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GORICA

(THE GEOGRAPHICAL
BASIS OF ITS FOUNDATION)

by

ANTON MELIK, Ph. D.

Professor of Geography in the University of Ljubljana
and Member of the Slovene Academy of Arts and Sciences

LJUBLJANA, 1946

Published by the Research Institute, Section
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In the Julian March, several geographical units are easily discernible. The Soča (Isonzo) Basin is one of the most obvious, probably the most important. That it forms a natural whole we can see from the fact that it has formed for centuries a separate province, the County of Gorica (Gorizia). It is obvious at the first glance that the territory of that province rough, though of course not perfectly and in all particulars, corresponds to that of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin. The county was named for its metropolis, the town of Gorica (Gorizia), situated approximately in the centre of the province.

The Soča (Isonzo) Basin (County of Gorica) cannot be called homogeneous as to its surface or geographical relief. Its common characteristic is that all its waters flow into the Soča (Isonzo), whose valley is the central line of communication which unites all the various, in some respects very different component parts into one whole, the Soča (Isonzo) Basin or County of Gorica (Gorizia), as it existed as a political unit up to 1918 and even longer. The Soča (Isonzo) Valley is the backbone of the country or rather its main artery. The vital point of this artery is there where the Vipava (Vipacco), its greatest tributary, flows into the Soča (Isonzo), forming a transverse road, which is prolonged towards the west by the plain at the foot of the Brda (Collio). It is at this natural centre that Gorica (Gorizia), the chief town of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin, was founded, to become and remain the heart of the province which justly derives its name from the town.

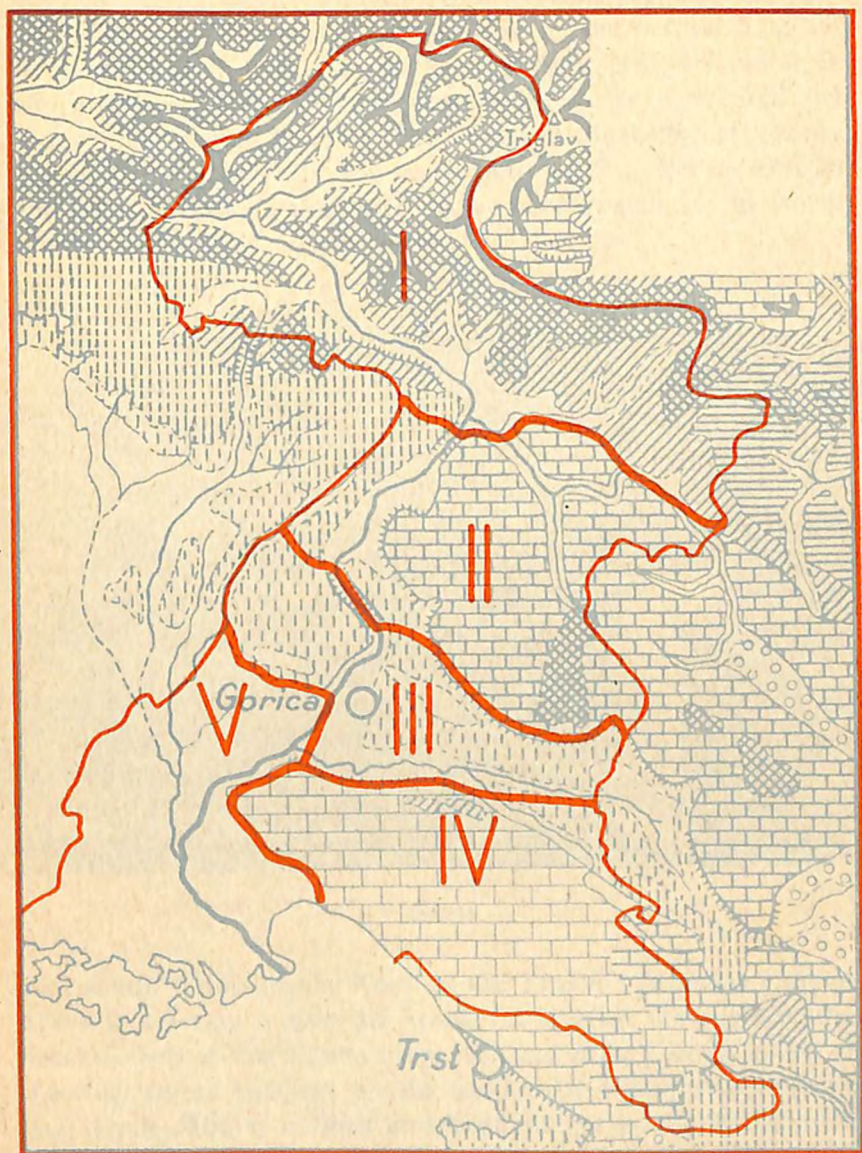
The northernmost of the component parts of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin is the one called „Gore“ by the inhabitants of Gorica (Gorizia). It belongs still to the Alps, it is, in fact, the mountainous country of the western Julian Alps, with the foothills, belonging to the river basins of the Bača (Bazza) and the lover Idrijca (Idria). All this hilly country gravitates to the upper Soča (Isonzo) Valley; its little local centre is the small depression of Tolmin (Tolmino). Its natural communication with the outer world is the middle Soča (Isonzo) Valley, leading

towards the south, towards the plain of Gorica (Gorizia) where it broadens out and gives scope to a greater settlement — the town of Gorica (Gorizia).

The middle part of the Soča (Isonzo) Valley, joining the „Gore“ in the narrower sense, forms the second great component part of the County of Gorica (Gorizia). It comprises chiefly high plateaus, mostly of karstic character, mainly the Trnova (Tarnova) Plateau, heavily wooded, thinly populated, the chief timber land of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin. To the north the Trnovo (Tarnova) Plateau passes into the somewhat lower, more densely populated Plateau of Idrija (Idria), which is cut by valleys into several parts; to the north-west it passes through the "Dry Valley" of Čepovan (Chiapovano) into the still lower and more densely populated Banjščica (Bainsizza) Plateau. Along this flows the middle Soča (Isonzo), at the right of which is the long mountain ridge of Korada.

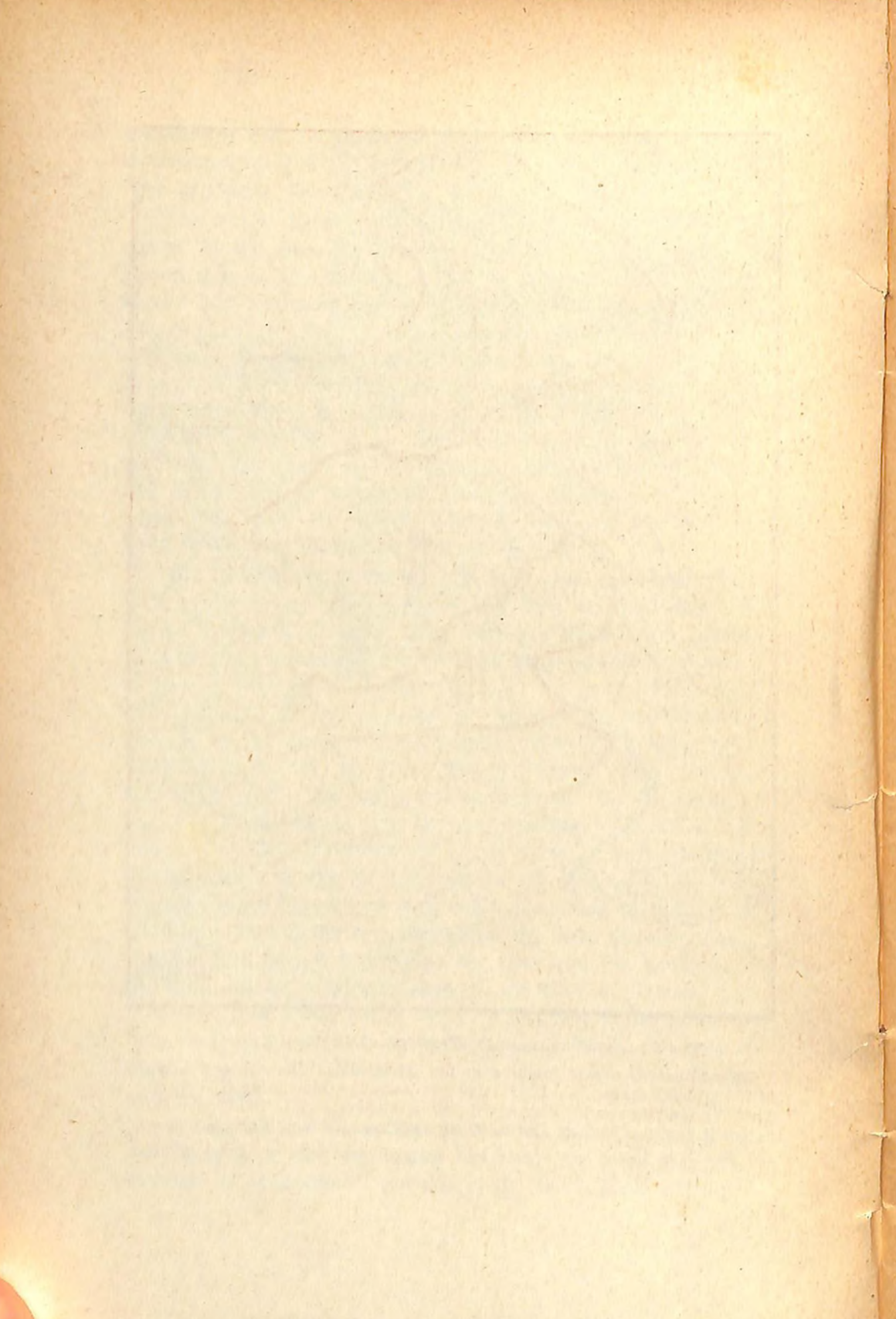
The inhabitants of Gorica (Gorizia) often call both these parts „Gore“, the Julian Alps of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin as well as the Karst plateaus, since both are highlands in strong contrast to the southern lowlands along the middle Soča (Isonzo), comprising the wide Vipava (Vipacco) Valley and the Brda and the plain of Gorica (Gorizia) between Solkan (Salcano) and the mouth of the Vipava (Vipacco). This is the third great component part of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin which we may undoubtedly call the centre of the country. To the south it passes into the fourth part, the Karst, which stretches all the way to the Gulf of Trieste. In all its northern part the Karst still gravitates to Gorica (Gorizia). In the south-west the Soča (Isonzo) flows through a wide plain stretching to the foot of the Karst. This plain, too, belongs to the Soča (Isonzo) Basin, at least that part of it between the river and the Karst, from the Brda to the northern coast of the Gulf of Trieste. This beautiful plain, justly called the Soča (Isonzo) Plain, forms the fifth component part of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin. But only its northern part still gravitates to the plain and town of Gorica (Gorizia).

Among all five component parts of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin, stretching in a long line along the river, the most important through its geographical position is the low central part, with

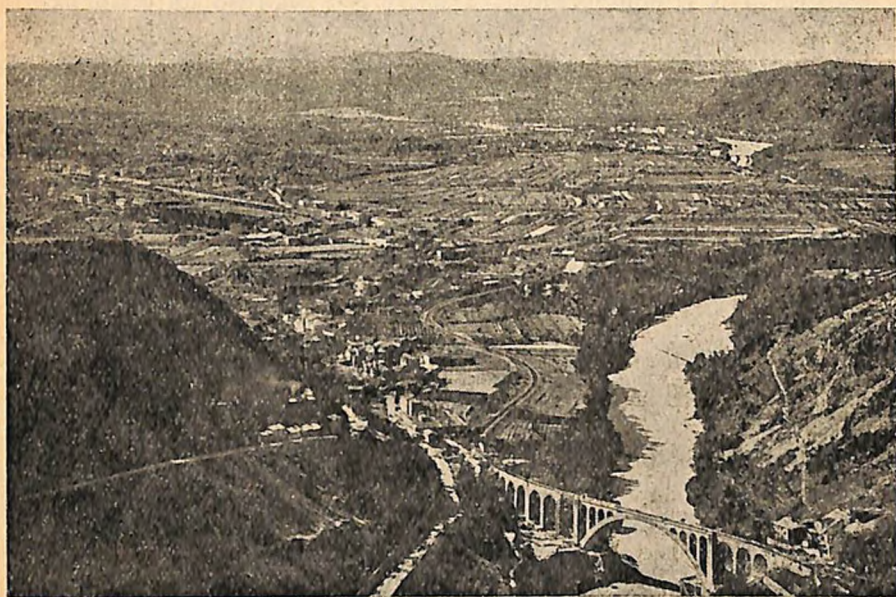


The Structural units of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia)

I. Mountains (Alps and foothills in the Rivers Bača [Bazza] and Lower Idrija [Idria] Basins). — II. Plateaux between the Mountains (I) and the River Vipava (Vipacco) Valley and the Brda (Collio). — III. The Vipava (Vipacco) Valley, the Plain of Gorica (Gorizia) (above the mouth of the Vipava) and the Brda (Collio). — IV. Karstlands. — V. Plain of Soča (Isonzo).



the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley, the Brda, and the plain of Gorica (Gorizia). This part is unique, also by the natural qualities of its surface. It forms an eocene, synclinal belt, stretching in the direction of the Dinaric Alps between the Karst and the Trnovo (Tarnova) Plateau. The surface, consisting of eocene flysch, is impenetrable for water and is thus very different from the cavernous limestone Karst bordering it to the north



Gorica

and south. Whilst on the Karst or the Trnovo (Tarnova) Plateau there is scarcely a river or brook flowing on the surface, the marlous belt of the Vipava (Vipacco) and Brda (Collio) is full of flowing waters that cut up the surface into innumerable large and small valleys, ravines and hills, ranges and hillocks, with less extensive alluvial plains along the chief rivers. Low hillocks with gently rising slopes are particularly characteristic for this lowland; they are called „gorice“ by the inhabitants and one of them gave the town Gorica (Gorizia, Görz) its name.

With its innumerable brooks and little rivers, with its whole variegated relief this country forms a great contrast to the

karstland bordering it on the north and south. A further important difference is its low height above sea-level in contrast to the higher Karst and the still higher Trnovo (Tarnovo) Plateau. And the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley seems to be put there by nature to serve as a line of communication for local and long-distance traffic. And with this we come to the chief function of this region.

The Soča (Isonzo) Basin is a remarkable natural unit not because it is a homogeneous country but because its different parts are strongly united by the River Basin of the Soča (Isonzo). The River Soča (Isonzo) and its tributaries bind them together and form the central system of communications, along which the economic and cultural life of the country flows in a common stream.

The main traffic line is the Soča (Isonzo) Valley, running from north to south. It is perfectly natural that the main line of communication should run along this valley which is at the same time the old historic road from the Central Alps over the Predil Pass, along the Soča (Isonzo) past Gorica (Gorizia) to the Adriatic coast, the Gulf of Trieste. It is crossed by an equally important transverse road along the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley. That is the road from Pannonia, the Danube Basin and from the Balkans, through the Sava and Pivka (Piuca) Valleys, the gate of Postojna (Postumia), down the Vipava (Vipacco), through the plain of Gorica (Gorizia) and south of the Brda to the Adriatic or into Italy. It is in the plain of Gorica (Gorizia) that this road crosses the one leading along the Soča (Isonzo) and over the Predil to Carinthia and further on into the Alps. It is at the junction of these two roads that Gorica (Gorizia) came into existence as a natural resting place and traffic centre. The foundation of the provincial capital of the County of Gorica (Gorizia) is connected with the natural lines of communication, the most important crossroads for the whole Soča (Isonzo) Basin. Its foundation in this place is the outcome of the nature of the country and its whole character.

And we must emphasize that as far back in history as we can learn anything, this place has been the most important traffic centre for the roads leading from Italy into the heart of the Continent, into the Alps and Central Europe, or the Pannonian Plains and the Balkans.

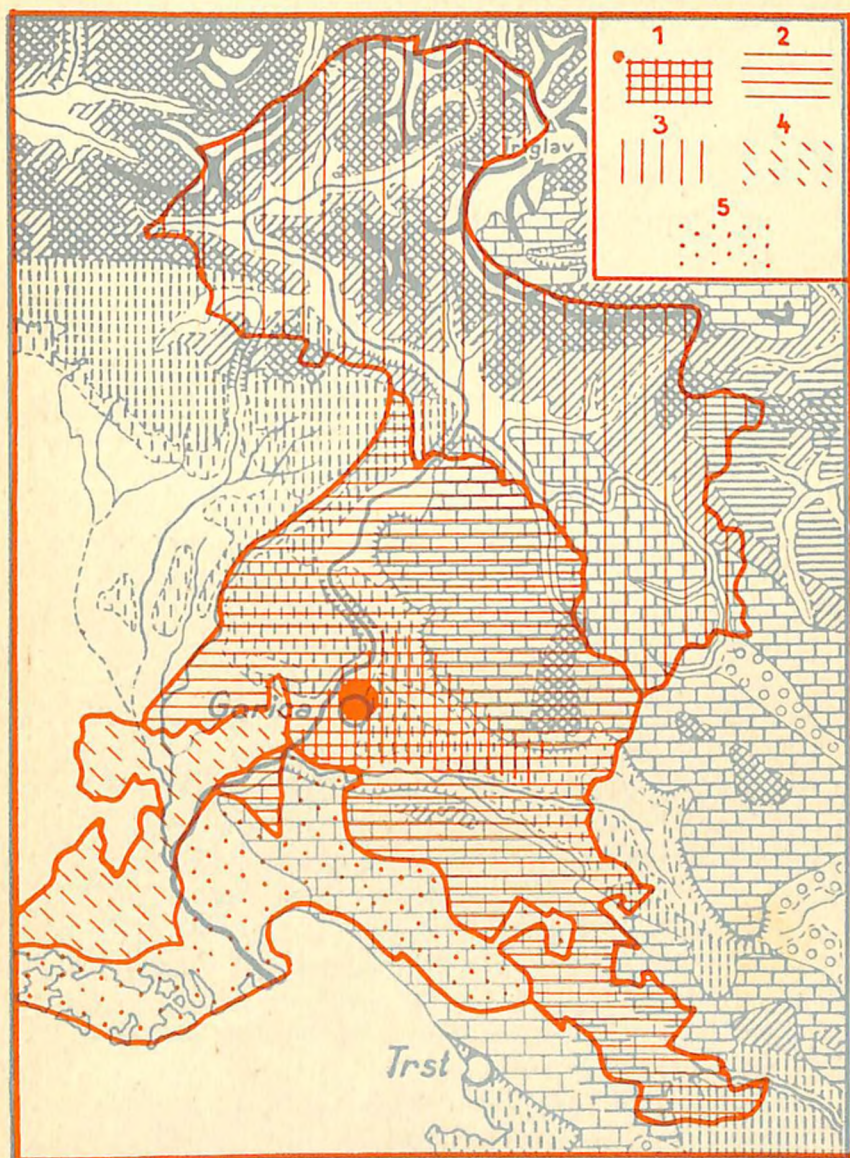
But Gorica (Gorizia) is also a natural traffic centre of local character. In itself the upper and middle valley of the Soča (Isonzo) forms a whole, a closed Alpine-Dinaric region between the watersheds, and very different from the Friulian Plain. This particular situation forms the basis for a large central town, an economic and administrative centre. As the plain at the juncture of the Soča (Isonzo) and Vipava (Vipacco) Valleys is a natural centre for long-distance traffic, it is also a natural centre for the local traffic along the Soča (Isonzo) and the Vipava (Vipacco). Thus the natural foundations of local traffic likewise demanded that the place where the Soča (Isonzo) and Vipava (Vipacco) Valleys meet should become a centre of traffic and of economic life.

We know comparatively little of the urban developments in the plain of Gorica (Gorizia). The oldest place named in these parts by historical writers is Silicanum, which is evidently the basis for the modern Solkan (Salcano). But Solkan (Salcano) is situated at the northern end of the Gorica (Gorizia) Plain, just where the narrow Soča (Isonzo) Valley, passing into the eocene Vipava (Vipacco) depression, suddenly widens into a large plain accumulated with Alpine gravel between the Brda and the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley. At the beginning of the Middle Ages *Castrum Silicanum* is often mentioned; experts naturally looked for it in the region of the present-day Solkan (Salcano), at the entrance of the Soča (Isonzo) Gorge; still it is interesting that several explorers of old geographical topography are inclined to think that the old *Castrum Silicanum* was not Solkan (Salcano) at all, but really the old castle of modern Gorica (Gorizia). In that case the name *Silicanum* would not mean only one settlement, but probably the whole region between Solkan (Salcano) and present-day Gorica (Gorizia).

Whatever the truth may be, whether the old medieval castle of *Silicanum* was the one that stands on the hill in modern Gorica (Gorizia), or not — it is firmly proved that from the Middle Ages the administrative and political centre and soon also the most important settlement developed at the site of modern Gorica (Gorizia). Originally there were two settlements — the castle and market place at the top, and a small Slovene village

on the western slope of the hill. Which of the two is older will probably remain an open question. But it is certain that the oldest settlement here was Slovene, since even the oldest documents (in the year 1001) never call it anything but „Gorica“, from which the Italian Gorizia and German Görz are derived. The castle in Gorica (Gorizia) became the centre of a fief from which the County of Gorica (Gorizia) developed. Around the castle and in the plain at the foot of the hill arose a settlement which in 1210 is for the first time called a market town, and in the 14th century became a town. Gorica (Gorizia) was the capital of a rising country and thus grew faster than any other town in the Soča (Isonzo) Basin. It remained the provincial capital through centuries and characteristically gave its name to the whole country. Even after 1918, when parts of the old County of Gorica (Gorizia) were cut off and united to various neighbouring provinces, Gorica (Gorizia) still remained the seat of the provincial authorities for the whole Province of Gorizia, reflecting still the hydrographic and geographical unity of the upper and middle Soča (Isonzo) Basin. During the time of the Italian rule between the two World Wars Gorica (Gorizia) remained the capital of the province which bore its name (Goriziano, Provincia di Gorizia); though parts of it in the south and south-west had been cut off and it had been enlarged towards the east, it still comprised all essential parts of the old County of Gorica (Gorizia), all those which are united into a geographical whole by the Soča (Isonzo) Basin.

We might even say that the reorganisation of the old County of Gorica (Gorizia) into the Province of Gorica (Provincia di Gorizia) more than ever expressed the geographical unity of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin proper, that is the upper and middle Soča (Isonzo) Basin. With the loss of the southern Karst region and the Soča (Isonzo) Plain, which really belong to the Gulf of Trieste and the settlements along it, the province of Gorica (Gorizia) became even more concentrated on the Soča (Isonzo) and Vipava (Vipacco) Valleys. With the addition of Idria, situated in the Valley of the upper Idrijca (Idria), and the upper Vipava (Vipacco) Valley the political administration of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin roughly corresponded to its hydrographical extent. Now the fundamental transverse line of the Soča



Development of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia)

1) Original nucleus of the County of Gorica in 1001. — Old County of Gorica during the following centuries. — 3) Tolmin (Tolmino) and Bovec (Plezzo) Districts, attached to the County of Gorica (Gorizia) towards the end of the Middle Ages. — 4) Separate County of Gradišče (Gradišca) from 1647 to 1754. — 5) Territory along the Lower Soča (Isonzo) and at the Gulf of Trieste (Tržič [Monfalcone], Gradež [Grado], Devin [Duino]) attached to the County of Gorica (Gorizia) at the beginning of the 19th century.

(Isonzo) Basin, the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley, became even more important. And Gorica (Gorizia) still remained the capital; within the new borders its central situation at the place where the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley meets the Soča (Isonzo) Valley, became particularly effective.

Which, then, were the causes that Gorica (Gorizia) was selected in the old times and remained through the ages the central settlement, the centripetal political, administrative and generally anthropogeographical centre of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin? The answer is very simple; we need only glance at a map. Here the Soča (Isonzo) Valley, which over the Predil Pass offers a natural communication with the upper Drava (Drau) Basin meets the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley which by its wide and deeply cut valley offers the most favourable natural foundation for a great line of communication with the Sava Basin and the central Danube Basin. The Plain of Gorica (Gorizia) is the natural crossroad for these lines of communication. The site on the Soča (Isonzo) is determined by the branching off of the road up the Soča (Isonzo) Valley; the road from west to east has some wider possibilities determined by the wide gap between the Brda and the edge of the Karst below the mouth of the Vipava (Vipacco). The main old Roman road, coming from Aquileia, ran past Gradišče (Gradisca) and Majnica (Mairnizza), crossed the Soča (Isonzo) and along the lower Vipava (Vipacco) over Miren (Merna) and Bilje (Biglia) towards Ajdovščina (Aidussina). In the Middle Ages a northern variation of this road along the Vipava (Vipacco) was more important — the road along the middle of the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley, past Gorica (Gorizia) and along the sunny southern slopes of the Brda towards the west. This road remained the most important all through the centuries to the present day and it is the most favourable because of its natural geographical traffic conditions. It is particularly for this road that the site about Gorica (Gorizia) offers all conditions for a great traffic centre. In times of unrest the hills around Gorica (Gorizia) offered a splendid strategic support; the fortified castle on the hill of Gorica (Gorizia) easily commanded and controlled the passages towards Solkan (Salcano) and the Soča (Isonzo) ravine as well as that towards the east up the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley, and

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towards the west past Podgora (Piedimonte) and Ločnik (Lucinico). The bridge and fords over the Soča (Isonzo) were likewise easily controlled from Gorica (Gorizia). These strategic geographical advantages could be used the better because they were connected with the natural conditions for a traffic, trading and general anthropogeographic centre. For the site in the long axis of the Vipava (Vipacco) and at the same time, the Soča (Isonzo) Valleys was connected with the easy access to the gentle slopes of the Brda, the nearby Karst and the nearer parts of the Soča (Isonzo) Plain between the Brda and the Karst. From all these considerations Gorica (Gorizia) is undoubtedly better suited for the chief settlement of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin than e. g. Solkan (Salcano), which is too much to one side for the road along the Vipava (Vipacco) and has the only advantage of directly controlling the entrance into the Soča (Isonzo) Ravine and the road towards Grgar (Gargaro) and Čepovan (Chiapovano). Better also than the places on the lower Vipava (Vipacco) which also are too far from the junction of the Vipava (Vipacco) and Soča (Isonzo) Valleys, since it was always the most important political and administrative function of the leading town of the Soča (Isonzo) Valley to control just this junction. And it even seems that the neighbourhood of Gorica (Gorizia) had this function even in prehistoric times. This is proved by traces of prehistoric life in the neighbourhood; prehistoric findings on the hill of St. Marko (San Marco) above St. Peter (San Pietro), just south-east of Gorica (Gorizia), show that there must have been rather large early settlements in these parts.

The dense population in the old times was certainly caused by the exceptional geographical advantages with regard to communications. Of course these easy communications had their drawbacks. Many armies passed down the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley and several battles took place in the vicinity. At the time of the Migration of Peoples the fighting hosts of ever new peoples passed through the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley and it is understandable that the settlements in these places had much to suffer. But after the Slovenes had settled here and peace had returned, the country around Gorica (Gorizia) was again the most densely populated, the most important. There are three

primary centres of church administration in this vicinity, the old parishes of Solkan (Salcano), Miren (Merna) and Ločnik (Lucinico). The settlement of the castle and town of Gorica (Gorizia) became for many centuries of the Middle Ages and in modern times the crystallizing core of the Soča (Isonzo) Valley, the political, administrative, commercial, cultural and traffic centre, and has retained this leading part to these days.

In all the chief directions of the communicational functions of Gorica (Gorizia) there are nowadays railway lines, which illustrate very well the natural geographic foundations of the traffic. One line goes along the Soča (Isonzo) towards Trieste, towards the sea, another along the southern foot of the Brda into the Friulian plain, a third along the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley towards Ajdovščina (Aidussina) and at last a fourth up the Soča (Isonzo) Valley towards Tolmin (Tolmino). It has often been criticised that this last line was built so late and was not built over the Predil Pass and there is ample evidence that the reasons were exclusively the old international political quarrels which would not allow a railway line to run too near the old Austro-Italian frontier. And it is sufficiently well-known how the Upper Soča (Isonzo) Valley has suffered and is still suffering because of this neglect which hindered its natural economic progress.

It is of particular interest how the communicational rôle of the Vipava (Vipacco) route changed more and more in modern times. Through centuries this was the chief communication between Italy and the Sava and Middle Danube Basins. But the more important Trieste grew, the more its trade and traffic surpassed the other ports on the upper Adriatic, the more the traffic from Ljubljana turned instead of through the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley over the Karst to the Trieste harbour. At last this route prevailed. The chief long-distance traffic went over the Karst to Trieste. The traffic along the Soča (Isonzo) ran to the same town, and this traffic, too, was partly long-distance. South of Gorica (Gorizia), this traffic had at its disposal, besides the plain of the Lower Soča (Isonzo) and along the foot of the Karst, also a very favourable shortcut, made by nature in the famous "Suh Dol" (Dry Valley), which runs from Peč (Peci) below Miren (Merna) over the Devetaki

and a little east of the Lake of Doberdob (Doberdò) to Štivan (S. Giovanni) above the Timavo. This "Suhi Dol", which is really the original river-bed of the Soča (Isonzo) through the Karst, always was and still is a welcome shortcut for the traffic between Gorica (Gorizia) and Štivan (S. Giovanni)—Trieste. The old highway ran along it, since it has only gentle slopes, and its highest point does not surpass 87 m above sea-level. Modern auto-roads are built along it, too. It still rivals the longer, roundabout route along the western foot of the Karst through Zagraj (Sagrado) and Tržič (Monfalcone), though this route runs in the plain all the time. The railway goes along the longer route, but another goes over the Karst, not along the Dol of the Devetaki, but past Dornberg (Montespino), Rihemberk (Rifemberg), Štanjel (San Daniele del Carso) and Dutovlje (Dutogliano) to Opčina (Opicina) and Trieste. But in all these variants Gorica (Gorizia) has remained the starting point since it is, by its site near the entrance into the Soča (Isonzo) ravine, a natural junction.

The shifted communication arteries which were pointed above, strengthened the function of the way along the Soča (Isonzo), while the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley was deprived of its part of the main communication line and left only the task of local traffic. The railway line from Gorica (Gorizia) to Ajdovščina (Aidussina) was not extended yet via Razdrto (Preval) and preserved its importance for the local traffic to Gorica (Gorizia) and to the elementary communication line of the Soča (Isonzo). The urban and traffic-geographical function of Gorica (Gorizia) was weakened by it to a certain extent by being situated no more on a first-class big communication artery stretched to a great distance. But Gorica (Gorizia) was left all its essential task of a traffic-crossing and focus, its extent being more than regional, at any rate of provincial character. Or with other words: Gorica (Gorizia) preserved its character and task of a traffic-centre, a crossing, and an economic focus of the country along the Soča (Isonzo) undiminished, so to say more closed and concentrated on the native country itself. Especially the leading-about of the traffic westwards fell off as it was going no more beyond the general line Krmin (Cormons) - Gradišče (Gradisca). At the same time the traffic in the longitudinal

direction towards the Gulf of Trieste, towards Trieste itself was strengthened. By it the longitudinal configuration of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin and the longitudinal traffic basis which agreed with the Soča (Isonzo) Valley became still more important. The provincial unity of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin got stronger by it and the centripetal task of the town of Gorica (Gorizia) was sooner or later affirmed by it very efficaciously and independently.

Hereby we are given the basis for considering which are the domains gravitating towards Gorica (Gorizia). At a glance it is evident that the nearest vicinity of Gorica (Gorizia) belongs to its influential sphere in its number being the Plain of Gorica (Gorizia) from Solkano (Salcano) to Sovodnje (Savogna), Brda and the lower Vipava (Vipacco) Valley equally, and the Central Soča (Isonzo) Basin with the northern part of the Karst. The stress is especially to be laid upon the fact that the lowest part of Soča (Isonzo) Basin, containing the Plain of the Soča (Isonzo) up to the sea does not gravitate to Gorica (Gorizia) and is not under the attractive power of the traffic and economical focus of Gorica (Gorizia). Being situated on coast and its vicinity the southern part of the Soča Plain from Gradišče and Zagraj belongs to the influential sphere of the Gulf of Trieste and to the attractive sphere of the great harbour and economical focus of Trieste. The entire broad southern part of the Karst gravitates there direct as well. The evidence of it is being given daily by the quotidian economic life, by the entire traffic and commercial living in that sphere of the immediate hinterland of Trieste. Besides in the western part of the Soča (Isonzo) Plain the attractiveness of the municipal centre of Videm (Udine) makes its influence felt; the urban sphere of influence of the town of Gorica (Gorizia) extends therefore into the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain approximately to the Lower Idrija (Iudrio) and to Romans and Gradišče (Gradisca). The economical attractiveness is nowadays regulated to a great extent by railways, namely by the railway line Gorica (Gorizia) - Krmin (Cormons) and Gorica (Gorizia) - Gradišče (Gradisca) to the advantage of the centripetal domain of Gorica (Gorizia) and by the line Trieste - Gradišče (Gradisca) and Trieste - Tržič (Monfalcone) - Červinjan (Cervignano) to the benefit of Trieste.

and a little east of the Lake of Doberdob (Doberdò) to Štivan (S. Giovanni) above the Timavo. This "Suhi Dol", which is really the original river-bed of the Soča (Isonzo) through the Karst, always was and still is a welcome shortcut for the traffic between Gorica (Gorizia) and Štivan (S. Giovanni)—Trieste. The old highway ran along it, since it has only gentle slopes, and its highest point does not surpass 87 m above sea-level. Modern auto-roads are built along it, too. It still rivals the longer, roundabout route along the western foot of the Karst through Zagraj (Sagrado) and Tržič (Monfalcone), though this route runs in the plain all the time. The railway goes along the longer route, but another goes over the Karst, not along the Dol of the Devetaki, but past Dornberg (Montespino), Rihemberk (Rifemberg), Štanjel (San Daniele del Carso) and Dutovlje (Dutogliano) to Opčina (Opicina) and Trieste. But in all these variants Gorica (Gorizia) has remained the starting point since it is, by its site near the entrance into the Soča (Isonzo) ravine, a natural junction.

The shifted communication arteries which were pointed above, strengthened the function of the way along the Soča (Isonzo), while the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley was deprived of its part of the main communication line and left only the task of local traffic. The railway line from Gorica (Gorizia) to Ajdovščina (Aidussina) was not extended yet via Razdrto (Preval) and preserved its importance for the local traffic to Gorica (Gorizia) and to the elementary communication line of the Soča (Isonzo). The urban and traffic-geographical function of Gorica (Gorizia) was weakened by it to a certain extent by being situated no more on a first-class big communication artery stretched to a great distance. But Gorica (Gorizia) was left all its essential task of a traffic-crossing and focus, its extent being more than regional, at any rate of provincial character. Or with other words: Gorica (Gorizia) preserved its character and task of a traffic-centre, a crossing, and an economic focus of the country along the Soča (Isonzo) undiminished, so to say more closed and concentrated on the native country itself. Especially the leading-about of the traffic westwards fell off as it was going no more beyond the general line Krmin (Cormons) - Gradišče (Gradisca). At the same time the traffic in the longitudinal

direction towards the Gulf of Trieste, towards Trieste itself was strengthened. By it the longitudinal configuration of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin and the longitudinal traffic basis which agreed with the Soča (Isonzo) Valley became still more important. The provincial unity of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin got stronger by it and the centripetal task of the town of Gorica (Gorizia) was sooner or later affirmed by it very efficaciously and independently.

Hereby we are given the basis for considering which are the domains gravitating towards Gorica (Gorizia). At a glance it is evident that the nearest vicinity of Gorica (Gorizia) belongs to its influential sphere in its number being the Plain of Gorica (Gorizia) from Solkano (Salcano) to Sovodnje (Savogna), Brda and the lower Vipava (Vipacco) Valley equally, and the Central Soča (Isonzo) Basin with the northern part of the Karst. The stress is especially to be laid upon the fact that the lowest part of Soča (Isonzo) Basin, containing the Plain of the Soča (Isonzo) up to the sea does not gravitate to Gorica (Gorizia) and is not under the attractive power of the traffic and economical focus of Gorica (Gorizia). Being situated on coast and its vicinity the southern part of the Soča Plain from Gradišče and Zagraj belongs to the influential sphere of the Gulf of Trieste and to the attractive sphere of the great harbour and economical focus of Trieste. The entire broad southern part of the Karst gravitates there direct as well. The evidence of it is being given daily by the quotidian economic life, by the entire traffic and commercial living in that sphere of the immediate hinterland of Trieste. Besides in the western part of the Soča (Isonzo) Plain the attractiveness of the municipal centre of Videm (Udine) makes its influence felt; the urban sphere of influence of the town of Gorica (Gorizia) extends therefore into the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain approximately to the Lower Idrija (Iudrio) and to Romans and Gradišče (Gradisca). The economical attractiveness is nowadays regulated to a great extent by railways, namely by the railway line Gorica (Gorizia) - Krmin (Cormons) and Gorica (Gorizia) - Gradišče (Gradisca) to the advantage of the centripetal domain of Gorica (Gorizia) and by the line Trieste - Gradišče (Gradisca) and Trieste - Tržič (Monfalcone) - Červinjan (Cervignano) to the benefit of Trieste.

With this characterization the territorial-political and administrative development of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin and the arrangement of urban centres in single parts of the country as well as the development of the urban and administrative functions owned by Gorica (Gorizia) when the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) was founded, is in accordance. The oldest, actually the very nucleus of the County of Gorica (Gorizia), which was built round the castle of Gorica (Gorizia), contained only the Plain of Gorica (Gorizia) and the lower part of the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley. After having gradually extended and rounded up the County of Gorica (Gorizia) contained the greater part of the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley, namely approximately up to Sv. Križ (Santa Croce), the entire Brda, the Central Soča (Isonzo) Basin, a little beyond Ročinj (Roncina) below Tolmin (Tolmino) and the highland on both sides of it, in the west up to Idrija (Iudrio), in the east beyond Čepovan (Chiapovano). Southwards the Country of Gorica (Gorizia) extended beyond the North Karst and to the Soča (Isonzo) Plain up to Lower Idrija (Iudrio) and somehow to the line Villesse-Jalmicco. The oldest Province of Gorica (Gorizia) consequently contained mainly the Central Soča (Isonzo) Basin and the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley. Soon, however, the Upper Soča (Isonzo) Basin containing the District of Tolmin (Tolmino) and Bovec (Plezzo), was annexed. The last the southern part of the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain which is in the domain of maritime influences originating from the coast of the Gulf of Trieste was annexed to the administrative-political unity of the ancient Province of Gorica (Gorizia). For long centuries there ruled Venetians over the entire domain of lagoons with Gradež (Grado) and over the plain spreading in the shape of a triangle between the Karst and the sea and the Lower Soča (Isonzo) below Zagraj (Sagrado). This Venetian territory, situated near the coast and its vicinity along the Lower Soča (Isonzo) united only after the decline of the Republic of Venice with the Central and Upper Soča (Isonzo) Basin into the unit of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia).

It is beyond doubt that in the outlined historical development of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) there is many a thing accidental, yet the nucleus of the politically geographical de-

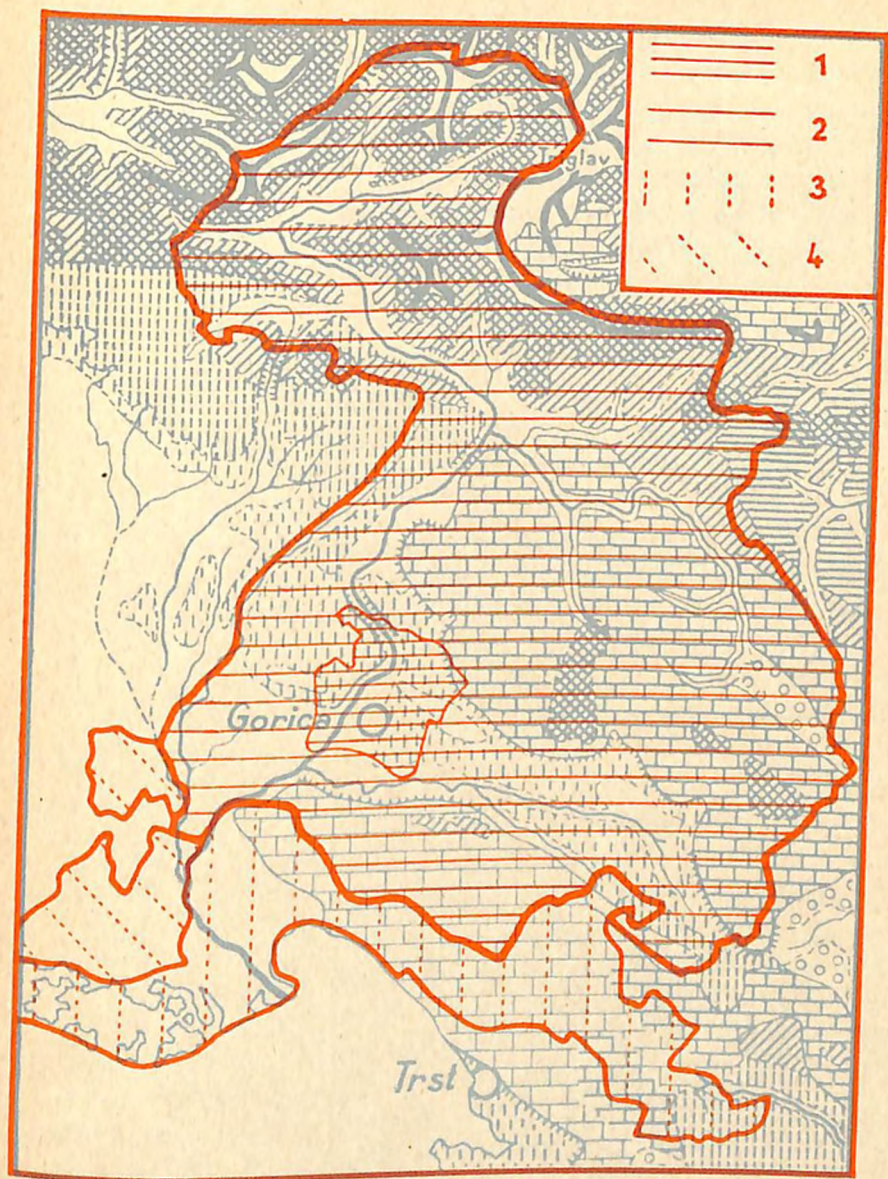
velopment is justified and genetically relied on physical-geographical facts. The Province of Gorica (Gorizia) was above all an indispensable formation as an administratively political connection of the Central and Upper Soča (Isonzo) Basin, representing a hydrographical and physical rounded-off unit, while the southern part of the ancient Province of Gorica (Gorizia) belongs according to its situation to the circumference of the Gulf of Trieste and is corresponding with the fact that it was annexed to Gorica (Gorizia) at the beginning of the 19th century.

From the following it is to be seen how Gorica (Gorizia) was mainly an administrative and urban centre for the Central and Upper Soča (Isonzo) Basin while the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain was rather pushed away. In the year 1647 the plain territories at the right bank of the Lower Soča (Isonzo) were separated from the entire Province of Gorica (Gorizia) and organized as a separate County of Gradišče (Gradisca), its seat being at Gradišče (Gradisca). The separate County of Gradišče (Gradisca) containing only the territory on the plain at the right bank of the Lower Soča (Isonzo) resisted as a self-governing, administratively territorial formation till the year 1754 when it was reunited with the remaining country into a unit. Yet in the name the remembrance of a special county on the Western Soča (Isonzo) Plain remained, as to the very end of the Austrian period the county was called Gorica - Gradiška (Gorizia - Gradisca) after the two constituent parts. In this double name the fact is reflected that Gorica (Gorizia) is above all a naturally allotted centre for the administration of the entire economical and cultural life of the Central Soča (Isonzo) Basin, while the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain requires special administrative and economic centres.

As already mentioned there is many a thing in that historical development accidental, it is, however, evident that it was essentially nevertheless an expression of natural-geographical conditions. It is very instructive to compare with it the recent division of the Julian March into detached provinces as it was carried out between the two World Wars under the Italian administration. By this provincial division they wanted in general to take into consideration natural geographic moments at least, while allotting the administrative territory to single

leading town. And there we see that in the domain of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin they made the following: The southern part of the Soča (Isonzo) Plain i. e. the lagoons with Gradež (Grado) and the plain between the sea, the Karst and the Lower Soča (Isonzo) down from Zagraj (Sagrado) were included into the Province of Trieste as well as the southern and eastern part of the Karst. The remainder of the plain along the right bank of the Lower (Soča (Isonzo) and westwards from Lower Idrija (Iudrio) was annexed to the Province of Videm (Udine). The central and the upper parts of the ancient Austrian Province of Gorica (Gorizia) were organized as the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) into which also Idrija (Idria), Črni vrh (Montenero d'Idria), Col (Zolla) and Vipava (Vipacco) consequently the upper part of the Idrija (Idria) and Vipava (Vipacco) Basins were included. We must admit that the new administrative unit relied still more upon the geographical unit of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin. The entire Vipava (Vipacco) Valley remained the central artery of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) and Gorica (Gorizia) proved to be an excellent seat of the entire provincial administration. Or to express it with other words: The Province of Gorica (Gorizia) meant simply an administratively political organization of the entire Central and Upper Soča (Isonzo) Basin which during their development of many years had created their organical administrative and economical centre in the town of Gorica (Gorizia) which was founded on the juncture of the Soča (Isonzo) and the Vipava (Vipacco) Valleys.

It is very instructive to compare the development of towns and boroughs and of other bigger, economically more important settlements in the Province with the territorially political development. It is the most instructive to take the ancient Province of Gorica (Gorizia) as it existed during the last Austrian census, and to see how localities as geographically individual settlements with more than one thousand inhabitants were situated. In the entire Province of Gorica (Gorizia) there were — beside the town of Gorica (Gorizia), which as the capital with the suburban, already urbanized settlements of Solkan (Salcano), Šempeter (San Pietro), Štandrež (Sant'Andrea), Podgora (Piedimonte), and Ločnik (Lucinico) is considered separately — there were 22 localities having more than 1000 inhabitants in the year 1910. It is surprising how unsymmetrically they are



Province of Gorica (Gorizia)

1) Territory of the present Commune of Gorica (Gorizia). — 2) Territory of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia). — 3) Section of the Province of Trieste, once part of the County of Gorica. — 4) Section of the Province of Udine, once part of the County of Gorica.

situated in the Province. The greater majority of not fewer than 82 per cent, i. e. 18 out of 22 are situated on the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain. This supremacy in larger settlements is the more effective if we consider that there are all larger towns to be found. There is the largest one of the ancient Province of Gorica (Gorizia) — except Gorica (Gorizia) itself — Tržič (Monfalcone) with 6460 inhabitants (These and the following particulars are from the year 1910). After Tržič (Monfalcone) the largest town was Gradež (Grado) with 4721 inhabitants, then Krmin (Cormons) with 4166 inhabitants. The fourth was Čerwinjan (Cervignano) with 3078, the fifth Ronchi with 2561, the sixth Nabrežina (Aurisina) with 2215 inhabitants. Then there follow 16 localities whose population was between 1000 and 2000. And again there must be laid stress on the fact that there are 13 among them situated on the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain, one, namely Sežana (Sesana), is situated on the Lower Karst and actually belongs, as well as Nabrežina (Aurisina), to the surroundings of Trieste already and is under the urban influence of Trieste. And thus we have only two localities left, Tolmin (Tolmino) with 1016 and Bovec (Plezzo) with 1345 inhabitants, situated in the Upper Soča (Isonzo) Valley, while the Slovene Central Soča (Isonzo) Valley, except Gorica (Gorizia), cannot afford either an urban or a rustic settlement reaching or exceeding the number of 1000 inhabitants in the year 1910.

Hence it appears that only the southern part of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) on the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain created more considerable towns, besides plenty of very large settlements as there are neither so big nor so dense anywhere else in the Province. It is evident that the function of those large settlements are not only rural but to a large extent urban as well, and therefore do not need Gorica (Gorizia). It is beyond doubt that there developed larger towns the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain belonging to the economical influence of the Gulf of Trieste.

In the Slovene part of the Central Soča (Isonzo) Basin there are no more considerable settlements and it is obvious at a glance that it is Gorica (Gorizia) that must execute urban functions. It is well known that especially the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley is densely populated; the fact that there has not de-

veloped any larger market-place is to be considered as a proof how much it is dependent on Gorica (Gorizia) which has the urban function for its entire domain as well as for the Soča (Isonzo) Valley above Solkan (Salcano) and plateaus and hills situated by its side, and finally, also for the mountainous Upper Soča (Isonzo) Basin.

Thus it was in the year 1910 and to this day the proportion has not changed yet. Gorica (Gorizia) is above all the economical and in general the market-centre of the Vipava (Vipacco) Valley and the Central and Upper Soča (Isonzo) Valleys, while the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Lowland possesses its special considerable market-places and is but little dependent on Gorica (Gorizia). This lowland does not require Gorica (Gorizia), while Slovene Vipava (Vipacco) and Slovene Central and Upper Soča (Isonzo) Basins cannot do without Gorica (Gorizia).

Having arisen on the contact of the Soča (Isonzo) and Vipava (Vipacco) Valleys, on the crossing of the Soča (Isonzo) and Vipava (Vipacco) ways, Gorica (Gorizia) is to this day mainly a centripetal urban focus for both above mentioned main valleys. The great majority of the population of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) are concentrated just in both valleys, almost all important settlements are situated there. The Soča (Isonzo) and the Vipava (Vipacco) Valleys are the principal, by far the most important parts of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia). When a guide-book of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) was published by the Società Alpina Friuliana in 1930 its title was characteristic: *Gorizia con le Vallate dell' Isonzo e del Vipacco*. As matter of fact the Soča (Isonzo) and the Vipava (Vipacco) Valleys are the framework of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia). By performing the function of the capital and of an economically leading urban settlement Gorica (Gorizia) serves mainly both valleys and their requirements. Those are geographical facts which cannot be doubted and which are well reflected in its previous administrative-political history, in the entire economical and cultural inventory of present time, and in the whole political and technical literature.

It would be absurd to examine the problem of Gorica's political belonging separately from the one of both main val-

leys, the Soča (Isonzo) and the Vipava (Vipacco) Valleys which it belongs to by the nature of its urban part. And it would be absurd to discuss it together with the Lower Soča (Isonzo) Plain it has the least common with, it depends the least on, in bringing forward its economical and vital requirements.

Consequently Gorica (Gorizia) is an urban centre of an almost entirely Slovene territory. It is clearly reflected in the statistical data. In 1910 the total number of inhabitants in the political district of the surroundings of Gorica (Gorizia) was 73.861, of whom not fewer than 70.038 were Slovenes, i. e. 95 per cent, beside 2764 Italians and Friulians representing only 3,7 per cent of the entire population. Gorica (Gorizia) itself, situated in the centre of this almost entirely Slovene region numbered, after Austrian official data, among its 30.995 inhabitants 14.812 Italians and Friulians and but a little fewer, i. e. 10.790 Slovenes.

Let us take as basis the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) as it was organized by Italy in the period between the two Wars. We see that by far the greatest part of that Province of Gorica (Gorizia) was a Slovene country. Considering first the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) without Gorica (Gorizia), i. e. without the municipality of Gorica (Gorizia), by the Italian official census in 1921 there were found only 4,3 per cent Italians and 15,4 per cent Friulians, while the others were Slovenes. And if we take the entire Province of Gorica (Gorizia) with the town of Gorica (Gorizia), there were, by the last Italian census in which the mother tongue of the population was stated, in the year 1921 only 10,7 per cent Italians and 16,8 per cent Friulians out of 200.707 inhabitants, beside 71,3 per cent of Slovenes, and 0,5 per cent of Yugoslav citizens. In Gorica (Gorizia) Italy reckoned up 14.798 Italians and 9474 Friulians beside 17.133 Slovenes. Slovenes were therefore even after the Italian official census in a relative majority. By a Slovene calculation the number of Slovenes in the increased municipality of Gorica (Gorizia) was about the half of the entire population. As several thousand Italian inhabitants were those immigrants who had come into the country as conquerors, as officials of the State administration, and who instantly left after the collapse of the Italian rule and after the victory of the Yugoslav

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National Liberation Army, we may reckon that the share of the Slovene population in the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) was 75 per cent at least if not more. The same can be seen from the results of the official census of 1910. If we take this Austrian census of 1910 and its statistics regarding the mother tongue („the language of intercourse“) as a basis of the number of population in the territories of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) between the two Wars, with the total number of population of 213.744 souls, the Italians and Friulians in the territory of what was the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) numbered only 42.989, or 20,1 per cent of the population. According to that census, the total number of Slovenes was officially given as 160.682 souls, or 75,1 per cent. The rest consisted of 5205 aliens, or 2,5 per cent and 4868, or 2,3 per cent of various nationalities among them chiefly Germans. If we consider the entire territory whose urban centre is Gorica (Gorizia), the share of Friulians is slight and confined only to the part of the plain between the Brda and the Karst.

It is not surprising that in recent time when the indicated bases of the economical attractiveness made themselves particularly strongly valued, the influx of Slovene inhabitants to Gorica (Gorizia) increased more and more. The people's immigration from the country to towns was much stronger from the Slovene country than from the Friulian-Italian one. According to the data of citizenship in 1910 we see that there were then — beside 41,9 per cent of citizens with right of domicile in Gorica (Gorizia) — not fewer than 32,9 per cent of citizens whose right of domicile was in Slovene districts, and only 9,5 per cent in Friulian-Italian ones. It is significant that of those people whose home is in Slovene districts there are not fewer than 19 per cent from the district of Gorica's surroundings. It is quite natural that the afflux of inhabitants from Slovene districts is prevailing, the Slovene population being in very great majority in the Province of Gorica (Gorizia).

Gorica (Gorizia) is the leading town of the County of Gorica (Gorizia), of the Province of Gorica (Gorizia), of the Soča (Isonzo) Basin which is in its main part a part of the Alpine and Dinaric territory. The Central and the Upper Soča (Isonzo) Basin is separated from the Friulian Plain being as a closed



Localities with more than 1000 inhabitants in the Province of Gorica (Gorizia) in 1910

1) Gorica (with environs: Ločnik [Lucinico], Podgora [Piedimonte], Solkan [Salcano], Standrež [Sant'Andrea] and Sentpeter [San Pietro]). — 2) Localities with more than 4000 inhabitants. — 3) Localities with more than 2000 inhabitants. — 4) Localities with more than 1500 inhabitants. — 5) Localities with more than 1000 inhabitants.

Abbreviations are: F — Foljana (Fogliano), M — Mariano, R — Ruda, Sv. L. — Sv. Lovrenc (San Lorenzo), T — Turjak (Turriaco), V — Villesse, Z — Zagraj (Sagrado).

basin of an Alpine-Dinaric river of the same nature as its neighbourhood in the Sava and the Karst Slovenia. Only the Lowest Soča (Isonzo) Basin passes over to the border of the large Friulian lowland. Yet just for this lowest territory Gorica (Gorizia) has not performed the urban part. Gorica (Gorizia) is urban, administrative, economic and cultural centre first of all for the Central and the Upper Soča (Isonzo) Basin, consequently for an entirely Slovene territory. There has never been any administrative-political frontier, separating the town of Gorica (Gorizia) from the Vipava (Vipacco) and the Soča (Isonzo) Valleys, as it would be absurd.

