

1.01 Izvirni znanstveni članek

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Boj za prehode proti Jadranu – Kras od 12. do 15. stoletja (politično- in vojnozgodovinska skica)

IZVLEČEK

Kras v poznem srednjem veku je pomenil obsežno območje od notranjskih kraških polj do neposrednega zaledja obalnih mest. Šlo je za izrazito prehodno območje s prelazi in pomembnimi trgovskimi cestami, z velikim strateškim in ekonomskim značajem. Za prevlado v tej regiji in glavna gospostva Lož, Postojna in Vipava, so se skozi stoletja borile vse regionalne sile iz Kranjske, Koroške, Furlanije. Koroški Spanheimi, bavarski Andeški in Bogenski v 12. in 13. stoletju; grofje Goriški in oglejski patriarh v 13. in 14. stoletju; Habsburžani, grofje Celjski in Ortenburški v 14.–15. stoletju, in končno Habsburžani ter beneška republika. Avstrijska vladarska hiša je s pridobitvijo Trsta leta 1382 dobila izhod na morje in latentno konfrontacijo z Benetkami. Šele cesar Maksimilijan je v vojni 1508–16 dokončno prevladal v zaledju jadranskih pristanišč in s tem utrdil vlogo habsburškega Trsta. Vojaško in politično dogajanje v kraškem območju je bilo izredno dinamično in nima primerjave v širšem slovenskem območju.

KLJUČNE BESEDE

Kras, pozni srednji vek, prelazi, gradovi, trgovske poti, najemniško vojskovanje, oglejski patriarh, Goriški, Celjski, Habsburžani, beneška republika

ABSTRACT

A STRUGGLE FOR PASSES TOWARDS THE ADRIATIC – KARST FROM THE 12TH TO THE 15TH CENTURIES (POLITICAL AND MILITARY HISTORICAL SKETCH)

The Karst in late Middle Ages encompassed a vast area stretching from karst fields in Inner Carniola to coastal towns and their immediate hinterland. It was a highly transitional area with mountain passes and important trade routes affording it a major strategic and economic relevance. For centuries, all major regional powers from Carniola, Carinthia and Friuli struggled to establish their supremacy over this area and its major seigniories of Lož (Laas), Postojna (Adelsberg) and Vipava (Wippach): the Spanheims of Carinthia, the Counts of Bogen and Andechs from Bavaria in the 12th and 13th centuries; the Counts of Gorizia and the Aquileian Patriarch in the 13th and 14th centuries; the Habsburgs, the Counts of Cilli and the Counts of Ortenburg in the 14th and 15th centuries, and finally the Habsburgs and the Venetian Republic. Having acquired Trieste in 1382, the Austrian ruling house secured itself an outlet to the sea, but also found itself in a latent confrontation with Venice. In the war of 1508–1516, Emperor Maximilian ultimately asserted his power over the hinterland of the Adriatic ports and thus strengthened the role of the Habsburg Trieste. The military and political developments in the Karst area were extremely dynamic and have no comparison in the broader Slovenian area.

KEY WORDS

Karst, Late Middle Ages, passes, castles, trade routes, mercenary warfare, Aquileian Patriarch, Counts of Gorizia, Counts of Cilli, House of Habsburg, Venetian Republic

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S U M M A R Y

A STRUGGLE FOR PASSES TOWARDS THE ADRIATIC – KARST FROM THE 12TH TO THE 15TH CENTURIES (POLITICAL AND MILITARY HISTORICAL SKETCH)

The region, in the late Middle Ages known as Karst, encompassed a vast area stretching from karst fields in Inner Carniola to the immediate hinterland of coastal towns of Istria (Triest, Muggia, Koper/Capodistria, Izola/Isola, Piran/Pirano). It was a highly transitional area with mountain passes and important trade routes leading from Hungary and Croatia towards the Adriatic and Italy (Venice), thus affording it a major strategic and economic relevance. No wonder it was through the centuries a highly contested region with all major powers from neighbouring provinces Carniola, Carinthia or Friuli struggling to establish their supremacy over its major seigniories of Lož/Laas, Postojna/Adelsberg and Vipava/Wippach.

In the 10th and 11th centuries the German emperors granted vast territories along the lower Soča/Isonzo river, in lower Vipava valley and around Cerknica in Carniola to the patriarchs of Aquileia. The last one enabled the control of all major passes on the roads from Carniola to the coast. The patri-

archs were thus a major political factor in the area all the way to the beginning of the 14th Century, when, after *interregnum*, losing a strong imperial support, they gradually succumbed to the lay forces. Their major rivals were from mid-twelfth century the Counts of Görz, formally advocates of the Patriarchate, who used this position primarily to enlarge their territories and political influence. The importance of this region in the first half of the 13th century is attested also by some important imperial princes possessing large estates on the Karst: the Spanheims, Dukes of Carinthia (in the hinterland of Triest), the Dukes of Andechs-Merania (seigniories of Vipava and Postojna) and Bavarian Counts of Bogen (half of seigniorship of Vipava). After the extinction of these dynasties the struggle in the area was focused primarily on two rivals – Aquileia and the Counts of Görz. With brutal force in almost ceaseless warfare the Counts in a few decades after 1250 overflowed the Karst with their castles and newly formed seigniories under the administration of their loyal *ministeriales* (seven castles in the span of just two decades). At the same time, in the shadow of Görz/Aquileia confrontation, the Republic of Venice finally enforced its rule upon the Istrian coastal towns, including Koper (1279), Izola (1280) and Piran (1283). Around 1320, under Henry II. († 1323), the House of Görz was at the peak of its power as one of the strongest among the princes in the south of the Empire. They controlled large territories stretching from Treviso in Northern Italy into the Inner Istria and across Karst passes to the Lower Carniola. The death of Count Henry II. in 1323 meant literally a disaster. Leaving only a newborn son and with more or less unfortunate marriage policy in the later decades, the family almost overnight became of secondary importance. New powerful forces emerged on the scene: the Austrian Habsburgs with their loyal vassals, the Counts of Cilli and Ortenburg.

Acquiring the rule over Carinthia and Carniola in 1335, the Habsburgs became immediate neighbours of Aquileian Friuli and seigniories on the Karst passes: Lož, Postojna, Vipava. Extending their power over this strategic area in the North-East of Italy was a logical consequence. In 1350 the offensive began with occupation of Friuli and the passes, literally eliminating the patriarch as a factor of any political importance in the area. Due to the strong influence of the Luxemburgs (emperor Charles IV), which was felt in this region from 1340s to the beginning of the next century, the matter was still resolved diplomatically, with Habsburgs receiving a temporary hold on a few strategic points (Chiusaforte, Venzone in Friuli, Vipava). But a decade later, in 1361 Duke Rudolph IV ruthlessly invaded Friuli again, occupied the land, captured the Aquileian patriarch and detained him in Vienna. Through the intervention of Hungarian king Louis the Great, peace was

concluded in 1362, but the Duke retained all major positions. The passes were lost to Aquileia, the castles were opened for the duke and put into custody of his loyal followers. The most influential of them, the Counts of Cilli, received two strategic seigniories of Vipava and Postojna in pledge and retained them for six decades (until 1430). Another huge success of Duke Rudolph IV, obtained by diplomacy, was the treaty of inheritance with a branch of the Counts of Görz, which in 1374 brought the Habsburgs two provinces/counties: in Inner Istria and in southern Carniola. During these turbulent times in the first two thirds of the 14th century the military activity in the region had no parallels in the Slovenian area. We have numerous sources reflecting the mercenary warfare, different political coalitions, truces and peace treaties being concluded and broken, loyalties changing overnight, sieges of castles, pillaging and devastating of countryside. Especially Istria suffered a lot, due also to the wars between the Hungarian King Louis the Great and the Republic of Venice (1346–47, 1356–58) which echoed in this area. One local noble family surpassed all others in the field of mercenary activity – those of Stegberg – who possessed the seigniorship of Postojna from 1332–1371, when they sold it to the Habsburgs for enormous 28.000 florins. In these decades they literally ruled the Karst due to their skilful manoeuvring between different masters: Görz, Aquileia, Venice, King of Hungary, Habsburgs.

A new chapter began by Habsburg acquisition of the city of Triest after the »War of Chioggia« in 1382 (the first attempt in 1371 failed), which was the only port in the bay of Triest to have escaped the Venetian rule so far. It gradually became the emporium of Habsburg Eastern-Alpine provinces and the main rival of Venetian monopoly in the Northern Adriatic (in regard to trade with continental hinterland, production of salt etc.). A huge military event with unexpected consequences for the area was in the second decade of the 15th century the war of King Sigismund with Venice for Dalmatia (1411–13 and 1418–20). Huge Hungarian armies (in November 1411 10.000 horsemen by the notion of the king himself) crossed the Karst passes towards Venice, in 1412 also king Sigismund, who in January next year led a campaign all the way to Pula in the south of Istria. After a five year truce without diplomatic results, the war broke out again in 1418. Sigismund relied too much on the economic (trade) blockade of the Republic, which was effectually carried out also by his father in law Herman of Cilly, the lord of all three main Karst passes. Venice, with no strong military opposition this time, in 1419–1420 occupied the whole of Friuli and the rest of Aquileian possessions in Istria, thus ultimately terminating the lay rule of the patriarch of Aquileia. The Terra Ferma expanded enormously and Venetian territories now bordered

directly on Habsburg lands. The rivalry between Trieste and Venetian ports for the trade with continental hinterland became fierce. When in 1461 the Emperor Frederick III. granted to Trieste the privilege of »compulsory road« (*Straßenzwang*) – all trade to Venetian Istria had to go through Trieste where all the dues (tolls etc.) had to be payed – the war became inevitable. It was duly won by Venice that occupied another piece of hinterland (Novi grad/Neuhaus, formally territory of Görz). The economic rivalry continued and the Emperor Frederick III. and especially Maximilian were now increasingly effective in creating an efficient trade and transport regime in the hinterland, which served Trieste and hindered Venice. The next war between Maximilian and Venice in 1508–16, a part of a huge war in northern Italy, was a total success for the Emperor, who in 1500 also inherited the last territory of the now extinct Counts of Görz (County of Gorizia). In 1516 (1522) new borders were drawn that for the next three centuries denoted the limits of Habsburg provinces and Venice in Friuli and Istria.

Karst area was during the 15th century gradually

subjected to the Habsburg rule. In 1430 Vipava and Postojna were peacefully ceded back to the Habsburgs by the Counts of Cilli, 1466/72 a huge territory was partly inherited and partly bought from the Lords of Walsee (Devin/Duino, Senožeče, Prem, Gotnik, Reka/Fiume with a large tract of land at Quarnero) and in 1500 the County of Gorizia was inherited. The area at this time already had a strong provincial identity, with territorial law being mentioned (*landesrecht am Karst*). Especially the Walsee territory was on a good way to become a »Land« in political terms. It had a common captain as a deputy of the lord with military and jurisdictional capacities, a »Landschaft« is mentioned – a community of provincial nobility – and there are strong indications that a privilege for the nobility was also issued by their lords. After the uniting under the Habsburg rule the regional identity was retained but at the beginning of the 16th century the whole region (except the County of Gorizia) was incorporated to the Duchy of Carniola as the so called *angeraichten herrschaften* (as well as the Inner Istria).