

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek

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Cestne povezave na Krasu od konca 17. do sredine 19. stoletja

IZVLEČEK

Članek podaja kratek pregled cestnih povezav na območju Krasa od konca 17. do sredine 19. stoletja. Opisane so težave, na katere so naleteli tovorniki, vozniki in popotniki – med njimi je bila nedvomno najhujša burja na območju Gabrka. Prav tako so bili omembe vredni cestni razbojniki, ki so gospodarili na tem območju. Čez Kras in na sam Kras so potovali posamezni učenjaki, ki so jih zanimali kraški pojavi, v 18. stoletju pa je Kras sodil celo med izobraževalna potovanja mladih plemičev in bogatih meščanskih sinov. Težave, ki so bile povezane s potovanjem po cestah, so se v desetletjih spreminjale, ko pa je bila dograjena železniška povezava Dunaj–Trst, so se potovalne razmere povsem spremenile.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

Kras, cesarska cesta, cestne povezave, vozniki, zakupniki

ABSTRACT

ROAD CONNECTIONS IN THE KARST FROM THE END OF THE 17TH TO THE MID-19TH CENTURY

The article provides a summary overview of road connections in the Karst from the end of the 17th to the mid-19th century. It describes difficulties encountered by freight transporters, drivers and travellers, with bora in the Gabrk area being undoubtedly the worst. Also worth mentioning were road bandits who controlled the area. Some scholars journeyed through or to the Karst to explore the karst phenomena. In the 18th century, the Karst was even on the list of educational trips for young noblemen and sons of wealthy bourgeois families. Road transportation faced different obstacles over decades, but a complete change in travel conditions came about with the construction of the railway line Vienna–Trieste.

KEY WORDS

Karst, imperial road, road connections, drivers, leaseholders

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S U M M A R Y

Road connections in the Karst from the end of the 17th to the mid-19th century

Before the railway, waterways were the main routes of large-scale transportation of goods. Where this was not possible or where these routes were of minor importance, a system of roads and paths had to be set up to ensure safe passage for transporters, merchants and different kinds of travellers. Among the provinces with limited navigable waterways were also those in the present-day territory of Slovenia. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Carniola hardly matched to the task of maintaining its slowly growing road network. There was constant shortage of funds for major—and increasingly critical—road constructions. The state and the province endeavoured to obtain funding in a number of ways: with toll tax, road tax, by offering some road sections for lease, introducing additional burdens on direct imperial taxes, etc.

It should also be borne in mind that the condition of roads, most of which were gravel, would quickly change in the 18th and 19th centuries. They were degraded as much by weather as by negligent drivers and their overloaded wagons, and also by nearby inhabitants who littered them with refuse. Especially great damage was caused by owners of fields adjacent to roads who often turned their ploughs in the middle of roads and soil them with all kinds of pollutants. Maria Theresa addressed this issue by adopting a series of ordinances and acts that stipulated how roads should be maintained and protected as well as how drivers and travellers should conduct themselves on the road, and determined the obligations and rights of the population living alongside imperial roads. Maria Theresa's legislation was further extended by Emperor Joseph II.

Cart-drivers were, without a doubt, the most important road users. They needed good and especially safe roads that enabled them to reach their destinations in time. Cart-drivers also immensely benefited from roadside taverns which were set up for them and provided comfortable stables for horses and am-

ple sheds for carts. Not surprisingly, such taverns also required an appropriate number of hired hands.

Another important user of imperial roads in the 18th was mail, especially once it also took over passenger transport. Passenger carriages always had complete priority in road traffic and postilions never missed an opportunity to take full advantage of it. Mail masters usually reported on the conditions of specific road sections, much to the chagrin of road workers and road masters.

Road bandits were a major nuisance not only in Slovenian territory but entire Europe. In the 18th and 19th centuries, road robbery was no longer considered a »gentleman's offense« but an act punishable

by death. Even so, brigandry was quite common, especially in areas where cart-drivers had to slow down their horses and where one could quickly retreat into the nearby woods. These troubles ended in the mid-19th century, thanks to the introduction of armed gendarmerie on the one hand and the construction of railway on the other, which provided a much safer and faster mode of travelling. The advent of railway delivered a heavy blow to cart-drivers, who were in no position to compete with it. That period also witnessed the ruin of craftsmanship closely linked to transport and places that were too distant from the new means of transportation.