var.* 2.26: six times; 2.30: twice; 2.38: twice; 6.7.7: once; 7.14.2: once; 11.11.1: once). More general term buyers is mentioned several times (*ementes*; Cass., *Var.* 3.19.2; 6.23.4; 11.11.1; 12.22.2).

³⁵ Cass., *Var.* 3.7. V. Gračanin 2016: 243-244, 244-245, 253, 261. Of course John also could have been a Dalmatian *possessor* or *negotiator*.

³⁶ It is possible that at least two more letters relate to the circumstances in Istria: Cass., *Var.* 1.34, addressed to praetorian prefect of Italy Anicius Probus Faustus the Younger saying that the grain stock should be of use primarily to the province in which it was grown as it is fairer that the residents benefit from this fertility instead of exhausting it with fierce greed in trading with foreigners; and Cass., *Var.* 11.11, actually an edict on preserving the prices of victuals in Ravenna. V. Ruggini 1995: 214-215, 283-285, 320-321; also Novak 2007: 46, note 151; Vera 2015: 203.

³⁷ Victuals for the residents of Concordia, Aquileia and Forojulii in Venetia were also bought at market price, within forced purchase (Cass., *Var.* 12.26.3).

pretpostaviti kako je rat između Istočnih Rimljana i Ostrogota umnogome poremetio uobičajene gospodarske tijekove, što je izravno utjecalo i na mogućnosti Histrana da prodaju svoje proizvode izvan vlastite pokrajine. Napokon, ako je utemeljena pretpostavka da se Histrija u kasno ostrogotsko doba upravno osamostalila od Venetije (čak i ako je to bila privremena mjera),³⁹ onda su i trgovci iz Venetije također mogli ponijeti oznaku *peregrini*. U vezi s *coemptio* Kasiodor posebno ističe kako osiguravanje prijevoza nije opterećenje – a inače je bio nemalen trošak⁴⁰ – jer je taj zadatak povjeren venetskim tribunima primorja (*tribuni maritimum*; 12.24). O razvijenosti pomorskoga prometa na sjevernome Jadranu u ovo doba svjedoči, iako posredno, podatak iz *Variae* o otocima koji se nadovezuju na obalu Istre, a pružaju zaklon brodovima (12.22.5).⁴¹ Tko su točno bili tribuni primorja, u historiografiji još nije razriješeno, a iznesena su različita mišljenja.⁴² Možda se najprihvatljivijom pretpostavkom doima ona prema kojoj je riječ o službenicima na čelu naselja u Venetskoj laguni. Čini se da u njima ne

time when the eastern Roman military commander Belisarius conquered the city.³⁸ At least in principle this does not exclude merchants from other provinces, including Aemilia where the royal capital Ravenna was located (Istria is called Campania of Ravenna, i.e. the cupboard of the capital; 12.22.3). We can assume that the war between the eastern Romans and the Ostrogoths heavily disrupted usual economic flows affecting directly possibilities of the Istrians to sell their products outside their own province. Finally if there is a foundation for the assumption that Histria gained administrative independence from Venetia in late Ostrogothic period (even if only temporary),³⁹ then the merchants from Venetia could have also been denoted as *peregrini*. In relation to *coemptio* Cassiodorus emphasized that transportation insurance was not a burden – and otherwise it was rather costly⁴⁰ – since the Venetian tribunes of the maritime parts (*tribuni maritimum*; 12.24) were entrusted with this assignment. Development of the maritime traffic in the northern Adriatic at this time is attested, though indirectly, by information from *Variae* about the islands that adjoin the coastline of Istria, offering shelter to the ships (12.22.5).⁴¹

³⁹ Usp. Novak 2007: 49, 61-62, 163. Tu je mogućnost već izrazio Suić 1970: 712. Kasiodor Histriju izravno naziva provincijom (Cass., *Var.* 12.22), a i Venetija uvijek se spominje samostalno i to u množinskom obliku (Cass., *Var.* 4.10.2; 10.27: *Venetiae*; 12.4 titulum: *Venetiae*; 12.7: titulum: *Venetiae*; 12.24.3: *Venetiae*; 12.26.1: *Veneti sc. provinciales*). Što se tiče množinskog oblika Venetije, čini se da je u kasnoj antici postojala dodatna unutarnja administrativna razdioba Venetije na Gornju i Donju, pri čemu je Donja imala sjedište u Akvileji, a smatra se da je ona u pravilu uključivala i Histriju (usp. Gračanin 2015a: 81; uz Turković & Basić 2011: 51; Bratož 2015: 26, bilj. 64, koji doduše misli da je Gornja Venetija vjerojatno obuhvaćala Histriju, a možda i današnju zapadnu i središnju Sloveniju s Emonom). Pa ipak, moguće je da je s obzirom na geografsku zasebitost, Histrija u ostrogotsko doba bila izuzeta iz dotadašnjega provincijskog ustroja, a da to nije utjecalo na korištenje množinskog oblika Venetije jer su dva dijela oblasti, kako se čini, odvojeno pokrivala unutrašnjost i priobalje.

⁴⁰ Ruggini 1995: 344-346 i bilj. 404; uz Uggeri 1987: 343-344; Novak 2007: 49.

⁴¹ O pomorskome prometu na sjevernom Jadranu u 6. stoljeću s težištem na Akvileji i Raveni usp. Sotinel 2001: 61-69, gdje se posebno ističe da se jedina Kasiodorova poslanica koja precizno locira trgovačke aktivnosti na sjevernome Jadranu, tiče upravo Istre (Sotinel 2001: 61).

⁴² Usp. Gračanin 2015b: 33-34, uz bilj. 93; Gračanin 2016: 236-237, uz bilj. 93.

³⁸ Ruggini 1995: 348-349; also Matijašić 1988: 365; Novak 2007: 52.

³⁹ Cf. Novak 2007: 49, 61-62, 163. This possibility was considered by Suić 1970: 712. Cassiodorus refers to Histria as a province (Cass., *Var.* 12.22), and Venetia is also always mentioned separately, in plural form (Cass., *Var.* 4.10.2; 10.27: *Venetiae*; 12.4 titulum: *Venetiae*; 12.7: titulum: *Venetiae*; 12.24.3: *Venetiae*; 12.26.1: *Veneti sc. provinciales*). As for the plural form *Venetiae*, it seems that in Late Antiquity there was an inner administrative division of Venetia to Upper and Lower, the latter having its center in Aquileia, and it is believed that it included Histria (cf. Gračanin 2015a: 81; also Turković & Basić 2011: 51; Bratož 2015: 26, note 64, who believes that Upper Venetia probably encompassed Histria, and possibly also present-day western and central Slovenia with Emona). However it is possible that in view of its geographical detachment Histria was excluded from previous provincial structure without affecting the use of plural form *Venetiae* as it seems that two parts of the region separately covered the interior and the littoral.

⁴⁰ Ruggini 1995: 344-346 and note 404; also Uggeri 1987: 343-344; Novak 2007: 49.

⁴¹ About the maritime traffic in the northern Adriatic in the 6th century with focus on Aquileia and Ravenna cf. Sotinel 2001: 61-69, where one Cassiodorus' letter stands out as it locates precisely trade activities in the northern Adriatic, and it relates exactly to Istria (Sotinel 2001: 61).

treba gledati tek usku lokalnu prijevozničku snagu jer Kasiodor ističe kako svojim lađama prevladavaju velike udaljenosti (12.24.1), pa bi se moglo pretpostaviti da su ostvarivali stalne kontakte s istočnom jadranskom obalom, kako Istrom tako i Dalmacijom, s potonjom vjerojatno poglavito u potrazi za solju za koju se ističe da im je glavna roba (12.24.6).⁴³ Imajući na umu tu mogućnost, možda ne bi bilo predalekosežno ustvrditi da su *tribuni maritimorum* sa svojom flotom mogli biti istaknuta posrednička karika u redovnim trgovačkim poslovima između dviju jadranskih obala, poglavito na sjevernome Jadranu.⁴⁴ Sa širenjem istočnorimsko-ostrogotskoga rata, osobito nakon što je 537. godine Dalmacija bila za Ostrogothe definitivno izgubljena,⁴⁵ zamislivo je da su se njihove pomorske rute bitno smanjile, pa su shodno tomu središnje vlasti mogle njihove brodove lakše uposliti na ovakvu prijevozničkom pothvatu o kojemu piše Kasiodor, već i stoga što je očita bila nužda.

Naposljetku vrijedi istaknuti da o gospodarskim mogućnostima Histrije svjedoči i okolnost da je u njoj redovito ubiran porezni prihod, o čemu jasno svjedoče *Variae* (12.22.1; 12.23.1).⁴⁶ U konkretnu slučaju radilo o anoni, prvotno podavanju naturalnog karaktera, ali koje je do 6. stoljeća bilo u potpunosti komutirano u obvezu u novcu.⁴⁷ Međutim, ovdje je vidljivo da se po potrebi potraživalo i u prirodninama, s time da se računalo kao novčano podavanje, dok se za komutiran iznos umanjivao dužni novčani porez. S obzirom na očiglednu dovoljnu proizvodnu i trgovinsku razvijenost oblasti, može

Who exactly were the maritime tribunes has not been answered in historiography, though different opinions were voiced.⁴² Perhaps the most acceptable assumption interprets them as the officials managing the settlements in the lagoon of Venice. It seems that they should not be seen as limited local transportation power since Cassiodorus emphasizes that they crossed big distances on their ships (12.24.1), so one could assume that they had regular contacts with the eastern Adriatic coast, Istria as well as Dalmatia, the latter probably in search of salt that is emphasized as their main merchandise (12.24.6).⁴³ With this possibility in mind perhaps it would not be too far-fetched to claim that *tribuni maritimorum* with their fleet might have been a prominent mediatory link in regular trade activities between the two Adriatic coasts, particularly in the northern Adriatic.⁴⁴ With expansion of the Eastern Roman-Ostrogothic war, and in particular after Dalmatia was definitely lost for the Ostrogoths,⁴⁵ it is conceivable that their maritime routes were significantly reduced so accordingly central administration could have easily used their ships on an assignment such as this one described by Cassiodorus, for necessity if nothing else.

Finally it is worth mentioning that economic potentials of Istria are attested by the fact that tax revenues were regularly collected in it, as clearly evidenced by *Variae* (12.22.1; 12.23.1).⁴⁶ In the specific case it was *annona*, originally tax levied in natural goods that commuted fully to monetary

⁴³ No ponajprije uzduž obale, a ne preko otvorenog mora (v. Bratož 2016: 151). U Gračanin 2015c: 26 misli se da su djelovali u Histriji, a zacijelo i u Dalmaciji, nadzirući morski promet, ribarstvo i branje soli.

⁴⁴ Tu treba imati na umu da je pomorski prijevoz bio bitno lakši i ipak jeftiniji od kopnenoga (Matijašić 1988: 368; Bratož 2016: 151-152). O opskrbi živežnim namirnicama i pomorskome prijevozu u *Variae* v. De Salvo 1986: 409-420.

⁴⁵ O tome v. Gračanin 2015c: 26-27.

⁴⁶ Sama se provincija zbog toga i naziva „odanom“ (*devota provincia*; Cass., *Var.* 12.22.1, 12.22.5) jer redovno ispunjava fiskalne obveze. V. i Novak 2007: 45. Vrijedi dometnuti da poslanica svjedoči i o mehanizmu po kojemu se porezna obveza imala definirati – Lovro je trebao najprije podnijeti izvješće o stvarnu stanju uroda (12.22.6-7; 12.23.2)

⁴⁷ V. i Novak 2007: 44. O anoni usp. Karayannopoulos 1958: 94-112; Jones 1964a-b, *passim*.

⁴² Cf. Gračanin 2015b: 33-34, with note 93; Gračanin 2016: 236-237, with note 93.

⁴³ Primarily along the coast, and not across the open sea (see Bratož 2016: 151). In Gračanin 2015c: 26 it is believed that they were active in Histria, and more than likely also in Dalmatia, supervising maritime traffic, fishing and salt harvest.

⁴⁴ Here we have to keep in mind that the maritime traffic was much easier and cheaper than the land transport (Matijašić 1988: 368; Bratož 2016: 151-152). About foodstuffs supply and maritime traffic in *Variae* see De Salvo 1986: 409-420.

⁴⁵ On this see Gračanin 2015c: 26-27.

⁴⁶ Therefore the province is given the attribute “devoted” (*devota provincia*; Cass., *Var.* 12.22.1, 12.22.5) since it settled its fiscal obligations regularly. See also Novak 2007: 45. We should add that this letter testifies to the mechanism of defining the tax obligation – Lawrence had to submit a report on actual state of the crop (12.22.6-7; 12.23.2).

se sa sigurnošću pretpostaviti da je u njoj ubiran i poseban porez na prodajnu robu nazvan silikvatik, u visini od 1 srebrne silikve po 1 zlatnom solidu (1/24), koji se u *Variae* spominje na nekoliko mjesta (2.4; 2.12; 2.26.4; 2.30.3; 3.25.1; 3.26; 4.19.2; 5.31), iako se u vezi sa silikvatikom izričito navode jedino italska pokrajina Apulija i Kalabريا (2.26; 5.31) te Dalmacija (3.25; 3.26).⁴⁸

Slika istarskoga blagostanja kao ideološko-promidžbeno sredstvo

U historiografiji je već bilo zapaženo kako je slika Istre u Kasiodorovim *Variae* naglašeno povoljna, do te mjere da to priziva oprez. Oдавno je iznesena primjedba da Kasiodor hotimično preuveličava bogatstvo Istre iz sasvim praktičnih financijskih razloga – kako bi osigurao da se lakše ubere traženo podavanje.⁴⁹ Jednako viđenje iskazano je i nedavno – da su i sadržaj i stil poslanice koja napose slavi Istru prilagođeni njezinoj temeljnoj nakani, odnosno da porezne obveznike privoli da ispune obveze koje se od njih traže, osobito u kontekstu tekućih ratnih zbivanja.⁵⁰ Dakle, pismo bi svjedočilo o Kasiodorovoj želji kao italskoga prefekta pretorija (glavnoga civilnoga dužnosnika) da udobrovolji porezne obveznike, nastojeći ih uvjeriti u naklonost i pravičnost središnjih vlasti.⁵¹ Na to je nadograđen zaključak da je Kasiodor zahtjev prema Istri morao prikazati u legitimnu svjetlu jer je bila riječ o osjetljivu trenutku kad su istočnorimske snage u blisku, dalmatinskom susjedstvu, a možda je postojala i bojazan da se Histrani ne bi pobunili protiv izvanrednih obveza.⁵² Ne odbacujući mogućnost da je Kasiodor zaista mogao imati na umu i potrebu da se donekle umili istarskim pokrajincima, istaknuo bih nekoliko točaka koje djelomično obesnažuju

payment by the 6th century.⁴⁷ However we can see that natural goods were demanded if necessary, and recorded as monetary payment, since unsettled monetary tax was reduced for the commuted amount. Considering the evident sufficient productive and trade development of the province we can claim with certainty that special tax on sales (*siliquaticum*) was collected in it, a levy of one silver siliqua on the golden solidus (1/24) on every sale, that is mentioned in *Variae* repeatedly (2.4; 2.12; 2.26.4; 2.30.3; 3.25.1; 3.26; 4.19.2; 5.31), although only Italian provinces of Apulia and Calabria (2.26; 5.31) are explicitly mentioned in relation to *siliquaticum* as well as Dalmatia (3.25; 3.26).⁴⁸

Image of Istrian prosperity as a means of ideology and propaganda

It has been noticed in historiography that the image of Istria in Cassiodorus' *Variae* is distinctly favourable, to the extent that it calls for caution. It has been argued long time ago that Cassiodorus intentionally exaggerated the wealth of Istria for quite practical financial reasons – to ensure easier collecting of the levy.⁴⁹ The same view has been recently expressed – that the content and style of the letter that celebrates Istria were adjusted to its primary intention, to make the tax payers fulfill their obligations consentually, especially in the context of then-current war events.⁵⁰ In that regard the letter would witness Cassiodorus' wish as a praetorian prefect of Italy (principal civilian official) to please the tax payers in an attempt of illustrating the central government's affection and righteousness.⁵¹ Another conclusion was added to this reasoning – that Cassiodorus' request towards Istria had to be presented as a legitimate procedure since it was

⁴⁸ O ubiranju silikvatika u ostrogotskoj Dalmaciji usp. Gračanin 2015b: 48, 61, 66; Gračanin 2016: 252, 266, 271; uz Gračanin & Kartalija 2018: 341. Pritom valja istaknuti da su osnovne živežne namirnice, žito, vino i maslinovo ulje, bile u ostrogotsko doba izuzete od ovog nameta (Cass., *Var.*, 4.19).

⁴⁹ Degrassi 1965: 57, prema Matijašić 1988: 364.

⁵⁰ Novak 2007: 44-45.

⁵¹ Matijašić 1988: 368.

⁵² Novak 2007: 46, 52.

⁴⁷ See also Novak 2007: 44. On *annona* cf. Karayannopoulos 1958: 94-112; Jones 1964a-b, *passim*.

⁴⁸ On collecting *siliquaticum* in Ostrogothic Dalmatia cf. Gračanin 2015b: 48, 61, 66; Gračanin 2016: 252, 266, 271; also Gračanin & Kartalija 2018: 341. Thereat it is important to emphasize that basic foodstuffs, grain, wine and olive oil were exempt from this tax in the Ostrogothic period (Cass., *Var.*, 4.19).

⁴⁹ Degrassi 1965: 57, after Matijašić 1988: 364.

⁵⁰ Novak 2007: 44-45.

⁵¹ Matijašić 1988: 368.

ustrajanje na takvim njegovim pobudama.⁵³ Po- najprije, treba poći uopće od razloga zašto je Kasi- odor sabrao odabrane službene isprave, uobličene znatnim dijelom u poslanice, u postojeću zbirku. Nedvojbeno je da je način sastavljanja i jezik pi- sama u obliku u kojem su ona do nas došla, čvrsto ukorijenjen u kasnoantičkoj tradiciji formulaična i retoričkog oblikovanja službenih dokumen- ta, a da u isti mah formom napuštaju uobičajen kancelarijski stil, jer su im smišljeno pridijeljena obilježja rimske epistolografije i providena su ra- zrađenim enciklopedijskim ekskursima koji zorno ukazuju na Kasiodorove učene interese i pridrža- vanje pravila i naputaka antičke retorike.⁵⁴ On je svakako želio da njegova zbirka stekne široku pu- bliku, zacijelo poglavito među vladajućom elitom u Italiji, ali vjerojatno jednako tako i pripadnicima senatorskog staleža i visokim dužnosnicima koji su se služili latinskim jezikom u Konstantinop- olu. Uzevši sve u obzir, Kasiodorova je zbirka ima- la nekoliko temeljnih ciljeva. Prvo, bila je spome- nik njegovoj vještini, darovitosti i naobraženosti. Također, nudila je praktične obrasce namijenje- ne retoričko-didaktičkoj, a moguće i ideološ- ko-političkoj poduci kancelarijskih službenika. Osim toga, budući da se očekivala promjena po- retka u Italiji, slom ostrogotske vladavine i do- lazak istočnorimske vlasti, vjerojatno je imala i apologetsku funkciju sa svrhom da oprimjeri, opravda i uzveliča način na koji su Kasiodor i ostali zapadnorimski dvorski dužnosnici obav- ljali svoju dužnost u službi ostrogotskih vladara, pa je njihove postupke valjalo lišiti možebitne izdajničke etikete te ih prikazati kao predane i sposobne upravljače koji su, postojano prista- jući uz rimske tradicije i pravovjerne kršćanske vrijednosti, u biti očuvali stare rimske navade pod barbarskom dominacijom, što bi ih učinilo prihvatljivima i podobnima da zadrže ugled i po- ložaje u promijenjenim političkim okolnostima.

⁵³ Pritom je dobro zapaziti da je s obzirom na obilježja djela teško točno razlučiti što je bila stvarna administrativna praksa, a što su tek ideološke težnje. V. Bjornlie 2016: 48, uz literaturu navedenu ondje u bilj. 6.

⁵⁴ Ova i sljedeća zapažanja su iz Gračanin 2015: 12-14; Gračanin 2016: 214-216. Za detaljnije analize karakteristika Kasiodorova stila v. literaturu navedenu u Gračanin 2015: 12-13, bilj. 10; Gračanin 2016: 214-215, bilj. 9.

a delicate moment when the eastern Roman forc- es were in the nearby, Dalmatian neighbourhood, and perhaps there was fear that the Histrians might rebel against additional obligations.⁵² Without dis- carding the possibility that Cassiodorus might have had in mind the need to please the provincials from Istria, I would emphasize some points that partial- ly invalidate this interpretation of his motivation.⁵³ First of all, one should start from the reason why Cassiodorus collected certain official documents, that were mostly edited into letters, in the existing collection. It is beyond doubt that the composition and language of the letters in form that reached us are firmly rooted in late antique tradition of formulaic and rhetoric shaping of the official documents, but at the same time they depart from the usual chan- cery style as they were intentionally enriched with the characteristics of the Roman epistolography and they were provided with elaborate encyclopa- edic excursions that vividly illustrate Cassiodorus' learned interests and abiding to the rules and pre- cepts of ancient rhetoric.⁵⁴ He definitely wanted a wide audience for his collection, primarily among the ruling elite in Italy, but possibly also among the members of the senatorial class and high ranking of- ficials who spoke Latin in Constantinople. Having all this in mind, Cassiodorus' collection had sev- eral fundamental aims. Firstly, it was a monument to his skill, talent and education. Also, it offered practical models intended for rhetorical-didactical, and possibly also ideological-political, education of chancery officials. Furthermore since change of ruling structures in Italy was expected, collapse of Ostrogothic rule and the beginning of the Eastern Roman reign, probably it also had apologetic func- tion with an aim of exemplifying, justifying and ex- alting the manner in which Cassiodorus and other

⁵² Novak 2007: 46, 52.

⁵³ In that regard it is important to notice that it is difficult to discern what was actual administrative procedure and what were merely ideological aspirations, having in mind the characteristics of the work. See Bjornlie 2016: 48, with the literature mentioned there in note 6.

⁵⁴ These and the following considerations were taken from Gračanin 2015: 12-14; Gračanin 2016: 214-216. For more detailed analyses of the characteristics of Cassiodorus' style see bibliography listed in Gračanin 2015: 12-13, note 10; Gračanin 2016: 214-215, note 9.

Drugim riječima, iskazani mar i uviđavnost koji izvire iz istarskoga *dossiera*, uključujući napose poslanicu s pohvalom istarskom obilju i krasoti uređena krajolika, uklapa se u opću sliku koja se željela posredovati, a to je da je sva ta blagodat posljedica – pored Božje volje (jer Božjim je darom, *divino munero*, i bio ostvaren obilan urod; 12.22.1)⁵⁵ – kako razboritosti starih (njihove se prosudbe i izrijekom spominju, *maiorum iudicia*; 12.22.5) tako i umješnosti i kompetentnosti požrtvovna i obzirna službenika koji jednoliko i pravično bdije nad dobrobiti svih onih koji su povjereni njegovoj upravi. To zapravo znači da je Kasiodor u predmetnom izričaju manje pred očima imao same pokrajince kojima je poruka

⁵⁵ Primjeri uvjerenja u neposredno Božje djelovanje zaista su brojni i raznovrsni u *Variae*. Uobičajene su sljedeće formulacije koje bi se mogle podijeliti u nekoliko skupina: a) pomaganje i zaštita: *divinum auxilium / divino auxilio / divinis auxiliis* (Cass., *Var.* 1.1.2; 5.37.1; 10.5.2; 10.14.4; 10.18.1; 10.18.3; 10.32.4), *divinitus custodia* (Cass., *Var.* 11.2.4), *divinitate iuvante* (Cass., *Var.* 5.16.4); b) obdarivanje: *munera divina / divina munera / munera divinitus / munera divinitatis* (Cass., *Var.* 3.23; 10.1.1; 10.29.4; 10.31.1; 11. praefatio. 3), *beneficium divinitatis / divina beneficia / divino beneficio / praestent divina beneficium / beneficium divina tribuerunt* (Cass., *Var.* 7.26.2; 10.4.1; 10.5.1; 10.29.4; 11.1.13; 11.10.2), *divinitatis dona / bona divina tribuerunt* (Cass., *Var.* 11.5.6, 11.13.1); c) naklonost, milost i milostivost: *divino favore / favore divino* (Cass., *Var.* 3.44.3; 4.48.2; 8.7.2; 8.9.3; 11.20.1), *propitia divinitate / divinitate propitia* (Cass., *Var.* 4.1.1; 6.10.4; 6.22.2; 7.2.2; 7.3.2; 7.26.3; 8.4.2; 8.5.3; 8.8.2; 8.11.4; 8.16.6; 9.21.5; 10.6.5; 12.11.3), *divina gratia / gratia divina* (Cass., *Var.* 8.15.1; 9.23.3; 10.31.3), *miserata divinitas* (Cass., *Var.* 10.27.3), *clementia divina* (Cass., *Var.* 11.5.6); d) promišljenost, prosudba i providnost: *consideratione divina / divina consideratione* (Cass., *Var.* 4.23.3; 5.29.2; 9.15.8), *divina iudicia / divino iudicio / divinum iudicium* (Cass., *Var.* 5.37.1; 7.30.1; 7.34.2; 9.15.1; 12.28.3), *divinum consilium* (Cass., *Var.* 12.25.1), *divina providentia / providentia divina / per divinam providentiam* (Cass., *Var.* 8.2.7; 10.23.1; 12.25.7; 12.28.1); e) molba: *sub obtestatione divina* (Cass., *Var.* 8.3.4), *divina supplicatio* (Cass., *Var.* 9.24.1); f) sreća: *felicitas divina* (Cass., *Var.* 9.23.6); g) strpljivost: *divina patientia* (Cass., *Var.* 12.13.3); h) moć i snaga: *potentia divina* (Cass., *Var.* 3.47.3; 10.26.1), *divina virtute / virtus divina* (Cass., *Var.* 9.18 praefatio; 10.22.3); i) volja i nalozi: *voluntas divina* (Cass., *Var.* 8.2.4); *divina mandata* (Cass., *Var.* 6.9.1; 10.26.4; 12.27.2), *divina institutio* (Cass., *Var.* 7.46.1), *ordinatione divina / divina ordinatione* (Cass., *Var.* 11.1.12; 12.25.5), *impulsu divinitatis* (Cass., *Var.* 12.13.2); j) pravda i kazna: *iustitia divina* (Cass., *Var.* 5.42.4.); *poena divinitatis* (Cass., *Var.* 8.33.6); k) uvreda: *iniuria divina* (Cass., *Var.* 12.13.3).

western Roman palatine officials performed their duties in service of the Ostrogothic rulers, so their actions would be dissociated from possible traitor's label and they would be presented as devoted and able administrators who managed to preserve old Roman customs under barbaric domination, by adhering steadily to Roman traditions and orthodox Christian values, making them more acceptable and suitable to retain their reputation and positions in altered political circumstances.⁵⁵ In other words expressed effort and tolerance radiating from the Istrian *dossier*, including especially the letter praising the Istrian abundance and beauty of the cultured landscape, fit into bigger picture that

⁵⁵ Examples of belief in direct God's actions are numerous and diverse in *Variae*. The following formulations are common and they could be classified into several groups: a) help and protection: *divinum auxilium / divino auxilio / divinis auxiliis* (Cass., *Var.* 1.1.2; 5.37.1; 10.5.2; 10.14.4; 10.18.1; 10.18.3; 10.32.4), *divinitus custodia* (Cass., *Var.* 11.2.4), *divinitate iuvante* (Cass., *Var.* 5.16.4); b) endowment: *munera divina / divina munera / munera divinitus / munera divinitatis* (Cass., *Var.* 3.23; 10.1.1; 10.29.4; 10.31.1; 11. praefatio.3), *beneficium divinitatis / divina beneficia / divino beneficio / praestent divina beneficium / beneficium divina tribuerunt* (Cass., *Var.* 7.26.2; 10.4.1; 10.5.1; 10.29.4; 11.1.13; 11.10.2), *divinitatis dona / bona divina tribuerunt* (Cass., *Var.* 11.5.6, 11.13.1); c) favour, grace and graciousness: *divino favore / favore divino* (Cass., *Var.* 3.44.3; 4.48.2; 8.7.2; 8.9.3; 11.20.1), *propitia divinitate / divinitate propitia* (Cass., *Var.* 4.1.1; 6.10.4; 6.22.2; 7.2.2; 7.3.2; 7.26.3; 8.4.2; 8.5.3; 8.8.2; 8.11.4; 8.16.6; 9.21.5; 10.6.5; 12.11.3), *divina gratia / gratia divina* (Cass., *Var.* 8.15.1; 9.23.3; 10.31.3), *miserata divinitas* (Cass., *Var.* 10.27.3), *clementia divina* (Cass., *Var.* 11.5.6); d) prudence, judgement and providence: *consideratione divina / divina consideratione* (Cass., *Var.* 4.23.3; 5.29.2; 9.15.8), *divina iudicia / divino iudicio / divinum iudicium* (Cass., *Var.* 5.37.1; 7.30.1; 7.34.2; 9.15.1; 12.28.3), *divinum consilium* (Cass., *Var.* 12.25.1), *divina providentia / providentia divina / per divinam providentiam* (Cass., *Var.* 8.2.7; 10.23.1; 12.25.7; 12.28.1); e) plea: *sub obtestatione divina* (Cass., *Var.* 8.3.4), *divina supplicatio* (Cass., *Var.* 9.24.1); f) luck: *felicitas divina* (Cass., *Var.* 9.23.6); g) patience: *divina patientia* (Cass., *Var.* 12.13.3); h) power and strength: *potentia divina* (Cass., *Var.* 3.47.3; 10.26.1), *divina virtute / virtus divina* (Cass., *Var.* 9.18 praefatio; 10.22.3); i) will and orders: *voluntas divina* (Cass., *Var.* 8.2.4); *divina mandata* (Cass., *Var.* 6.9.1; 10.26.4; 12.27.2), *divina institutio* (Cass., *Var.* 7.46.1), *ordinatione divina / divina ordinatione* (Cass., *Var.* 11.1.12; 12.25.5), *impulsu divinitatis* (Cass., *Var.* 12.13.2); j) justice and punishment: *iustitia divina* (Cass., *Var.* 5.42.4.); *poena divinitatis* (Cass., *Var.* 8.33.6); k) insult: *iniuria divina* (Cass., *Var.* 12.13.3).

naslovno bila upućena, a više intelektualne i političke primatelje cijele zbirke.

Takvo viđenje moguće je dodatno potkrijepiti. Može se smatrati prilično sigurnim kako je Kasiodor redigirao izvorne isprave kad je odabirao koje će uvrstiti u svoju zbirku i na koji će je način sastaviti. Štoviše, prema nekim mišljenjima, Kasiodor je pojedine poslanice čak izmislio, odnosno uvrstio je naknadno napisane krivotvorine.⁵⁶ Time se nipošto ne želi sugerirati da bi istarski *dossier* bio na jednak način kontaminiran, međutim svakako je potrebno dopustiti i mogućnost da je u pojedinim dijelovima predmetna poslanica bila naknadno doradena i shodno tomu obogaćena literarnim dijelovima koji možda nisu postojali u izvorniku.⁵⁷ Jedna od glavnih tema istarskoga *dossiera* pitanje je poreza, odnosno visine i načina ubiranja nameta, a ta tema proteže se znatnim dijelom zbirke, posebice u njezinoj 11. i 12. knjizi. Nedavno je ponuđeno tumačenje koje ovo nastoji kontekstualizirati u okviru mnogo represivnije i korumpiranije porezne politike koju je dopuštao istočnorimski dvor, pri čemu se zaključuje da je Kasiodor naumio ponuditi obrazac valjane uprave koja uravnoteženo spaja nužnu obvezu da se državi služi i umjerenost u provedbi čvrstih vladavinskih načela poteklih iz davnine.⁵⁸ Taj je pristup sasvim zoran na početku poslanice: „Javni troškovi, koji mijenama vremena različito kolebaju, mogu se na ovaj način obuzdati ako se zdravi nalozi povode za mjesnim urodom. Jer, lakša je nabavka ondje gdje su plodovi bili obilniji. Naime, nametne li se nešto što je gladna nerodica zanijekala, tada se i provincija oštećuje i ne dobiva se željen učinak (*Expensae publicae diversa temporum varietate titubantes hac ratione se poterunt continere, si proventum locorum sequatur salubritas iussionum. Illic enim facilis est procuratio, ubi fuerit fructus uberior. Nam si indicatur quod sterilitas ieiuna denegavit, tunc et provincia laeditur et effectus optabilis non habetur*; 12.22.1). Otuda je i slika istarskoga blagostanja – bez obzira

should have been mediated - that all prosperity is a consequence, in addition to the God's will (since abundant harvest was realized owing to the God's gift, *divino munero*, 12.22.1), of the wisdom of the old (their judgements are explicitly mentioned, *maiorum iudicia*; 12.22.5), and skill and competency of a self-sacrificing and considerate official who evenly and justly watches over the welfare of all people within his jurisdiction. This actually means that Cassiodorus in the given expression thought less about the provincials that the message was addressed to, and more about intellectual and political receivers of the entire collection.

This perspective can be further corroborated. It is more than likely that Cassiodorus redacted the original documents when he was choosing them for the selection and envisaging a way to compile it. Furthermore, according to some scholars, Cassiodorus invented some of the letters, that is he added some subsequently written forgeries.⁵⁶ By no means is this a suggestion that the Istrian *dossier* might have been contaminated in an equal manner, but one should definitely consider the possibility that the letter in question was edited and accordingly enriched with literary passages that might not have been present in the original.⁵⁷ One of the main themes in the Istrian *dossier* is the tax, its rate and manner of collecting, and this topic is discussed in the major part of the collection, in particular in its 11th and 12th books. Recently an explanation was offered trying to contextualize this within more repressive and corrupt tax policy allowed by the Eastern Roman court, wherein the conclusion is that Cassiodorus decided to offer a model of valid administration that provided balanced combination of necessary obligation to serve the state and modesty in executing firm governing principles inherited from antiquity.⁵⁸ This approach is clearly reflected at the beginning of the letter: “Public expenditure fluctuates with the varying nature

⁵⁶ Usp. Bjornlie 2013: 4-5, 332. Također i Barnwell 1992: 168-169.

⁵⁷ Tako i Bjornlie 2013: 5 ističe da je Kasiodor ubacivao tematske digresije u odabrane poslanice.

⁵⁸ Bjornlie 2013: 324-327. Sentiment je sukladan i Kasiodorovoj prisposodbi posla prefekta pretorija koji je sâm obavljao, djelu biblijskoga Josipa kao faraonova vezira i žitnoga upravitelja (Barnish 2008: 14-15).

⁵⁶ Cf. Bjornlie 2013: 4-5, 332. Also Barnwell 1992: 168-169.

⁵⁷ Bjornlie 2013: 5 emphasizes that Cassiodorus inserted thematic digressions into selected letters.

⁵⁸ Bjornlie 2013: 324-327. The sentiment is in accordance with Cassiodorus' comparison of his position of the praetorian prefect with the work of Biblical Joseph as Pharaoh's vizier and grain administrator (Barnish 2008: 14-15).

na to je li više ili manje idealizirana – poglavito upri-zorenje načela po kojemu se savjestan upravljač tre-ba ravnati, da se pobrine za pravednu preraspodje-lu dobara vodeći brigu o državnim potrebama i o probicima poreznih obveznika. Samo takav pristup omogućava, osobito u vremenima velike nužde, da se sačuva sve ono obilje koje je stvorila uređe-na uprava naslijeđena iz prijašnjih vremena. Pouka je to svim vlastodržcima (a ponajprije istočnorim-skim) da trebaju djelovati kao čuvari onih tekovi-na koje su stvorile i koje čak i u nuždi podržavaju obostranu korist vlasti i podanika, jer samo su one jamstvo uspješna opstanka države u cjelini.⁵⁹

Zaključna razmatranja

Kasiodorove *Variae* rijedak su i nezaobilazan izvor o gospodarskim i upravnim prilikama na istočnoj obali Jadrana u kasnoantičko doba pod ostrogot-skom vlašću. Jedinstvene su kao svjedočanstvo o gospodarskim mogućnostima provincije Histrije u prvoj polovini 6. stoljeća, temeljenima poglavito na klasičnim mediteranskim proizvodima – žitu, vinu i maslinovu ulju, uz marikulture aktivnosti. Vijesti o poljoprivrednoj proizvodnji upotpunjene su podacima koji upućuju na razvijenu trgovinu, kako unutarprovincijsku tako i međuprovincijsku, s italskim pokrajinama (izrijekom se navodi kako se istarskim proizvodima opskrbljivala i kraljevska prijestolnica Ravena), a zacijelo i sa susjednom Dalmacijom kamo je moglo pristizati istarsko ma-slinovo ulje. Dobra iskorištenost raznolikih poljo-privrednih resursa i razgranatost trgovačkih veza svakako daju osnovu za pretpostavku o dostatnim prihodima mjesnih posjednika i trgovaca koji su bili kadri redovno podmirivati propisane fiskalne obveze. Shodno tomu vrlo je vjerojatno i kako se u pokrajini ubirao poseban porez na prodajnu robu – silikvatik.

Drugi, za interpretaciju nadasve važan aspekt Kasidorova svjedočanstva o istarskom bogatstvu i plodnosti u prvoj polovini 6. stoljeća, povezan je

of the seasons, but can be kept in check if sound instructions accord with local productivity. For where the harvest has been more abundant, pro-curement is easy, but if there is a requirement for that which hungry barrenness has denied, then the province is harmed, and the desired result will not be obtained” (*Expensae publicae diversa temporum varietate titubantes hac ratione se poterunt continere, si proventum locorum sequatur salubritas iussionum. Illic enim facilis est procuratio, ubi fuerit fructus uberi-or. Nam si indicatur quod sterilitas ieiuna denegavit, tunc et provincia laeditur et effectus optabilis non ha-betur; 12.22.1*).

Therefrom the image of the Istrian welfare – re-gardless if it was more or less idealized – is primar-ily illustration of the principle that conscientious administrator should act upon, taking care of just redistribution of goods having in mind state needs and benefits of the tax payers. Only this approach enables, in particular in times of great need, pre-serving the abundance created by a regulated ad-ministration inherited from times long gone. It is a message to all rulers (primarily eastern Roman) to act as guardians of the accomplishments that had created and even in need support mutual benefits of both the administration and its subjects as these accomplishments are the only guarantee of success-ful survival of the state as a whole.⁵⁹

Concluding remarks

Cassiodorus’ *Variae* are a rare and indispensa-ble source about economic and administrative circumstances on the eastern Adriatic coast in Late Antiquity under the Ostrogothic rule. They are unique as a testimony about economic pos-sibilities of the province of Histria in the first half of the 6th century, based primarily on traditional Mediterranean products – grain, wine and olive oil, in addition to mariculture activities. Information on agricultural production are supplemented

⁵⁹ Prema Bjornlie 2013: 229, karakteristično obilježje *Variae* nerazdruživo je spajanje i međuovisnost ključnih koncepcija prirode, starine, političkog poretka i moralnog reda, a običaji i postupci naslijeđeni iz davnine pružaju građu kojom će se održavati idealiziran politički i moralni sustav zasnovan u prirodnome poretku.

⁵⁹ After Bjornlie 2013: 229, characteristic feature of *Variae* is inseparable joining and interdependence of crucial concepts of nature, antiquity, political and moral order. Customs and procedures inherited from antiquity offer material for preservation of idealized political and moral system founded in natural order.

s njegovom koncepcijom valjane vladavine i dobre uprave, prema kojoj i oni koji vladaju i oni kojima se vlada, svaki u svojim ulogama i sa svojim zadaćama koje trebaju ispunjavati vjerno i savjesno, djeluju na obostranu, a time i na opću dobrobit. Tako slika istarskog obilja nije bila kao literarni ekskurs s ideološko-političkom pozadinom ponajprije zamišljena da bude sredstvo pridobivanja pokrajinaca, već je, uz to što je spomenik Kasiodorovoj retoričkoj vještini, trebala djelovati na političku elitu kao zoran primjer plodotvornosti rimskoga uređenja koje je moguće očuvati i u nepovoljnim prilikama, čak i pod tuđom dominacijom, ako se slijede i poštuju stare rimske vrijednosti i ustaljeni obrasci dobra gospodarenja. Uostalom, jedva da bi imalo smisla same istarske posjednike i trgovce uvjeravati u blagostanje njihove pokrajine ako to nije bilo znatnim dijelom utemeljeno u stvarnosti, eda bi ih se udobrovoljilo da lakše prihvate dodatnu poreznu obvezu jer se u protivnom slučaju ionako ne bi namjeravan ishod niti polučio.

with information suggesting developed trade, in the province and between the provinces, with the Italian provinces (it is explicitly stated that the imperial capital Ravenna was supplied by Istrian products), and definitely also the neighbouring Dalmatia where Istrian olive oil might have been exported. Good use of various agricultural resources and widespread trade connections definitely offer grounds for a conclusion about sufficient income of local landowners and merchants who could pay prescribed fiscal obligations. Accordingly it is likely that a special tax on sales goods - *siliquaticum* - was also farmed in the province.

The second, for the interpretation also very important aspect of Cassiodorus' testimony about the wealth and fertility of Istria in the first half of the sixth century is related to his concept of sound government and good administration, according to which both the rulers and the subjects, each in their respective roles and with their respective duties, which they have to execute faithfully and conscientiously, act for their mutual benefit and therefore for the good of all. Thus the image of Istrian abundance was not, as a literary digression with an ideological-political background, primarily intended to be a ploy to win the provincials, but, in addition to being a monument to Cassiodorus' rhetorical skills, was aimed at influencing the political elite as a shining example of the successfulness of the Roman order of things that could be preserved under unfavourable circumstances as well and even under the foreign domination, if traditional Roman values and established models of good governance were abided by and respected. After all, it would hardly make sense to try to convince the Istrian landowners and merchants of the prosperity of their homeland if this was not substantially rooted in reality so they would be more comfortable to accept an additional tax obligation, since otherwise the intended result would not have been achieved in the first place.

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