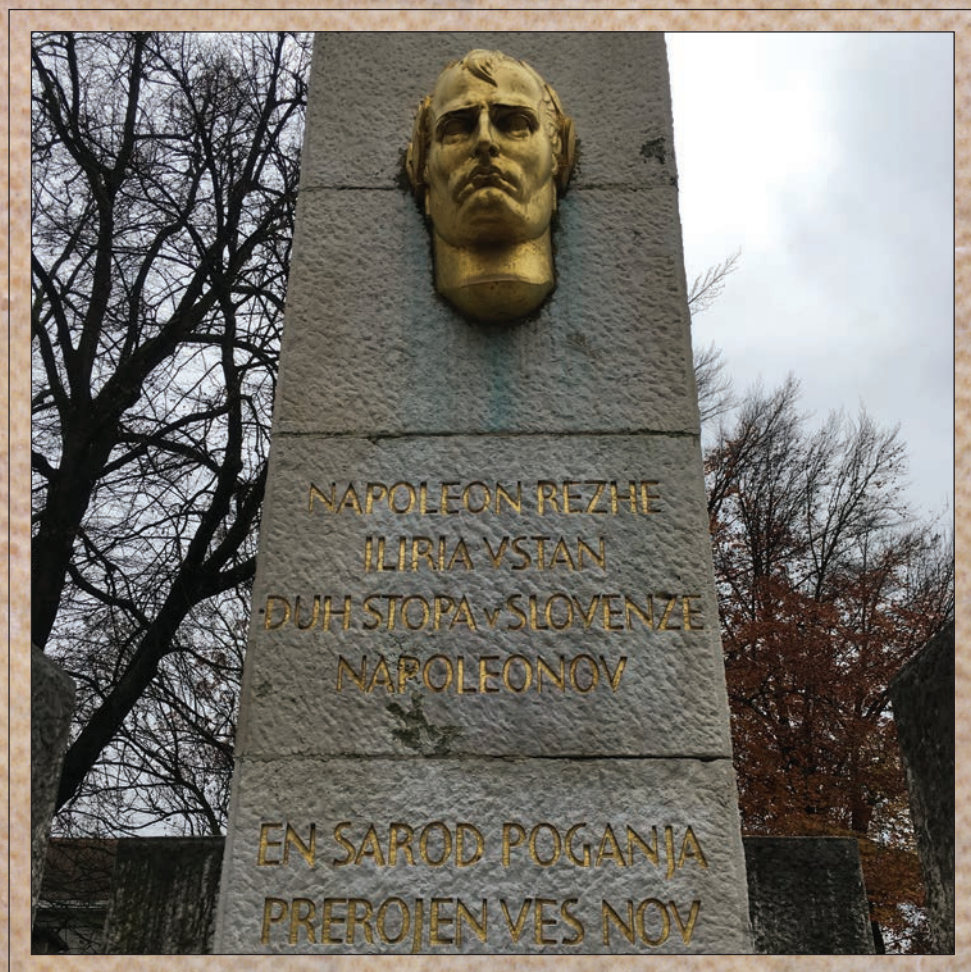




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Napoleonov spomenik v Ljubljani oziroma spomenik Ilirskim provincam, postavljen leta 1929, delo arhitekta Jožeta Plečnika in kiparja Lojzeta Dolinarja. Detajl, pogled z zahoda / Monumento dedicato a Napoleone ovvero alle Province Illiriche a Lubiana, eretto nel 1929, opera dell'architetto Jože Plečnik e dello scultore Lojze Dolinar. Dettaglio, vista da ovest / Napoleon's Monument in Ljubljana or the Monument to the Illyrian Provinces, Erected in 1929, the Work of Architect Jože Plečnik and Sculptor Lojze Dolinar. Detail, View from the West (Foto: Darko Darovec, 2019).

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“GRANDI SPERANZE DI BENE”: METTERNICH, WRBNA AND LAŽANSKÝ AT THE ZOIS PALACE IN MAY 1816

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ABSTRACT

The paper deals with talks between Austrian Foreign Minister Klemens von Metternich and Carniolan Enlightenment figure Žiga Zois von Edelstein in Ljubljana in May 1816. Based on an analysis of Zois's correspondence with Jernej Kopitar, Raffaele Zelli and Anton Bonazza, it sheds light on the context of this meeting and previously unknown details related to it. At the same time, Zois was visited by two other high representatives of the Austrian government, Count Rudolf von Wrbna-Freudenthal and Count Procop Lažanský von Bukowa. The carefully planned talks addressed not only the importance of an Illyrian kingdom and the rehabilitation of Valentin Vodnik, but also the state purchase of Zois's Upper Carniolan ironworks.

Keywords: Klemens von Metternich, Žiga Zois, Valentin Vodnik, Kingdom of Illyria, Austrian Empire, ironworks

“GRANDI SPERANZE DI BENE”: METTERNICH, WRBNA E LAŽANSKÝ NEL PALAZZO DI ZOIS NEL MAGGIO 1816

SINTESI

L'articolo verte sulle trattative svoltesi nel maggio del 1816 tra Klemens von Metternich, il ministro austriaco degli Esteri, e l'illuminista carniolano Sigismondo Zois von Edelstein. Basato sull'analisi degli scambi epistolari di Zois con Jernej Kopitar, Raffaele Zelli e Antonio Bonazza, il contributo fa luce sul contesto di quell'incontro e su alcuni dettagli ad esso relativi, rimasti finora ignoti. Nello stesso periodo Zois ricevette la visita di altri due esponenti di rispetto del governo austriaco, il conte Rudolf von Wrbna-Freudenthal e il conte Procop Lažanský von Bukowa. Trattative così ben pianificate rilevano non solo l'importanza che dovette avere, in quell'incontro, la questione di un Regno d'Illiria e la riabilitazione di Valentin Vodnik, ma anche l'acquisto da parte dello Stato delle ferriere di Zois dell'Alta Carniola.

Parole chiave: Klemens von Metternich, Sigismondo Zois, Valentin Vodnik, Regno d'Illiria, Impero austriaco, ferriere

INTRODUCTION¹

Due to a preserved copy of a letter written by Baron Žiga (Sigmund) Zois von Edelstein (1747–1819) to his former secretary, Jernej (Bartholomäus) Kopitar, on 12 July 1816 (ZRC SAZU, ISLLV, ZFK 15, MP 84), it has long been known that the Austrian Foreign Minister, Prince Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859), visited Zois, a central figure of the Carniolan Enlightenment, in his palace in Ljubljana in May 1816 (Kidrič, 1929–38, 562). France Kidrič, who was the first to publish information from the copied letter, interpreted the talks between Zois and Metternich selectively: in light of the national perspective of his *Zgodovina starejšega slovenskega slovstva* (History of Early Slovenian Literature), he saw only the Baron's apology for Valentin Vodnik and his poem *Ilirija oživljena* (Illyria Revived), and the Baron's support for Vodnik's candidacy for the position of professor of Slovenian at the Ljubljana Lyceum, which was threatened by the reluctance of the Austrian authorities to give their consent (Kidrič, 1929–38, 562, 609, 610).

Janko Kos, who referred to a draft of Zois's letter dated 24 June 1816 to Raffaele Zelli, the former Superintendent of Schools in the Illyrian Provinces, as an additional source (NMS, KŽKZ 13, P 141; Faganel, 1999, 162), correctly found that Zois had included his defence of Vodnik and *Ilirija oživljena* in the more important, central topic of his talks with Metternich: his support for the establishment of an Austrian Illyrian kingdom on the basis of the French Illyrian Provinces and the South Slavic character of this new state (Kos, 1988, 28–30). I myself found some new information in the correspondence between Zois and Kopitar: in mid May, when he learned of the Minister's imminent arrival in Ljubljana, Kopitar asked his former patron and mentor to advocate the Illyrian kingdom as a South Slavic state (including Dalmatia) with its own court chancellery and chancellor. Zois and Metternich then met no later than 23 May, and not on 25 May as (incorrectly) stated in the correspondence and consequently in the associated literature (Vidmar, 2016, 207–212).

In the present paper, I will try to expand the existing knowledge concerning the talks between Zois and Metternich by analysing an additional source: Zois's letters to his nephew Anton von Bonazza, who was living in Trieste at the time. These letters, preserved at the Ravne na Koroškem Museum (Krivograd, 2010), give a more detailed and, above all, more complex picture of the events of May 1816: Zois spoke not only with Metternich, but also with two other representatives of the court and the government; there was not just one discussion, but several; at least two of the meetings were planned not just a few days before, but several

1 This paper is the result of research carried out in the programme *Studies in Literary History, Literary Theory and Methodology*, funded by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS, P6-0024). My thanks to Neville Hall and Mojca Šorli for translating the text. I am indebted to Karla Oder (Carinthian Regional Museum, Ravne na Koroškem Museum) for providing me with the photographs of Zois's letters to Bonazza.

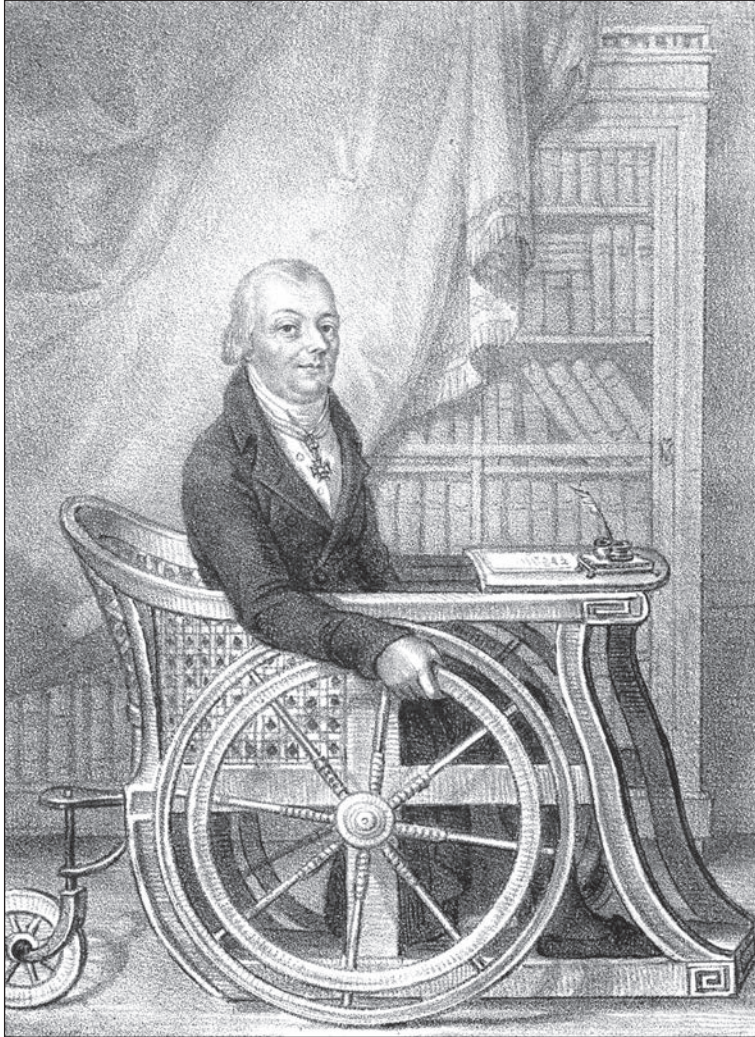


Fig. 1: Portrait of Baron Žiga (Sigmund) Zois at the end of his life, lithograph by Joseph Lanzedelly the Elder, 1820. Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Photo: Luka Vidmar.

weeks and even months in advance; and the participants spoke not only about Vodnik and the Illyrian kingdom, but also of Zois's ironworks. In the continuation, I will try to reconstruct the content of the talks, but first I will clarify their context: the journey of Austrian Emperor Francis I through the annexed Italian and Illyrian provinces.

THE EMPEROR'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE KINGDOM OF LOMBARDY-VENETIA AND THE FORMER ILLYRIAN PROVINCES

At the end of September 1815, after the final defeat of Napoleon, Emperor Francis I (1768–1835) travelled from Paris to Tyrol and further south to visit his new Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia and the northern part of the former French Illyrian Provinces, which Austria had conquered by the end of January 1814 and formally annexed at the Congress of Vienna. On 31 October 1815, the ruler was formally received in Venice, where he stayed for some time. He then travelled to Milan, arriving on 31 December. In addition to his wife, Maria Ludovika, members of the imperial family and courtiers, he was accompanied by ministers and other senior government officials, who were preparing the reorganisation of the annexed Italian and Illyrian provinces. Among them were Metternich, who had travelled from the French capital after the signing of the Treaty of Paris and joined the monarch in Venice on 5 December, as well as Count Rudolf von Wrbná-Freudenthal (1761–1823) and Count Procop Lažanský von Bukowa (1771–1823). All three of these men were later to be Zois's interlocutors. After the Empress died in Verona on 7 April 1816, Francis I set out for the former Illyrian Provinces, visiting Trieste, Istria, Carniola and Carinthia in May. After visiting Tyrol and Salzburg, he returned to Vienna in mid June (*Giornale di Venezia*, 31. 10. 1815, 1; *Wiener Zeitung*, 25. 9. 1815–18. 6. 1816; Berényi, 1833, 190–200; Haas, 1963, 78–97).

As his correspondence with Bonazza shows, Zois closely followed the Emperor's journey, partly out of an interest in politics, and partly because he wanted to make contact with the court, initially mainly for business reasons, when it travelled through Trieste and Ljubljana. He knew several members of the Emperor's entourage personally, some of whom he had corresponded with in the past or was otherwise associated with. He was regularly, albeit with an inevitable delay, informed of the ruler's movements by the newspapers *Laibacher Zeitung*, *Osservatore Triestino* and *Vaterländische Blätter*, to which he subscribed (Svoljšak & Vidmar, 2019, 55), although sometimes news reached him faster via Bonazza, who was closer to events. In addition, Zois read the central newspaper of the Habsburg Monarchy, *Wiener Zeitung* (see, for example, KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5124), if not others. In establishing and maintaining contact with the court, he relied on his two nephews, who in recent years had been his main deputies in running the family estates and businesses: Bonazza helped run the trading company in Trieste and the ironworks in Mislinja, while Karl Zois, the designated heir, managed the Brdo estate and oversaw the ironworks in Bohinjska Bistrica and Javornik (cf. Kidrič, 1939, 7, 8; Preinfalk, 2003, 33).

ZOIS'S CONTACT WITH WRBNA: THE SALE OF THE IRONWORKS IN MISLINJA, BOHINJ AND JAVORNIK

From the correspondence with Bonazza, it is evident that, in the autumn of 1815, Zois decided to establish contact with the travelling court because he wanted to sell the Mislinja ironworks, followed by the ironworks in Bohinjska



Fig. 2: Portrait of Emperor Francis I, lithograph by Johann Georg Mansfeld, after the painting by Franz Thaler; around 1810. National Museum of Slovenia. Photo: Tomaž Lauko.

Bistrica and Javornik. The profitability of his ironworks had begun to decline in the 1780s, as Emperor Joseph II had liberalised the iron trade and taxed domestic iron production, making it increasingly difficult for Austrian producers to compete with Russian, Swedish and English iron. Zois modernised his plants, making them among the most efficient in Carniola and Carinthia; after 1809, however, the Continental Blockade and the contribution under French rule, as well as increased taxes on production and the introduction of export duty under Austrian rule, led to a reduction in operations, financial losses, borrowing and redundancies (Šorn, 1984, 147, 160, 220, 221; Valenčič et al., 1991, 834–836; Preinfalk, 2012, 45–46; cf. Šumrada, 2006, 45–46; Schmidt, 2015, 9–11; Stergar, 2017, 104). It was under these circumstances that Zois began to look for buyers for his assets, including the ironworks. At the beginning of 1815, he and Bonazza discussed the sale of the Mislinja ironworks, but concluded that it would be difficult to obtain an acceptable sum for them. Zois also considered, with anticipated support of his friends in the court responsible for mining and metallurgy (Franz Joseph Müller, Baron Joseph von Leithner, Count Rudolf von Wrbna-Freudenthal), the possibility of proposing a state purchase to the Emperor. In September, the Mislinja steward Joachim Paul Jaut advised trying to sell the ironworks through a lottery organised by the state on the basis of the official valuation. Zois and Bonazza were immediately enthusiastic about the proposal (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5116, 5118, 5122, 5128, 5129).

In a letter written in the period 3–6 October 1815, when the Emperor was already on his way from Paris, Zois began considering how he could win the favour of the court for the lottery. However, he complained that, due to his age and his persistent gout, he lacked the energy to execute such an extensive plan, and that this was also true of his allies, as his old friends in the court had already passed away (which was not entirely true). He was no doubt referring to Count Karl von Zinzendorf (cf. Trampus, 1993), who had died in 1813, having served as the minister responsible for home affairs until 1809 (Petteneegg, 1879, 185–186). Zois went on to conclude that it would be necessary to wait for the return of the Emperor, his brothers and magnates. As a potential ally, he at least envisioned the Aichelburg family, with whom the Zois family was closely related (cf. Preinfalk, 2003, 34). In addition, he counted on the favour of Archduke John and Count Wrbna: "Um die Erlaubniß zum Ausspiel zu werben kann ich mich einzig auf die Gnade des Erzherzogs Johannis, und des Ministers Gr. Wrbna, verwenden!" (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5130). Zois's hopes were not unfounded: he had established a friendship with the Emperor's brother, Archduke John, who had been his guest on several occasions, while Count Wrbna was an acquaintance and natural sciences correspondent (Kidrič, 1939, 29, 92; Klemun, 2000, 15; Vidmar, 2016, 73, 185, 187). This senior imperial chamberlain was particularly important to Zois's plan because, as well as being the Emperor's personal friend, advisor and the leader of his bodyguard, he was also a longstanding official of the Court Chamber of Coinage and Mining (cf. Wurzbach, 1856–91, LVIII, 190–194;

Procházka, 1974, 100; Klemun, 2000, 20). The correspondence with Bonazza shows that Zois established contact with Wrbna in the first months of 1816 and presented the lottery proposal to him. However, it is clear that he had not yet addressed Archduke John, who was visiting Britain at the time and only returned to Graz in May 1816 (see Wiener Zeitung, 25. 5. 1816, 1).



Fig. 3: Portrait of Count Rudolf von Wrbna-Freudenthal, engraving by Karl Hermann Pfeiffer, after the painting by Johann Baptist von Lampi the Elder, 1806. Europeana.

In addition to the proposal for the Mislinja ironworks, in the spring of 1816, Zois also put together a proposed solution for the Bohinj and Javornik ironworks: the state treasury would buy them and combine them with the Bled estate, which had been secularized in 1803, thus creating an economically strong and, above all, profitable state estate. Zois referred to this idea as "Veldeser Projeckt" (the Bled Plan), for instance, on 16 May and 12 June 1816 (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5135, 5138). All the while, he was well informed about events in Italy. In mid April, when the newspapers were only just reporting the Empress's death (Wiener Zeitung, 12. 4. 1816, 1), he already knew that the Emperor was on his way to Trieste. On 15 April, he quickly instructed Bonazza to seek an audience with Wrbna upon the arrival of the court, to thank him on Zois's behalf for his goodwill regarding the solution for the Mislinja ironworks, and to mention the Bled Plan. If possible, Bonazza was to express the entire family's gratitude to the Emperor himself. Zois wrote that he intended to repeat this tribute – personally and with the help of his nephew Karl – in Ljubljana (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5132). Wrbna did indeed receive Bonazza shortly after 30 April, when the Emperor arrived in Trieste (see Wiener Zeitung, 8. 5. 1816, 1), as, on 7 May, Zois was delighted by his nephew's account of the meeting. Moreover, he was not disturbed by the fact that Bonazza had not had an opportunity to explain the Bled Plan to Wrbna in more detail, as he was convinced that a perfect basis had been established for his personal talks with Wrbna, which had already been agreed upon (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5134).

ZOIS'S PREPARATIONS FOR METTERNICH'S ARRIVAL

At precisely this time, new opportunities unexpectedly opened up for Zois's lobbying. On 7 May 1816, when the Emperor was already in Istria (Laibacher Zeitung, 21. 5. 1816, 1–2), or a few days earlier, the court commission for accommodation informed Zois that his palace had been chosen to serve as Metternich's residence during the Emperor's visit to Ljubljana. As he wrote in a letter to Bonazza on 7 May, Zois was alarmed by the news, as he believed his premises were too meagre for such an important guest: "Die hiesige Hof Quartiers Kommission hat mir den Fürsten Metternich angesagt, worüber ich beinahe erschrocken bin, weil meine Zimmer für so grosse Herren wohl zu armselig sind." (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5134). Despite his surprise, Zois immediately decided to take advantage of this opportunity, but to resolve other matters. He reported the news to Kopitar in Vienna, with whom he had been developing the concept of Illyria as a South Slavic state since 1810, when the first rumours of the return of the Illyrian Provinces to Austria had come to light. In mid May, Kopitar sent the Baron instructions encoded in a Latin sentence due to their delicate political content. In a conversation with Metternich, Zois was to take advantage of a favourable occasion to mention a weighty matter: his support for the establishment of an Illyrian kingdom as a South Slavic state: "Tu per occasionem mentionem injice rei magnae!" (Vidmar, 2016, 202–208).



Fig. 4: Portrait of Prince Klemens von Metternich, engraving by David Weiß, after the painting by Baron François Gérard, after 1810. National Museum of Slovenia. Photo: Tomaž Lauko.

Thus, no later than 7 May, Zois had secured a meeting with two statesmen. On 16 May, he described to Bonazza the final preparations before their arrival. On the morning of that day, Karl Zois, the imperial chamberlain Count Josef von Thurn-Valsassina and six other Carniolan nobles set out for Planina and Postojna, to pay their respects to the Emperor. The delegation probably arrived before the Emperor in Postojna, on 17 May, and from there escorted him to Ljubljana (cf. *Laibacher Zeitung*, 21. 5. 1816, 2). During these days, Karl had ample opportunity to thank Wrbna and the Emperor once again for their help in resolving the situation with the Mislinja ironworks, as his uncle had explicitly ordered him to do. Meanwhile, the Baron was preparing everything necessary to receive Metternich, who was travelling to Ljubljana with his friend and advisor, Prince Franz Joseph von Dietrichstein, and the general and imperial privy councillor, Baron Peter Duka von Kadar, by another route, from Rijeka via Karlovac: "Heüte erfahre, daß Fürst Metternich mit Fürst Dietrichstein, und F. M. L. Duca von Fiume über Karlstadt hier einrücken werden." Zois also awaited the final court instructions regarding the accommodation of his high guests (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5135).

ZOIS'S TALKS WITH WRBNA: THE BLED PLAN

From the same letter from Zois to Bonazza, we can gather the circumstances in which the discussions with the statesmen, beginning with Wrbna, took place. The Baron's health was very poor. In the draft letter to Zelli dated 24 June 1816, Zois wrote that he had suffered a severe attack of gout on 29 February of that year in all of the joints of his upper torso. He had been close to death and subsequently remained in bed for three months (NMS, KŽKZ 13, P 141), thus including the month of May. On 16 May, just prior to the visit by the statesmen, he wrote to Bonazza that he had not yet recovered sufficiently to perform his duties fully on this very decisive occasion: "Bin ich noch nicht so weit erhohlt, um alles was mir in dieser höchst entscheidenden Gelegenheit obliegt, mit physischen und moralischen Kräften gehörig ausführen zu können." He could only leave his bed in the afternoons, his arms were paralysed, and he complained of a weak head and voice. As he described in a postscript the next day, his condition worsened on the night of 16 to 17 May, when he suffered an attack of gout in his left hip. This burdened him with the sad fate of greeting his first important guest while bedridden: "[...] muß ich unglücklicherweise berichten, daß mich heüte Nachts ein neüer Anfall im linken Hüftbein ausser Stande gesetzt hat, an das Aufstehen zu denken, wonach mich also das betrübte Schicksal treffen wird, den Gr. Wrbna nicht anderst als aus dem Bette sprechen zu können." (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5135). A report to Zelli also confirms that Zois had received the statesmen half dead ("mezzo morto") in bed (NMS, KŽKZ 13, P 141).

From a postscript dated 17 May, it is obvious that Zois was expecting the imminent arrival of Wrbna. It is quite possible that Wrbna actually came to Zois prior to the arrival of the Emperor, possibly on 18 May, so that he could prepare everything necessary for a ruler's sojourn in Ljubljana. Surprisingly, Zois's next letters to

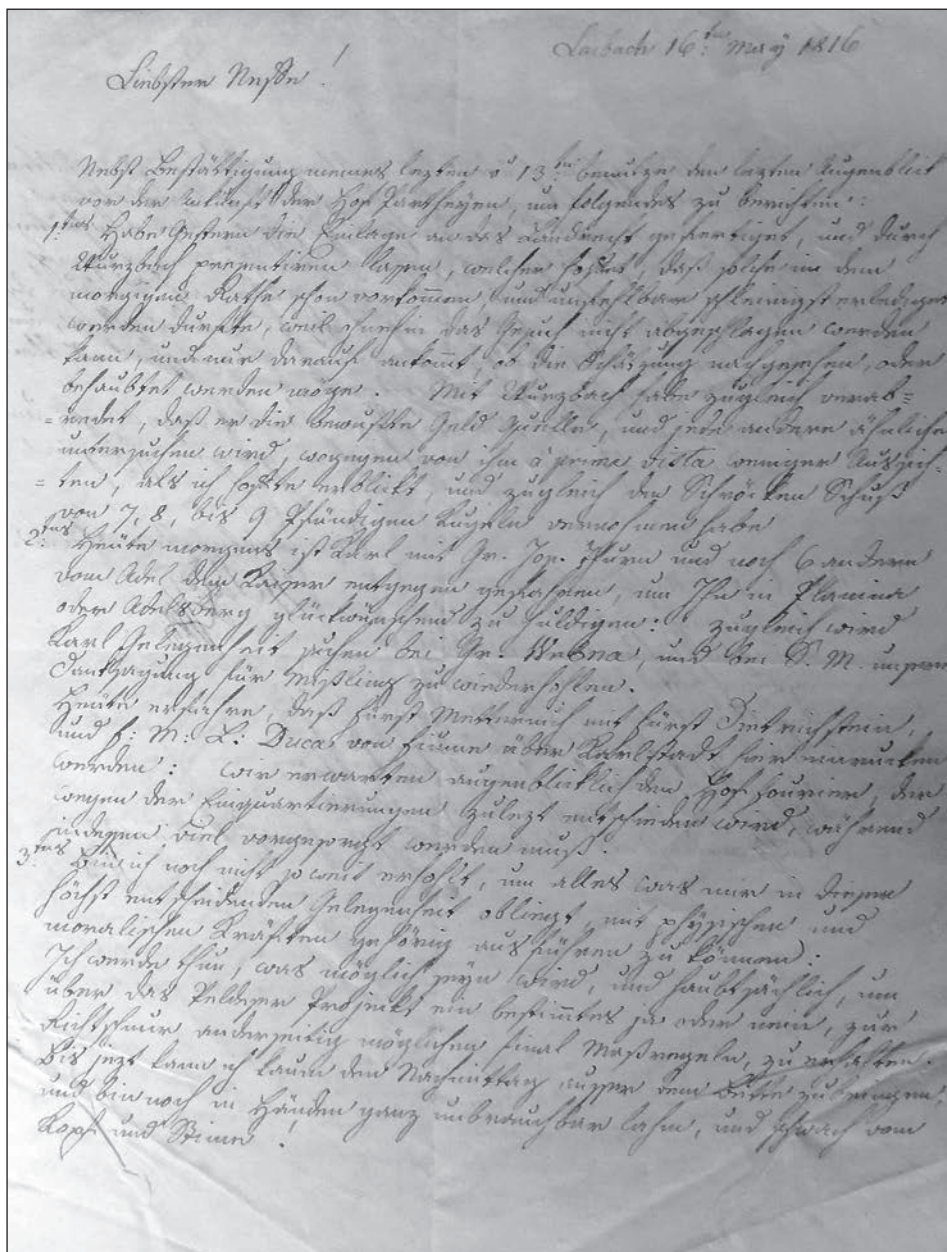


Fig. 5. The first page of Zois's letter to Bonazza announcing the talks with Wrbna, 16–17 May 1816. Carinthian Regional Museum, Ravne na Koroškem Museum. Photo: Karla Oder.

Bonazza do not mention the details of the talks with Wrbtna (nor with Lažanský and Metternich). The suspiciously large time gap between the letter dated 16 May and the next letter dated 8 June suggests that Bonazza may have burned the letter that spoke about the statesmen due to its political sensitivity. This was a typical precautionary measure among Zois's contemporaries and acquaintances (cf. Kidrič, 1939, 169; Vidmar, 2010, 257). It can, however, be reasonably assumed that Zois sought to obtain the firmest possible approval or rejection of the Bled Plan from Wrbtna, as he assured Bonazza on 16 May: "Ich werde thun, was möglich seyn wird, und hauptsächlich, um über das Veldeser Project ein bestimmtes ja oder nein [...] zu erhalten." (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5135). Of course, it was not so simple, as Wrbtna was not able to decide on such an ambitious plan alone. At most, Zois could obtain from Wrbtna – and, in light of the development of events, he apparently did so – a promise of governmental consideration of the proposal and an assurance of personal support. On this occasion, Wrbtna no doubt also viewed Zois's mineral collection, as he was a collector himself and had exchanged minerals with the Baron in the past (cf. Klemun, 2000, 15, 19).

THE EMPEROR IN LJUBLJANA, LAŽANSKÝ AT THE ZOIS PALACE

On 19 May, shortly before noon, the Emperor arrived in Ljubljana via the road Tržaška cesta (Triesterstrasse). He entered the city not far from the Zois Palace in Breg (Rain), near the monastery of the Teutonic Order. From his palace, Zois would have been able to catch the sound of the city guard parade in the square Nemški trg (Deutscher Platz) and the military parade with a band in the square Novi trg (Neuer Markt). No doubt his employees and acquaintances also informed him about the lively events in the city streets. The Emperor then took up residence in another part of Ljubljana, in the diocesan palace (Laibacher Zeitung, 21. 5. 1816, 1). It is unlikely that he and Zois met during these days. Zois was in fact well known to Francis I, who appreciated and made use of his experience in the fields of economics, zoology and mineralogy. In 1808, the Emperor named Zois a commander of the then-established Order of Leopold for his service to the state (Kidrič, 1939, 96; Vidmar, 2016, 185). However, Zois was probably too frail to attend any formal receptions with the Emperor, such as that held for all present recipients of the Order of Leopold, the imperial chamberlains and the generals in the diocesan palace at one o'clock in the afternoon on 22 May (Laibacher Zeitung, 31. 5. 1816, 2–3), to which he would certainly have been invited. The Emperor had a busy schedule and, between his daily visits to state buildings and public institutions, probably did not find time to visit Zois personally. At least for now, we do not know of any source that mentions such a visit. If nothing else, the Baron would have been able to see the ruler from his palace on the morning of 22 May, when the latter visited the nearby tollhouse building in Breg. The Emperor left the capital of Carniola on the morning of 23 May, setting out for Villach from the square Marijin trg (Marienplatz) (Laibacher Zeitung, 31. 5. 1816, 2–4).



Fig. 6: Portrait of Count Procop Lažanský von Bukowa, lithograph, early nineteenth century. Europeana.

It is, however, clear that Zois was visited by a senior government official who, according to the reporting of the newspaper *Laibacher Zeitung*, always accompanied the Emperor during his official visits: since July 1814, Count Procop Lažanský von Bukowa had served as the chairman of the Court Central Organisation Committee, which was responsible for preparing the integration of the Italian and Illyrian provinces into the Austrian Empire (*Laibacher Zeitung*, 31. 5. 1816, 2; Haas, 1963, 42; Kos, 1988, 28). This is testified to by the draft of a letter by Zois to Zelli, which is the only known source that mentions all three statesmen in the palace in Breg: "[...] l'ho [Metternich] veduto al mio letto, assieme alli Conti Wrbna e Lazanzkÿ [...]" (NMS, KŽKZ 13, P 141). Although it could be inferred from Zois's words that all three men came to his bedside together, such coordination of statesmen with very different duties in such a short time is very unlikely; furthermore, the Baron's correspondence with Bonazza and Kopitar indicates that the first statesman to visit the palace in Breg (around 18 May) was Wrbna and the last (around 23 May) was Metternich. In the interim, Lažanský appeared.

Given what we know about Zois's careful planning of the talks with Wrbna and Metternich, we can conclude that Lažanský's visit was more than just a courtesy call. It is quite likely that Lažanský visited Zois, who was one of the greatest authorities on the local situation, on the specific instructions of the Emperor, or at least with his knowledge. They probably talked about the administrative arrangements of the former Illyrian Provinces and, if the discussion proceeded according to Zois's wishes, about the scope and character of the future Kingdom of Illyria. The conversation no doubt also touched upon the Upper Carniolan ironworks, as the correspondence with Bonazza shows that Lažanský was informed about the Bled Plan after returning to Vienna. In view of the fact that Zois mentions Lažanský less frequently than Wrbna and Metternich in the extant letters, we can conclude that the former was the least amenable to his plans, or the least useful in this regard. That would be logical, as Lažanský was not responsible for economic matters, least of all for the iron industry. Moreover, he was not in favour of Metternich's proposal to transform the Austrian Empire into a union of kingdoms, which would give more weight to the Kingdom of Illyria, instead advocating traditional concepts of centralisation and provincial identities (Haas, 1963, 99, 148, 188).

METTERNICH AT THE ZOIS PALACE: THE FATE OF THE KINGDOM OF ILLYRIA AND VALENTIN VODNIK

Of the three statesmen, it was Metternich who spent the most time in the Zois Palace, as he resided there during the Emperor's visit to Ljubljana. With typical modesty, Zois reported to Zelli that, among the ministers who accompanied the ruler, Metternich had contented himself with his military apartment: "Abbiamo qui avuto di passaggio per 4 giorni il nostro Sovrano con tutto il seguito di Ministri, frà i quali il Principe Metternich s'è contentato del mio quartiere militare



Fig. 7: The Zois Palace in Breg, Ljubljana, early nineteenth century. Photo: Luka Vidmar.

[...]” (NMS, KŽKZ 13, P 141). From these words it can be gathered that Zois relinquished his personal apartment on the second floor of the palace to the Foreign Minister, which was not so modest, as it consisted of seventeen rooms including the renowned library and mineral collection (cf. Kopitar, 1851, 6; Kidrič, 1939, 34; Svoljšak & Vidmar, 2019, 93, 94).

Metternich apparently took the time to have a long discussion with Zois in the second half or towards the end of his stay in Ljubljana, as the copy of the Baron’s letter to Kopitar of 12 July dates this meeting on 25 May (ZRC SAZU, ISLLV, ZFK 15, MP 84). This date is, however, incorrect, because the Foreign Minister was already in Klagenfurt on 24 May (cf. Haas, 1958, 392). The mistake was made either by Zois himself when composing or dictating the letter, or by his copyist Vincenc Karnof when copying the letter for the archives. The talks were in fact probably held on 23 May (Vidmar, 2016, 209), the day of the Minister’s departure, or on a day prior to that.

The correspondence with Kopitar proves that Zois wanted to talk to Metternich primarily about the Illyrian question. It is highly likely that Metternich wanted to hear Zois’s opinion on the matter, and this may even be why he chose the latter’s palace for his residence. Zois reported to Kopitar: “Ich wiederhohle kurz, daß der Fürst M. alle Gründe für Illyrien, und für den Südlichen Slavismus mit vieler Aufmerksamkeit angehört, beherzigt, und versprochen hat, den Gegenstand zur

Sprache bringen zu wollen." Thus, Zois explained to the Foreign Minister his and Kopitar's understanding of an Illyrian kingdom, which, under the Austrian imperial crown, would politically and culturally connect the South Slavs from Carinthia to Dalmatia, possibly extending as far as Serbia, while the capital would be located in Ljubljana. The Baron probably recommended that, if at all possible, there should be an Illyrian court chancellery with a chancellor in Vienna, in order to give the new state genuine significance and influence. According to Zois, Metternich listened carefully to his reasons for the South Slavic character of the future Kingdom of Illyria, giving them due consideration and promising to take them up with the Emperor (Kos, 1988, 29–30; Vidmar, 2016, 209). Zois's impression of Metternich's sympathy for his and Kopitar's ideas was entirely correct: as early as the beginning of 1816, the Foreign Minister suggested to the Emperor the establishment of an Illyrian kingdom that would include Dalmatia (as did the Illyrian Provinces) and would serve as a counterbalance to Russia's presence in the Balkan Peninsula. This proposal was part of Metternich's ambitious plan to transform the Austrian Empire into a more effective federation of states or kingdoms with a powerful central authority in Vienna (Haas, 1963, 98, 99; Rumpler, 1997, 202; Stergar, 2017, 106–108).

The second topic of the talks – Valentin Vodnik – was undoubtedly raised by Zois himself. The Emperor had retired Vodnik at the end of 1814 due to his Francophilia, expressed mainly in the poem *Ilirija ožvljena*, as well as his alleged membership in the Masonic Lodge (Vodopivec, 1988, 19–20; Kos, 1990). In 1816, Vodnik had applied for the new Slovenian language chair at the Ljubljana Lyceum, but had little chance of securing the position in light of the Emperor's command. Due to a personal dispute, even Kopitar, then a scribe at the Imperial Library and a censor for Slavic and Greek books and periodicals in Vienna, did not support Vodnik's candidacy. As early as in 1815, he had envisaged the position of professor being taken up by theologian Matevž Ravnkar, who was also a member of Zois's circle. Thus, on 20 March 1816, Kopitar informed Zois that, at the bequest of the government, he was preparing questions for the call for applications for the professorship, and that his preferred candidate was unequivocally Ravnkar (Vidmar, 2016, 111). Zois was justifiably worried that they would overlook Vodnik despite the latter's efforts for the Slovenian language. Although Metternich was not responsible for education and was probably not aware of the case at all, Zois took advantage of the opportunity to try to help his friend. On 12 July, he reported to Kopitar: "Er [Metternich] hat mir erlaubt, Ihnen die Illyria rediviva, mit lat. Übersetzung zuzusenden, und hat meinem Kommentare über diese Ode und dem verfolgten Poeten, gütig aufgenommen." (ZRC SAZU, ISLLV, ZFK 15, MP 84). Obviously emboldened by the Minister's kindness, Zois skilfully directed the conversation to the matter of Vodnik. He defended the controversial poem, probably downplaying its pro-French stance and emphasising its patriotism (which was also important for the future Austrian Illyria), and advocated the appointment of Vodnik as professor of Slovenian. According to the

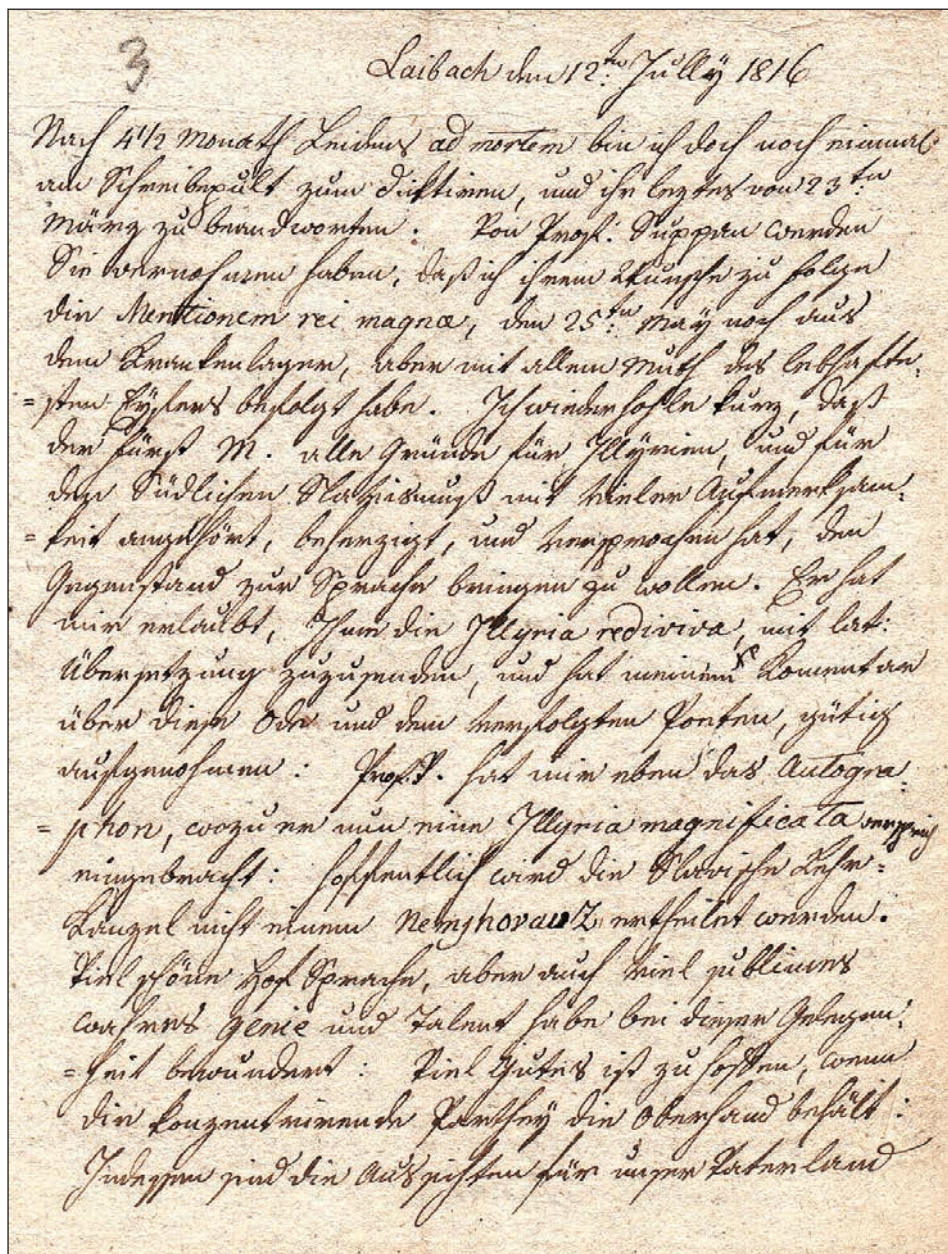


Fig. 8: The first page of the copy of Zois's letter to Kopitar with a report on the talks with Metternich, 12 July 1816. Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

Baron, Metternich graciously accepted his comments and agreed to Zois sending him the poem in Slovenian together with its Latin translation (Kidrič, 1929–38, 650, 651; Kos, 1988, 30; Vidmar, 2016, 94, 209). The translation was, of course, necessary in order for the Minister to understand the poem at all.

In addition to the issues of Illyria and Vodnik, Metternich and Zois also touched upon the political situation in Europe. In his report to Kopitar, Zois expressed satisfaction with the enhanced role of Austria after the Congress of Vienna and the establishment of the Holy Alliance: "Viel Gutes ist zu hoffen, wenn die konzentrirende Parthey die Oberhand behält." (Vidmar, 2016, 209). Last but not least, the report reveals Zois's genuine enthusiasm for Metternich. We can therefore conclude that the two interlocutors established an excellent mutual understanding: "Viel schöne Hof Sprache, aber auch viel sublimes wahres Genie und Talent habe bei dieser Gelegenheit bewundert." (ZRC SAZU, ISLLV, ZFK 15, MP 84; Vidmar, 2016, 210). Zois's praise of Metternich's fine courtly language, his talent, and even his sublime genius, is in line with the impressions of his contemporaries, who, regardless of their personal predisposition towards the man, recognised the Austrian Foreign Minister's sharp intellect and sophisticated elegance (cf. Sked, 2008, 27).

UNSOLD ZOIS'S IRONWORKS

The May talks filled Zois with great hope for the state purchase of the ironworks, the establishment of a South Slavic Illyrian kingdom, and Vodnik's appointment as professor of Slovenian. A favourable general outcome is alluded to in the draft of a letter to Zelli: "[...] ed ho avuto campo di ammirare i sublimi talenti di questi Capi, e di concepire grandi speranze di bene per l'avvenire – ma troppo tardi per me – pregando il Cielo che i Superstiti ne possan goderne quanto prima." (NMS, KŽKZ 13, P 141). Thus, after the visit of the statesmen, whose superior gifts he had an opportunity to admire, Zois could have entertained high hopes for the best in the future, even though the realisation of his plans would come too late for him personally. In the summer of 1816, he remained in contact with all three visitors via letters and intermediaries. In keeping with their promises and the Baron's expectations, they did in fact support, or at least favourably consider, his plans, which nevertheless failed one after the other, as their fate was sealed by other factors.

The correspondence with Bonazza shows how further lobbying was conducted for the purchase of the Upper Carniolan ironworks. On 12 June, Zois announced that he had brought the troubles of the Upper Carniolan ironworks to the attention of Archduke John, and had specifically recommended the Bled Plan to him, "weil dieses Projekt im Grunde vollkommen physisch und moralisch wahr und gut ist." No later than August, he sent Karl Zois to Vienna to deliver his letters to Archduke John, Wrtna, Lažanský and other government officials, and to convince them of the advantages of the Bled Plan. Thus, Karl delivered his uncle's letter

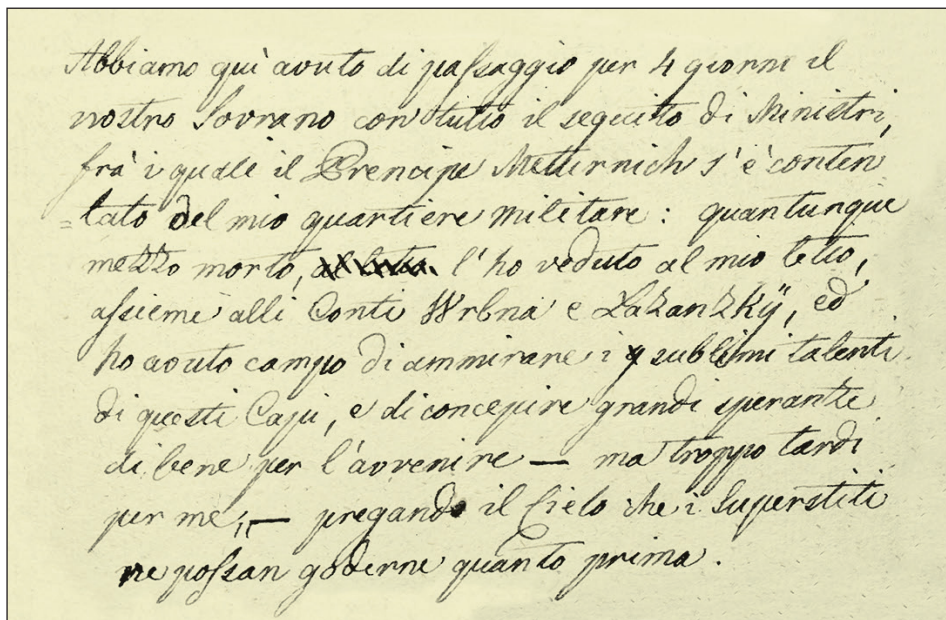


Fig. 9: Report on the visit of Metternich, Wrbna and Lažanský in the draft of Zois's letter to Zelli, 24 June 1816. National Museum of Slovenia. Photo: Luka Vidmar.

to Wrbna no later than 4 September, along with a package of minerals, which was Zois's established way of gaining favour (cf. Kidrič, 1941, 156; Vidmar, 2016, 185). Undoubtedly, Zois kindly sent some minerals that Wrbna had discovered to be missing from his own collection during his visit to Ljubljana. On or just prior to 7 September, Karl was received by Archduke John, who lamented the state of Austrian ironworking, graciously accepted Zois's letter, endorsed the Bled Plan, and promised to warmly recommend it to the Emperor. The Archduke no doubt sincerely wanted to help, but Zois was probably unaware of how little weight his word carried in the court, as the Emperor and Metternich had excluded him from political decision-making due to his involvement in the attempt of a new Tyrolean uprising in 1813 (cf. Siemann, 2010, 97, 100).

The bad portents multiplied. In the period until 9 September, Karl was received by a number of government officials, including Lažanský, who was friendly but referred to the binding opinion of the General Court Chamber. He also had a meeting with the President of the General Court Chamber, Count Ignaz Karl von Chorinsky, who was much cooler and resolutely opposed the state purchase until he was convinced of the true links between Bled and the Upper Carniolan ironworks. On 16 September, Zois reported to Bonazza on the poor prospects for the realisation of the Bled Plan, which, according to him, could only be resolved by the ruler's personal

intervention, encouraged with the help of Archduke John and Wrbna. On or just prior to 10 September, Court Councillor Franz Ferdinand Schiller, who was responsible for mining, bluntly informed Karl that he could not advise the state to take over the Zois's ironworks, even if they were handed over gratis: "Der Haupt Referent S[c]hilller hat Karl'n drocken ins Gesicht gesagt, daß er dem Staate nicht anrathen könne, unsere Werken – auch nicht geschenkter – anzunehmen." In the following days, assistance was offered by Wrbna, who was prepared to speak with his friends Chorinsky and Stadion (the Finance Minister) about Zois's ironworks. However, the decision of the state financiers and mining experts remained unchanged: the Bled Plan was rejected. As early as in September 1816, Zois began to explore other solutions with his nephew Karl: the exchange of the Mislinja ironworks for Ruard's ironworks in Sava; the sale of the Upper Carniolan ironworks to Count Radetzky, who would amalgamate them with the Bled estate if the Emperor bestowed it upon him for his military service; and the sale of the ironworks by lottery. However, after unsuccessful lobbying, Karl set out for home in October (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5138, 5144, 5146, 5147, 5148, 5149, 5150). In 1817, the exhausted Baron left the Mislinja ironworks to Bonazza, who was in any case its main creditor (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5132; cf. Potočnik, 1999; Krivograd, 2004, 78–98). The Upper Carniolan ironworks were sold to Karl by his uncle Zois just before his death in 1819 (Valenčič et al., 1991, 836).

A POWERLESS KINGDOM OF ILLYRIA

Nor did the creation of the Kingdom of Illyria unfold according to Zois's wishes, despite initial positive indications. The day after his departure from Ljubljana, Metternich fulfilled his promise to Zois and raised the issue of Illyria and the South Slavs with the Emperor. On 24 May 1816, he wrote a letter to Francis I in Klagenfurt advocating the establishment of an Illyrian kingdom with a South Slavic character. He asserted that he had been strengthened in this belief by conversations with authorities on the matter, specifically naming only the governor of Venice, Count Peter von Goëss, a member of an established noble family of Carinthia, but, of course, having Zois in mind, as well. Referring to the inhabitants of the proposed state, Metternich wrote: "Die Mehrzahl der hiesigen Nation ist Slawischen Ursprungs und hegt daher Vorliebe zu dieser Abkunft. Ein *Mittliges Slawisches Reich* kann nur Vortheil bringen und dieses besonders auf einem Punkte, wo diese Nationalität sich mit der römisch-katholischen Religion vereint." (Haas, 1958, 392). According to Metternich, the Illyrian kingdom would be advantageous because it would connect the Catholic Slavic peoples in the southwest of the Habsburg Monarchy, consolidate their loyalty to Austria, and distance them from the neighbouring Slavic peoples of the Orthodox and Islamic faiths. This letter clearly demonstrates that the Foreign Minister took into account Zois and Kopitar's arguments, which largely corresponded to his own plans (Vidmar, 2016, 211–212).

On this occasion, however, the Emperor disregarded Metternich's advice and gave priority to the traditional division into provinces rather than a new system of kingdoms. He also decided to continue relying on Joseph II's concepts of centralization and German primacy: he did not agree with adapting to ethnic features of particular parts of the Austrian Empire and was especially reluctant to approve a coherent state with a Slavic character (Haas, 1958, 393; Rumpler, 1997, 202; Stergar, 2016, 113). On the Emperor's command, the Kingdom of Illyria was proclaimed on 3 August 1816, but it was territorially reduced and without any power. Ljubljana did not become the capital, but only the seat of the Ljubljana Gubernium, which, together with the Trieste Gubernium, constituted the new state. The existing provinces and their borders were maintained within the kingdom. The former Illyrian Provinces were expanded with the addition of Cividale del Friuli, Gradisca d'Isonzo and, in 1825, the Klagenfurt district. The Kingdom of Illyria did not, however, include Dalmatia, and Provincial Croatia reverted back to Hungary in 1822 (Polec, 1925, 92–126; Haas, 1958, 394–396; Stergar, 2017, 113–114). Despite Metternich's persistent attempts, which were completely in line with Zois and Kopitar's wishes, the kingdom was not allocated its own court chancellery and chancellor (Haas, 1963, 130, 131, 134; Rumpler, 1997, 202), nor was its South Slavic character indicated in any way. At the end of 1817, with his final rejection of Metternich's attempt to reform the internal organisation of the Austrian Empire, the Emperor also buried Zois and Kopitar's concept of a South Slavic Illyrian kingdom.

NO PROFESSORSHIP FOR VODNIK

Likewise, despite his high connections, Zois was unable to help Vodnik. On 12 July 1816, he gave Kopitar a summary of his talks with Metternich, partly to remind him of Zois's own (and potentially the Minister's) support for Vodnik's candidacy. Significantly, he announced his parcel for Metternich that would supposedly help Vodnik to secure the professorship rather than some Germanophile: "Prof. V[odnik] hat mir eben das Autographon [der Illyriae redivivae], wozu er nun eine Illyria magnificata verspricht, eingebracht: hoffentlich wird die Slavische Lehrkanzel nicht einem Nemshovauz ertheilet werden." (ZRC SAZU, ISLLV, ZFK 15, MP 84; Vidmar, 2016, 122). Thus, Vodnik prepared a manuscript of *Ilirija oživiljena* (together with a Latin translation) for Metternich, as well as promising a manuscript (certainly also, or only, in Latin) of a new poem entitled *Illyria magnificata* or *Ilirija zveličana* (Illyria Redeemed). While the first ode was conceived as a eulogy to Napoleon, the second was a eulogy to the Habsburgs, but both hailed South Slavic statehood in the form of Illyria (Kos, 1988, 29–30). The parcel with the odes was intended to persuade Metternich that, in the period of the Illyrian Provinces, Vodnik had acted primarily as an enthusiast for the Slovenian language and his homeland, and that he was, as such, extremely suitable for the post of professor of Slovenian, just as all of the Austrian officials dealing with his case had determined

(cf. Vidic, 1908). The Minister probably received the parcel with Vodnik's manuscripts around 4 September 1816. On that day, Karl Zois informed his uncle from Vienna that he had passed on the latter's letter for Metternich (KPM, MRK, FMŽ, K 20, KM 5144).

For now, we do not know whether Metternich spoke in favour of Vodnik, but the Emperor did not revoke his decision, while Kopitar also deliberately ignored Zois's intimation that he should nevertheless support Vodnik (Vidmar, 2016, 111). In 1817, with Kopitar's firm support, Ravnikar's protégé Franc Metelko was elected professor of Slovenian in Ljubljana (cf. Jagić, 1885, 424; Kos, 1990).

CONCLUSION

Despite the lack of success of the plans that he had attempted to realise in talks with the three statesmen, Zois shows himself to be one of the most influential men in Carniola or the southwest regions of the Habsburg Monarchy in the early nineteenth century: his opinion on local administrative, economic and cultural policy was certainly always welcomed by the authorities, although it was not, of course, necessarily accepted. Despite the fact that these plans were not realised, they nonetheless represented a contribution to the long-term success of a large part of Zois's efforts throughout his life: the Upper Carniolan ironworks remained the cornerstone of the Zois family wealth for half a century, the idea of a South Slavic Illyrian kingdom represented the beginnings of the search for an appropriate state framework for the Slovenian nation, and Vodnik was established as the first nationally important Slovenian poet. Zois's remarkable ability to act pragmatically and strategically, as is best demonstrated in his talks with the three statesmen, was a key foundation of his success, which was constantly threatened by frail personal health, challenging political conditions in Europe, the poor state of the economy in Carniola and neighbouring provinces, and the modest prospects of the Slovenian language.

**“GRANDI SPERANZE DI BENE”:
METTERNICH, WRBNA IN LAŽANSKÝ V ZOISOVI PALAČI MAJA 1816**

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POVZETEK

Maja 1816, ko se je v Ljubljani na poti iz Lombardsko-beneškega kraljestva za štiri dni ustavil avstrijski cesar Franc I., so kranjskega razsvetljenca Žigo Zoisa barona Edelsteina v njegovi palači obiskali trije visoki predstavniki cesarskega dvora in vlade: zunanji minister Klemens knez Metternich, Rudolf grof Wrbna-Freudenthal, ki je bil cesarjev osebni prijatelj, svetovalec in vodja njegove telesne straže, poleg tega pa tudi dolgoletni funkcionar Dvorne komore za novčarstvo in rudarstvo, in Procop grof Lažanský-Bukowa, ki je vodil Dvorno komisijo za centralno organiziranje, zadolženo za pripravo vključitve italijanskih in ilirskih dežel v Avstrijsko cesarstvo. Srečanje z Wrbno je bilo skrbno pripravljeno vnaprej, srečanje z Metternichom pa je omogočila dvorna komisija za nastanitve, ki je za ministrovo bivališče v času cesarjevega obiska Ljubljane izbrala Zoisovo palačo. Zois je Wrbni predlagal, naj država odkupi njegove gorenjske fužine, Metternicha je prosil, naj podpre južnoslovanski značaj Ilirskega kraljestva in kandidaturo Valentina Vodnika za profesorja slovenščine na ljubljanskem liceju, z Lažanskim pa se je najbrž pogovarjal o prihodnji upravni ureditvi in gospodarskih težavah ilirskih dežel. Po pogovorih je ostal v korespondenčnih stikih z vsemi tremi državniki, za lažje lobiranje pa je poslal na Dunaj nečaka Karla Zoisa. Kljub temu se njegovi načrti niso uresničili: država ni odkupila gorenjskih fužin, Ilirsko kraljestvo ni postalo južnoslovanska država, Vodnik pa ni bil imenovan za profesorja.

Ključne besede: Klemens knez Metternich, Žiga Zois, Valentin Vodnik, Ilirsko kraljestvo, Avstrijsko cesarstvo, fužine

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