

Neva Makuc

Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Slovenia
e-mail: neva.makuc@zrc-sazu.si
ORCID: 0000-0002-1526-5242

CHALLENGES FACING RESEARCH ON THE HISTORY OF FORMERLY UNIFIED HISTORICAL TERRITORIES IN THE LIGHT OF ENLIGHTENMENT HISTORIOGRAPHY: A CASE FROM THE CORNER OF THE HABSBURG HEREDITARY TERRITORIES¹

Abstract

This article aims to treat some problems connected with research on the Enlightenment and focuses on the case of Enlightenment historiography in the area between the Alps and the upper Adriatic. The article compares two Enlightenment historians (Carlo Morelli and Anton Tomaž Linhart) from the neighbouring Habsburg hereditary provinces (the Duchy of Carniola and the County of Gorizia) in the area between the Alps and the upper Adriatic. The two scholars are emblematic of the challenges that research on the Enlightenment historiography of the then historically unified territories is facing today, in a period when nation-centred interpretations of history still retain an important role.

Keywords: Enlightenment historiography, County of Gorizia, Carlo Morelli, Anton Tomaž Linhart.

The ascent of national identities and historiographies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

As stressed by Peter Rietbergen, in the period between 1400 and 1800, European inhabitants were, first and foremost, attached to their family and *patria*, *Heimat* or “native soil”. Some were also characterized by the feeling of belonging to the regional state, as early modern Europe was composed of regional cultures. From the seventeenth century

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onwards, several European countries (e.g., France) developed “national” variants of culture, delivering a blow to regional traditions and turning regional languages into dialects. In the eighteenth century, the admiration of classical civilization among the middle-class strata of European nations was accompanied by an increasing glorification of individual nations’ past. A growing emphasis was placed on the search for common roots. Through the leading strata, this tendency developed into national identity. Constructing their respective national identities and unity, societies resorted to elements of emotional value, such as common language, common religion, and historical memory. Rising nationalism contributed to building an internal unity through connecting different regional identities and “sociocultural elements”, which were not infrequently in conflict. In addition, they provided support for the expansionist goals of European countries.²

It is possible to identify two ways of creating a nation in Europe roughly. The Anglo-Saxon-French way is based on the state-forming construction of the third estate into a sovereign nation, whereas the German way builds on the language and cultural components.³ Between the French Revolution and the First World War, the “nation” drastically changed its connotation and political function. At the end of the eighteenth century, it encompassed a small number of people that belonged to higher, executive political strata and, in cultural terms, intellectuals of every stripe. In the early twentieth century, however, the nation already had a mass foundation and signified in Europe a tool for political legitimation.⁴

The creation of nations was a cultural necessity of the time.⁵ Earlier regional identities had to adapt to this change and subject themselves to the formation of nation-states. This period witnessed the emergence of historical works written from the vantage points of individual countries. However, the pasts of individual countries were praised not only in history books but also in literature, music, and artworks.⁶ In the eighteenth century, increasing admiration was felt for own nation and its past. At the end of the eighteenth century, special attention was also devoted to historical periods through which the characteristic traits or particularities of an individual society or country could be elucidated.⁷

² Rietbergen, *Europe*, pp. 166–373.

³ Kreft, *Znanstveno zgodovinisje*, pp. 64–70.

⁴ Schulze, *States*, p. 137.

⁵ Kreft, *Znanstveno zgodovinisje*, pp. 64–70.

⁶ Rietbergen, *Europe*, pp. 366–373.

⁷ Rietbergen, *Europe*, pp. 330–335.

Regional identity and historiography in the Age of Enlightenment in the case of the County of Gorizia

In my previous studies, I have dealt with the problem of early modern collective identities (between the end of the Middle Ages and the eighteenth century) in the case of the border area of Venetian Friuli and the Habsburg County of Gorizia, an area between the Alps and the upper Adriatic, which is today divided between the Republic of Italy and the Republic of Slovenia.⁸ In the Age of Enlightenment, this is where the County of Gorizia, since 1500 a Habsburg hereditary territory, bordered the Venetian Republic or, more precisely, the Venetian Friuli. The Habsburg part, that is, the Habsburg-dominated County of Gorizia, was strongly marked and transformed by the enlightened absolutism of Empress Maria Theresa and her son, Emperor Joseph II. The two rulers introduced radical administrative, economic, education, tax, church, and other reforms. Chronologically, my research had focused on the period before the nineteenth century, when national ideas first took root in this part of Central Europe and radically changed the structure of collective identities in this area.⁹

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Habsburg Monarchy, which also encompassed the bordering County of Gorizia, had already developed an "Austrian" identity across several regions. Although the formation of a common elite culture largely rested on the German language, instruction in vernacular languages also encouraged the cultural development of other language groups. These movements mainly developed on the aesthetic level without undermining the loyalty to the Habsburg dynasty or state.¹⁰ However, in the nineteenth century, the multilingual Habsburg Monarchy was already torn by nationalisms.¹¹

⁸ Makuc, *Historiografija*; Makuc, *Early Modern Provincial Identity*, pp. 1–14; Makuc, *Italijanski patriotizem*, pp. 17–28; Makuc, *Border identities*.

⁹ Makuc, *Historiografija*; Makuc, *Border identities*; Makuc, *Early Modern Provincial Identity*, pp. 1–14; Makuc, *Italijanski patriotizem*, pp. 17–28; Makuc, *Furlanska historiografija*, pp. 43–58. For more on the history of the County of Gorizia in early modern period, see: e.g. Morelli, *Istoria della Contea*, books 1–3; Rutar, *Poknežena grofija*, pp. 69–111; Štih, Simoniti, Vodopivec, *A Slovene History*, pp. 87–267; Cavazza, *I primi decenni*, pp. 99–161; Pavlin, *Goriška*, pp. 15–241; Preinfalk, Golec (eds.), *Marija Terezija*; Zwitter, *Linhartova doba*, pp. 303–350.

¹⁰ Ingrao, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, p. 218.

¹¹ An exception among nation-centred historical works is a non-nationally conceived textbook by Tadeusz Korzon from Warsaw, titled *Historia nowożytna. Tom I do 1648 roku*, which was published in Krakow in 1889. The work, among other things, dedicates an equal share of attention to Polish and Habsburg developments (Davies, *Europe*, pp. 33–34, 812–835, 1141).

It is worth considering subsequent interpretations and meanings of Enlightenment historiography, which emerged in the watershed period when territorial or regional identities still played an important role among the population in this part of Europe, but soon withdrew into the shadow of emerging national identities. While territorial identities retained their role in the area under examination and remained relevant throughout the early modern period, radical changes began to occur in collective identity in the eighteenth century,¹² signalling a period of significant social, economic, political, and cultural changes. In this sense, the century of the Enlightenment was also a kind of transitional period regarding collective identities.¹³

The Habsburg Gorizia witnessed the compilation of an important Enlightenment work. A special note ought to be taken of the territorial history of the County of Gorizia, *Istoria della Contea di Gorizia*, written in Italian by the Gorizia nobleman Carlo Morelli (1730–1792). Driven by his social engagement and concern with concrete problems facing the society in which he lived, Morelli accorded much consideration to the recent history and the eighteenth century itself, to economic, political, demographic, and cultural topics. Morelli held important offices in state administration. He also organized the archives of the Gorizia territorial estates with exceptional care and, drawing on a detailed and in-depth knowledge of the archival materials and other primary sources, compiled the historical work on Gorizia's early modern history.¹⁴

Focusing on his native territory, Morelli's work is underlined by the territorial concept. The inhabitants of the County of Gorizia considered themselves and their fellow people as a community of individuals of different language backgrounds who were bound together into a whole group by certain political and social factors that took root in the Middle Ages. In the multilingual County of Gorizia, the territorial identity surpassed the language differences of its population by being inclusive of all historical languages of the area, i.e., Friulian, Slovenian, Italian, and German. Territorial identities slowly gave way to Italian, Slovenian, and German national identities in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ During the same period, its mild and sunny climate earned Gorizia the repu-

¹² Makuc, *Historiografija*; Makuc, *Border identities*.

¹³ Schulze, *States*, pp. 134–174. See also: Vovelle, *Ideologije*, p. 132.

¹⁴ Cavazza, *L'Istoria della Contea*, pp. 49–60; Cavazza, Porcedda, *Manoscritti ed edizione*, pp. 89–99; Cavazza, Morelli Carlo, pp. 1733–1737; Cavazza, *Note sulla storiografia*, pp. 61–77; Cavazza, *Premessa*, pp. 9–13; Porcedda, *Il riordino dell'archivio*, pp. 75–87; Porcedda, *Una vita per lo stato*, pp. 19–47; Makuc, *Historiografija*, pp. 98–100; Makuc, *Border identities*.

¹⁵ Makuc, *Historiografija*; Makuc, *Border identities*; Makuc, *Early Modern Provincial Identity*, pp. 1–14; Makuc, *Italijanski patriotizem*, pp. 17–28.

tation of a climate resort, the so-called “Austrian Nice”, Görz Österreich’s Nizza. This image was popularized by Baron Carl von Czoernig (1804–1889). Czoernig was born in the Bohemian town of Černousy and later became a state functionary until he moved to Gorizia for health reasons. In the following decade, Czoernig published in Vienna *Görz Oesterreich’s Nizza: nebst einer Darstellung des Landes Görz und Gradisca* (in two volumes, 1873–1874), in which he presented Gorizia and its surroundings as a climate resort.¹⁶ Branko Marušič stressed that in the nineteenth century, when national conflicts were already besetting Gorizia, such a presentation was an attempt to promote peaceful coexistence among the nations and languages in the region. An attempt that failed at the outbreak of the First World War.¹⁷ The nationalisms in the area led to fierce national struggles in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The “savage and wrathful” nationalisms were not inclined towards a peaceful coexistence between the Slovenes and Italians, “as was still be hoped for in the liberal nineteenth century, but rather towards the formation of two opposing sides [Italian on the one hand and Slovenian on the other] vying with each other in a merciless struggle and settling scores following the decline in the values of equality and tolerance”.¹⁸

Returning to Morelli, the researcher Silvano Cavazza pointed out that he possessed a sound knowledge of administrative and economic affairs. However, he also distinguished himself for his practical attitude towards the economy, administration, education, and similar fields, and for his splendid knowledge of primary sources. His work combines a great mastery of primary sources, critical scholarly work, and a great historical synthesis. Morelli’s history is still considered a fundamental work for studying the period of the Enlightenment and the policies of enlightened rulers of his time. In terms of substance and methodology, Morelli’s work is regarded as outstandingly innovative within the framework of Enlightenment historiography while preserving the tradition of territorial historiography and reflecting the author’s deeply felt territorial identity.¹⁹

Although Morelli wrote a masterpiece of the Age of Enlightenment, it is striking how little known it is today outside the Slovenian-Italian border area in which it was produced.²⁰ Why, then, is it so little known outside its territorial boundaries? That is probably because he wrote in

¹⁶ Kralj, Czoernig baron; Tavano, Czoernig Carl, pp. 1115–1119. Cf. Czoernig, *Görz*.

¹⁷ Marušič, Prispevek, p. 33.

¹⁸ Sestan, *Venezia Giulia*, p. 125.

¹⁹ Cavazza, *L’istoria della Contea*, pp. 49–60; Cavazza, Porcedda, *Manoscritti ed edizione*, pp. 89–99; Cavazza, Morelli Carlo, pp. 1733–1737; Cavazza, *Note sulla storiografia*, pp. 61–77; Cavazza, *Premessa*, pp. 9–13. Cf. Morelli, *Istoria della Contea*, books 1–3.

²⁰ Cavazza, *Premessa*, p. 10

Italian about a small, frontier Habsburg hereditary territory, but even more so because of the territorial concept of his Enlightenment work itself. However, the answer remains incomplete unless placed within the broader history of Gorizia, the neighbouring territories, and European society in general.

Towards Slovenian national identity and historiography: Anton Tomaž Linhart

The Slovenes, who lived in several Habsburg hereditary territories, were considered the so-called non-historical nation for not having their own state.²¹ In this connection, a special note should be taken of Moreli's contemporary, a playwright, poet, and historian Anton Tomaž Linhart (1756–1795). Comparing the two historians will enable us to understand better the subsequent change in the field of collective identities and interpretations of history and historical works. Linhart was born in Radovljica in the historical province of Carniola, a Habsburg hereditary territory that neighboured Gorizia and that still represents the central Slovenian area today. Among other things, he served as an archivist in the Ljubljana Episcopal Archives and the secretary of the Carniolan territorial board. In 1781, he wholeheartedly embraced the ideas of the Enlightenment. It was partly due to his engagement in the circle of enlightened intellectual, patron, and wealthy industrialist Sigismund Zois (1747–1819). There is extensive literature on Linhart, especially in the Slovenian language,²² not least because he set the foundations of Slovenian drama and theatre.²³ The Age of Enlightenment was of paramount importance for developing the Slovenian literary language, literature, and historiography. That is because the form of Enlightenment that took root in Central and Eastern Europe — as opposed to Western Europe — incorporated “national” tendencies.²⁴

²¹ Štih, *Poglavje*, p. 122. For more on Slovenian history, see: Luthar et al. *The Land Between*; Štih, Simoniti, Vodopivec, *A Slovene History*.

²² Zwitter, *Linhartova doba*, pp. 303–350; Svetina et al. (eds.), *Anton Tomaž Linhart*; Koblar, Linhart; Strsoglavec, “Anton Tomaž Linhart”, pp. 321–332; Štih, “Linhart kot zgodovinar”, pp. 291–310; Štih, *Miti*, pp. 25–47; Štih, *Poglavje*, pp. 114–118; Sitar, *Sto slovenskih znanstvenikov*, pp. 140–141; Kreft, *Znanstveno zgodovino*, pp. 55–71; Vidmar, Linhart. Literature on Linhart's literary work is very extensive. A survey of literature on Linhart is conveyed in: Lah, *Izbrana bibliografija*, pp. 592–610.

²³ Koblar, Linhart.

²⁴ Strsoglavec, “Anton Tomaž Linhart”, pp. 322–323.

In the 1780s, Linhart wrote the Enlightenment historical work in German, titled “Versuch einer Geschichte von Krain und den übrigen Ländern der südlichen Slaven Oesterreichs” (An Attempt at a History of Carniola and Other South Slav Lands of Austria, Ljubljana 1788–1791). He extended Slovenian history back to the early Middle Ages, to the time of the early medieval gentile Principdom of Carantania.²⁵ In what remained an incomplete *Attempt*, he discussed the time from prehistory to the eighth century.²⁶ In discussing the creation of national communities, historians devoted particular attention to the Middle Ages.²⁷ As pointed out by Đurđa Strsoglavac, the title of Linhart’s work indicates that it is “a combination of territorial and national history”.²⁸ In addition, Linhart talked about “Carniolan Slavs” (*krainischen Slaven*),²⁹ suggesting that his concept of national history had not entirely broken with the longstanding tradition of territorial historiography.³⁰ Nevertheless, unlike Morelli, Linhart tried to abandon the territorial concept and introduce that of Slovenian national history. The said concept signalled the beginning of Slovenian national historiography and represented a cornerstone in constructing Slovenian national identity in the nineteenth century. Linhart’s book was often “labelled as the major and central ideological work of the so-called Slovenian Rebirth Movement and as the first historical work written from the Slovenian national perspective that introduced in historiography the Slovenian historical conception, i.e. treating the history of the Slovenes as a national whole”, even though Linhart used the concept of national history for the early medieval period when peoples and nations in the modern sense did not exist.³¹ At the same time, he admired the Slavs in general (*die Slaven*), stressing that “although they were barely noticed in the grey past, they attained magnificence unmatched by any other nation”. He highlighted the robustness and numerousness of the Slavs in the Habsburg Monarchy.³²

²⁵ Štih, “Linhart kot zgodovinar”, pp. 291–310; Štih, *Poglavja*, pp. 105–132. For more on Carantania, see: Štih, Simoniti, Vodopivec, *A Slovene History*, pp. 27–41.

²⁶ Linhart, *Versuch*, vols. 1–2.

²⁷ Schulze, *States*, pp. 170–174.

²⁸ Strsoglavac, *Anton Tomaž Linhart*, p. 330.

²⁹ Cf., e.g. Linhart, *Versuch*, vol. 1, preface. Cf. Linhart, *Poskus*, vol. 1, p. 9.

³⁰ Obviously being aware that the designation of the territory of Carniola for the period of the Middle Ages might confuse the reader, Linhart explained that he used it for earlier periods, when the name still did not exist, for purely practical reasons in terms of the former territory of the present-day Carniola (Linhart, *Versuch*, vol. 1, preface. Cf. Linhart, *Poskus*, vol. 1, p. 10).

³¹ Štih, “Linhart kot zgodovinar”, pp. 291–310 (quotation on p. 291); Zwitter, Linhartova doba, pp. 303–350.

³² Linhart, *Versuch*, vol. 2, preface. Cf. Linhart, *Poskus*, vol. 2, p. 171. On this, see also: Zwitter, Linhartova doba, pp. 329–330.

As stressed by Peter Štih, Linhart introduced a conception of the Slovenes as a linguistic, cultural, and historical community, albeit not naming it Slovenian. He talked about “Carniolan Slavs” (*krainischen Slaven*), “Slavs in Southern Austria” (*die Geschichte der Slaven Oesterreichs im Süden*),³³ which is not at all unusual due to terminological confusion and non-uniformity in designating the Slovenian-speaking population and the Slovenian language in Linhart’s time.³⁴ The awareness of the existence of the Slovenian language community became consciously articulated in the sixteenth century through the works of Protestant authors. For the first time in history, the term “Slovenian” appeared in written sources, becoming a clearly defined bearer of Slovenian national consciousness in the nineteenth century. Linhart espoused the comparative-philological method of equating peoples and languages, which asserted itself as the predominant method in the nineteenth century.³⁵ That is because the establishment of early modern “state-nations” and their needs led to the division of the world in congruence with language boundaries. It was only in the more recent period that these became of crucial importance for defining and delimiting individual communities or nations.³⁶

Adopting Linhart’s views in discussing the history of the Slovenian-speaking population was of long-term significance for Slovenian historiography. The writer and journalist Valentin Vodnik (1758–1819)³⁷ promoted the knowledge of Linhart’s national concept, most notably in a textbook that reached broader strata of the population.³⁸ However, because it remained unclear who Linhart’s “all-Slavic conception” encompassed, it ought to be stressed that in 1795 the teacher and enlightener Blaž Kumerdej (1738–1805)³⁹ also included Gorizia in this framework.⁴⁰ Thus, Linhart notably contributed to the formation of the Slovenian nation in the nineteenth century, whereas the concept of national history finally prevailed in the early twentieth century. Yet, at the end of the

³³ Cf., e.g. Linhart, *Versuch*, vol. 1, preface, vol. 2, preface. Cf. Linhart, *Poskus*, vol. 1, pp. 8–9, vol. 2, p. 171.

³⁴ Štih, Linhart kot zgodovinar, pp. 299–300.

³⁵ Štih, „Linhart kot zgodovinar“, pp. 291–303; Štih, *Poglavja*, pp. 105–132; Štih, *Miti*, pp. 25–47. Cf. Zwitter, Linhartova doba, pp. 303–350. More on the new approach in Slovenian historiography and Slovenian historical myths, see: Štih, Nacionalizem, pp. 221–237.

³⁶ Zantedeschi, Nazioni, p. 106.

³⁷ For more on Vodnik, see: Kos, Toporišič, Vodnik.

³⁸ Zwitter, Linhartova doba, p. 347.

³⁹ For more on Kumerdej, see: Logar, Kumerdej.

⁴⁰ Zwitter, Linhartova doba, p. 348.

twentieth century, an interpretation took root in Slovenian historiography that the aforementioned concept of national history represented a “retrospective nationalization of history” by anachronistically transposing the existence of the modern Slovenian nation into distant historical periods when the actual consciousness of a Slovenian national community had still not developed. Old conceptions of Slovenian history still featured significantly in the historical consciousness of the Slovenes.⁴¹

Morelli’s and Linhart’s works differ significantly. Morelli discussed recent and contemporary history by relying on archival materials of the early modern period, which he splendidly mastered.⁴² On the other hand, in a similar vein as part of enlightened historians, Linhart underestimated scientific criticism and erudition.⁴³ He discussed the complex and distant medieval history, and read the earliest historians in translation or even through abstracts of more recent authors.⁴⁴ From the perspective of the present knowledge of the early medieval period, the ethnogeneses of his time and so on, Linhart’s work was already outdated.⁴⁵ In contrast, Morelli’s work still represents today an essential source for studying the early modern history of Gorizia. Linhart’s work is intertwined with “ethnicities” and peoples, whereas Morelli devoted no attention to what was later called “ethnic” issues. Morelli focused on his native historical territory, whereas Linhart sought the best way possible to present the “Southern Slavs of Austria” territory.⁴⁶ Within this framework, his conception of the Slovenian-speaking population in the Habsburg-Venetian border area was ambiguous. More specifically, Linhart was making only vague references to “Italianized Slavs in Gorizia and Friuli — *Schiavi, Schiavoni*”.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Štih, “Linhart kot zgodovinar”, pp. 291–303; Štih, *Poglavja*, pp. 105–132. Cf. Zwitter, Linhartova doba, pp. 303–350.

⁴² Porcedda, *Il riordino dell’archivio*, pp. 75–87.

⁴³ Zwitter, Linhartova doba, p. 317; Grafenauer, Pripombe, p. 380.

⁴⁴ Linhart, *Versuch*, vol. 1, preface. Cf. Linhart, *Poskus*, vol. 1, p. 9. Although Linhart served as an archivist in the Ljubljana Episcopal Archives (Zwitter, Linhartova doba, p. 309), this was not of particular benefit to him for the period of the early Middle Ages. However, he did use archaeological remains (Linhart, *Versuch*, Vol. 1, preface. Cf. Linhart, *Poskus*, vol. 1, p. 9).

⁴⁵ Another author writing about this: Grafenauer, Pripombe, pp. 381–382.

⁴⁶ Cf. Morelli, *Istoria della Contea*, books 1–3; Linhart, *Versuch*, vols. 1–2. Cf. Linhart, *Poskus*, vols. 1–2.

⁴⁷ Zwitter, Linhartova doba, p. 323. Cf. Linhart, *Versuch*, vol. 2, p. 199; Linhart, *Poskus*, vol. 2, p. 241.

Conclusion

The works thus differ substantially in terms of methodology, selection of historical periods, (non)discussion of peoples, and, most importantly, in the framework itself (Morelli's territorial concept and Linhart's national concept). The comparison between Morelli's and Linhart's works is indicative of the problem researchers face when investigating the Enlightenment history and historiography of formerly unified historical territory, which is today divided between two countries and where two nation-centred interpretations of the past (Italian and Slovenian) still frequently collide,⁴⁸ but also of the answer to the question of why Morelli's Enlightenment work is little known outside today's Slovenian-Italian border area.⁴⁹ Morelli and his writing promulgating the territorial concept was overshadowed by the concept of nation in this part of Central Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the other hand, Linhart's name features prominently in today's Slovenian historiography. The subsequent evaluations of Enlightenment historiographical works were often contingent on whether they suited the ensuing, nationally focused interpretations. The role that Linhart's concept of Slovenian national history played in the future construction of Slovenian national identity gave his name and historical work a prominent place in Slovenian historiography.

Reconstructions of the past are, of course, selective by highlighting some things and omitting others.⁵⁰ National historiographies in border areas often include the mythologization of the past and excluding "other" nations or communities, thus rendering mutual understanding difficult.⁵¹

A great step towards transcending the treatment of history strictly through the perspective of one nation has in the area concerned been the activities performed by the Slovenian-Italian historical and cultural commission, which the Italian and Slovenian governments established in 1993. The collaboration resulted in the publication of a trilingual report on the Slovenian-Italian relations between 1880 and 1956, the most tragic and divisive period in the Slovenian-Italian relations, the origins of which could be traced back to the Enlightenment period. The report was first officially published in Ljubljana in 2001 under the title

⁴⁸ For more on this, see: Panjek, *Ricostruire*, pp. 9–28; Verginella, *Zgodovinjence*, pp. 207–216; Rožac Darovec, *Narod*, pp. 217–228. On transculturality in the Alps-Adriatic space, see: Jurić Pahor, *Čezmejni in transkulturni imaginariji*, pp. 409–424.

⁴⁹ Cavazza, *Premessa*, p. 10.

⁵⁰ Jurić Pahor, *Čezmejni in transkulturni imaginariji*, p. 412.

⁵¹ Rožac Darovec, *Narod*, pp. 217–228. An important survey on the Slovenian national formation, the concept of Slovenian national history and its myths (including the image of Carantania): Štih, Miti, pp. 25–47.

*Slovene-Italian relations 1880–1956. Report of the Slovene-Italian historical and cultural commission.*⁵² However, despite the endeavours of some researchers, there are still quite a few steps to be taken on this path because nation-centred interpretations continue to render research on Enlightenment historiography difficult in regions and areas plagued by conflicting national interpretations of the past.⁵³ The effort to avoid an anachronistic discussion of the complex Age of Enlightenment requires researchers to reflect on such interpretations and their research approach, as well as read sources and literature carefully.

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⁵² Kacin Wohinz, Troha (eds.). *Slovensko-italijanski odnosi*.

⁵³ Verginella, *Zgodovinj enje*, pp. 207–216; Panjek, *Ricostruire*, pp. 9–28; Rožac Darovec, *Narod*, pp. 218–228.

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