

**Pan-Slavism, Germanocentrism and Russian
Particularism: Notes on “Über die russische Sprache,”
Laibacher Wochenblatt, 1804**

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Abstract

Jernej Kopitar and the other members of Baron Zois’s circle would surely have read the 1804 article “Über die russische Sprache” in the important Ljubljana weekly *Laibacher Wochenblatt*. However, they would have strongly disagreed with the way the anonymous author viewed Slavic language and Russia’s place among the Slavs, which ran counter to all their own scholarly and philosophical positions as expressed in their work for the so-called “Slovene Renaissance.” Various passages in Kopitar’s own early work suggest that this article perhaps reflected attitudes within Austria’s German population that had to be overcome in order for the Slovene enlighteners’ project to succeed.

Key words: Slovene Renaissance, Pan-Slavism, early Romantic nationalism, Austria, German-Slavic cultural relations

In his massive 1906 biography of the Slovene philologist Jernej Kopitar,¹ N. M. Petrovskii mentions in a footnote an article that the young Kopitar probably read while working for Baron Žiga Zois in Ljubljana: “Über die russische Sprache” (On the Russian language), published over the course of three issues in the *Laibacher Wochenblatt zum Nutzen und Vergnügen* in 1804. Petrovskii essentially says nothing more about this piece; to my knowledge, no one else has ever commented on it either, and, in truth, based strictly on its philological worth, there would be no reason to. However, the anonymous author’s main interest is not so much language as it is Russia’s place in contemporary Europe. For this reason, it is not without interest to consider this article in light of the work the Zois circle was doing in Ljubljana at the time.² There can be little doubt that they read it—the *Laibacher Wochenblatt* was published by the most important newspaper in the city and they were personally acquainted with the editor/ publisher. What is more, “Über die russische Sprache” discusses topics very near to

¹ *Pervye gody deiatel’nosti V. Kopitaria*. As the title implies, this 730-page tome covers only part of Kopitar’s life, from 1780 to 1818. The author mentions “Über die russische Sprache” on p. 32.

² For a concise sketch summarizing the work of the circle of scholars and writers that Baron Zois gathered around him from his arrival in Ljubljana in 1781 till his death in 1819, see Vidmar (2010: 20–26).

their hearts: Slavic languages in the European context, the status of a Slavic culture in contemporary Europe, etc. After all, their own project involved the “revival of the Slovene language as the soul of national identity” within multi-cultural Austria.³

Although whatever responses Zois, et al., had to this piece at the time were never recorded for posterity (at least to my knowledge), it is easy enough to guess what in it might have irritated them given their high scholarly standards and the robust Pan-Slavic ideology they articulated. Interestingly, some of the more controversial stands Jernej Kopitar takes in his early work (ca. 1808–11) could be seen as a belated response to some of these points. Below I will argue that they might have reflected (besides defective scholarship) attitudes within Austria’s German population that the Zois circle had to contend with as they strove toward their goals.

The *Laibacher Wochenblatt*: General Notes

The most influential newspaper in Ljubljana in the nineteenth century was the *Laibacher Zeitung*, which appeared from 1783 to 1918.⁴ From 1804 till 1918,⁵ it published a weekly supplement on Sundays called *Laibacher Wochenblatt zum Nutzen und Vergnügen* (The Laibach weekly for utility and amusement). As its full title suggests, the *Laibacher Wochenblatt* set out to entertain and edify its readers, by publishing dispatches from foreign lands, articles on history and geography, short biographies of famous people, brief notes on fashion, literature and the theater, etc. (Žigon 2001: 72). This was a new kind of publication for Laibach/Ljubljana, and Žigon (2001: 72) suggests that it could be called the city’s first magazine.⁶

“Über die russische Sprache” seems to reflect the editorial policies of the man who founded the new periodical, the highly capable Georg Stadelmann (ca. 1780–1807), who moved to Laibach in early 1804 and

³ “...prenova slovenskega jezika kot duše narodnega identiteta”; see Vidmar (2010: 21).

⁴ See the online entry at The European Library website, theeuropeanlibrary.org. For a discussion of the paper’s early history, see Žigon (2001: 69–72); this section also contains a general overview of newspapers in the Slovene provinces in the Pre-March era, as well as copious references to other literature.

⁵ Here I will be focusing only on the first three years of publication, which Žigon (2001) treats on 72–79.

⁶ Specifically, she says that “we can call it a *časopis*, according to Ivan Prijatelj’s definition,” and then further discusses the issue in note 27. Prijatelj, for his part, contrasts the word *časopis* with its near synonym *časnik*. While both scholars are clearly addressing historical realia of Slovene culture without reference to English semantics, the wording of Prijatelj’s argument and the context in which Žigon applies it in her own piece makes “magazine” an appropriate translation of *časopis* in this case.

immediately leased the local Kleinmayr printing establishment and assumed the editorship of the newspaper it published, the *Laibacher Zeitung*.⁷ Although he was evidently a German nationalist who “in his paper [never] concealed [the fact that] he was of German blood” (Žigon 2001: 74), he was also a “cultivated man with a feel for literature and science” (“izobraženec z literarnim in znanstvenim čutom” [Žigon 2001: 73]), and from every indication an enlightened and open-minded editor who regularly published articles on other cultures. Pieces on Russia from a German perspective in particular seem to have been something of a staple in the magazine, at least in its first years: a casual perusal of some bound editions of the magazine at the library of the National Museum in Ljubljana in April 2014 uncovered an article on the “German colony” in St. Petersburg, as well as a near-panegyric to the German-born Empress Catherine II (the Great) and a shorter, but no less positive, piece on the Germanophilic Peter the Great.⁸

“Über die russische Sprache”: General Notes

“Über die russische Sprache” appeared in three parts over issues 34–36 in 1804, the *Laibacher Wochenblatt*'s first year of publication.⁹ None of these publications display either page numbers or the date. Petrovskii gives the date of LW 1804/34 as 1 March, but this is clearly wrong: Žigon (2001: 73)

⁷ The biographical information in this paragraph is from Žigon (2001: 73). Žigon generally refers to him by his German given name, after having introduced him as “Jurij.” An internet search for “Georg Stadelmann” produced no useful results, while searching “Jurij Stadelmann” led to a number of Slovene sources, including a brief entry in the *Slovenski biografski leksikon* at slovenska-biografija.si. For a brief history of the *Laibacher Zeitung* and the Kleinmayr printing house that produced it, see Žigon (2001: 71–73).

⁸ All the articles mentioned were published in 1806: “Czar Peter der Erste” in no. VI; “Etwas über die deutschen Kolonie bei Sankt-Peterburg” in no. VIII; and “Katharina die Zweite, Kaiserin von Rußland” in IX. The author would like to thank the staff at the Narodni muzej Slovenije for their invaluable assistance. Why was Stadelmann seemingly so interested in Russia? Žigon does not address the issue, but it does not seem to have any direct connection to the progress of the Napoleonic Wars: in 1804, Russia was in the League of Armed Neutrality with Prussia, Sweden and Denmark that was formed to counter “British interference with neutral shipping” and thus constituted “a virtual alliance with France” (Herold 1963: 142). Since German nationalism arose with Herder in the 1770s and 1780s as a response to French cultural dominance, membership in this League would not have recommended Russia to an Austrian German patriot like Stadelmann.

⁹ Hereafter I will cite the original article as “LW 1804/34, 35, or 36.” I utilize scanned copies of the originals that I accessed at the Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije (<http://www.dlib.si>); when the home page appears, type “laibacher wochenblatt” into the site’s search engine; they have scanned issues from the years 1804–1805 and 1814–16.

provides evidence that this was, in fact, the date of the magazine's inaugural issue. If we assume one issue per week, numbers 34–36 would thus have appeared in late October and early November. All three parts are the lead article of their respective issues, and thus appear on the first two pages. It is quite possible that this article had been written (or at least started) a few years earlier: the author discusses the Third Partition of Poland (1795) as something that has just occurred, and he mentions the publication of the Russian Academy dictionary as a still ongoing process, whereas the final volume came out in 1794 (Jagić 1910: 156). In general, the author's knowledge of Russian culture feels somewhat dated: its "golden age" is associated with Catherine the Great's reign (1762–96), but the only writer mentioned by name is Mikhail Lomonosov (d. 1765).¹⁰ On the other hand, in LW 1804/36 he mentions the great contemporary Czech philologist Joseph Dobrovský (1753–1829) and the Polish linguist G. S. Bandtke (1768–1835), who, according to Jagić (1910: 147), did not start publishing until 1802.

The anonymous author is clearly a German man writing for the edification of other Germans. Russia's growing importance on the world stage is presented almost exclusively in terms of what that means for "us Germans,"¹¹ and the author constantly points with pride to the many ways in which Germans have contributed to the country's cultural awakening. (As for his gender, it would probably be sufficient to recall the time and place—the turn of the nineteenth century in a small provincial town in arguably the most conservative country in patriarchal East Central Europe—but we can also point to patronizing gender references in LW 1804/34 and 36; see below.)

Given the frequency with which such articles appeared in *Laibacher Wochenblatt* under Stadelmann's editorship—as well as the Germano-centric tone—it is tempting to assume that he himself might be the author of "Über die russische Sprache." However, there is reason to believe that the writer was a Protestant from one of the northern German provinces. The fact that Prussia and Russia now share a border after the final "Dismembration" (sic) of Poland in 1795 is of such importance to him that he cites it at the very beginning of Part 1 as a reason why Germans need to study Russian. Later in LW 1804/34 he notes with pride how Peter the Great (ruled 1682–1725) and his successors advanced Russian science by importing German scholars to their realm; and then he boasts of the vital

¹⁰ And the only work of Lomonosov's mentioned is his 1755 grammar—i.e., not his history, his verse, or his scientific writings.

¹¹ He, in fact, regularly uses the phrase "wir Deutsche": cf. from the second page of part 2, in LW 1804/35: "Obgleich die Russen weit mehr Schriftzeichen besitzen, als wir Deutsche..."—"Although the Russians possess far more letters than we Germans ..."

role German tutors are currently playing in the education of the Russian nobility (specifically “the manly part” thereof). It is well known that both these groups of intellectuals came predominantly—if not exclusively—from northern Germany.¹² One wonders if the author is writing from personal experience here.

“Über die russische Sprache” on Contemporary Russia

This, then, is what we would now call a popularizing article, a staple of “Sunday supplements” down to our own day. The style is lively and colloquial, and there is little pretense to academic depth or rigor, although the value of good scholarship is dutifully acknowledged: for example, the author declares proudly in part 1 that “all that foreigners know about Russia is thanks to German research,” and we have already seen that he peppers his text with the names of important scholars of various nationalities. However, there is no attempt to engage with such work in any serious way, and the overall impression the reader gets is of an intelligent amateur sharing his personal observations.

Take, for instance, the treatment of Russian, *qua* language. Toward the end of part 3, the author drops the name of J. C. Adelung, the most important German grammarian of the time and one of the founders of modern linguistics.¹³ However, his own description of Russian is not in the least scientific, and would hardly have given his uninitiated readers a clear idea of what the language was actually like. Consider this discussion of comparative phonetics from LW 1804/36:

The many sonorants admittedly make [Russian] difficult for our [German] tongues, but in the Russian mouth, especially that of the fair sex [*besonders des schönen Geschlechts*] it loses that putative roughness and jerkiness completely, and becomes rich and harmonious.

The treatment of grammar is even more perfunctory—it amounts to scattered lists of individual facts which are then contrasted to German

¹² Northern German scientists who spent time in Russia included the philosopher Christian Wolff from Halle and Marburg, who organized the Russian Academy of Sciences according to Peter’s precepts (Billington 1966: 214); the mathematician Leonhard Euler from Berlin (Billington 1966: 215); and the historians G. F. Müller from Leipzig (Jagić [1910, 81–82]; Vucinic [1963: 101–104]) and August Schlözer from Göttingen (Jagić [1910: 81–84]; Vucinic [1963, 120–21ff]). On the small army of foreign tutors who flooded into Russia from northern Germany and France beginning in the mid 1700s, see Billington (1966: 215); and Figes (2002: 54–58).

¹³ On Adelung, see Petrovskii 1906, 114–16, 158, et passim.

and/or Latin.¹⁴ Very few actual Russian examples are given, and many of these are lists of surnames. Elsewhere, he betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of just what constitutes Russian language and literature: he calls Church Slavonic “die Mutter” of the Russian language (from the first paragraph of LW 1804/35), and its canon¹⁵ the beginning of Russian literature:

[Its] development dates from the time of St. Cyril, who, with his brother Methodius, in the last half of the ninth century, translated the Holy Scripture into the Russian or Old Slavic language... From Cyril’s time to Peter the Great, Russian literature lay in a deep sleep, existing only in cloisters...

In typical fashion, he then praises Peter as the great man who brought enlightenment to his heretofore “neglected people.”

To repeat, however, the writer is primarily interested in Russian culture and its place in modern Europe, not the Russian language, per se. Here, Russia is consistently treated as one of the great European powers of the day, and he suggests that a great future awaits her: “Who can say that our northern neighbors will not one day outstrip us Germans?” (LW 1804/34). This is the context in which he wishes to discuss the language: Russian is regularly compared and contrasted with German, French, and English, and the author speculates that it might one day be the world’s *Hof- und Modesprache* (LW 1804/34). (After all, “for convivial company it affords the same ease as Italian” [LW 1804/36]!)

As already mentioned, this writer is quite proud of the contributions “we Germans” have been making to Russia’s burgeoning status, particularly in the realms of science and education. (In part 1, he surmises that this will eventually influence the development of the language.) He repeatedly praises Peter I, Elizabeth, and Catherine II, the most significant Russian monarchs of the eighteenth century, for their enlightened rule (see especially LW 1804/36), and offers a similar panegyric to the current ruler¹⁶: “...die schönen Aussichten, die Rußland

¹⁴ For example, from LW 1804/36: there is no article, as opposed to German; and word order is freer than in Latin.

¹⁵ For a concise description of the origins of OCS and the manuscripts that comprise the OCS canon, see Lunt (1974: 1–5).

¹⁶ But *which* ruler in particular? A reader in 1804 would, of course, assume the writer was referring to Alexander I, who was at that time a dynamic young emperor on whom many people in Europe had pinned high hopes. However, what if, in fact, the article was written earlier, as I suggested above? The masculine form of the German word (*Beherrscher*) would seem to rule out Catherine (d. 1796), but “wonderful prospects” and “the spread of human culture” are concepts not normally associated with her son and immediate successor, the harsh, stubborn Paul (ruled 1796–1800). Could perhaps the

unter seinem jetziger Beherrscher für die Ausbreitung der Cultur des Menschengeschlechts sogar bis in die Gegenden hindarbiethet, worin nur bisher... die Wohnsitze von Wildern zu sehen gewohnt waren..." [LW 1804/34] ("...the splendid prospects, which Russia presents under her current ruler for spreading the culture of the human race even into regions which until now have customarily been seen as the domicile of savages ...".) Elsewhere in part 1, the author goes so far as to declare that "the spirit of industry" and a host of other good qualities have been passed onto the Russians by German settlers of all classes—something that always happens whenever Germans settle under foreign peoples (*fremden Völkern*).

The Zois Circle and the *Laibacher Wochenblatt*

Žigon suggests that friendly ties were established between Georg Stadelmann and Žiga Zois almost from the moment of the former's arrival in Laibach (Žigon 2001: 73). While it might be an exaggeration to claim, as she does, that the *Laibacher Wochenblatt* became a "pillar of the Slovene revival" (Žigon 2001: 73), it is indisputable that the Zois circle left a distinct mark on the fledgling publication. As early as the second issue, Stadelmann promised to publish anecdotes from Carniolan history and profiles of worthy locals, and Žigon lists several such titles from 1804 and 1805 (Žigon 2001: 75, notes 46–48). The man responsible for many of these pieces, J. A. Zupančič,¹⁷ became close enough to the Zois circle that Kopitar helped support him after he found himself destitute in Vienna (Žigon 2001: 78). An article that Žigon attributes to him on Carniolan folk poetry in LW 1806/33-34 mentions Anton Tomaž Linhart, Zois's most trusted collaborator until his death in 1795, as well as Valentin Vodnik's recent book of verse, *Pesmi za pokušino*. Linhart's work is also discussed in a two-part article from 1805, and a lengthy announcement (alas, erroneous) about the impending publication of Vodnik's Slovene-German dictionary appeared in LW 1806/25–26. Jernej Kopitar's first published work is almost surely the brief, twenty-nine-line review of Dobrovský's anthology *Slavin* that came out in LW 1806/53–54, and Zois himself published an article on the olm, or "human fish," an unusual aquatic, cave-dwelling salamander native to Carniola in LW 1807/29. Only after Stadelmann's death in January 1807 did "German national consciousness" start to crowd out Slavic content in the *Laibacher Wochenblatt*, to the extent that Kopitar, in a letter to Zois of 23 December 1808, lamented that there was no longer

editors have substituted the masculine form in a clause originally written about Catherine in order to reflect the new reality?

¹⁷ On Zupančič (who signed his articles "Johann Anton Suppantšitsch"), see Žigon (2001: 73, 75–78); she includes references to other sources, as well.

anything Carniolan in the magazine.¹⁸ Zois himself did not even renew his subscription for 1808 (Žigon 2001: 80).

All of this strongly suggests, if not virtually guarantees, that the members of the Zois circle read and contemplated the article “Über die russische sprache” in 1804. Again, they have left no written record of what they thought about it, but it is easy to assume what their opinion was: satisfaction that one of the Slavic “tribes” was being presented in such a favorable light in the German-language press, mixed with some annoyance at the assumptions that guided the piece—for “Über die russische Sprache” goes against virtually all of the principles that underlay their own work.

The Zois Circle and Early Pan-Slavism

The Slovene enlighteners surrounding Žiga Zois in the first years of the nineteenth century would have objected to this article on both philological and historiographical grounds. Although they were essentially amateurs themselves, they took their scholarly endeavors very seriously, and were well-read in the current literature. There can be no doubt that this was thanks to the influence of Zois himself, who was “an exceptionally learned man... an encyclopedia in which there was not a single blank page” (quoted in Petrovskii [1906: 16]), an elected member of many learned societies who had a solid foundation in the natural sciences, technology, languages, and other fields.¹⁹ His remarkable library contained many Slavic rarities, as well as several works on Russia and/or by Russians.²⁰

From the first, the Baron set high standards for his circle’s philological endeavors. His ambitious “literary-revival program” (*literarno-prerodni program*; see Vidmar [2010: 20]) for the Slovene people included the creation of grammars and dictionaries, reforming the orthography, re-translating the Bible, and producing “linguistically pure and formally beautiful literature of useful content” for the peasantry and educated classes alike (Vidmar 2010: 21). Although this program anticipates the

¹⁸ See quote in Žigon (2001: 80); ironically, the new editor responsible for this shift in focus, Maximilian Wurzbach, had been a classmate of Kopitar’s in the Ljubljana *gymnasium* (Žigon 2001: 78).

¹⁹ On Zois’s background, see Petrovskii (1906: 13–21) and Pogačnik (1977: 17–20). On Zois as a typical Enlightenment figure, see especially Pogačnik (1977: 18). On the significance of Zois for Kopitar’s career, see Kopitar (1839: esp. 4).

²⁰ On the baron’s library, see Petrovskii (1906: 17–18) and Pogačnik (1977: 17–18). I accessed its catalogue at the manuscript division (Rokopisna zbirka) of the National and University Library (Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, NUK) in Ljubljana in July 2009. It is also accessible online on the NUK website. A new book on Zois’s library is forthcoming in October 2019 (Svoljšak and Vidmar 2019).

linguistic/literary Romantic nationalism of the nineteenth century, Zois and his acolytes were much more of the Enlightenment: “Scientifically, [they were] dependent on contemporary rationalist historiography and analytic philology... literarily, on Enlightenment poetry and drama” (Vidmar 2010: 21). In practice, this meant that their linguistic work shows the influence of Adelung and Dobrovský: it is indicative that the baron, in his letter to Vodnik of 20 March 1794, insists that the Slovene people cannot be enlightened “until we acquire a philosophical-critical grammar and dictionary that meet the current standards of art and science” (Kos 1971: 17) which clearly echoes the title of Adelung’s celebrated *Grammatisch-Kritisches Wörterbuch der hochdeutschen Mundart* (Grammatical-Critical dictionary of the High German dialect, first edition published 1774–86).²¹ Zois praised Kopitar for his reliance on the German philologist (as well as Herder) in his Slovene grammar (Vidmar 2010: 190), and indeed Adelung’s influence pervades Kopitar’s early work (see below). Meanwhile, we have already seen how the anonymous German author of “Über die russische Sprache” casually invokes the name of his learned fellow countryman without making any effort to apply his rigorous principles to his own superficial description of the Russian language.

In connection with historiography and culture, the scholars of the Zois circle took their lead, in particular, from such (near) contemporary German writers as the philosopher J. G. von Herder and the historian A. L. Schlözer.²² Both were Protestants who lived and worked in the Russian Empire in the 1760s (Herder in Riga, Schlözer in Petersburg with the Academy of Sciences).²³ Both preached that there was one huge Slavic nation, speaking dialects of one far-flung Slavic language. Schlözer describes the Slavs in his 1771 *Nordische Geschichte* (Northern history) as “the great, renowned, old, mighty and widespread people of the north” (Schlözer 1771: 323), and seems to take a special delight in telling his readers just how widespread they are: “From Ragusa on the Adriatic to the coast of the North Sea (*Eismeer*), from Kamchatka in the vicinity of Japan in the east (*rechter Hand*) to the Baltic in the west (*linker Hand bis an die Ostsee hin*)...”²⁴ He uses the words *Sprache* ‘language’ and *Mundart* ‘dialect’ more or less interchangeably to describe the different varieties of

²¹ Adelung’s dictionary has been digitalized and is available through the Münchener Digitalisierungszentrum digital library: <http://lexika.digitalisierungen.de/adelung/online/angebot>.

²² See Kohn (1960: ix–xii); here the author adds to this list the name of another German historian who worked in Russia in the mid-eighteenth century, G. F. Müller.

²³ For a brief biography of Herder, see Barnard (1965: xi–xv); on Schlözer’s career, see Jagić (1910: 81–84) and Vucinic (1963: 121ff).

²⁴ Schlözer (1771: 222); a nearly identical quote from his *Nestor* (1802) is provided in translation in Kohn (1960: xi).

Slavic speech, but stresses how close they are to one another: “The Croatian writer, for example, well knows that the language which one speaks in Archangel [sic], Iakutsk and Warsaw is a sister of his own (Schlözer 1771: 324).

Herder, meanwhile, also refers to the wide expanses occupied by the Slavic nation in his famous *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (“... a vast territory extending from the Don to the Elbe, and from the Adriatic Sea to the Baltic...” [Herder 1784: 482–83]), and goes on to extol its many virtues of this simple, rustic people:

Everywhere they settled on lands that others had relinquished, cultivating... them as... husbandmen or shepherds: so that their noiseless industry was of infinite advantage to countries from which other nations had migrated... They were fond of agriculture ... and various domestic arts... They led... a gay and musical life... They were liberal and hospitable to excess, lovers of pastoral freedom... submissive and obedient, enemies to spoil and rapine. All this preserved them not from oppression: nay, it contributed to their being oppressed... etc., etc. (Herder 1784: 482–83)

All this is compared most favorably to “enterprising warriors and adventurers, like the Germans,” who in fact have “injuriously oppressed them”: “What the Franks began, the Saxons completed: in whole provinces the Slavs were extirpated or made bondsmen, and their lands divided among bishops and nobles” (Herder 1784: 483). However, for the famous philosopher “the wheel of changing time... revolves without ceasing,” and at the end of his account he hints that the Slavs might soon “at length awake from their long and heavy slumber,” and that “the future just may belong to them.”²⁵

Such chords were already being struck in Carniola by Marko Pohlin in his 1768 *Kraynska grammatika*: here, Father Marko declared that so many people in so many different countries speak one or the other Slavic “dialect” that most of the world could be called Slavic (Kos 1971: 8–9). Writing nine years later in his *Windische Sprachlehre*, Ožbalt Gutschmann sounds a more clearly Schlözerian note: “[The Slovenes] are part of the chain of Slavic nations that stretches from the most distant North Sea to the Adriatic.”²⁶ Gutschmann’s and Pohlin’s much more serious successors in the Zois circle continue in the same vein a few decades later. Linhart, for example, who cites Schlözer more than any other authority in both prefaces to his two-volume *Versuch einer Geschichte von Krain...* (Essay on the

²⁵ Herder 1784, op. cit. This is certainly how Kohn interprets Herder’s statements: see Kohn (1960: xi).

²⁶ Available at <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~stermole/Gutschmann/index.html>.

history of Carniola...) of 1788/1791 (Kos 1971: 67, 69, 73), also appropriates Schlözer's phraseology when he writes: "...the Slavs... have spread more widely than any other people... they now... live in half of Europe and Asia," etc.²⁷ Later, his description of the Slavic character is redolent of Herder: "They have been subdued and humiliated, but in them still stirs a feeling of personal worth, a *love of freedom*..."; "it is exceptionally difficult to separate a Slav from his nation"; "when they were conquered their lot was hatred, scorn, and oppression..."; etc.²⁸

The Ljubljana enlighteners take the concept of a single Slavic nation to surprising lengths, considering how specific their stated goals are (i.e., to enlighten their largely peasant people according to modern scientific principles and to halt the relentless process of Germanization in Slovene towns). They regularly refer to this people not as "Slovenes,"²⁹ but as *Slavs*. That is, they usually use the general ethnonym in place of the specific. Linhart's history focuses on "the Slavs of southern Austria"³⁰ and in his letter to Anton cited above in footnote 15, he calls himself "a Slav and an historian." When Zois exhorts the budding Slovene poet Valentin Vodnik to get rid of the German words in his verse, he advises him to replace them not with Slovene ones *per se*, but with Slavic ones (letter of 25 June 1794 [Kos 1971: 26–27]).³¹ Meanwhile, one of Blaž Kumerdej's goals in writing his own grammar was to compare Carniolan to all the other Slavic dialects (Petrovskii 1906: 105–106); while yet another Ljubljana grammarian, Jurij Japelj, hoped that his work on Slovene would serve as the foundation for a "universal Slavic grammar" (Petrovskii 1906: 111). Both Kumerdej and Japelj intended to choose among variants in Slovene dialects according to preferred usage in other Slavic languages, and both works contain numerous examples from all the Slavic "dialects," including Russian.³² The overall effect of all this is to overwhelm the reader with evidence that the Winds

²⁷ This is from the preface to vol. 2; see Kos (1971: 70).

²⁸ "Character of the Nation," from *Versuch einer Geschichte von Krain...*, in Kos (1971: 77–79).

²⁹ Or "Carniolans," or "Winds," etc. The question of ethnic nomenclature in the Slovene provinces at the turn of the nineteenth century is rather complicated. According to Kopitar himself, Carinthian and Styrian Slovenes called themselves "Slovenzi" and were called "Winds" by their German neighbors; the Slovenes of Carniola, however, were just "Carniolans"; see Kopitar (1809a: vi).

³⁰ See the preface to vol. 1 (Kos 1971: 66); the full title of his book is, of course, significant in and of itself: *Versuch einer Geschichte von Krain und den übrigen Ländern der südlichen Slaven Österreichs*.

³¹ Zois also talks about Vodnik's putative audience being the entire Slavic world: letter of 4 October 1795 (Kos 1971: 48), and the undated letter on the occasion of Linhart's death on 14 July 1795 (Kos 1971: 32).

³² Petrovskii (1906: 10). I examined Japelj's and Kumerdej's manuscripts at the Rokopisna zbirka/NUK in July 2009.

and Carniolans are much more than insignificant minorities tucked away in a provincial corner of the Austrian Empire: they are rather part of a vast entity that Europe's greatest minds insist will soon dominate the continent. As such, the work of the Ljubljana enlighteners can be seen as taking the first step beyond Herder in the direction of Romantic nationalism: the precepts the German sage expounds in support of an abstract theory of history are here put to the service of a particular ethnic group in a specific country.

In this connection, it is also striking just how casually these people refer to the Russians in their writings: to them, the latter are not the largest of the Slavic peoples and masters of what was rapidly becoming one of Europe's most powerful states, but just another one of the Slavic "tribes" and thus on the same plane as the Carniolans, et al. Linhart, in the preface to Vol. 2 of his *Versuch einen Geschichte...* basically equates the Russians and Slovenes by calling them the northern and southern extremes respectively of the Slavic world (Kos 1971: 74), and also sounds a theme that Kopitar would subsequently take up when he proclaims Austria to be as much a Slavic state as the Romanov's realm is (Kos 1971: 71). Elsewhere, he mentions Russia as (merely?) one of the Slavic nations that adheres to the "Greek church"—i.e., Eastern Orthodoxy (Kos 1971: 81).

Admittedly, the author of "Über die russische Sprache" has much less ambitious goals in view than Linhart, Vodnik, etc. Still, the thematic contrast could not be greater. Only rarely does he bring up Russia in a broader, pan-Slavic context: in part 1, he makes a cryptic and otherwise isolated reference to Russia's Slaviness: "...nur Rußland steht noch als Macht der erster Große in seiner slavischen Bedeutsamkeit da" ("...only Russia stands as a power of the first magnitude in its Slavic significance"); and in LW 1804/35 he refers to Russian as a dialect of the Slavic language in a discussion of German loanwords; however, these are the only places where the author uses such terminology. Otherwise, his focus is on the Russians alone, not on their place among the other Slavic "tribes"; their language is treated as a one of the other great world languages, not as one of the Slavic "dialects"; and the great future that Herder sees for the Slavs collectively is here predicted for the Russians alone. What is more, he writes exclusively about Russia's royal house and aristocracy, not Herder's rustic poets; the only reference to the lower classes comes in the panegyric to the current ruler quoted above, in which he calls them "savages." And far from decrying the rough treatment meted out to gentle, industrious, freedom-loving Slavs by savage German warriors, he declares that all that is good in Russian culture comes from German influence! Whatever virtues the early Pan-Slavists in Ljubljana might have seen in this piece, its Germano-centrism would not have recommended it to them.

Kopitar's Early Work and "Über die russische Sprache"

Jernej Kopitar's scholarly career began in earnest in 1808, four years after "Über die russische Sprache" appeared in Laibach. That year, he started his correspondence with Joseph Dobrovský, moved to Vienna, and sent his first important work to the publisher: his *Grammatik der Slavischen Sprache in Krain, Kärnten und Steyermark*.³³ In 1809, he also began publishing articles in the Vienna press in which he laid the foundations for Austro-Slavism. Needless to say, Kopitar makes no direct reference to this old *Laibacher Wochenblatt* piece in any of these writings. However, many of them contain curious echoes of it, which are all the more obvious if one reads them after consulting it. I would certainly not argue that an ambitious young scholar, freshly settled in his country's capital, a major European cultural center, would bother disputing with a long-forgotten writing from the popular provincial press; but I would suggest that "Über die russische Sprache" could have reflected prejudices and misconceptions within German-speaking Austrian society that he felt had to be dispelled in order for his and Zois's vision to be realized. Certainly, the combativeness and desire to convince that mark his early work imply that Jernej Kopitar could have been on such a mission.

In the following discussion, I will focus mainly on three important works from 1808–10, with brief references to letters from 1810–11. The first is the Slovene grammar already mentioned (Kopitar 1808/1809); the other two are articles that were published in the Vienna newspaper *Vaterländische Blätter für den österreichischen Kaiserstaat*: "Adresse der künftige slavischen Akademie..." (Kopitar 1809)³⁴ and "Patriotische Phantasien eines Slaven."³⁵ In these works, Kopitar insistently invokes all

³³ Laibach: Wilhelm Heinrich Korn. Although the book was at Korn's in late 1808 and so dated, it was not released until March 1809. Both dates are used in the literature; in my discussion below, I will refer to the grammar as Kopitar 1808/1809.

³⁴ Originally published in *Vaterländische Blätter* II, 411–14; reprinted in Miklosich (1857: 34–39); page references here are to the latter version. The full title of the article was: "Adresse der künftigen slavischen Akademie an den Verfasser des Aufsatzes ‚Das vormalige und das künftige Illyrien‘. *Minerva* 1809" ("Address of the Future Slavic Academy to the Author of the Essay 'The Former and Future Illyria.'" *Minerva* 1809.)

³⁵ "Patriotic Phantasies of a Slav." Originally published in *Vaterländische Blätter* III: 87–93; reprinted in Miklosich (1857: 61–70). Page numbers here refer to the latter. See also appendix II: "Three Editions of Jernej Kopitar's 'Patriotische Phantasien...,'" the second of which is an English translation, in Lencek and Cooper (1982: 189–234).

of the current authorities that were ignored in the 1804 article (Schlözer, Herder, Dobrovský, and Adelung); furthermore, he can also be seen as disputing with the treatment of certain issues in this piece, namely questions of class, Russian particularism, and Germano-centrism.

However, not all of the echoes of “Über die russische Sprache” in the early Kopitar are negative, and at least one suggests the possibility that he used this work as an unattributed source. Below, I will discuss in detail Kopitar’s complaints about German orthographic conventions, which he feels are unsuitable for capturing Slavic sounds in writing; here the anonymous author of “Über die russische Sprache” is in complete agreement with him: see especially LW 1804/35 on the shortcomings of German orthography vis-a-vis Cyrillic. Conceivably, he could have gotten this idea from the same place that Kopitar did—i.e., the other members of the Zois circle. It is also interesting that a common trope in Kopitar’s early work is that the Slavic language is as suitable for singing as Italian—e.g., in Kopitar (1809: 38). This obviously echoes the comments about Russian and Italian and “convivial conversation” in “Über die russische Sprache” (see above). Here, a direct connection is less likely: Kopitar is surely thinking about Žiga Zois translating arias from Italian into Slovene for touring opera companies to sing in Ljubljana, something that was very well received by the locals (Vidmar 2010: 19); still, the coincidence in the choice of words by the two authors is noteworthy. Even more striking, however, is the fact that what Kopitar knows about Russian literature could have come straight out of the 1804 article—he, too, sees a belated modernization under Peter I, a period of efflorescence under Catherine II, and little else (Kopitar 1810: 65–69, especially 67; also see below). Could he be using the *Laibacher Wochenblatt* piece as a reference, or were both basically paraphrasing what could have been common knowledge at the time about the enigmatic Russians?

Academic Credentials

Like any young scholar wishing to make a mark in his chosen field, Kopitar is eager to establish his scientific credentials immediately and demonstrate that he knows the literature, and therefore what he is talking about. From the first page of his first published work (his Slovene grammar), Kopitar constantly refers to Schlözer, Herder, Dobrovský, Adelung, et al. For example, there are four footnotes to Schlözer just on the first two pages of the *Grammatik*, and there are references to Adelung throughout, especially in the long section on orthography, where the German linguist’s injunction, “schreib, wie du sprichst” is invoked several times. A long quote from Herder also appears at the very beginning of the introduction (xi; also see below); meanwhile Dobrovský’s name first appears on p. xix and is repeated throughout.

Kopitar firmly believes in Schlözer's and Herder's contention that there is but one Slavic nation and he regularly uses the general ethnonym instead of the specific. His grammar is technically not a "*Slovene* grammar" at all, but rather a "grammar of the *Slavic language* in Carniola, Carinthia and Styria," and its opening sentence is about "the million *Slavs* in Inner Austria" who are part of "the most widespread of all the national families on God's earth [der ausgebreitetsten aller Völkerfamilien auf Gottes Erdboden]" (Kopitar 1809a: iii; my emphasis). Then follows the famous quote we have already discussed from Schlözer's *Nordische Geschichte* ("from the Adriatic... to the North Sea...," etc.).³⁶ Kopitar goes on to cite the inflated figure of "fifty million Slavs" (quoting Schlözer), for which he would later be derided by (among others) the poet France Prešeren.³⁷ Like Kumerdej and Japelj before him, he fills his grammar with examples from all the other Slavic "dialects." This certainly reflects Kopitar's training in Baron Zois's household, and thus reminds us of the work of older Slovene scholars, particularly Linhart. Like the latter, Kopitar is essentially inflating the importance of the heretofore barely noticed Slovenes by linking them to the fifty-million-strong colossus that was starting to hit its stride.

In this connection, it is interesting to consider how Kopitar treats the Russians. Generally, he shares the approach of Linhart, Zois, et al.—the largest of the Slavic "tribes" is not accorded any special treatment, but is viewed as just one among equals. Perhaps even more than his teachers, he is ready to celebrate the Russians' Slaviness: he refers to them occasionally as "our brothers" (cf. Kopitar 1809b: 38); sometimes seems to take pride in their current prestige (Kopitar 1809a: ix–x); speculates that they were more cultured than the Scandinavians who forcibly united them in the Middle Ages (Kopitar 1809b: 38); compares the Russian peasant very favorably to his German counterpart (Kopitar 1809b; see below); and ponders how good it would be for present-day Slavs to be united under a ruler like the tenth-century Russian prince Vladimir (Kopitar 1809a: xvii; also see Churkina 1996: 392).

The many negative things Kopitar says about the Russians in these works have been attributed to his alleged "anti-Russian prejudice,"³⁸ but in the context of the present discussion they could just as easily be taken as attempts to disabuse his readers of the notion that the Russians are anything special compared to the other Slavic "tribes." For instance, compared to the

³⁶ Kopitar distorts the sentence somewhat, but its main idea is certainly conveyed.

³⁷ I.e., in the German-language poem "Relata refero"; see Prešeren (1968: 214–15); also Petrovskii (1906: 251–52, fn. 4). Kopitar repeated this figure many times in his early oeuvre.

³⁸ I have discussed this issue at length elsewhere. See in particular "Rehabilitating Kopitar" (Miller: 2008: especially 300–304), which contain references to other literature.

tall, well-built “Illyrian” Slavs (i.e., the Serbs), the Russians are like “Mongolized dwarfs” (! Kopitar 1809b: 38); Austria needs to keep the Church Slavonic cultural legacy out of “the depraved hands of the Russians,” because they have been mishandling it,³⁹ their literature is all right, but deserves less comment than that of the Serbs, Croats, and Poles.⁴⁰ As for the Russian upper classes and the “wonderful prospects” under their current ruler: “...let Alexander abolish serfdom, and [then] world dominion would come to him, to our benefit and to that of the entire world.”⁴¹

An Anti-German Bias?

In any case, Jernej Kopitar is far more likely at this point in his career to make provocatively offensive comments about the Germans than the Russians. It is not only that he deplores the Germanization of the Slovene elite (“Der Bauer schreibt nicht, der gebildete Slave ist Deutsch gebildet ...” [“The peasant does not write, the educated Slav is German educated”] Kopitar 1809a: 109, footnote), which is one of the basic positions of the Zois circle—he often resorts to outright derision. He regularly uses the adjective *teutonisch* to mock what he sees as the inefficient way German orthography is forced to handle certain Slavic sounds.⁴² He calls German missionaries in ninth-century Pannonia “die salzburgischen Zehentglauber, die diese Slaven bloß getauft hatten, aber zu bequem waren ihre Sprache zu lernen” (“the Salzburg tithe-grubbers, who had merely baptized these Slavs, but were too idle to learn their language” [Kopitar 1810: 62]), and then goes on to take yet another jab at “Teutonic teachers of writing” (Kopitar 1810: 62). Kopitar 1809b is basically a five-page anti-German screed occasioned by another ignorant article about the Slavs in the German-language press:⁴³ it is here that Kopitar claims that the Novgorod Slavs were more cultured than Rurik and his men, and declares that German travelers to Russia find the Russian peasant superior to their own “in regard to [both their] spiritual and physical agility” (in Hinsicht auf Agilität des Geistes wie des Körpers

³⁹ It was Kopitar’s contention that Russian monks were allowing old manuscripts to rot in their cloisters, and were allowing vernacular accretions to distort the texts; see, *inter alia*, Kopitar (1810: 67, 70).

⁴⁰ Together, the writings of the Croats and Serbs (“der katolischen” and “der griechischen Sloveno-Serben”) are accorded over a page and a half in Kopitar 1810 and Russian literature—seventeen lines. The Poles actually get even less space, but his account here is a bit more up-to-date and more complimentary. See Kopitar (1810: 65–69).

⁴¹ From an 1811 letter; quoted in Petrovskii (1906: 126).

⁴² See, *inter alia*, Kopitar (1809a: 163, 173, 186). To repeat: the anonymous author of “Über die russische Sprache” is in complete agreement with him: see above.

⁴³ Namely, “Das vormalige und das künftige Illyrien” (“The former and future Illyria”), published in the December 1809 issue of *Minerva* (Hamburg).

[Kopitar 1809b: 62]). The intemperate language Kopitar used to taunt the Germans early in his career actually prompted a stern retort from Dobrovský.⁴⁴ In these and other similar passages from his early oeuvre, the Carniolan philologist is clearly attacking the attitudes that are reflected in “Über die russische Sprache” and could have been widespread amongst his German Austrian compatriots: the Slavs are not as cultured as the Germans and whatever culture they do have has come from the Germans. Kopitar here is saying the exact opposite: the Slavs have always been *more* cultured than the Germans, and owe them nothing for their enlightenment.

Conclusion

In the end, we do not know exactly what Žiga Zois, Jernej Kopitar, and their comrades in Ljubljana thought about “Über die russische Sprache.” We can safely assume that they read it, however, and can readily imagine how they must have reacted, based on the early Pan-Slavic ideology that permeates their writings. The older among them, steeped as they were in the sober spirit of the Enlightenment, would no doubt have passed it over with a dignified (if contemptuous) silence, as an unserious work that was not worthy of their attention. However, a combative personality like Jernej Kopitar, already imbued with the greater emotionalism we associate with early Romanticism,⁴⁵ would not have been quite as phlegmatic: he would have wanted to attack the “mistakes” and “wrong thinking” this article contained, especially since they reflected the prejudices of many otherwise educated people in Austria and Germany. Assuming that he is doing just that explains much that is curious in his early writings, including many passages that subsequent scholarship has deemed “anti-Russian”—for, ironically, the Slovene scholar would have seen “putting the Russians in their place” as one way to combat Germano-centrism and promote Pan-Slavism.

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⁴⁴ See the letter of 7 August 1810 in Jagić (1885: 157). In this epistle, the Prague Slavist also scolds his protege over his comment about “the Russians’ depraved hands.”

⁴⁵ On Kopitar as an early “restrained”, as opposed to a later “unbridled”, Romantic (according to the terminology of Isaiah Berlin), see Miller (2014: especially 99–110).

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POVZETEK

PANSLAVIZEM, GERMANOCENTRIZEM TER RUSKI PARTIKULARIZEM: O ČASOPISU LAIBACHER WOCHENBLATT, LETA 1804

Leta 1804 so Jernej Kopitar in drugi člani Zoisovega kroga v Ljubljani gotovo prebrali anonimni članek Über die russische Sprache, ki je bil objavljen v časopisu Laibacher Wochenblatt in je govoril o ruskem jeziku in položaju Ruskega imperija v tedanji Evropi. Niso se strinjali s tem, kako je avtor članka gledal na slovanstvo, slovanske jezike ter na položaj Rusov med Slovani, saj to ni bilo v skladu z načeli slovenskega narodnega prepoveda. Avtor članka je namreč videl Rusijo kot veliko evropsko državo, njen jezik pa je enakovredno postavil ob prav tako "velike" jezike, kakor sta nemščina in francoščina. Pri tem ni pisal o ruskih kmetih, ampak izključno o ruskem plemstvu. Skoraj nič ni povedal o Rusih kot Slovanih. Kopitar je prav vse te "napake" obravnaval v svojih prvih delih iz razdobja 1808-1811. To daje slutiti, da je anonimni avtor članka Über die russische Sprache pravzaprav izrazil splošna stališča nemškega prebivalstva Avstrije, tj. tista stališča, ki so jih morali Kopitar, Zois idr. preseči v prid uspeha slovenskega narodnega prepoveda.