

SLOVENIAN LITERATURE IN THE PROVINCES OF GORIZIA AND UDINE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TURBULENT HISTORICAL EVENTS

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses twentieth-century Slovenian literature in Italy, especially the provinces of Udine and Gorizia. Due to the complex developments of the twentieth century (i.e., wars, demarcation lines, borders, linguistic, ethnic, and other divisions, and an earthquake), every area of Slovenian literature in Italy (i.e., the provinces of Trieste, Gorizia, and Udine) was afflicted in its own way by suffering and disappointment. Taking into account the historical realities facilitates understanding the literary works themselves because every area of Slovenian literature in Italy has helped shape literary discourse in a different way. In addition, the message conveyed by this part of Slovenian literary discourse can be even better understood by considering contemporary Friulian and Italian works in this area.

Keywords: Slovenian literature in Italy, province of Gorizia, Slavia Veneta, border, 20th century

LA LETTERATURA SLOVENA DELLE PROVINCE DI GORIZIA E DI UDINE ALLA LUCE DEI TURBOLENTI EVENTI STORICI

SINTESI

L'articolo tratta della letteratura slovena in Italia, soprattutto quella composta nelle province di Udine e di Gorizia nel Novecento. Prendendo in esame le complesse realtà storiche di un'area specifica è possibile comprendere meglio le opere letterarie, dato che ogni area ha elaborato – tramite i turbolenti avvenimenti storici del Novecento (guerre, linee di demarcazione, confini, divisioni linguistiche, etniche etc., terremoto) – il discorso letterario in modo differente. Inoltre, il messaggio di questa parte del discorso letterario sloveno può essere inteso in modo più approfondito se si include nell'analisi anche le opere scritte, in quel periodo e in quei territori, in friulano e in italiano.

Parole chiave: letteratura slovena in Italia, Goriziano, Slavia Veneta, confine, Novecento

INTRODUCTION

In examining the past of today's Slovenian–Italian border region, a great deal of attention is primarily dedicated to the turbulent events of the nineteenth and especially twentieth century, and not infrequently to the ethnic conflicts and violence that had a dramatic impact especially on the twentieth century.¹ Borders or demarcation lines divided the population in this area on several occasions during that century. Unlike ethnic conflicts, life along the border has more or less been a historical constant in this region: it has characterized it for several centuries (Makuc, 2011; 2021). With regard to central Europe, the historical development of which differed from the situation in western Europe, Charles Ingrao stressed that before the rise of nineteenth-century nationalisms it had been characterized by a symbiosis of languages and peoples. Because central Europe has a multiethnic past, it is key to approach this history with a shared interpretation, and not one that focuses on only one ethnic group (Ingrao, 2004, 144–157).²

The situation changed dramatically in the nineteenth century with the rise of various nationalisms in the region. The divisions became increasingly deeper and were tainted with stereotypes.³ The twentieth century was full of turbulent events (i.e., the First and Second World Wars, demarcation lines, borders, ideological, linguistic, ethnic and other divisions, etc.), and all of this affected the lives, feelings, and historical memories of the population.⁴

This article discusses Slovenian literature⁵ produced on the Italian side of the Slovenian–Italian border, specifically in Slavia Veneta with Resia⁶ and in the province of Gorizia (both areas are now part of the Italian region of Friuli Venezia Giulia). This is an area

where various languages and dialects have intersected for centuries. Especially over the past centuries, it has been defined by dynamic political developments and divisions that have also had a significant impact on local book production. In this regard, a closer look is taken at the term “Slovenian literature in Italy.” This is an umbrella term for literature in standard Slovenian or Slovenian dialects in this area, whereby it should be noted that it is not produced within a single literary system of the Slovenian community in Italy.⁷ The basis for this is the examination of book production in a chain of interconnected factors within a literary system, from literary production (the author's cultural, political, and economic conditions) to literary mediation (mediators' motivation, political relations, and so on), reception, and processing (Dović, 2004).

THE DIVERSITY OF SLOVENIAN LITERATURE IN ITALY

The term “Slovenian literature in Italy” is historically conditioned, and it came into being after the establishment of the border⁸ between Italy and Yugoslavia following the Second World War. From the perspective of literary history, the term facilitates the examination of Slovenian literary production that has been generated in Italy for several decades and, consequently, has somewhat different literary features resulting from the minority status of the literature produced (i.e., the assertion of the community's identity through literature).⁹ On the other hand, the term covers various literary environments (i.e., the Trieste, Gorizia, and Udine literary areas) and their appertaining literary centers (i.e., Trieste, Gorizia, and Udine with Cividale del Friuli).¹⁰ Nonetheless, in places the term “Slovenian literature in Italy” is considered equal

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2 In Slovenian historiography, attention has already been drawn to overcoming “nationally-focused border history” (Marta Verginella) by certain authors studying the Slovenian–Italian border area: Rutar, 2005, 241–254; Panjek, 2006, 9–28; 2011, 11–29; Verginella, 2010, 207–216; Rožac Darovec, 2010, 217–228; Bajc, 2017, 835, and others.

3 For more on this, see, for example, Verginella (2009, 11–18; 2016, 705–720; 2017, 457–472).

4 For more on this, see Širok (2012), who analyses the historical memories and narratives of the population in the border area of Gorizia regarding the events in the 1940s.

5 Because of the complexity of the collective consciousness in the border territory, especially Slavia Veneta (Sln. *Beneška Slovenija*), the term “Slovenian literature” is used here rather than “literature of the Slovenians.” In this way, literature in both standard Slovenian and dialect is covered, while intentionally leaving aside the issue of (self-)identification of its authors.

6 In the province of Udine, Slovenian is also spoken in the Canale Valley (Zuljan Kumar, 2018).

7 Over the past decades, Slovenian literature in Italy has been studied in depth by Miran Košuta, Marija Pirjavec, Jadranka Cergol, David Bandelj, Roberto Dapit, and others.

8 Italy used the term “demarcation line” until the Treaty of Osimo (1975). With the Memorandum of London (1954), Yugoslavia interpreted it as a state border (Šušmelj, 2005, 309–316).

9 Giorgio Valussi described the Slovenians in Italy as a “historical or traditional minority” (*minoranza storica o tradizionale*) because they have been present in the border territory since the early Middle Ages. In addition, the population also has characteristics of a “border ethnic minority” (*minoranza nazionale di frontiera*) (Valussi 1974, 28–29).

10 Today Slovenian identity, language, and culture are not homogeneous concepts because they are characterized by “internal identity disconnects, such as local identities among members of the Slovenian minority in Italy” (Vidau, 2014, 77). In the province of Udine, only a portion of the population identifies itself as being part of the Slovenian minority (Vidau, 2014, 77).

to “Trieste literature.” For example, such a perception can be found in Jože Pogačnik’s *Književnost v zamejstvu in zdomstvu* (Literature in Neighboring Countries and Overseas) (Pogačnik, 2001, 374) or Vilma Purič’s *Sodobne tržaške pesnice* (Contemporary Trieste Female Poets) (Purič, 2018). The latter examines both the female poets living in the province of Trieste and those from the provinces of Gorizia and Udine. Alongside this, the term “Trieste literature” is also commonly used in a spatially more defined sense for literature by authors from Trieste and the wider Trieste area, excluding literature by authors from the provinces of Gorizia and Udine. Attention below is dedicated to the special literary features of Slovenian literature in the provinces of Gorizia and Udine, which differs from Slovenian literature in Trieste. Therefore, it makes sense to limit the term “Trieste literature” to the Trieste area only.

First of all, Slovenian literary production in Friuli Venezia Giulia should be viewed from the perspective of the meeting points of various literary systems in the region: namely, Slovenian literary production has arisen in contact with the Italian and Friulian literary systems. However, some distinctions should also be made at this level. In Trieste, Slovenian and Italian literatures were distinctly opposing. At the symbolic level, it can be said that they were in constant conflict dialog with one another because even in literalizing the same parts of Trieste and its surrounding area they interpret them differently or even the opposite way. The anti-Slovenian discourse of Italian Trieste literature found its echo in interwar Slovenian Trieste literature, which drew attention to aggression, usually through allusions, symbols, metonymy, and other rhetorical devices that indirectly pointed to what was going on in the Trieste area.¹¹ During the interwar period, the Italian literary discourse in the provinces of Gorizia and Udine was not as mass produced and anti-Slovenian as in Trieste, and the Slovenian literary production in these areas was also not as productive as in the Trieste area. The prelude to this is also important: in the decades leading up to the First World War, large-scale literary production of the Italian minority in cosmopolitan central European Habsburg Trieste agreed with its minority’s political and economic goals, which found strong support in literary discourse.

In this regard, it should be noted that the Slovenian population in the provinces of Gorizia and Udine was in contact with the Friulian environment. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Slovenian–Friulian cultural contacts were not yet examined comprehensively, but based on studies to date¹² it can be nonetheless assumed that the Slovenian and Friulian literary discourses (in Friulian) were not in strong opposition to each other.¹³

BORDERS AND DIVISIONS OF THE SLOVENIAN–ITALIAN BORDER TERRITORY

The border territory in question has been characterized by various borders and administrative systems. Slavia Veneta, also called Slavia Friulana (Sln. *Beneška Slovenija* or *Benečija*), was part of the Republic of Venice from 1420 until its dissolution in 1797.¹⁴ The population there was autonomous and enjoyed special privileges for protecting the area along the border. Therefore, it was very favorably inclined toward the Republic of Venice. Because of its remote location, it preserved its own customs, language, and so on.¹⁵ In 1866, the Udine area, Slavia Veneta, and Resia were annexed to the Kingdom of Italy. In the interim, for a while Slavia Veneta also belonged to the Habsburg Monarchy, which deprived it of its former rights and imposed taxes on it (Salimbeni, 1977, 71).

In turn, both the Gorizia and Trieste areas were under Habsburg Rule nearly uninterruptedly for several centuries, up until the end of the First World War. The Isonzo Front, which developed after the London Memorandum¹⁶ signed on April 26th, 1915, and Italy’s entry into the war, provided the population with, among other things, a “framework of shared suffering manifested in various ways, beginning with the front, which spread to all corners of civilian life” (Svoljšak, 2012, 80). Gorizia, which at that point found itself on the very front line, inspired poetry, which, for example, comes to the fore in the anonymous Italian song “Gorizia tu sei maledetta” (Gorizia, You Are Cursed), inspired by a strong antiwar sentiment (Svoljšak, 2012, 80–81).

In accordance with the Treaty of Rapallo signed in 1920, the Gorizia and Trieste areas were annexed to the Kingdom of Italy. The border between the King-

11 For more, see Toroš (2011).

12 See, for example, Marušič (1975, 101–106; 1986, 33–36); Ferluga Petronio (2003, 255–261); Dapit (2008); Toroš (2017, 386–396); Zanello (2020, 171–188), and others.

13 For example, the contacts between Ivan Trinko (1863–1954) and the important Friulian poet Giuseppe Ellero (1866–1925), born in Tricesimo, indicate an amicable relationship. In addition, in his poem “Slavia” published in 1904 in the weekly *Cittadino italiano* (Udine), Ellero praised the Slavs for building a better future (Ferluga Petronio, 2003, 255–261).

14 The modern term “Slavia Veneta” refers to the area of both the Natisone and Torre valleys, which means it covers a larger territory than the early modern *Schiavonia* (*Veneta*) (Beguš, 2015, 11). For more on the various names for this area, see Dapit (1995, 9) and Valussi (1974, 72–74). For more on the various names used for Slovenians in the province of Udine, see Marušič (2019a, 32).

15 For example, to protect the population’s language, in 1738 the Republic of Venice decreed that the curates there had to speak the local language (*lingua schiavona*) (Salimbeni, 1977, 71).

16 For new findings about this (First) Memorandum of London preserved in London and its designations, see Bajc (2017, 836–842).

dom of Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was met with disappointment on both sides of the new border. It led to new divisions and conflicts in the border territory (Bajc, 2017, 827). Already after the war, a period of severe ethnic conflict began in Venezia Giulia,¹⁷ with an “explosion of Adriatic nationalism (*esplosione del nazionalismo adriatico*)” (Valussi, 1974, 31). Under Fascism, the oppression of the Slovenian population in Venezia Giulia was very severe, followed by the tragic events of the Second World War, which brought along new divisions and violent conflicts among the people. After the war, a demarcation line ran across this territory, which, based on the agreement signed in Belgrade on June 9th, 1945, divided it into Zones A and B (i.e., the Morgan Line). Life was made difficult by the unclear location of the border (Marušič, 1998, 277). In 1946, the Soviet Union accepted the French proposal of “ethnic balance” in this area, according to which the border would separate two minorities of approximately the same size. In addition, a smaller state covering an ethnically mixed area was to be formed. On July 3rd, 1946, the Free Territory of Trieste was established, but it satisfied neither the Yugoslav nor Italian aspirations (Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec, 2000, 119).

On September 15th, 1947, a “new border” divided the Gorizia area and its population. The two neighboring countries were not happy with its course (Marušič, 1998, 271–284). In the Gorizia area, it “dramatically encroached upon territory that had been politically, culturally, and economically homogeneous for centuries” (Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec, 2000, 121). The population was dissatisfied with the new postwar division of the territory between Italy and Yugoslavia because the border divided the once-homogeneous province of Gorizia and, among other things, it also separated Gorizia from the surrounding countryside (Šušmelj, 2004, 291–292; 2005, 308; Bufon, 2005, 345; Širok, 2012, 155–159).

The Trieste issue remained acute. The (Second) Memorandum of London¹⁸ of October 5th, 1954, allocated Zone A of the Free Territory of Trieste to Italy and Zone B to Yugoslavia, introducing certain changes in the border to the benefit of Yugoslavia. The Special Statute annexed to the memorandum defined the rights of both minorities, but there was still a long way to respecting these rights in practice (Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec, 2000, 140). The legal interpretation of

the Slovenian population in the provinces of Trieste, Gorizia, and Udine varied (Valussi, 1974, 33–34). All these turbulent developments were accompanied by various population movements in the wider border territory. On November 10th, 1975, the Yugoslav–Italian border was definitively confirmed through the Treaty of Osimo (Kacin-Wohinz & Pirjevec, 2000, 151–152).

SLOVENIAN LITERATURE IN SLAVIA VENETA AND RESIA, AND TURBULENT HISTORICAL EVENTS

Historical watersheds also influenced the specific nature of Slovenian literature in the province of Udine, which had traditionally been under the influence of Romance culture and mostly part of states with a majority Romance-speaking population (i.e., the Republic of Venice and then Italy). This area was thus not part of cultural milieus as established in the Gorizia and Trieste areas, which were under Habsburg rule for several centuries. In addition, Slovenian-language school instruction was not provided for the Slovenian-speaking population there.¹⁹ Due to its geographical characteristics (i.e., hilly terrain that was difficult to traverse), Slavia Veneta and Resia were separated from other centers of Slovenian culture, where, during the nineteenth-century rise of national movements, Slovenian identity also gradually began to be established.

In Slavia Veneta and Resia, the situation was slightly different, which was also reflected in the plebiscite of October 21st and 22nd, 1866. Nearly all the residents agreed with annexation to Italy (Marušič, 1985, 55–67; 2003, 9). The border was definitively agreed upon in Venice on December 22nd, 1867 (Devetak, 2019, 53). As highlighted by Branko Marušič, the Slovenian-speaking population in this area had fond memories of the former Republic of Venice and also associated it with the Italian Risorgimento, which is why it was ill-disposed toward the Habsburg Monarchy. The following verses were created in the Natisone Valleys in 1848 and 1849, expressing a fondness for Italy: “Predraga Italija / Preljubi moj dom / Do zadnje moje ure / Jest ljubu te bom” (Dear Italy, / My beloved home, / Until my last hour, / I’ll love you; Marušič, 2019a, 38).²⁰

After this area passed to the Kingdom of Italy, which was ruled by the House of Savoy, a period of efforts to form a monoethnic state and assimilate the non-Italian speaking population followed (Kacin-Wohinz & Pirje-

17 The name *Venezia Giulia* (Sln. *Julijska krajina* or *Julijska Benečija*) refers to the territory of Austria-Hungary that was annexed to Italy after the First World War. It included the former County of Gorizia and Gradisca, Istria with Trieste, part of Inner Carniola and Carinthia, Ceres, and later Rijeka (Pelikan, 2002, 14).

18 On its denomination, see Bajc (2017, 842).

19 In the Gorizia area, the conditions for school instruction in Slovenian were slightly more favorable. Slovenian-language primary schools had been promoted since 1848, but there were no public Slovenian-language primary schools. Instead, private Slovenian-language preschools, primary schools, and trade schools were introduced in the 1880s and 1890s (Devetak, 2020, 361–370).

20 Fulvio Salimbeni attributes this poem to Peter Podreka (1822–1889). These lines have also been translated into Italian: “Carissima Italia, patria mia molto amata / fino alla mia ultima ora io ti amerò” (Salimbeni, 1977, 75).

vec, 2000, 17–19). A policy of Italianizing the residents of Slavia Veneta began (Salimbeni, 1977, 73–83). Some Slovenian priests played an important role in asserting Slovenian national sentiments in Slavia Veneta. In the nineteenth century, Jožef Podreka (a.k.a. Podrieka; 1822–1886)²¹ and Peter Podreka (1822–1889)²² from San Pietro al Natisone, and Ivan Obala (1824–1898) from Mersino engaged in Slovenian literary production in Slavia Veneta. Peter Podreka's poetry expressed his "dual" identity: "Prebivam na Laškim / Sim rojen Taljan, / Izviram z Slavljanstva / Bom vedno Slavljjan" (I live in Italy, / I was born an Italian, / I have Slavic origins, / I will always be a Slav; (Marušič, 2019a, 38; 2019b, 10–14).

A special role was played by the priest, cultural figure, and man of letters Ivan Trinko (1863–1954), born in Tercimonte (Ferluga-Petronio, 1984; Dapit et al., 2006).²³ He was one of the "Slovenian national awakening movement figures from the second half of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century covering a very wide range activities" (Marušič, 2006, 42–43). He also played the role of a mediator because it was through him that Slovenians, as well as Russians, Poles, and Czechs, learned more about Slavia Veneta. Trinko made an effort to write his poems in Slovenian, but unfortunately they received severe criticism in central Slovenia, especially from Anton Medved (1869–1910), a priest and poet born in Kamnik.²⁴ The criticism was directed at certain deficiencies in his linguistic expression (Ferluga Petronio, 1984, 12–14, 38; 2003, 257).²⁵ Trinko did not learn standard Slovenian at school,²⁶ but started learning this language, which was different from the dialect he knew from home, on his own as a teenager. However, the poet Simon Gregorčič, who shared Trinko's fate of living in the border territory, albeit on the other side of the border, encouraged him to write poems in Slovenian (Ferluga-Petronio, 1984, 9–54). In Slavia Veneta, Trinko and many other priests played the key role in preserving Slovenian during the interwar period, when it was prohibited from schools and public life. In connection with this, the writer France Bevk (1890–1970) from the Gorizia area wrote the novel *Kaplan Martin Čedermac* (The Curate Martin Čedermac, 1938), in which the main character, Martin Čedermac, fights to

preserve his right to hold mass in Slovenian. Based on this novel, the Slovenian priests that strove to preserve the use of Slovenian in Slavia Veneta are often referred to in Slovenian as *čedermaci* (i.e., 'Čedermaces'; Cencič, 2008, 145–156; Banchig, 2008, 165–173). Slovenian priests' efforts to preserve Slovenian identity in Venezia Giulia during the interwar period were in fact very demanding and complex (Pelikan, 2002).²⁷

The situation in the province of Udine after the Second World War is summarized in a report by the Slovenian–Italian Historical and Cultural Committee:

More difficult was the situation for Slovenes in the Valleys of Natisone, Torre and Resia and the Canal Valley, since they were never recognised as a national minority by the authorities; therefore, they were refused the right to instruction in their mother tongue and to use of the mother tongue in their dealings with the authorities (Slovensko-italijanski odnosi, 2001, 153).

A painful experience of the assimilation pressures²⁸ in this region after the war is revealed at the symbolic level in the poem "Pustita nam rože po naše saditi" (Let Us Plant Our Flowers Our Own Way) by an important cultural figure in Slavia Veneta, Aldo Clodig (1945–2015), born in Grimacco (Kragelj, 1993, 519). Clodig strove for Slovenian language and culture to become strongly rooted in the local environment, especially among young people. He believed that one's love for tradition was part of living cultural heritage and that it also had to be continually renewed and developed. He wrote poetry, and in 2009 he published the poetry collection *Duhuor an luna* (The Owl and the Moon). He also published his poems in the anthology *Besiede tele zemlje* (The Words of This Land, 2004), *Slavia dilecta* (Beloved Slavia, 2004), *Trinkov koledar* (Trinko Almanac), and the volume *V nebu luna plava* (The Moon Floats in the Sky, 2007). In addition, he wrote the book *Čez namišljeno črto* (Across the Imaginary Line; on the tenth anniversary of the hike that bears the same name) and a book about the village of Costne (Toroš et al., 2019, 30; Kragelj, 1993, 519).

The symbolic meaning of the poem "Pustita nam rože po naše saditi" (Let Us Plant Our Flowers Our

21 For more on Jožef Podreka, see Stanonik & Brenk (2008, 865).

22 For more on Peter Podreka, see Pirjevec & Andrejka (1949, 9–11); Stanonik & Brenk (2008, 865).

23 A literary-historical overview of Slovenian poetry in the Natisone Valleys is provided in the bachelor's thesis by Anita Bergnach (Bergnach, 1996).

24 For more on Medved, see Lukman (1933, 78–79).

25 For more on how familiar Slovenians in the Habsburg hereditary lands were with Slavia Veneta, see Marušič (2019a, 31–44).

26 After the annexation (in 1866), school instruction in Slavia Veneta was conducted only in Italian (Marušič 2004, 41). In the areas of Gorizia, Trieste, and Istria, on the other hand, the Slovenian education system made progress until the First World War (Bajc & Pelikan, 2004, 62–63).

27 Among other things, soon after the adoption of Giovanni Gentile's school reform (1923), Slovenian was driven out of the schools. Slovenian teachers were fired, displaced, and so on. However, children could learn Slovenian via religious education classes (Pelikan, 2002, 112–113, 230).

28 On this see, for example, Bajc & Pelikan (2004, 59–92); Marušič (2004, 33–44).

Own Way) comes to the fore in the following lines. “Pustita nam piet takuo, k’ nam je všeč, / guorit an uekat, pisat an še brat / po tistim jiziku, ki mat na zibel / z vso nje ljubeznijo navadla nas je” (Let us sing the way we like, / Speak and cry, write and read / In the language that our mother / Taught us with all her love at the cradle; Clodig, 2009, 32). For many years (1983–2012), “Pustita nam rože” was also used as the title of volumes of the music festival *Senjam beneške piesmi* (Festival of Venetian Slovenian Songs), which shows the semantic weight of these three words in Slavia Veneta or demonstrates the exceptional importance of preserving linguistic and cultural identity for this community. Clodig wrote this poem in the dialect used in the Natisone Valleys. Due to the political situation and their geographical isolation, Slavia Veneta and Resia developed unique regional identities with their own regional language (a Slovenian dialect) (Dapit, 2003, 301–312), which also predominates in literary production. Most literary works are created in one of the local Slovenian dialects (i.e., the Natisone, Torre, or Resian dialects). As highlighted by Marija Pirjevec, the importance of writing poems in dialect has recently been growing in Slavia Veneta and Resia. Among other things, this has also been contributed to by the increasingly positive view of dialect poetry (Pirjevec, 2002, 43–44).

In the 1970s, the situation for the Slovenian population gradually improved (Troha, 2004, 151–152). Regarding standard Slovenian, it is worth noting that there were no Slovenian-language schools in the province of Udine up until the 1980s. Since then (1984), a bilingual primary school has operated in San Pietro al Natisone. According to Danila Zuljan Kumar, today’s residents of Slavia Veneta have significantly more options available to learn standard Slovenian than in the past, and in recent years there have been changes in the discursive practices of the local speakers. The use of Slovenian is also becoming common in the public informal sphere, but in the past Slovenian was used only in the private sphere (Zuljan Kumar, 2016, 13–16; Zuljan Kumar, 2018, 143–153). Since 2001, the Slovenian population in the province of Udine, just like the Friulian, has been protected by a special law that safeguards historical linguistic minorities (Decreto, 2001). It is important to emphasize that until 2001 there was no unified protection of the Slovenian population of Friuli Venezia Giulia, but there were different situations in various areas of the region (Troha, 2004, 145).

The topics of Slovenian literary works in Resia and Slavia Veneta are usually connected with life in the local area, existential attachment to one’s homeland, the pressing issue of out-migration due to unfavorable economic and political conditions, and

the subsequent problem of nearly empty villages, which inevitably also indicate a slow disappearance of the local culture. In addition, it should be noted that Slovenian speakers have traditionally settled at higher elevations of three poorly connected valleys: the Natisone, Torre, and Resia valleys. This differs from the Trieste region, where literature is dominated by images of the sea and karst landscape. In the province of Udine, the authors incorporate the local hilly landscape in their works via personified mountains, rivers, and mythological heroes, who constitute part of the extensive local folk tradition. In addition, a prominent topic is also the emigration of Slovenians from Slavia Veneta, whose population declined heavily during the twentieth century. After the First World War, the local population moved to urban centers, mining towns in Belgium and France, the US, and so on, which diminished the Slovenian community in Italy (Škvor, 2005, 35–60; Kalc, 2009, 37–46).²⁹ During that period, emigration from Resia was even stronger than from Slavia Veneta, where it accelerated after the Second World War. People primarily moved to other European countries and overseas, and later also to economically well-developed towns in northern Italy or to the Friulian Plain (Kalc et al., 2008, 8–15).

Worth highlighting in this regard are two excerpts from two poems by the politician, cultural figure, and teacher Viljem Černo (a.k.a. Guglielmo Cerno; 1937–2017), born in Lusevera in the Torre Valley (Pipan, 2019; Bandelj, 2009, 352–353; Klinec, 1976, 236). Černo wrote his poems in the Torre Valley dialect, whereby he was very sensitive in selecting his poetic language: he searched for nearly extinct dialect words for specific objects or concepts associated with life in the Torre Valley among the elderly residents of nearby villages, thus enshrining them in verse (Toroš et al., 2019, 10). In his poem “Sveta si, zemlja” (Land, You Are Holy), Černo verbalizes the hardship caused by assimilation pressures (“Nan še kradejo dušo” ‘Are they still stealing our souls’), which, however, is only indirectly indicated due to the politically unfavorable situation for the Slovenian population in the province of Udine after the Second World War. In addition, Černo’s poems primarily aimed to support the local community, which lived in the situation in question and hence did not need any further context to understand a “coded” message. In his second poem, “Ter” (The Torre), titled after the personified Torre River, the poet remembers all the people in the Torre Valley that were forced to emigrate because of unfavorable living conditions (“se zlivaž med krasi Muzca, / de reš naproui tvojin sinan, / ki so raztreseni po svietu” ‘Flow from under the rocks of Mount Musi / Toward your children / Scattered all over the world’).

29 On the problem of emigration from Slavia Veneta, see also, for example, Ruttar (2015, 65–71; 2018, 165–169).

Viljem Černo “Sveta si, zemlja” (excerpt)		Viljem Černo “Land, You Are Holy” (excerpt)
Upivamo dušo nju, čujemo urisk planin, božamo ritam rok anu ráman. Se zbudamo od spanja? Al se naša besieda suši? Sveta si, zemja, ki daješ siena anu otave, ki zdraviš razpuokano roko, ki rosiš posušeno sárce! So šenjé trudne naše noe? Nan še kradejo dušo?	Dušo naših polj vsrkavamo, do nas prihaja glas planinskih pašnikov, ljubkujemo spet ritem svojih rok, ramen. Se mar prebudamo iz sna? Ali pa usiha v nas beseda? Sveta si, zemlja, ki sena nam daješ in otave, ki pozdraviš razorano roko, ki z roso izsušeno nam srce namočiš! So naše noge še utrujene? Nam dušo kradejo še zmerom?	We drink in the soul of our fields, The sound of mountain pastures comes to us, Caressing yet again the rhythm of our hands And shoulders. Are we awakening from our sleep? Or is our word drying up inside us? Land, you are holy, You give us hay Early and late, You heal Our worn hands, Your dew moistens Our dried-out hearts! Are our feet still tired? Are they still stealing our souls?
(Černo, 2013a, 16–17)	(Černo 2013a, 16–17; standard Slovenian translation by Ciril Zlobec)	

Viljem Černo “Ter” (excerpt)		Viljem Černo “The Torre” (excerpt)
Koranina naše žeje, zviéralo, ki poje, se zlivaž med krasi Muzca, de reš naprouiti tvojim sinan, ki so raztreseni po svietu s tómo nad striehami.	Korenina naše žeje, v molitev zbran studenec, teci izpod muških skal naproti svojim otrokom, raztepenim po vsem svetu, z večerom nizko iznad streh.	Root of our thirst, Spring gathered in prayer, Flow from under the rocks of Mount Musi Toward your children Scattered all over the world, With the evening lying Low above the roofs.
(Černo, 2013b, 12–13)	(Černo, 2013a, 12–13; standard Slovenian translation by Ciril Zlobec)	

Literature in the province of Udine, especially in Resia, has also been influenced by the severe earthquake of 1976. On May 6th that year, the Italian–Slovenian border region was affected by a destructive earthquake with an epicenter near Gemona

del Friuli in Italy. It claimed nearly a thousand lives and was followed by a series of aftershocks. Several villages in Friuli and Slovenia’s Soča Valley, such as Artegna and Breginj, were destroyed. Slavia Veneta was also severely affected (e.g., the villages of Lusevera, Cesariis, and Pers; Ribarič 1980, 40–51). Some authors, including the Resian poet and writer Silvana Paletti, born in Prato in 1947 (Stanonik & Brenk, 2008, 795; Bandelj, 2009, 358), began writing poems after this tragic event, most likely in the desire for the area to at least retain in literature the life that disappeared in front of its people’s eyes in just a matter of seconds: “Stare lipe vasice, / kam šyl vaš glas, / same ližiita, / wdarjane na smárta, / kumüj težita düšo” (Pretty old villages, / Where did your voice disappear, / You lie alone, / Struck to death, / Barely breathing; Paletti, 2003, 32–33).³⁰ The Resian poet Renato Quaglia, born in Stolvizza in 1941, also wrote about the tragic earthquake (Stanonik & Brenk, 2008, 920; Bandelj, 2009, 353–354). In 1985, he published the collection of poetry *Baside* (Words), which already indicates the importance of local language in its title and for which Quaglia received the Prešeren Fund Award.

Renato Quaglia “Potres” (excerpt)		Renato Quaglia “Earthquake” (excerpt)
Gorko to bilo žvečara ko zemlja se potresala ko gore so se cipile nu hiše so spaduwale	Bilo je vroče ta večer ko se je zemlja stresala ko so se gore trgale in hiše so razpadale	It was hot that night When the earth shook, When the mountains were rent And the houses crumbled.
(Quaglia, 1985, 48)	(Quaglia, 1985, 49; standard Slovenian translation by Marko Kravos)	

Viljem Černo, Silvana Paletti, and Renato Quaglia are not the only poets from the province of Udine that have broached the issue of migration, complex identity, and the earthquake in this area. Similar experiences can also be traced in Friulian poetry, such as in the poem “Las valís di un emigrant” (An Emigrant’s Baggage) by the Friulian poet and writer Leonardo Zanier (1935–2017), born in Maranzanis. Zanier also experienced emigration himself (Pellegrini, 2016). In this poem, he expresses the deep existential crisis of an emigrant (“ch’a nol va par vivi ma par no murî” ‘he is not leaving to survive, he is leaving not to die’).

30 Translation by Marija Pirjevec into standard Slovenian: “Stare, lepe vasice, / kam je šel vaš glas? / Same ležite, / do smrti zadete, / komaj še dihate” (Paletti, 2003, 32–33). Silvana Paletti writes poetry not only in the Resian dialect, but also in Friulian and Italian (Pirjevec, 2002, 44).

Leonardo Zanier "Las valis di un emigrant"	Leonardo Zanier "Prtljaga migranta"	Leonardo Zanier "An Emigrant's Baggage"
las valis di un emigrant no an peçots denti ma sperança e sperança las sôs mans ma sôl las primas voltas dopo il so non: emigrant al diventa il so mistîr e al impara ch'a nol va par vivi ma par no murî	prtljaga migranta ne nosi oblačil, nosi upanje njegove roke so upanje, a samo prvič, potem njegovo ime: migrant postane njegov poklic in zave se, da ne odhaja, zato da bi preživel, odhaja, da ne bi umrl	An emigrant's baggage Does not carry clothes, It carries hope, His hands are hope, But only the first time, Afterward his name: Emigrant Becomes his profession And he realizes he is not leaving to survive, he is leaving not to die.
(Zanier, 2003, 44)	(Zanier, 2019b, 26; Slovenian translation by Dana Čandek)	

Also worthy of mention is Zanier's poem "Identitât" (Identity), in which he problematizes the issue of national and regional identity in relation to another culture, drawing attention to the nonsense of ethnic conflicts.

Leonardo Zanier "Identitât" (excerpt)	Leonardo Zanier "Identiteta" (excerpt)	Leonardo Zanier "Identity" (excerpt)
ma l'identitât ce êse? a dîli in curt e duta: che s'î fos su Marte mi sintares cjericul e co soi in Africa mi sint European co soi in Portugal talian co soi a Roma furlan co soi a Udin cjargnel	kaj pa je identiteta? kratko in jedrnato: na Marsu bi se čutil Zemljana ko sem v Afriki sem Evropejec na Portugalskem Italijan v Rimu Furlan v Vidmu Karnijec	What is identity even? In a nutshell: On Mars I would feel myself an Earthling, When I'm in Africa, I'm a European, In Portugal I'm an Italian, In Rome a Friulian, in Udine a Carnian
(Zanier, 1997, 62)	(Zanier, 2019a, 31; Slovenian translation by Živa Gruden)	

SLOVENIAN LITERATURE IN THE PROVINCE OF GORIZIA AND TURBULENT HISTORICAL EVENTS

Similar thematic meeting points and overlapping can also be observed in the Gorizia area, such as in the poetic experience of Gorizia during the second half of the twentieth century as expressed in the poems by three different writers: the Italian poet Roberto Marino Masini, born in 1958 in Gorizia (Milich, 2017, 96), the journalist and editor Celso Macor (1925–1998), born in Versa (Zanello, 2011, 1995–1999; 2020, 172–173),³¹ and the director and journalist Janez Povše, born in Ljubljana in 1941 (Stanonik & Brenk, 2008, 888). These are the poems

of three contemporaries, who were born in three different times and belonged to three different literary systems in the province of Gorizia (Masini to the Italian system, Macor to the Friulian, and Povše to the Slovenian). Macor's poem "Da punta di chista mont" (From the Top of This Hill) describes Gorizia as viewed from Sabotin Hill, using allusions to the bloody events of the First World War. He thus experiences Gorizia as a town conditioned and defined by the weight of suffering with collective memory and the associated anxiety, suppressed feelings, and the unpromising nature of the border region. Presented below are selected excerpts in which this comes most to the fore. Attention should be dedicated to certain phrases, such as "hill of death," "bloody river," "endless noon," and "locked in anxiety."

Celso Macor "Da punta di chista mont" (excerpt)	Celso Macor "Z vrha tega hriba" (excerpt)	Celso Macor "From the Top of This Hill" (excerpt)
Da punta di chista mont di muart jo ciali la vita di Gurissa sota, come un furniar van e vegnin dal cricâ dal di fin tal crepuscul ... Lusinz, flun di sanc, sflandôr da nestra ciasa ... E li ciampanis a' sùnin di lunc, tun misdi senza fin nus clâmin adun, ... E còrin pa stradis e si incròsin, no si ciàlin siarâts dal ingòs.	Z vrha tega hriba smrti opazujem utripanje Gorice tam spodaj, kot v mravljišču ljudje prihajajo in odhajajo od zore do mraka. ... Soča, krvava reka, biser naše zemlje, ... Zvonovi dolgo odzvanjajo v neskončnem poldnevu in nas kličejo vkup ... Ljudje hitijo po ulicah, srečujejo se, a se ne pogledajo, vkljenjeni v tesnobo.	From the top of this hill Of death I watch the life in Gorizia Down below, like an anthill People come and go From dawn to dusk. ... The Soča, bloody river, pearl Of our land, ... The bells ring for a long time At the endless noon, Calling us together ... People hurry along the streets, Meeting, but not looking at one another, Locked in anxiety.
(Macor, 2008, 103–106)	(Macor, 2019, 52; Slovenian translation by Dana Čandek)	

Janez Povše experiences Gorizia similarly, through the prism of past war events, most likely making an intertextual reference to Simon Gregorčič's poem "Soči" (To the Soča). The most representative lines in this regard from his poem "Pesem Gorici" (A Poem for Gorizia) read as follows: "Čez tebe šla je bridka zgodovina / boleče te pretresla v temeljih, / sedaj obdaja trudna te tišina, / spomin medlí tvoj v strtih upanjih" (A

31 For more on Macor's experience with the border and the border territory, and his attitude toward Slovenians, see Zanello (2020, 171–188).

bitter history trod over you, / Shaking you painfully in your foundations, / Now only the weary silence surrounds you, / With your memory dwindling away in crushed hopes; Povše, 2014, 78–79). In this poem, Povše remembers the “bitter history,” which left a heavy mark on Gorizia. In turn, in his poem “Soči” (1879) Gregorčič predicted that “bitter steel will strike upon these lands” (“tod sekla bridka bodo jekla”; Gregorčič, 1947, 66). By selecting the word *bitter* as an expressive word that evokes emotional pain, Povše makes a connection to the bitterness evoked in Gregorčič’s poem “Soči” as well the historical context that Gregorčič predicted. In addition, in his experience of Gorizia, Povše mentions pain, shock, weary silence, and crushed hopes, which most likely indicates dissatisfaction with the border in the Gorizia area established after the war.

As Kaja Širok points out in her study of the historical memories of the border population on both sides of the Slovenian–Italian border area, there were different historical interpretations of historical events in the Gorizia border area, but the “anchors or milestones” of these narratives were the same or similar (Širok, 2012, 66, 164). Masini’s perception of his hometown seems to be less burdened with collective memory. Nonetheless, the introductory lines of his poem already reveal a conflict relationship with the town, which can be linked to the conflicts within the town itself, resulting from the ethnic tensions during the twentieth century.

communities), they share a fairly similar view of Gorizia. First, it is obvious that they experience Gorizia as their own town, which is like a loving woman (Povše), who gives birth to all emotions (Masini), whereby the first-person narration of the poet is combined with the first-person collective narration of Gorizia residents (Macor). The poetic descriptions of Gorizia hence do not emphasize the Slovenian, Italian, or Friulian component. This, however, becomes more evident, for example, when comparing the poems by Slovenian and Italian poets from the Trieste area, who give Trieste different and even opposing highlights. In this regard, the multilingual poetic image of Gorizia avoids the ethnic tensions, or it indicates them only subtly. Of course, here it also needs to be taken into account that these poems were created at a different time (i.e., in the second half of the twentieth century). In the Trieste poetry, too, this period is marked more by disillusionment and fatigue, and no longer so much by bellicosity and a pronounced inclination toward conflict. However, the multilingual poetic manifestation of Gorizia, its personification, and the sadness, melancholy, and anxiety in its poetic image after the Second World War show that the poetic discourse about Gorizia sprang from an internal need, arising from the border established after the Second World War, which cut into the life of everyone in this territory.

CONCLUSION

Because of the complex and often also turbulent and tragic developments during a significant portion of the twentieth century, the life of the population in the border provinces of Gorizia and Udine was very demanding and intertwined with suffering. This was greatly contributed to by war, the establishment of demarcation lines and state borders, and linguistic, ethnic, and other divisions. A heavy burden for the population of the province of Udine was also the 1976 earthquake. All these complex developments were also reflected in the Slovenian literature of this border area. Taking into account these complex realities facilitates the reception and deeper understanding of the literary works themselves because every area of Slovenian literature in Italy (i.e., the provinces of Trieste, Gorizia, and Udine) has helped shaped literary discourse in a different way. This means that familiarity with only one of these three realities, such as that of the Trieste area, does not provide the right and key literary-historical and sociopolitical information required for a competent understanding and perception of Slovenian literary works in the provinces of Gorizia and Udine. In addition, the message conveyed by this part of Slovenian literary discourse can be even better understood by taking into account contemporary Friulian and Italian works in this area.

Roberto Marino Masini “Le mie emozioni” (excerpt)	Roberto Marino Masini “Moja čustva” (excerpt)	Roberto Marino Masini “My Emotions” (excerpt)
Le mie emozioni sono fatte di questa terra, di una città che maledico e poi ritrovo come un paradiso ogni volta che m’allontano.	Moja čustva so iz te zemlje, iz mesta, ki ga preklinjam in spet odkrivam kot neka nebesa vsakič, ko odidem.	My emotions Derive from this land, From the town I curse And yet discover like some sort of heaven Every time I leave.
(Masini, 2006, 10)	(Masini, 2019, 54; Slovenian translation by Dana Čandek)	

The presented parts of all three poems show similar perceptions of Gorizia, which do not permit a person to have an entirely intimate relationship with this town, separate from the collective memory associated with Gorizia, the ethnic tensions in it, the war, and the postwar definition of the border. Even though the poets express their relationship with the town in three different languages (i.e., they belong to three different linguistic

SLOVENSKA KNJIŽEVNOST V GORIŠKI IN VIDEMSKI POKRAJINI V LUČI TURBOLENTNIH ZGODOVINSKIH DOGODKOV

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POVZETEK

Pričujoči prispevek obravnava slovensko književnost v Italiji, zlasti v videmski in goriški pokrajini v 20. stoletju. Književnost v slovenskem jeziku in v slovenskih narečjih ni nastala znotraj enotnega literarnega sistema slovenske skupnosti v Italiji. Pojem "slovenska književnost v Italiji" dejansko pokriva različna območja, natančneje tržaško, goriško in videmsko območje in njim pripadajoča središča (Trst, Gorica, Videm/Čedad), ki pa imajo z literarnovednega vidika svoje specifike. Življenje prebivalstva videmske in goriške pokrajine je namreč zaznamovalo kompleksno dogajanje v 20. stoletju (vojne, demarkacijske črte, meje, jezikovne, narodnostne in druge delitve, potres). Upoštevanje teh kompleksnih zgodovinskih stvarnosti olajša proces razumevanja samih književnih del, saj je na osnovi specifičnih dogodkov vsako od danih območij slovenske književnosti v Italiji drugače sooblikovalo literarni diskurz. Poleg tega se lahko sporočilo tega dela slovenskega literarnega diskurza globlje razume ob upoštevanju sočasnih del v furlanskem in italijanskem jeziku na danem območju.

Ključne besede: slovenska književnost v Italiji, Goriška, Beneška Slovenija, meja, 20. stoletje

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