

INTRODUCTION TO FORUM ON CONTINUITY AND CHANGE  
IN SOUTH-CENTRAL EUROPE, 1914-1920.

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**ABSTRACT**

*This article introduces a two-number special issue on World War I in the northeastern Adriatic. It presents the main foci of the four articles included in this issue, case studies that demonstrate the need for a more complex and multi-faceted analysis of the past, which transcends exclusively national visions.*

*Keywords: World War I, northeastern Adriatic, Habsburg monarchy, nationalism, borderlands.*

INTRODUZIONE AL FORUM SU CONTINUITÀ E CAMBIAMENTI IN EUROPA  
CENTRO-ORIENTALE

**SINTESI**

*L'articolo serve da introduzione al primo dei due numeri dedicati alla Grande guerra nella regione dell'alto Adriatico. Presenta i principali risultati dei primi quattro articoli inclusi in questo volume ed attraverso questi studi dimostra la necessità di un'analisi più complessa ed eterogenea del passato, tale che possa superare visioni esclusivamente nazionali e prospettive unidirezionali.*

*Parole chiave: prima guerra mondiale, alto Adriatico, monarchia asburgica, nazionalismo, regioni di confine.*

We have conceptualized this two-number special issue of *Acta Histriae* to locate south-central Europe, especially the northeastern Adriatic, within the contemporary international scholarly debate on World War I. The contributions are particularly timely owing to the approaching centenary of its outbreak on July 28, 1914. Numerous initiatives, scholarly and otherwise, have already begun to commemorate this event. We hope to contribute to the discussion by bringing together articles dedicated to analyzing different aspects of changing state orders and loyalty, nationalism and national identity, memory and commemoration, and to aspects of continuity and change before, during, and after World War I in the northeastern Adriatic.

Interconnections with other regions and a high degree of cultural heterogeneity define the northeastern Adriatic, a region which today comprises parts of Croatia, Italy and Slovenia. Owing to its politico-geographic location, the northeastern Adriatic is historically integrated into spaces of communication that link it with east-central Europe, the Mediterranean and the rest of the world. Since World War I, the region has experienced regular re-drawing of borders and reconfiguration of state orders almost up to the present. The issue of how different societies continued to interact despite volatile, even hostile political conditions is of enormous importance to the region's history. At the same time, the history of this area offers an ideal case study of great European relevance.

The modern history of the northeastern Adriatic has been often in the center of national and international research interests. World War II and the Cold War have been the main focus of much of the existing historiography, however, because of the attention given to the so-called "Trieste question," the issue of the Italo-Yugoslav border dispute.<sup>1</sup> As a result, many important research questions related to the history of World War I in this region have remained understudied. The existing analyses of the period have often been limited to local events or have concentrated on military issues (Isonzo/Soča front) or diplomacy (the Treaty of London in 1915, the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Rapallo in 1920).<sup>2</sup> Although in the last twenty years aspects of World War I in the region have been the focus of several studies, many elements of political, social, cultural and economic transformation have received limited attention. Moreover, trans-national perspectives addressing the period between the beginning of World War I in 1914 and 1920, when the new border between the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later, Yugoslavia) was established, have only rarely been employed.

In the first four articles of our double-number issue, the authors' application of interdisciplinary, transnational and comparative approaches draws attention to less-studied topics and offers new research directions, thus helping to fill a lacuna in the historiography of the region. The articles range chronologically from the first decade of the twentieth century into the interwar era, and include wider consideration of interaction of memory, identity and war in the Adriatic's long twentieth century. They interpret the war years

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1 For a recent overview on the existing bibliography, see: Pelikan 2012. Cfr. Bajc, 2012. For analyses in the English language, see: Ballinger, 2002, Novak, 1970, Sluga, 2001.

2 Among the most important studies on these two issues, see also: Lederer, 1966, Pleterski, 1971, Valiani, 1966. See also: Caccamo, 2000, Marjanović, 1960.

(1914-1918) as part of longer-term historical developments in the region rather than a break in its history. Thus, these articles also contribute to our understanding of continuities as well as changes in the modern history of the northeastern Adriatic.

In his analysis of a 1908 trial in Celje/Cilli, today part of Slovenia, Pieter Judson expands our perspective of World War I Adriatic, both spatially and temporally. His examination underscores the role of nationalist claims in both the political space of prewar Cisleithanian Austria and demonstrates how nationhood was used in public life in the Habsburg Monarchy. Through his analysis of national riots in Styria, he shows how Slovene and German nationalist activists sought to convince people to follow their national feelings and how these activists worked to construct the “nation” as a legitimate actor in public life. Judson argues that schools, newspapers, nationalist organizations and individuals did not succeed in nationalizing the masses. Rather, he develops a picture of overlapping, fluid and shifting identities among Slovene- and German-speakers of the Monarchy.

Highlighting the presence of the “nation” in the everyday life of the Monarchy Borut Klabjan analyses the impact at the local level of the assassination on June 28, 1914 of the heir apparent to the Habsburg throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and his wife in Sarajevo. The site of his analysis is the Habsburg port city, Trieste/Trst, in today’s Italy, where the ceremonial procession of the bodies through the city in early July 1914 provoked not only widespread mourning as reported in the media, but also violent expressions and acts of subversion. The growing tension between Austria-Hungary and Serbia in the following weeks, together with the subsequent declarations of war and concomitant mass mobilization, resulted in incidents of national intolerance in the multinational city. Klabjan’s study raises new questions about forms of interaction between national allegiances and loyalty. Monarchists perceived many local Slovene-speakers as disloyal and thus among those responsible for the war. Austrian authorities reflected these attitudes through limitation of political freedom and a wide-ranging system of denunciations. Klabjan’s conclusions challenge ideas of linear national divisions and dichotomic explanations, offering a more complex picture in which varying degrees of allegiance are taken into account.

Nancy M. Wingfield’s article, in which the regulation of prostitution serves as a platform for a more complex analysis of state orders and systems, also challenges clear-cut temporal delimitations of World War I. Examining prostitution in the northeastern Adriatic from late imperial Austria through the immediate post-World War I years, she demonstrates how we should consider wars not (only) absolute ruptures but (also) junctures of long-term historical processes.

Maura Hametz also demonstrates how War World I can be studied in broad terms rather than limited to the period from 1914 through 1918. She investigates the non-linear path of transition from war to peace with the purpose of re-thinking the immediate aftermath of the Great War and its legacies. Her analysis of the northeastern Adriatic region under Italian rule after World War I challenges assumptions about aspects of ethnicity, citizenship and state relations in ethnically heterogeneous borderlands.

Editors Klabjan and Wingfield have also contributed to another special issue, *Commemorative Practices: Spaces, Identities and Politics of Memory* published by the same journal in 2010 (Klabjan, 2010; Hajková, Wingfield, 2010). Moreover, some of the es-

says in these special issues of *Acta Histriae* are based on papers presented at an international workshop held at the Science and Research Centre, University of Primorska, in June 2013. The workshop offered us the opportunity to discuss some of the ideas we are addressing in our articles. Finally, this issue on continuity and change in south-central Habsburg Europe represents one of the primary results of our bilateral project, which has been financially supported by the Slovenian Research Agency.

UVODNIK K SKLOPU O KONTINUITETI IN SPREMEMBAH V JUŽNI  
IN SREDNJI EVROPI, 1914-1920

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**POVZETEK**

Članek predstavlja uvod v posebni sklop, ki bo izšel v dveh številkah in je namenjen kontinuiteti in spremembam v času prve svetovne vojne na območju severnega Jadrana. Številne pobude in srečanja se že vrstijo za obeležitev stote obletnice začetka spopada, tako da je pričujoči sklop namenjen obogatitvi in dopolnitvi iniciativ namenjenih temu dogodku. Kljub številnim študijam, ki so v zadnjih dvajsetih letih postavile v ospredje pomembna vprašnja o prvi svetovni vojni, ostajajo še mnoge teme na obrobju znanstvenega preučevanja. S posebnim poudarkom na različne vidike spreminjanja državnih in oblastniških struktur, lojalnosti in neloyalnosti prebivalstva, nacionalizma in spreminjajočih se identitet, komemoracij in spomina, želimo vsaj delno zapolniti to vrzel in ponuditi nove perspektive za branje preteklosti tega prostora.

*Ključne besede: prva svetovna vojna, severni Jadran, habsburška monarhija, nacionalizem, mejna območja.*

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