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## **Rediscovering the Greeks – The Impact of Intensified Contacts Between Western Europe and The Byzantine World on Shaping Humanistic Thought from the Perspective of Istria**

Pregledni rad

Review article

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*Nec ipsa humanitas non est  
gradus et via quaedam ad pietatem.*

The migration from Byzantium to the West due to the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Empire had an immense impact on promoting classical Greek culture, inherited by Byzantium. „Rediscovered” Greek culture affected the shaping of Humanistic thought, the content of Renaissance art and, indirectly, the formation of a new European identity. The author examines the aforementioned historical phenomena from the perspective of Istria, particularly in the context of the Greek migrants who fled the Ottomans and arrived at the Istrian peninsula.

**Key words:** Humanism and Renaissance, Byzantines, Greek language, Greeks, Istria

Humanistic thought and Renaissance art were shaped under the strong influence of „rediscovered” classical civilization, particularly Greek literature, culture and philosophy. The awakening of Western Europe under the stimulus of classical civilisation was strongly influenced by Byzantine migrants, who had a crucial role in promoting Greek culture.

For centuries, Greek and Roman civilizations developed through mutual influence. The Roman Empire was bilingual, with Latin prevailing in the west and Greek in the east. Moreover, Greek had the status of being the language of the educated - all those who prized their education learned it. Wealthy Romans sent their offspring to further their education in Greek *poleis*. Greek was, as well, the language of Christianity in western Europe in the first centuries.

East and west gradually diverged. Due to the difficulty of ruling such a vast territory, the Empire was divided into smaller administrative units several times during the 3rd and 4th centuries. Theodosius the Great (379-395) was the last Roman emperor who reigned the Empire its final division. After his death in 395, the eastern and the western part of the empire functioned as separate administrative units. The endeavors of Emperor Justinian the Great (527-565) to re-conquer the western territories seized by German invaders had limited results, as only three years after his death, in 568, Langobards invaded Italy and seized vast parts of Italian territory. Charlemagne was crowned the new Roman Emperor in 800. The territory of his Frankish state was largely congruent with the territory of the former Western Roman Empire. Charlemagne sought to unite the Eastern and Western Roman Empire under his rule; instead, his coronation further alienated the east from the west, whose rulers claimed sovereignty over the whole of the empire for centuries.<sup>1</sup> Charlemagne took the title *pater Europae* (and *Europae venerandus apex*). That was a symbolic step in building a new European identity; for centuries to come, Europe was identified with Western Europe, that is, with the Catholic world. Such an identity, built on the opposition Catholic-Orthodox (and Catholics-Orthodox (and Catholics-Muslims)), was further established by the Schism (1054) which deepened the gap between the east and the west.

## THE FATE OF CLASSICAL HERITAGE DURING THE DARK AND MIDDLE AGES

During the Dark Ages civilization in Western Europe declined. On the territory of the former Western Roman Empire, German invaders had formed new barbarian kingdoms in which subdued Roman inhabitants were ruled by new illiterate masters, who had no appreciation for literary culture and education. The Romance languages

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1 Ostrogorski 2003: 96-98.

developed, while Latin became a learned language. Yet, there was a continuity in instruction in Latin, as opposed to Greek. Greek was still spoken in the territories under Byzantine dominion, including Istria. However, with the decline of Byzantine power, the number of Greek speakers diminished, and the tradition of institutional Greek learning disappeared somewhere between the 5th and 6th centuries, until the time of Boccaccio. Classical heritage fell into oblivion. Heathen literature was condemned and rejected. The only elements of classical heritage preserved were those congruent with Christian teaching, such as the famous *Fourth Eclogue*, believed to have announced the birth of Christ. Still, classical heritage was preserved in a modified form in myths, fairy tales and stories.<sup>2</sup> In Istria, Greek and Roman traditions were preserved in the translations and redactions of popular medieval literary works, such as the translations of the Romance of Troy and Romance of Alexander the Great. Reminiscences on the classical world could also be traced back to popular beliefs and knowledge. For example, in the medieval compendium *Lucidarius* the highest Istrian mountain Učka is compared to Olympus.<sup>3</sup> In the east, classical heritage had a different fate. Latin was an official language of the Eastern Roman Empire until the reign of Heraclius (610-641). Classical culture was never forgotten; it became part of the school curriculum, and was thus preserved.

In the Middle Ages the secular education system was finally revived in the West. Numerous schools and universities were founded. Latin became the language of the educated, but also the international language of literature, science, diplomacy and polite communication (in fact, it gained the status that the Greek language had in Roman times). Greek was still unknown in the West, and did not have a place inside the school curriculum. In Latin manuscripts, instead of Greek words we can find scribbles with comments such as „...since this was in Greek, it was not readable”<sup>4</sup>

2 Hightet 1964: 1-9; 13-14.

3 „Vaspjet je jedna vlast, jaže zovet se Istrija. I v tej zemlji je jedna gora, jaže zovet se latinski Olimfos, ježe je Učka”. (transliteration from Glagolitic script), Bratulić 2005.

4 Hightet 1964: 13-14.

## MEETING THE GREEKS: THE BYZANTINE EXODUS TO ITALY

The Crusades, the Ottoman invasions and the Council of Florence were the main historical events that favoured the rapprochement of the east and west. Due to intensified contacts during the Crusades, westerners and easterners learned a lot about each other. Moreover, Catholics and Orthodox had the same goal – to defend the Holy Land from non-Christians; this was the basis for the development of a common Christian identity. During the Fourth Crusade, at the instigation of Venice, the Crusaders sacked and plundered Constantinople and formed a number of Crusader States in the territory of the Byzantine Empire (1204-1261). A vast part of the conquered Byzantine territory fell under the dominion of the Venetian Republic. The relations between Byzantines and westerners had never been so intense. Still, this conquest debilitated the Byzantine Empire, which later became easy prey for the Ottomans.

The threat of the Ottomans strengthened the Christian identity of Europeans. As the Ottomans were approaching Constantinople, in the 1430s and 1440s, the eastern and western Churches intensified their endeavours at unification. Orthodox Christians, particularly those from the Balkans, hoped that such a union would grant them the help from the West against the Ottomans. In July 1439, Church authorities, gathered at the Council in Florence, proclaimed the union of the Eastern and Western Churches. The agreement was signed by almost all of the Byzantine bishops present at the Council, and by the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Joseph II, but was rejected in the Byzantine Empire and in other Orthodox countries. Some bishops, who accepted the union, had to flee from Byzantium to Italy.<sup>5</sup>

Constantinople fell in 1453; the last Byzantine territories sacked by the Ottomans were the Despotate of Morea (on the Peloponnese, in 1460) and the Empire of Trebizond in 1461.<sup>6</sup> In the series of Venetian–Ottoman wars that followed, the Ottomans sacked numerous territories under Venetian dominion inhabited by Greeks, such as Crete, Cyprus and parts of the Peloponnese. A large number of people from Byzantium fled from the Ottomans, many of whom sought shelter in the West. Venice was the main reception centre for immigrants, since

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5 Ostrogorski 2003: 304-306.

6 Ostrogorski 2003: 310-311.

many refugees fled from the territories under its dominion. By 1478 there were some 4000 Byzantines in Venice.<sup>7</sup> They were so numerous, that cardinal Bessarion named Venice „almost another Byzantium” – *Venetiae quasi alterum Byzantium*.<sup>8</sup> Another great receiving centre was Southern Italy. A significant Greek community was formed at Naples.<sup>9</sup>

Byzantines who sought refuge in Italy had differing backgrounds. Many of them were artisans, and a large number of them served as rowers in the Venetian fleet, or as *stradioti* in a regiment in Venetian army made up entirely of Greeks. Those who knew the language or accepted Catholicism fared better. Not all Byzantines came as refugees. Some among them arrived with a specific goal in mind, but decided to stay permanently. Already during the 14th century Demetrius Kydones (c. 1342 - c. 1398), a friend of Byzantine Emperor Manuel II, was sent to Italy as an ambassador; he converted to Catholicism and remained in Venice.<sup>10</sup>

The rich and powerful arrived first; they usually had strong relations with the Italian aristocracy and resources for the transfer. Their destination was usually Rome. Joseph II, Patriarch of Constantinople, was forced to resign after agreeing to the union with the Western Church; he decided not to return to Byzantium and lived in Florence until his death. Metrophanes II and Gregory III, successors of Joseph II to the throne of the Patriarch of Constantinople, were so publicly despised for promoting the union of the Churches that they fled to Rome.<sup>11</sup> Thomas Palaeologus, despot of the Peloponnesus and the emperor's brother, fled to Rome. Pope Pius II hosted him generously and awarded him with an annual pension; he also provided revenue for the members of his family. Despot showed his gratitude by bestowing him a precious relic, the right hand of John the Baptist.<sup>12</sup>

7 Harris 2000.

8 Janeković-Römer 2007: 14.

9 Greeks founded numerous colonies in Southern Italy from the 8th century BC, providing the region with the name *Magna Graecia*. Another wave of Greek speakers came in the 7th century, fleeing the Arabian and Slavic invasions. After Justinian's *reconquista*, parts of southern Italy remained under Byzantine dominion until 1071. Harris 1995: 27-29.

10 Harris 2000.

11 *Ibidem*.

12 Joksimović 2017: *passim*.

## THE THREE MAIN ASPECTS OF REDISCOVERING GREEK TRADITION

There were three main aspects of „rediscovering” Greek cultural heritage and its integration into the new Renaissance culture: philological, philosophical and political.<sup>13</sup>

1) Philological. People in western European countries developed a new interest in Greek literature, which was followed by an increased interest in Greek manuscripts and the Greek language. Manuscripts containing Classical Greek texts became sought-after. They were edited, translated and published. Wealthy individuals collected them for their private libraries. Renaissance literature was shaped under the influence of Greek classics. New literary forms developed, such as tragedy, comedy, the ode, the essay and elegy, and the writing style improved. Themes from Greek and Roman mythology and history became popular and knowledge of the classical tradition is shown through frequent references and allusions.<sup>14</sup>

2) Philosophical. Classical philosophy was obliterated in the Dark and Middle Ages. The only Greek philosopher whose teaching was to some extent known was Aristotle. His works, however, were not studied in their original Greek form, but through their Latin or Arabic translations; moreover, only his ideas congruous with Christian theology were accepted and interpreted. Therefore, his teaching was often blurred through various misinterpretations. With increased knowledge of the Greek language and new manuscripts containing, among others, philosophical texts, the West familiarized itself with a whole new set of philosophers and teachings. Plato (Neoplatonism) became particularly popular. New philosophy concerning the relations between man and nature or man and the state developed. This new position of man in the universe gave birth to a new Renaissance man, and the new mankind, again, needed to be shaped by a new type of education. Many Humanists endeavoured to develop the education programme, based on Greek and Roman heritage.

3) Political. With an increasing danger posed by Muslims the common Christian heritage of the Europe was increasingly empha-

13 Cf. Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 48.

14 Hight 1964: 18-20.

sized. The rediscovered classical heritage offered common cultural background linking the East and the West. In the West many appealed loudly for a united Christian front against the Ottomans and for the liberation of the Greeks. A new European identity was born, founded in a common, classical heritage.

The Byzantines in Italy influenced all of the aforementioned areas. They taught Greek language, literature and history. Immigrants brought with them manuscripts containing Greek classics (*belles lettres*, as well as philosophical texts) and helped with their editing and publishing. As scribes and printers, they helped develop the first Greek printed fonts. They translated Greek texts, and these new translations made Greek classics, particularly the works of Plato, more accessible to a larger readership. The Byzantines played an important role in discussions on classical Greek philosophy. They also actively advocated for the idea of a united Christian European front against the Ottomans.

Interest in Greek literature and language and the tradition of editing Greek manuscripts began in Florence with Petrarca, Boccaccio, and Coluccio Salutati. Unlike in the West, where secular education had disappeared during the Dark and Middle Ages, in the East there was no rupture with classical Greek heritage, which was integrated into Byzantine higher education. Educated Byzantines, thus, had solid knowledge of Classical Greek language and culture. In 1339 Petrarca learned Greek from the monk Barlaam, then staying in Italy (as a secret agent of the Byzantine government). Some years later, in 1360, Boccaccio set Barlaam's pupil Leontius Pilatus to Florence as a professor of Greek. With his help he completed the first complete prose Latin translation of Homer.<sup>15</sup>

At the end of the 14th century Manuel Chrysoloras was sent to Italy to negotiate help for Byzantium. While in Venice, he supplemented his income by teaching Greek and was recommended to Coluccio Salutati (1331-1406), chancellor of Florence, who invited him to teach Greek language and literature at the University of Florence (1397-1400). Some of his students greatly influenced the revival of Greek studies in Italy, particularly Guarino da Verona

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15 Hightet 1964: 16.

(1374-1460).<sup>16</sup> Chrysoloras did not only teach, he also translated Greek texts, such as Plato's *Republic*. Other prominent Greeks who taught Greek in Italy were Theodore of Gaza, George of Trebizond, Demetrius Chalcocondyles and John Argyropulos.<sup>17</sup>

Byzantine refugees brought Greek manuscripts to the West, where they were in high demand. Italian humanists collected them for their libraries. Lorenzo Medici (1449-1492), for example, sent Ianus Lascaris to Greece to buy good books at whatever price.<sup>18</sup>

His grandfather, Cosimo de' Medici (1429-1464) was highly inspired by George Gemist Plethon, the great Byzantine philosopher. Plethon was the head of a Neoplatonist philosophical school at Mistras (on the Peloponnese). He was held in such a high esteem that emperor John VIII Palaiologos invited him to attend the Council of Florence as councillor; he was an opponent of the union of the Churches. During his stay, Plethon held lectures on the differences between Plato and Aristotle, which aroused such a great interest that he is often credited as a pioneer in the revival of Greek scholarship in Italy.<sup>19</sup> Inspired by his teachings, Cosimo de' Medici founded a Neoplatonist Academy in Florence, where many Byzantines taught.

Another Neoplatonist who participated in the Council of Florence was Bessarion, Metropolitan Bishop of Nicaea and former student of Pletho in his school at Mistras. He was the leader of the pro-Uniate Byzantine clergy at the Council, and read aloud a solemn proclamation of the Union in Greek. The Pope awarded his endeavours by making him a cardinal.<sup>20</sup> Bessarion was not only one of the main promoters of the Union of the Churches, but also one of the main advocates of the united European Christian front against the Ottomans. He was a man of great wealth and immense influence, and he used both to support learned men, particularly Byzantine refugees, to whom he commissioned the transcription and translation of Greek manuscripts. At his home in Rome he surrounded himself with learned Greeks, and was known as a patron of exiled scholars and diplomats, including the

16 Harris 2005: 11-12; Marsh 1998: 13-14; 17; 21.

17 Gibbon 1926: 129-130.

18 Hight 1964: 17-18.

19 Harris 2005: 13.

20 Ostrogorski 2003: 305-306.

aforementioned John Argyropoulos, Theodore of Gaza, and George of Trebizond. He translated Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Xenophon's *Memorabilia*. He even wrote a treatise against the Aristotelian teachings of George of Trebizond. Bessarion owned the largest collection of Greek manuscripts of his time and sponsored their editing and transcription. In 1469 he donated his library, containing 482 Greek and 264 Latin manuscripts, to the church of St. Mark in Venice where they now form a nucleus of the library of St. Mark's *Bibliotheca Marciana*.<sup>21</sup>

There were many famous and influential Byzantines, whose role in the revival of classical heritage is well established. There were many „small” and ordinary people, however, whose names have often been lost for us, but without whom a revival on such a large scale would not have been possible, as, for example, Cretan priest John Rhossos, who copied books for Bessarion and other patrons during a period spanning 50 years. Such were, as well, scribes and printers involved in the editing and publishing of Greek texts and in developing the first Greek printing fonts.<sup>22</sup>

The availability of a large number of Greek manuscripts in the library of St. Mark led to Aldo Manuzio's Greek press in Venice, the first in Venice, in 1490. With the help of Byzantines Demetrios Doukas and Mark Mousouros he printed the works of almost all of the most important Greek authors until 1515. His publishing project was even more important because his editions were moderately priced, so that they might reach large audience.<sup>23</sup>

## ISTRIA MEETS THE GREEKS

Istria has been in contact with the Greek world since the earliest of times. Archaeological evidence testifies that the inhabitants of prehistoric Monkodonja (1800-1300) traded with Mycenaean colonies. Contacts with Greek culture have been reflected in Greek myths related to the foundation of many Istrian towns. Thus, Koper and Pula were supposedly founded by Colchidians who arrived there after chasing the Argonauts. The origin of the former name of Koper, *Aegida*, according to myth, is derived from Athena's shield (*aegis*) which she threw in the

21 Čoralić 1998: 143-146.

22 Harris 2000; Highet 1964: 17.

23 Harris 1995: 127, 134; Harris 2000.

sea to lighten her burden while her well-known opponent, Poseidon, was chasing her. The shield fell into the sea and transformed into the island of Koper. Greeks founded numerous colonies in the Northern Adriatic from the 6th century onward, but none of them are located in Istria. Still, Greeks from metropolises and from colonies traded intensely with the Histrians and Liburnians. After the Roman conquest of Istria in 177 BC, systematic contact with the Greek world continued.

With the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Istrian Peninsula, together with the rest of Italy, came into the hands of the Odoacer, the German military leader who deposed Romulus Augustulus. When Theoderic the Great killed Odoacer Istria became part of Theoderic's Ostrogothic Kingdom, with a center in Ravenna (493). With Justinian, the Byzantines conquered the Ostrogothic Kingdom and Istria (538), which became part of the Exarchate of Ravenna. The era of Byzantine rule was a time of great prosperity and progress, which can still be attested in its magnificent architectural monuments, such as the church of Maria Formosa in Pula or the famous *Euphrasiana* in Poreč.<sup>24</sup> Istrian dioceses were subordinate to the Patriarchate of Aquileia. The Byzantines ruled Istria for over two centuries, until the Frankish conquest (797-802).<sup>25</sup> With the Treaty of Verdun (843) Istria became part of the Kingdom of Italy and, consequently, of the Holy Roman Empire.

Istrian towns prospered during the Crusades. Cities liberated themselves from the influence of bishops and feudal lords and became communes. At the same time, from the 11th century onward the Venetian Republic began spreading its influence. By 1050 Istrian communes were subordinated to the Venetian Republic and the doge took the title *Totius Istriae inclitus dominator*. Over the next centuries, Venice fought with the Patriarchs of Aquileia for Istrian territories; by the beginning of the 15th century Venice ruled large part of the Peninsula. An Istro-Romance language, Istriotto, slowly began to disappear, withdrawing itself before the Venetian dialect. From the second half of the 14th century onward, the Habsburgs began gaining and conquering Istrian territories (Trieste, County of Pazin). The next 300 years of Istrian history were marked by conflicts between Venetian Republic and the House of Austria for dominance.

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24 Levak 2015: 385-386.

25 Ostrogorski 2003: 104; cf. Levak 2015: 397.

A great demographic crisis marked the 15th and 16th centuries in Istria. Hunger, plague and malaria, combined with occasional incursions of the Ottomans and conflicts between the Venetian Republic and The House of Austria decimated the Istrian population.<sup>26</sup> Venetian authorities sought to alleviate the consequences of depopulation by settling immigrants from regions occupied by the Ottomans.<sup>27</sup> Systematic colonization began in the middle of the 15th century.<sup>28</sup>

After the fall of the Constantinople, the Venetian Republic and Ottoman Empire fought over the leftovers of the Byzantine Empire in a set of wars (1463-1718). The loss of Venetian possessions in the Levant during these wars led to the migration of Greeks to the Venetian Republic. The Greeks came to Istria in three main waves: after the fall of Nauplion and Monemvasia in 1540, after the loss of Cyprus in 1571, and after the loss of Crete in 1669. Those were the most important Byzantine emigration centres from the Istrian perspective.<sup>29</sup>

The Peloponnese was occupied and the Despotate of Morea extinguished in 1460. Venetian fortresses were sized by the Ottomans later, during the wars that followed.<sup>30</sup> Monemvasia was an important trade center, the main port of shipment for Malmsey wine. After the Ottoman sack of the Peloponnese, it was the only remaining domain of the Despot of Morea, Thomas Palailogos, who sold it to the Pope (as mentioned, Pius II hosted the Despot in Rome). Monemvasians in 1464 admitted a Venetian garrison. The town prospered under Venetian rule.<sup>31</sup> In 1388 Nauplion (Nafplio) was sold to the Venetian Republic by French crusaders. It became one of the most important Venetian strongholds in the Levant. Venetians called it *Napoli di Romania* (*Romania* referring to the Byzantine Empire). Venetians lost Monemvasia and Nauplion, their last two possessions on Greek mainland, in the Third Ottoman-Venetian War (1537-1540).

26 Bertoša 1995: 22-24; 49-55.

27 Bertoša 1995: 31-35.

28 Knapton 2007: 390.

29 In Pula, there was significant number of immigrants from Rhodes, which was sacked by the Ottomans in 1522 (Bertoša 2003: 101-102).

30 During the Great Turkish War (1683-1699) Venetians occupied the entire Peloponnese; however, Ottomans reconquered it easily in 1715 (Bées – Savvides 1993: 236-241).

31 Miller 1907: 229-241.

Cyprus was annexed to the *Serenissima* in 1489. It became the center of the Venetian trade in the Levant. The Ottomans conquered it during the Fourth Ottoman-Venetian War (1570-1573).

After the Fourth Crusade, Crete came into the hands of Boniface, Marquess of Montferrat (in Northern Italy), and later the Republic of Venice.<sup>32</sup> Under the Venetian state the island was named the Kingdom of Candia (*Ducato di Candia*) after its capital Candia (Heraklion). Crete was the main center of the Renaissance in the Greek world. It witnessed a literary and artistic revival, with the painter El Greco as its most famous representative. The Ottomans conquered Crete after the long, devastating Candian War (1645-1669).

The settling of the Byzantines on Istrian soil is difficult to reconstruct. Individuals or smaller groups arrived at their own initiative.<sup>33</sup> Settlements organized by the state are better attested in historical sources. Some Byzantine peasants likely settled in the surroundings of Pula, Poreč and Rovinj at the end of the 15th century.<sup>34</sup> Several Greek families came to Buje and Novigrad in 1530, and again, in the 1540s, to the surroundings of Umag and Buje.<sup>35</sup>

At the same time, in 1540, the Venetian Senate sent 17 families from Nauplion and Monemvasia to Pula. A new group of Byzantine refugees arrived with Antonio Fedel between 1540 and 1553. The immigrants were under great pressure from the indigenous inhabitants, and were threatened, molested and abused, and finally forced to leave, many of them leaving behind fields they had already plowed and cultivated.<sup>36</sup> In 1553 Baldessare Gabiano brought immigrants to the countryside of Pula. In 1558 a Greek from Nauplion, count Nicolò Caligà, was allowed by the Venetian Senate to bring 180 Greek families from Nauplion to Istria. The immigrants were granted land and empty houses in Pula, Marčana and Marlera.<sup>37</sup>

32 Ostrogorski 2003: 226.

33 Bertoša 1995: 35.

34 Knapton 2007: 389; cf. Bertoša 2003: 81 *cum* n. 418.

35 Bratulić 1959: 7.

36 Bertoša 1995: 69-70. Bratulić, *ibid.* gives number of 70 instead of 17 families.

37 Bertoša, *ibid.*; De Luca 2012: 62-63. Bratulić, *ibid.* gives number of 80 families.

After the Cyprian war, in 1573, a group of Cyprian refugees was granted permission to settle in Pula, but they never came. The Venetian government allowed Francesco Calergi, a nobleman from Famagusta on Cyprus, to bring some 50 families from Cyprus and another 50 from Nauplion to Pula. Some Monemvasians were set to arrive, as well. However, due to a bad weather, which did not allow for travel by sea, not even half of them arrived to Pula by 1581. There are mentions of 48 Cyprian families in Pula in 1580 and 56 Cyprian families in 1582.<sup>38</sup> Some 15 families from Monemvasia and Nauplion settled in Pula between 1580 and 1583.<sup>39</sup>

Around 1580 some 25 Greek families settled in Peroj, but they left after only two years.<sup>40</sup> In the same year, a small group from Candia settled in Pula and Poreč. A new wave of refugees from Crete arrived from Rethymnon in 1585, led by two brothers, Cà da Chiozza and Michiel Pandimò, and settled near Šišan and at Marlera. In 1586 the Greek noble family Sozomeno brought to Pula a group of Nicosians and gave them land in Valtursko polje, Contrada Maderno, Turtian, Magran, Ševe and Campanoš. The family of Ercole Paleologo brought Cyprians who were given land in Valtura and family Flebra family brought them to the region between Šišan and Ližnjan.<sup>41</sup> In 1623 some Greeks came as refugees to Šišan, and in the period following the loss of Candia (1669) some 60 families were granted houses in Poreč, while several families arrived in Pula.<sup>42</sup>

The two main centers of immigration were Pula and Poreč along with their surrounding areas. Altogether, some 4000 Greeks arrived in Istria with the intent to stay.<sup>43</sup> Rich and influential families adapted more easily. Many immigrants spoke the Venetian dialect; part of them accepted the Latin Rite in their new homeland (some of the immigrants were Hellenised Venetians). They entered careers in the military, state and public services, and especially the Church.<sup>44</sup>

38 Knapton 2007: 390 dates the event to 1579; Bertoša 1995: 71-72 to 1583; Bratulić, *ibid.*

39 De Luca 2012: 97.

40 Štoković 2012: 31; Bertoša 1995: 72; *cf.* De Luca 2012: 19, *cum n.* 12.

41 Bertoša 1995: 72-73; Bratulić, *ibid.*

42 Bratulić 1959; De Luca 2012: 205-206; De Franceschi 1952.

43 Darovec 2000: 78-79.

44 Štoković 2005.

The noble family Sozomeno from Nicosia in Cyprus settled in Pula.<sup>45</sup> They were wealthy and influential enough to bring a group of Nicosians to Pula and grant them land which they possessed near Ližnjan.<sup>46</sup> Two brothers from this family became bishops in Pula: Claudio (1583-1604/05) and Cornelio (1605-1617/18).<sup>47</sup> Another Istrian bishop of Greek origin was Cesare de Nores, a native of Cyprus, who was head of the Bishopric of Poreč (1573-1597).<sup>48</sup> Badin, also from the De Nores family, became Canon of Pula.<sup>49</sup> We also learn that some immigrant families were accepted into the City Council of Poreč.<sup>50</sup> Family Lombardo from Crete gained the status of nobility (1675) and the title of counts from Venetian government (1788).<sup>51</sup>

Greeks, however, mostly belonged to the Eastern Rite, and thus their adaptation was more difficult. In theory, Orthodox Christians were granted rights equal to those of Catholics, but in practice they experienced greater difficulties. At the request of immigrants from Cyprus, in 1580 Apostolic Visitor Bishop Valier granted them the church of St. Nicholas in Pula and the right to celebrate according to their own religious rite.<sup>52</sup> Still, in his relations to Rome, Claudio Sozomeno emphasizes that Orthodox Christians respect the Catholic Church, and that those speaking ill of it are tried by bishops and inquisitors and punished (*qui male de ipsa loquebantur ab Episcopo et Inquisitore fuerunt processati et iuxta Canonum sanctiones puniti*).<sup>53</sup> Civil and Church authorities were often opposed to the settlement of non-Catholics. Orthodox immigrants were expected to accept Catholicism.<sup>54</sup> Claudio Sozomeno wrote about his endeavours to bring Greeks to adhere to the Roman Rite.<sup>55</sup> In the deca-

45 Grah 1987: 27.

46 Bertoša 1995: 73.

47 Grah 1987: 27-31 (Claudio); 31-36 (Cornelio).

48 Grah 1988: 80, n. 1

49 Grah 1987: 32.

50 De Luca 2012: 207-208; De Franceschi 1952: *passim*.

51 Bertoša 2003: 64.

52 Joksimović 2017: 246.

53 Grah 1987: 29; Grah 1988: 88.

54 Bertoša 1995: 36.

55 Grah 1987: 29 *cum* n. 11.

des to come, the same effort was made by other Istrian bishops, as well.<sup>56</sup> Orthodox Greeks in Istria were converted to Catholicism by the 18th century.<sup>57</sup>

Religion was not the only stumbling stone for Byzantine immigrants. Generally, they were not accepted. Greek immigrants were often more educated and had an elevated cultural background, which caused the envy of locals.<sup>58</sup> The local nobility feared for their power and obstructed the adaptation of settlers. Certain privileges, granted to them by the Venetian government, created discontent among the indigenous inhabitants.<sup>59</sup>

The number of Greeks slowly decreased. From some 100 families and 300 individuals during the time of Bishop Matteo Barbabianca (1567-1582), there were only 80 Orthodox Greeks left by the time of Claudio Sozomeno, and 20-40 in the time of Uberto Testa (1618-1623), 30-40 in the time of Giulio Saraceni (1627-1640) and only five in the time of Bernardino Corniani (1664-1689). In the time of Giuseppe Bottari (1695-1729) Orthodox priests of the church of St. Nicholas held mass for Orthodox Christians from Peroj. After the death of the last Greek Orthodox priest, Zuanne Mosconas, in 1785, the church was granted to the Montenegrin Orthodox Church in Peroj, which later became a part of the Serbian Orthodox Church.<sup>60</sup>

## HUMANISM AND THE RENAISSANCE IN ISTRIA

In Istria humanistic thought developed under the strong influence of Italian humanism. One particularity in Istria was the separate development of the Italian and Slavic Renaissance. Labin was the center of the Croatian Humanism, which was closely related to the spread of Reformation in the second half of the 16th century. Koper was the center of

56 E. g. bishops of Poreč Giovanni Battista Del Giudice (1644-1666) and Alessandro Adelasio (1671-1711) (Bertoša 1995: 36-38). See bitter writings against Orthodox by bishops of Pula: Luigi Marcello (1653-1661), Ambrogio Fracassini (1663) and Bernardino Corniani in Grah 1987: 47-50; 55; 57; 59. Marcello rejoices the fact that Greek rite is diminishing and is about to disappear in a few years, because bishop (Marcello himself) does not allow mixed marriages with Catholics without the conversion to Catholicism, Grah 1987: 46.

57 Bertoša 1995: 38; Darovec 2000: 79.

58 De Franceschi 1952: *passim*; Bertoša 2003: 33.

59 Bertoša 1995: 31-32; 34-35.

60 Grah 1987:29 *cum* n. 11; 38; 42; 55; 64.

the Italian Renaissance and the true center of Istrian humanism, with many active schools and academies.

In exploring the influence of Greek culture, literature and language on Istrian Renaissance literature and Humanistic thought, we have examined the aforementioned aspects of „rediscovering” Greek classics, that is the philological, philosophical and political aspects, while especially highlighting the role of Byzantine immigrants in these fields. We have explored the studies of Greek language, literature and philosophy as well as the interest in Greek texts and manuscripts. We searched for authors who looked up to Greek literary models, used references to Greek history and mythology and explicitly praised classical culture and education. We searched for advocates for a common European identity, based on a classical heritage, as well as for individuals promoting the idea of a united Christian European front against Muslim invaders for the liberation of subdued Byzantines.

One of the first Istrian humanists and an admirer of Greek culture of great influence was Giovanni Malpaghini (1346 –1417), who taught in Muggia.<sup>61</sup> He was a teacher of Vergerio the Elder and friend of Coluccio Salutati, Petrarca’s copyist and secretary. Almost all of his students continued their education with Chrysoloras.<sup>62</sup>

Pietro Paolo Vergerio The Elder (1370-1444) belonged to the first generation of Istrian humanists. He was first educated in his native Koper, where he also lived briefly (1411-1412) after finishing his studies. Vergerio studied Greek in Florence (1398-1399) under Chrysoloras, where he had met some of the most eminent Humanists, such as Coluccio Salutati, Guarino from Verona and Leonardo Bruni, who dedicated his work *Dialogi ad Petrum Paulum Histrum (Dialogues to Pietro Paolo the Istrian)* to him.<sup>63</sup> He wrote letters to his teacher and even sent him a treatise on Plato. When Chrysoloras passed away, Vergerio dedicated an epitaph to him, which can still be read in Costanza. He continued his studies under Malpaghini, who was summoned from Muggia to teach Greek in Florence.<sup>64</sup> We

61 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 262.

62 Witt 2003: 342-343; 372.

63 Browning 1913: 49-50.

64 Ziliotto 2019: 51; 76; 82.

know that he had read Greek classics, such as Plutarch, Tucididus, Homer and Plato. He perhaps even translated some Plutarch. Vergerio was the first to write about contemporary themes using Sapphic metre.<sup>65</sup> He translated Arrian's *Anabasis Alexandri* into Latin and wrote comments on Hippocrates. Vergerio was friends with Ennea Silvio Piccolomini and, like him, advocated for the revival of the Greek studies.<sup>66</sup> His most influential work is *De ingenuis moribus ac liberalibus studiis* (*On the Manners of a Gentleman and Liberal Studies*), which is considered the first and most influential humanistic treatise on education. In it, Vergerio claims that the perfect citizen should be modeled on classical examples and virtues, by reading Latin and Greek literature; he looks to Greek models in developing a perfect educational curriculum.<sup>67</sup>

Vergerio had an immense influence on contemporary Humanists. At the court of Hungarian-Croatian king Sigismund he had formed an influential Humanistic circle, to which, among others, John Vitéz, Ianus Pannonius, Antun and Faust Vrančić belonged. Vergerio encouraged Vitéz to send his nephew Iannus to study Greek under Guarino of Verona; he later became Bishop of Pécs and founded the first Greek library in Hungary.<sup>68</sup> Vitéz was the tutor of Matthias Corvinus (1458-1490) who later built a great library of Greek and Latin manuscripts and sponsored the immense project of translating Greek texts into Latin.<sup>69</sup>

Vergerius' translation of Arrian, dedicated to king Sigismund, would have been completely obliterated if it hadn't had fallen into the hands of Ennea Silvio Piccolomini, who wished to dedicate it to the king of Naples, Alfonso. Before he became Pope Pius II (1458-1464), Ennea Silvio Piccolomini served as Bishop of Trieste (1447-1449) and supported the development of schools and education.<sup>70</sup> He was a great enthusiast of Greek culture. Piccolomini wrote comedies, love and erotic poetry in Latin, and encouraged scholarship and education. In his treatise *De educatione liberorum* (*On Education of Children*), written while he

65 Ziliotto 2019: 50-51, n. 3; 57.

66 Duigan 2018; Apollonio s. a.

67 Ziliotto 2019: 62-63; 68-69; Zagorac 2008: *passim*.

68 Janeković-Römer 2007: 21-22.

69 Browning: 1913.

70 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014, *ibid*.

was Bishop of Trieste, he claims that learning Greek would be most useful for children (*Edu.* 61). Most significantly, Pius II was among the founders of the common Christian European identity and one of the loudest advocates for the battle against Ottomans. He wrote a book on Europe (*De Europa*). For him, Constantinople is our city and Europe our homeland, our home (*In Europa, id est in patria, in domo propria, in sede nostra Pont. Ep. 1. 130*), he deplores the fall of the Constantinople (*Eur.* 7). Europeans share common history and culture, and they are all Christians - *qui nomine Christiano censentur* (*Eur.*, 1 *praef.*). In 1459 Pius II brought together the leaders of Christian countries in Mantova in order to discuss the possibility of launching a new crusade; Bessarion himself was one of the most vigorous advocates of the crusade at the meeting.<sup>71</sup> He wrote an open letter to Mehmed the Conqueror (*Epistola ad Mahometum*), inviting him to convert to Christianity and promising that he would crown him if he did so. The letter was truly aimed at inducing European leaders to act against the Ottomans.<sup>72</sup> Pius II was a man of great initiative and influence. His activity and his writings, including the treatise on humanistic education, have certainly had an important impact on Istrian humanists.

From 1499 in the school of Trieste courses on Greek and philosophy were introduced.<sup>73</sup>

In the first half of the 14th century grammar school was established in Koper, where many Humanists from Italy, Istria and Byzantine world taught or were educated. The school became the center of Humanism, where from the knowledge of Greek language, literature, culture and history spread.<sup>74</sup> At the school of humanities Francesco Zambecari (1466) taught Greek, rhetoric, philosophy and history.<sup>75</sup> He had been living in Greece over five years in order to learn Greek and a certain contemporary claims him to be fluent in Greek as if he had been born in the centre of Athens. He translated Libanius epistles.<sup>76</sup>

71 Čoralić 1998: 145.

72 Fuček 2017: 19-20.

73 Ziliotto 2019: 93.

74 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 77-78; 262.

75 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 77; 262; Pusterla 1891: 58.

76 Ziliotto 2019: 96-97.

Raffaele Zovenzoni, originally from Trieste, lived in Koper during two periods (1461-1466; 1469-1470), where he taught Greek and Latin and became *Rector scholarum* (1461-1466).<sup>77</sup> He studied Greek and Latin literature in Ferrara under the famous Guarino from Verona, together with Ianus Pannonius. He dedicated *Monodia Chrysoloras* to the heads of the school, claiming Guarino to be his father and Chrysoloras his grandfather. In one letter he claims himself to be immersed in Greek literature.<sup>78</sup> His humanistic views were shaped under the strong influence of E. S. Piccolomini. Just like him, Zovenzoni advocated for war against the Ottomans and even wrote poetry on that subject to Emperor Friedrich III. Zovenzoni considered himself Istrian and called himself *Ister* and *Tergestinus*. His collection of Latin poems, *Istrias*, is full of references to classical antiquity, the most outstanding being the Greek nickname Lampra for his wife Chiara (c. 5, 61, 84, 95). He also worked as a printer in Venice, publishing Greek and Roman classics.<sup>79</sup> Zovenzoni wrote a poem dedicated to the Capodistrian Crispo Belgramoni, mentioning Belgramoni's previous writings on topics from Greek tragedies.<sup>80</sup>

At the very beginning of the 16th century two men of Greek origin, father and son, became *rectores scholarum* in Koper. They belonged to a family that probably left after the fall of Constantinople; the famous Hellenist Simon Grineo belonged to that same family. Gilberto Grineo taught in Koper in 1501, and his son, Marc'Antonio Grineo, was rector from 1502 to 1504. Their activity was not limited to Koper; they travelled all around Istria and Dalmatia, teaching. Marc'Antonio's son, Pietro, was born in Piran, where he had taught.<sup>81</sup> Giustiniano Donato from Crete was rector in 1532.<sup>82</sup>

Marc'Antonio was followed by Christoforo Nuzio, the famous scholar of Greek and father of Girolamo Muzio, who taught in Koper in 1504.<sup>83</sup>

77 Zovenzoni, *Rafaele*, in Treccani 2019.

78 Ziliotto 2019: 134-135.

79 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 77; 237; 262; Čvrlijak 1992: 119-130; Pusterla 1891: 58.

80 Ziliotto 2019: 131-132.

81 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 77-78; Liruti 1830: 398-399; Pusterla 1891: 59.

82 Pusterla, *ibid.*

83 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 262; Pusterla, *ibid.*

The head of the school from 1516 to 1520 was Palladio Fosco, a famous Humanist and advocate of the European front against the Ottomans, and author of *Commentaries on the Turkish War (Commentarii de bello Turcico)*.<sup>84</sup> Bernardino Donato, a famous translator and teacher of Greek and Latin, taught in Koper (1514 and/or 1527-1528). Donato succeeded Romulus Amaseus as a professor of Greek in Verona. His superb knowledge of Greek allowed him to write works in Greek, to translate the works of Eusebuis, Xenofont and Aristotle, and to edit the works of John Chrysostom and John Damascene in Greek.<sup>85</sup>

Giovanni Domenico Tarsia taught Greek in Koper (1532) and later in Trieste (1561); he belonged to the noble family Tarsia, which gained its wealth, among other ways, through relations with the Byzantine territories; members of this family served as *dragomani* (interpreters) and ambassadors of the Venetian Republic in Constantinople.<sup>86</sup>

Giovanni Giustiniani, originally from Crete, lived and taught in Koper (1535-1537; 1555). He translated the works of classical writers into Italian and wrote comedies that are full of references to classical Greece.<sup>87</sup> Another teacher of Greek origin in Koper was Nicolò Papadopoli (1687; 1689).<sup>88</sup>

Esiodo Sporeni taught Greek and Latin in a Capodistrian school (1593).<sup>89</sup>

Koper and its grammar school were not only the destination of many teachers, who shared their knowledge and influence, but also a place where numerous Humanists were educated and where their enthusiasm for the Greek heritage was born. Andrea Divo Giustinopolitano (c. 1490 - t.p.q. 1548) was born into an old Capodistrian family, whose many members were proficient in Greek and Latin. He is known for his Latin translations of Homer, Aristophanes and Theo-

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84 Janeković-Römer 2007: 12.

85 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 78; Pesenti 1992; Pusterla, *ibid*; Ziliotto 2019: 103.

86 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 82; Pusterla, *ibid*; Ziliotto 2019: 125-126.

87 Russo 2001; Cherini 1991: 48.

88 Cherini 1991: 50.

89 Pusterla 1891: 58.

critus, which were often made *ad verbum* with the aim of facilitating learning of Greek to the students.<sup>90</sup>

Individuals proficient in Greek could be found elsewhere in Istria. In Izola Francesco Egidio taught Greek. In the first half of the 15th century Zaccaria Lupetina from Labin dedicated a poem containing references on Greek mythology to the Venetian Doge.<sup>91</sup>

Giovanni Battista Goineo from Piran (born in 1514) studied Greek in Bologna under the famous Grecist Romulus Amaseus. He wrote a defense of Amaseus and his school in *Defensio pro Romuli Amasaevi auditoribus adversus Sebastiani Corradi calumnias* (1537).<sup>92</sup> In the treatise that followed in the same year *Disputatio de coniungenda sapientia cum eloquentia* Goineo praises the style of Greek philosophers, particularly that of Plato and Aristotle. He defends distrust in the poetry of Plato and Greek Church fathers who burnt the poetry of Alcaeus and Sappho, for „poetry is a meadow where thorns and poisonous flowers grow, as well”. He recommends reading the works of Greek fathers and imitating their elegance and style.<sup>93</sup> Goineo completed studies in medicine and arts in Padua, where he wrote a manual based on Galen’s *Medici enchiridion*, illustrated with quotations from Greek philosophers, in which he claims that a good doctor has to be well educated in classics. In Padua he also wrote the treatise *De situ Istriae* in which he hypothesizes that Zrenj in Istria is the birth place of St. Jerome, and a treatise entitled *Paradoxum quod Latino potius quam vulgari sermone scribendum sit*, in which he advocates for the use of Latin and Classical Greek in writing instead of Italian and Byzantine Greek, praising Byzantines such as Theodor of Gaza and Giovanni Lascaris for using Classical Greek and not the colloquial *koine*.<sup>94</sup> Goineo worked as a doctor in Piran. He became friends with P.P. Vergerio the Younger and adhered to Protestantism; he was tried for heresy in Venice and fled to Germany. His works are full of reminiscences on Greek classics and praises of Greek authors from different periods such as Homer, Aristotle and Origen.<sup>95</sup>

90 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 101; Lisac 2013; Ziliotto 2019: 119-120.

91 Ziliotto 2019: 132-133.

92 Cavazza 1981: 138-141.

93 Cavazza 1981: 141-143.

94 Cavazza 1981: 144-147.

95 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 67; 100; 262; Cavazza 1981: 143, 146, 149.

The only female author mentioned in this paper, Philippa Lazea (1546-1576) originated from Pula. She was well educated and knew Greek and Latin. Her work is scarcely preserved; we know, however, that she wrote lyric poetry and that she looked to Greek models in form and content; she even bore the nickname Illyrian Sappho. Lazea wrote in Sapphic verse. She often refers to Greek and Roman mythology, her most significant reference being the claim that Minerva aids her writing. Some of her works have been known only in the form of titles (or themes), such as *Flora et Zephyrus* and *Polyxena's immolation*.<sup>96</sup>

References to Greek mythology, history and culture served as a mark of authors *humanitas*, erudition and his adherence to classical Antiquity and became *topos* in humanistic and renaissance writings. Such references were present in all genres. Thus, Athena announces the prologue to the comedy *Ardor di amore* by a Capodistrian Pietro Pola (fl. 16th century). Ottonello Belli (1569-1625) from Koper wrote the pastoral tragicomedies *Pastor fido* (*The Faithful Shephard*) and *Le selve incoronate* (*The Crowned Forests*) based on themes from Greek mythology. Giovanni Battista Brati from Koper wrote the pastoral drama *La ninfa del Formione* (*The Nymph of Formio*) in 1619.<sup>97</sup>

One of the characteristics of the new interest in Greek antiquity was an enthusiasm for Plato's philosophy. Ambrosio Febeo, native of Piran, resided at the school of Koper on three or four occasions (1514-1520; 1520-1524; 1531-1533; 1540-1550).<sup>98</sup> He also taught in Trieste. Febeo is an author of the *De Virtute aquirenda et eius fructu*, a platonic dialogue on the same issue (virtue) as Plato's *Symposion*. Neoplatonist Girolamo Vida (1563-1591) was a native of Koper, and wrote *Cento dubii amorosi* (*Hundred Love Issues*) in the form of Plato's *Symposion*; in it famous Capodistrians of the time discuss the topic of love (among them Giovanni Zarotti, Nicolo Manzuoli and Ottonello Belli, mentioned in this article). In the manner of Plato, Vida wrote his treatise *Sileno*, dialogue of Silenus and Mercury on happiness, with the conclusion that only love brings true happiness. The treatise is full of erudite references to Greek mythology and history. In its introduction author narrates

96 Istrapedia s.a; Bratičević 2009-2018; Delbianco 2013: 25-34.

97 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 80; 102-106; 119-120; 206; 262.

98 Ziliotto 2019: 98-101.

the story of foundation of Koper by Colchidians and the myth of Athena's *aegis*.<sup>99</sup>

References to Greek myths on the foundation of different Istrian towns were popular at the time, particularly in works on geography and history. In his historical treatise *De urbe Iustinopolis*, Vergerio the Elder ascribes the foundation of the Koper to Colchidians and links the name of Istria with the river Ister. He discusses the etymology of numerous Istrian toponyms, connecting the name Iustinopolis with the emperor Iustinian, and the name Egida with Minerva's shield.<sup>100</sup> In his work *On Europe* E. S. Piccolomini explained that Istria got its name based on the erroneous belief of Greek geographers that the Danube (*Ister*) flows into the Adriatic. He relates the origin of the name with the myth of Argonauts, claiming that the Argonauts sailed upstream on the Danube and Sava to Ljubljana, from whence they carried the boat to the Istrian Adriatic shore on their backs (*Eur.* 18, p. 408-9).

The myth of the Argonauts is linked to the foundation of Istrian towns at the beginning of *Del sito de l'Istria (On the Istrian Geography)*, written by geographer Pietro Coppo (1469/70- Izola 1555/56),<sup>101</sup> as well as in a work on the history and geography of Istria, *Nuova descrizione della provintia dell'Istria (New Description of the Istrian Province)* written by Nicolò Manzuoli (Koper / Izola, c. 1625), who in his description of the foundation of Koper mentions other Greek myths as well.<sup>102</sup>

During Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, classical heritage was often condemned because of paganism. With humanism, however, such a setback vanished. Even in the works of fervent Catholics we find numerous references to Greek heritage. Such was Girolamo Muzio Giustinopolitano (1496-1576), son and pupil of the aforementioned Hellenist Christophoro Muzio. Born in Padua, Girolamo spent his youth in Koper and returned there on several occasions. He even bore nickname *Giustinopolitano* – „Capodistriano”. In his heroic poem *Egida*, Girolamo Muzio links the name of Istria with

99 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 80; 101-104; 206.

100 Ziliotto 2019: 60.

101 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 59-64.

102 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 124-129.

Danube and the Argonauts, claiming that Colchidians founded Koper, Pula and Novigrad. He relates the story of Poseidon and Athena's dispute to the origin of Koper and praises the restoration of Koper in the time of Justinian, from whom the city took the name Justinopolis. Moreover, he narrates the less known story of Motovun having been created when Athena transformed one of Poseidon's sons into the hill.<sup>103</sup>

In his writings to Rome, Claudio Sozomeno, Bishop of Pula, related the myth of the Argonauts to the founding of Pula and admired the pagan Roman heritage of Pula and praised the beauty of the Amphitheater and Augustus' temple.<sup>104</sup> Another bishop of Pula, Uberto Testa (1618-1623), narrates that the Greeks named Pula Χρυσόπολις, «Golden Town». The same claim is repeated by another bishop of Pula, Marino Badoer (1641-1648). Bishop Giuseppe Bottari even claims that Colchidians founded Pula around 1200 BC, and that Constantine the Great lived in the city for two years and convicted his son to death there.<sup>105</sup>

Admiration and respect for Greek heritage changed the perspective of Western Europeans; classical heritage began to be seen as a common European heritage. As opposed to the previous period, when Catholicism was opposed to Orthodoxy, with an imminent Muslim threat, a common European (Christian) background was emphasized.

Great classicist and teacher of philosophy, Bishop of Senj and Forlì, Ludovico Traversari (1390-1450), native of Piran, loudly advocated for the union of the Eastern and Western Church at the Council of Florence.<sup>106</sup> Vergerio the Elder advocated for the union with the Eastern Church; he publicly addressed the cardinals of the Roman Church, instigating them to remove the schism.<sup>107</sup>

We have already mentioned E. S. Piccolomini, Raffaele Zovenzoni and Palladio Fosco's appeals for a united military campaign against the Ottomans. During the 15th century, Michele della Vedova from Pula or Galizana in his poem *Lamento di un Istriano per la caduta di Costantinopoli*

103 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 75-77; 80; 82-96; 111; 126; 142; 229; 237; 262.

104 Grah 1988: 84-85; Grah 1987: 27.

105 Grah 1987: 36; 44; 60.

106 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 58.

107 Ziliotto 2019: 73-75.

*oli* (*The Lament of an Istrian for of the Fall of Constantinopolis*) appealed to the Pope, Emperor Alfonso III of Aragon, and to the entire Christian Europe to unite against those who threaten European civilization. In the poem, the author admires and praises Constantinople from the times of Constantine the Great onward, and emperor Justinian himself addresses the reader with his song from Paradise.<sup>108</sup> Friar Michele Pacis, a native of Trieste, and Capodistrian Antonio Zarotti exchanged letters in 1472 in which they shared concerns on the Turkish threat to the Christendom.<sup>109</sup>

The Battle of Lepanto (1571) was an event of the greatest importance for the entire Christian world, with the victory of united Christian forces over the Ottoman fleet proving that terrifying Turks were not invincible. Over 1000 Istrians participated in this naval battle; Koper, Krk and Cres sent their ships to the battle.<sup>110</sup> Pride and the thrill of the victory is reflected in works of contemporary European literature, including Istrian writers. In his epic poem *Il Marte (Mars)*, Vincenzo Metelli from Koper presented the events allegorically, through the perspective of heathen Antiquity.<sup>111</sup> Giovanni Zarotti celebrated the victory in his *Sonetti sopra la Guerra turchesca (Sonets on Turkish War)*.<sup>112</sup> The aforementioned Girolamo Muzio wrote *Rime per la gloriosa vittoria (Verses on the Glorious Victory)*. Muzio was, however, not famous for his verses against the Ottomans, nor for his already mentioned epic poem *Egida*. This fervent Catholic is known for his work *Malleus Haereticorum (The Hammer for the Heretics)* and his struggle against heretics, particularly Pietro Paolo Vergerio the Younger.<sup>113</sup>

## HUMANISM AND REFORMATION

The spread of humanistic thought in Istria, particularly on its mainland, was closely related to spread of the Reformation. In the 16th century Istria was divided between Venice and The House of Austria.

108 Cellerino 1989; Ziliotto 2019: 29-33.

109 Ziliotto 2019: 119-120.

110 Bertoša 2014: 38.

111 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 75; 109; 262; Vergerio 1971: 660.

112 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 9; 75; 103-104; 111; Vergerio, *ibid.* Marco Antonio Adrario from Cres wrote a collection of the same name and dedicated a sonnet in it to his friend Giovanni Zarotti, v. P. 1908: 252-256.

113 Zudič Antonič – Knez 2014: 9; 75; 103-104; 111; Vergerio, *ibid.*

Protestant doctrine penetrated from two centres: Kranjska, under Austrian domain, and Venice, which, due to the political controversy with Rome, initially supported Reformation. Venetian authorities later changed their politics due to economic interests; that shift was followed by the persecution of Protestants. Protestant teaching was present in Istria for a short period, but its impact was intense. Some high prelates, including the Bishop of Koper, Pietro Paolo Vergerio, and his brother, Gian Battista, Bishop of Pula.

Pietro Paolo Vergerio the Younger (1498-1565), served as a bishop in his native Koper from 1536. After he met Martin Luther, he adhered to his teaching. He was accused of heresy and fled. Vergerio's letters are the most important writings of the time from the Bishopric of Koper. He was proficient in Latin and probably knew some Greek. In his *De republica Veneta* he discusses the importance of the Greek language.<sup>114</sup>

Focal points of the Istrian Reformation were Pazin and Labin. Many Reformers worked in secrecy, and a great number of them left their homeland and acted abroad. Some paid with their lives: well-known is the example of Baldo Lupetina from Labin, and less known the example of Andreas Callegher from Vodnjan – they were both drowned in the Venetian lagoons after being convicted by Venetian authorities.<sup>115</sup>

Matija Grbić (Grbac, c. 1505/08-1559) from Labin was an associate of Martin Luther. He was educated at a protestant gymnasium in Nürnberg by Joachim Camerarius, a famous Hellenist, and in Württemberg, by the great Reformer Philipp Melanchthon. Grbić himself taught the Greek language and literature in Württemberg (1535) and Tübingen (1537), and became Dean of Faculty of Philosophy in Tübingen. He wrote poetry and prose (predominantly speeches) in Greek and Latin, and translated Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, Hesiod's *Works and Days*, and the *Letter of Aristeas*.<sup>116</sup> He also published a collection of epitaphs entitled *Epitaphia quaedam non iscita partim Graeca, partim Latina* (1543). In his writings he abundantly quotes Greek authors, predominantly Hesiod, and uses many Greek words as a sign of his erudition and respect of the Greek

114 Jacobson Schutte 1977: 28; 39.

115 Joksimović – Komšo 2017: 101-102.

116 Three poems in Greek were published in *Georgii Sabini Brandeburgensis Poemata* in 1543, Karabaić 1996: 3-5; Mandelbrote – Weinberg 2016: 32-35.

culture. In a foreward to *Prometheus Bound* Grbić praises Greek art and culture, which shaped, he claims, Christian thought. According to Grbić, great Church fathers such as Basil the Great, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianus, Augustine, and Jerome were modeled by liberal arts and studies, and the wisdom of the Apostles was inspired by heathen thought. He proves this by quoting sayings from Greek authors, such as Epimenides, Menander and Aratus in Epistles of St. Paul. *Humanitas*, claims Grbić, is first found in works of classical Greek authors; he praises Homer, Aeschylus and Sophocles for their style and *humanitas*, which is „a step toward piety” (*Nec ipsa humanitas non est gradus et via quaedam ad pietatem*, p. 7 of the foreword).<sup>117</sup>

While in Tübingen, Grbić hosted his younger countryman, Matija Vlačić (1520-1575), who came to be the greatest Istrian Reformer and humanist. Vlačić was a nephew of Baldo Lupetina. Vlačić studied Greek in the school of St. Marco in Venice, in Basel under Simon Grynaeus (Grineo), in Tübingen under Matija Grbić, and in Wüttenberg under Philipp Melanchthon. All of his teachers were great admirers of Greek culture, proficient in the Greek language. Vlačić was a philologist as well, and taught Greek and Aristotelian philosophy. He published a volume of Aristotle's writings in Greek.<sup>118</sup> In his master's thesis entitled *Regulae et tractatus quidam de sermone sacrarum litterarum* (1551) he discussed the importance of Greek, Hebrew and Latin for Bible study. He is the author of the encyclopedic dictionary of Hebrew *Clavis scripturae sacrae* (*The Key to Scripture*, 1567), which was the most important biblical lexicon of the time. He also wrote a commentary on the *New Testament* containing notes with Greek text and Erasmus' Latin translation. Death prevented him from completing his philological commentary on the *Old Testament*.<sup>119</sup>

One of the aspects of the Reformation was an advocacy for the use of the national language in spiritual scriptures. A printing office was set in Urach (1561-1565) where under the supervision of the scho-

117 Karabaić 1996: 3; 4-5; 10-11; 16.

118 Ilić 2015: 209-212. Grynaeus, famous Hellenist of Greek origin, edited Euclid's *Elements* in Greek and translated works of Plutarch, Aristotle and John Chrysostom to Latin; he even bore the epithet „Apollo”. Melanchthon was a scholar of Greek language. He first published a paraphrased edition of Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos*.

119 Ilić 2015: 215-218.

lars from the University of Tübingen Protestant books were printed in Croatian (mostly on Istrian Čakavian dialect).<sup>120</sup> Translations of the *Bible* made there were not necessary based on the Hebrew and Greek originals; more often, they were translations of existing versions in other languages. Still, some members of the group that worked on this translation project must have known Greek. We know that is true of Anton Dalmatin<sup>121</sup> and Juraj Cvečić<sup>122</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

As it has been shown, numerous Istrian Humanists studied Greek, some of them with famous Hellenists: Vergerius the Elder with Manuel Chrysoloras, Zovenzoni with Guarino of Verona, Bernardino Donato and G.B. Goineo with Romulus Amaseus, Matija Grbić and Matija Vlačić with Joachim Camerarius, Philipp Melanchthon and Simon Grynaeus. They were immersed in Humanistic culture and exchanged ideas with eminent Hellenists of the time, such as Coluccio Salutati, Guarino from Verona or Leonardo Bruni. Many Humanists taught the Greek language, literature or philosophy; such were Giovanni Malpaghini, Francesco Zambecari, Raffaele Zovenzoni, Christoforo Nuzio, Bernardino Donato, G.D. Tarsia and Esiodo Sporeni. Some of them were of Greek origin, like Gilberto, Marc'Antonio and Pietro Grineo, Giustinianno Giustiniani or Nicolò Papadopoli. These Hellenists translated the texts of Greek and Byzantine authors (Homer, Hesiod, Aristophanes, Aeschyles, Arrian, Theocritus, John Chrysostom, John Damascene) and wrote commentaries on their works. Some of them worked as printers, publishing Greek classics (Zovenzoni). Returning *ad fontes*, Reformers needed Greek to search for the true meaning of the *New Testament* in its original; Vergerio the Younger discusses the importance of the Greek language, while Matija Grbić and M. Vlačić Ilirik based their philological careers on their knowledge of Greek. Vergerio the Elder promoted education based on classical models and advocated for the revival of Greek studies. Greek philosophy became popular: Neoplatonists Girolamo Vida and Ambrogio Febeo imitated the writings of Plato, and G.B. Gioneo's medical manual was full of quotes from Greek philosophers. Istrian humanistic literature was shaped by Greek literary models in form and in content. The Illyrian

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120 Biletić s. a.

121 Palanović 1983.

122 Jembrih 2006: 57.

Sapho, thus, wrote poetry in Greek verses, Pietro Pola comedies, and Ottonello Belli and G.B. Brati pastoral drama on themes from Greek mythology. Literature abounded with references to the Greek world. Particularly popular were the Greek myths related to the founding of Istrian towns, as in works of geographers Pietro Coppo and Nicolò Manzuoli. The classical heritage, which in the Middle Ages was scorned for its heathen elements, became popular even among fervent Catholics; thus, we find allusions on Greek myths and culture in the works of E.S. Piccolomini, Girolamo Muzio and Bishops of Pula Claudio Sozomeno, Uberto Testa, Marino Badoer and Giuseppe Bottari. Classical culture became a foundation for building a new European Christian identity, reflected in the appeals for the defence of Greek lands and war against the common Muslim enemy, as reflected in the works of Pope Pius II, Michele della Vedova, Raffaele Zovenzoni, Palladio Fosco, Vincenzo Metelli, Giovanni Zarotti and Girolamo Muzio.

The impact of Byzantines on Istrian Humanism was predominantly „imported”; enthusiasm for Greek culture and language arrived with the Renaissance from Italy (Venetian Republic) and with Reformation from German countries. Even though it was not instigated by the Byzantine immigrants who were settling in Istria, these Istrian Byzantines helped to keep the Hellenist fire alive, particularly by teaching the Greek language, literature and philosophy. They embraced the existing fervor for Greek culture and adhered to it in their own writings, promoting it further. Particularly influential were wealthy and the acculturated immigrants (or their descendants), such as Istrian bishops, who also had the power to protect fellow immigrants. They needed protection, for they faced numerous difficulties upon their arrival. Due to that, many left; those who remained were acculturated, they accepted Catholicism and lost their identity.

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## **SUMMARY**

### **Rediscovering the Greeks – The Impact of Intensified Contacts Between Western Europe and The Byzantine World on Shaping Humanistic Thought from the Perspective of Istria**

The article explores the impact of Byzantines on Istrian Humanism and Renaissance. In the introduction author describes the alienation of the territories which used to be Eastern and Western part of the Roman Empire and, congruently, the fate of the classical (particularly Greek) heritage in the Dark and Middle Ages in those territories. This is followed by a description of the historical events that led to rapprochement of the East and West, with particular emphasis on the Byzantine exodus to Italy. The author then provides a methodological framework by analyzing the main aspects of „rediscovering” Greek cultural heritage and the influence of the Byzantine immigrants on them. The author then turns to Istria, providing, first, a short summary of Istrian contacts with the Greek cultural heritage throughout history and then the settlement of the Byzantines in Istria. The main part of the article follows, containing a detailed analysis of the described elements of „rediscovering” Greek cultural heritage – interest in Greek language, literature, culture and philosophy (particularly Neoplatonism), in translations, the editing and publishing of Greek classics, as well as in the presence of the idea of a common European identity based on a common ancient heritage, and the voices advocating for the formation of a united Christian European front against the Ottomans.

## SAŽETAK

### Ponovno otkrivanje Grka – utjecaj pojačanih kontakata između zapadne Europe i Bizanta na oblikovanje humanističke misli iz perspektive Istre

U radu se istražuje utjecaj Bizanta na humanizam i renesansu u Istri. U uvodnom dijelu autorica opisuje otuđenje teritorija koji su nekoć bili dijelom Istočnog i Zapadnog Rimskog Carstva, kao i sudbinu klasičnoga, posebice grčkoga, nasljeđa u ranom srednjem vijeku. Slijedi opis povijesnih događaja koji su doveli do zbližavanja Istoka i Zapada s posebnim naglaskom na *exodus* Bizantinaca u Italiju. Autorica nadalje postavlja metodološki okvir analizirajući glavne aspekte „ponovnog otkrivanja Grka” u smislu kulturnoga nasljeđa i utjecaja bizantskih emigranata na doseljeno područje. Zatim se osvrće na prilike u Istri dajući kratak pregled istarskih kontakata s grčkim kulturnim nasljeđem kroz povijest, a zatim i pregled naselja u Istri u kojima je bilo bizantskoga stanovništva. Glavni dio rada sadrži detaljnu analizu spomenutih elemenata „ponovnog otkrivanja” grčkoga kulturnog nasljeđa s naglaskom na grčki jezik, književnost, kulturu i filozofiju (posebno neoplatonizam), na prevođenje, uređivanje i izdavanje djela grčkih klasika, kao i prisutnost ideje o zajedničkom europskom identitetu utemeljene na zajedničkoj antičkoj baštini i zalaganjima za uspostavu ujedinjene kršćanske fronte protiv Osmanskoga Carstva.

**Ključne riječi:** humanizam i renesansa, Bizant, grčki jezik, Grci, Istra