

A FRAGMENT FROM JERNEJ KOPITAR'S
CORRESPONDENCE WITH TALVJ

One would never expect to find a "Letter to the Editor" by Jernej Kopitar published in a scholarly journal in America. We do find one, however, in Edward Robinson's quarterly, The Biblical Repository, III (Andover, 1833), dated from Vienna, September 3, 1832. The existence of such a letter in an American publication, its content and history certainly deserve to be brought to light and inventoried for a future collected Kopitariana.

1.0 A reference to Kopitar's "Letter to the Editor" of The Biblical Repository appears in a footnote in the very first version of Therese Albertine Louise von Jakob's "Historical View of the Slavic Language in its Various Dialects, with special reference to Theological Literature,"¹ published in The Biblical Repository, IV (1834), on page 413. It appears as a footnote reference to the following statement in the text:

The inhabitants of the provincial counties Agram, Kreutz, Varasdin, and the neighbouring districts, called Provincial Croatia, who speak a somewhat different dialect of the Vindish language, but are able to read this translation, have nevertheless several versions of the Bible in their own dialect, "lying in manuscript, which are only waiting for some Mecaenas, or for some favourable conjuncture, in order to make their appearance."⁹⁴

The footnote 94 under this text then reads: "See Kopitar's Letter to the Editor, Bibl. Repos. III, p. 186."

In The Biblical Repository, III (No. IX, dated January 1833), page 186, we indeed find among "Literary Notices" a passage from Kopitar's correspondence under the title: "Extract from a Letter to the Editor, from M. Kopitar, Custos of the Imperial Library in Vienna," dated "Vienna, Austria, Sept. 3, 1832," with a note: "M. Kopitar is highly distinguished in Germany, for several publications, exhibiting a very extensive and profound acquaintance with the Languages and literature of the various Sclavonic nations."

The correspondence itself, however, reads as follows:²

As a notice for your Repository [a]--a work which cannot fail to be of high utility in your country-- permit me to offer as the most recent intelligence, that we have at length received from Ofen (Buda) a catholic translation of the Scriptures in the Servian dialect [b], the first satisfactory version in this language of five millions of people of the Slavonic race. The translator is the late Franciscan monk and professor Katancsich [c], but the printing of it was brought about by the deceased primate of Hungary, cardinal Rudnay [d]. In like manner, in consequence of this step, the Slowaki (or Slovenes, the Slavonic portion of the Hungarian people) [e], who have heretofore made shift to help themselves with the Bohemian version, as being the most intelligible to them, have now been induced to undertake the printing of a pure Slovenian version of their own [f], made by the canon Palkowitsch [g]. Consequently, at present, of all the Slavonic tribes, only the provincial Croatians still remain without the Bible in their own dialect. And even they have several versions lying in manuscript; which are only waiting for some Maecenas, or for some favourable conjuncture, in order to make their appearance [h].--The version of Katancsich needs only to be printed in the alphabet of Cyril, in order to come into use among the Greek Servians [i].--The Bulgarians, finally, as well as the Albanians, are still almost without any literature; yet the latter, since 1827, have had in their hands the New Testament, through the aid of the British and Foreign Bible Society [j].

[a] With variation of title; in 1833: The Biblical Repository (Andover), "by Edward Robinson, Professor Extraordinary in the Theological Seminar at Andover." In its final bibliographic quotation: The Biblical Repository and Classical Review. Volumes 1-12 (1831-36), and continuation 13-30 (1838-50). Quarterly. Andover, Mass. (1831-36), New York (1837-50). Edward Robinson was its editor from 1831 to 1834.

[b] Sвето pismo staroga zakona, Siksta V. Pape naredbom previdjeno i Klementa VIII. Pape vlastjom izdano, sada u jezik slavno-ilirički izgovora bosanskoga prinešeno, tad sv. otacah i nadučiteljah tomačenjem nakitjeno. Knj. IV. U Budimu

troškom i tiskom sveučilišta 1831; and Sveto pismo novoga zakona, Siksta V. Pape naredbom previdjeno i Klementa VIII. Pape vlastjom izdano... (etc.). Knj. II. U Budimu 1831,-- both by Matia Petar Katančić. Cf. Kukuljević-Sakcinski 1860, Nos. 759 and 760.

[c] Matija Petar Katančić (1750-1825), a Franciscan, between 1795 and 1800 a teacher of archaeology and numismatics at the University of Buda, earlier a professor of poetics at the Gymnasium of Zagreb and Osijek; a Latin and Croatian poet, author of numerous philological and historical treatises; the translator and publisher of the first complete Bible in the "jezik Slavno-ilirički izgovora bosanskoga," a language defined by Kopitar "Dialecto illyrica, rectius Serbochroatica, sive Chrovatoserbica" (Kopitar 1836:LIV). Cf. Lencek 1976:47.

[d] Alexander Rudnay (Rudnai) (1760-1831), cardinal and Archbishop of Esztergom (Ostrihom in Slovak), a Slovak by birth, a patron of printing of Slavic books. Rudnay made possible the publication of Katančić's Bible, as well as the publication of the first complete Bible in a Slovak translation. It is with his help that much of Antonín Bernolák's work was published. Cf. Ottův Slovník naučný 22:66.

[e] Kopitar's German equivalents of his English ethnic terminology here, used already in his "Patriotische Phantasien" of 1810 (see Miklosich 1857:61-70), are: Slowaki = die Slovaken, Slavonic = slavisch, Slovenes, Slovenian = die Slovenen, slovenisch. The apparent contradictions in "the Slovaks or Slovenes," and "a pure Slovenian version" in this text twenty years later, should be understood either phylogenetically (cf. Russian Primary Chronicle use of Slověne, slověnskij in reference to Pannonian Slavs in general), or as a translator's interpretation of Kopitar's terms. See below.

[f] Swaté Pismo Starého i Nowého Zákona podla obecného latinského, od sw. Rimsko-katolíckég cirkwi potvrdeného... W Ostrihome, 1829-32. 2 vols. [Preface signed: Georgius Palkovics.] For the term Slovenian see our note [e].

[g] Esztergom canon Georg Palkovics (Juraj Palković) (1763-1835). Cf. Ottův Slovník naučný 19:110.

[h] Cf. Kopitar's reference to a translation of the Bible into the dialect of Provincial Croatia (= kajkavian) in his

German article in Österreichischer Beobachter, 1832, No. 285, page 1370: "Selbst die Agramer, d. i. Provinzial-Kroaten, könnten sie einer Bibel in ihrer besondern Mundart zum Grunde legen, wenn sie nicht etwa lieber und besser eine ihrer eigenen, dem Vernehmen nach seit lange fertigen, und der eines Verleges entbehrenden Übersetzungen, endlich zum Drucke sollten befördern wollen; was nicht nur ihnen selbst, sondern da dieser kroatische Dialect, wie er sich in Habelich und Jambresich darstellt, einer der unvermischtesten ist, auch allen andern Slawen zum Ruhm und Nutzen gereichen würde." Quoted from Nahtigal 1945: 290-291. For Kopitar's general attitude toward Slavic translations of the Bible and his understanding of the significance of such translations for the evolution of Slavic cultures, cf. the following praise of Palkovič's Slovak Bible in Österreichischer Beobachter 1832: "Willkommen jüngste Bibel im Kreise deiner slawischen Schwestern! Mögest du es nicht lange bleiben, sondern dir bald eine kroatische, bulgarische etc. nachfolgen." Quoted from Nahtigal 1945: 291.

[1] "The Greek Servians" = Orthodox Serbs. Cf. Kopitar's language in his article in the Österreichischer Beobachter, 1832, No. 285, page 1370: "Wollen dann die griechischen Illyrier, nebst der ihnen, wie den Russen anerkanntermassen unverständlichen veralteten slawo-russischen Bibel auch eine gemeinverständliche serbische in ihrer Muttersprache haben, so dürfen sie im Ganzen nur diese bosnische mit serbischer Schrift umschreiben." (Quoted from Nahtigal 1945: 290.) It is known that the first Serbian vernacular translation of the Bible was prepared by Vuk S. Karadžić (Novi zavjet, 1847), and Djuro Daničić (Sveto pismo, 1869).

[j] In 1827 the four Gospels were printed in Corfu in the Greek original with the Albanian translation on the side, for which the Greek characters were employed. It was the work of a group of translators under the supervision of Grigor Argjirokastriti, an Albanian bishop of the island of Eubea. Cf. S. Skendi, "The History of the Albanian Alphabet; A Case of Complex Cultural and Political Development," Südost-Forschungen, XIX (1960), 263-285.

2.0 Judging by the subject, style, and the culturological concepts reflecting Kopitar's understanding of the cultural evolution of Slavic nations of the time, the correspondence in The Biblical Repository attributed to Kopitar could not have been written by anybody else but Kopitar himself. His authorship can be proven by comparing its content and tenor with the content and tenor of his signed articles on the same subject in the Österreichischer Beobachter in

October 1832 and in December 1833.³ What remains to be clarified is the question of how such correspondence found its way to the United States and appeared in a scholarly journal, which was published by a theologian known as a leading American biblical scholar of the time, but about which Jernej Kopitar could not have been cognizant in Vienna.

The answer to this question appears to be simple. We know that Therese Albertine Louise von Jakob (1797-1870), known under the pen name of Talvj, one of Kopitar's scholarly correspondents in Halle, Germany (Kernc 1932:504), in August 1828 married Edward Robinson (1794-1863), at that time an Extraordinary Professor of Biblical Literature at the Theological Seminary in Andover, Massachusetts, and that in 1830 she moved with him to the United States. We know that she, now Mrs. Therese Robinson, continued to correspond with Kopitar from the United States, first from Andover, then from Boston, finally from New York,⁴ following the stations of her husband's career, and that in her letters to Kopitar which have been preserved,⁵ she twice communicated to Kopitar about her husband's Repository of Biblical Literature,⁶ a copy of which she probably also sent him in Vienna.⁷

The complication starts when we begin looking for an immediate documentation of our answer in Kopitar's correspondence with Talvj/Mrs. Robinson. It has been known for a long time that none of Kopitar's letters to Talvj/Mrs. Robinson has been inventoried thus far.⁸ On the other hand, we know from Kopitar's "Brief-Journal 1829-1844" (Jagić 1897: 828-842) that after Robinson's departure from Halle (in August 1828), Kopitar registered eleven letters to Talvj/Mrs. Robinson of which at least one must have been sent to Andover, Massachusetts. One entry in the "Brief-Journal," viz.: "3/7 September 1832--Talgj in Andover" (Jagić 1897: 830), leaves no doubt that this must have been the correspondence containing Kopitar's "Letter to the Editor--September 3, 1832" in The Biblical Repository published in January 1833. Mrs. Robinson's subsequent letter to Kopitar from Boston (July 17, 1834) confirms this assumption and conclusively clarifies the question of Kopitar's authorship of the "Letter to the Editor":

"Erfreuen Sie mich, verehrter Freund bald mit einem Brief [wrote Mrs. Robinson in the last paragraph of this letter to Kopitar], ich will auch recht bald wieder schreiben! Mein Mann empfiehlt sich ihnen bestens. Was Sie unter dem Titel "A letter to the Editor" citirt finden, ist eine Übersetzung der Stelle die die Bibelübersetzungen

anbelangt, aus ihrem letzten Brief an mich. Mit herzlichen Wünschen für Sie und der Bitte um ein freundliches Andenken Therese Robinson, geb. v. J." (Milović 1941:94).⁹

There is an important lesson as well as a warning in this story of Kopitar's "Letter to the Editor" in The Biblical Repository. The question of the authorship of the "Letter" could never have been solved if one relied on Franz Miklosich's publication of Talvj's correspondence with Kopitar. Miklosich's handling of this correspondence was, to say the least, capricious and arbitrary: he omitted entire passages in Talvj's published letters, and what is more important, he did not include in his publication Mrs. Robinson's Boston letter to Kopitar, which helped us to resolve the riddle.

*Rado L. Lencek
Columbia University*

NOTES

¹Therese Albertine Louise von Jakob's "Historical View of the Slavic Language in its Various Dialects, with special reference to Theological Literature (Original)," appeared first under this title anonymously, introduced by Edward Robinson, in The Biblical Repository, IV (Andover and New York, 1834), 328-413, 417-532. In its reprint the title was changed to Historical View of the Slavic Language in the Various Dialects, From the Biblical Repository, conducted by Edward Robinson (Andover, 1834). An enlarged edition of this work appeared in 1850 as Historical View of the Language and Literature of the Slavic Nations, with a Sketch of their Popular Poetry by Talvj, with a Preface by Edward Robinson (New York, 1850).

²The note numbers [a] to [j] are added to the text; they refer to our annotation of Kopitar's "Letter" below.

³Cf. Kopitar's notes "Literatur" (Announcement of five new Slavic publications) in Österreichischer Beobachter, Donnerstag, den 11. October 1832, N^{ro} 285, pp. 1369-1370; and in Österreichischer Beobachter, Sonntag, den 8. December 1833, N^{ro} 342, p. 1580; now in Nahtigal 1945:288-293.

⁴Milović 1941:36-103 has all together 12 of Talvj's letters to Kopitar from the United States; the following

three letters encompass the period under discussion: the first letter from Andover, dated 17 January 1831; the second from Andover, dated 2 February 1832; and the letter from Boston, dated 17 July 1834. The first of these letters Kopitar received only a few days before October 1, 1832. Cf. Vasmer 1938:87.

⁵Talvj's letters to Kopitar are in the National-Bibliothek in Vienna. They were published twice: once in Miklosich 1883:462-489; the second time in Milović 1941:36-103.

⁶See above note [a].

⁷Cf., e.g., in her first letter to Kopitar from Andover: "Ich würde mir ein grosses Vergnügen daraus machen, Ihnen ein Exemplar davon zu schicken, u. werde mit meinem Mann gemeinschaftlich suchen, eine passende Gelegenheit dazu zu finden." Or, in her second letter from Andover: "Wie gern wüsst' ich eine Gelegenheit zu finden Ihnen R.'s Repository zu schicken." Cf. Milović 1941: 85 and 90.

⁸Cf. the last word on this subject by J. M. Milović: "Meine Bemühungen, die Briefe des grossen slovenischen Philologen und Sprachforschers an Talvj zu ermitteln, sind bisher erfolglos geblieben." (Milović 1941:III).

⁹Stress added.

REFERENCES

- Filipović, R., 1972 "Bowring i Kopitar," Englesko-hrvatske književne veze (Zagreb), 135-169.
- Jagić, V., ed., 1897 Novye pis'ma Dobrovskogo, Kopitara i drugix jugozapadnyx Slavjan. St. Petersburg (Sbornik ORJaS, LXII).
- Kernc, E., 1932 "Kopitar Jernej," Slovenski biografski leksikon, I (Ljubljana, 1925-1932), 496-513.
- Kopitar, J., 1836 Glagolita Clozianus.... Vienna.
- Kukuljević-Sakcinski, I., 1860 Bibliografija hrvatska, Dio Prvi: Tiskane knjige. U Zagrebu.

- Lencek, R. L., 1976 "For the History of the Term 'Serbo-croatian' Language," Zbornik za filologiju i lingvistiku, 19/I (Novi Sad), 45-53.
- Miklosich, F., ed., 1857 Barth. Kopitars Kleinere Schriften sprachwissenschaftlichen, geschichtlichen, ethnographischen und rechtshistorischen Inhalts, I. Vienna.
- Miklosich, F., 1883 "Über Goethes 'Klaggesang von der edlen Frauen des Asan Aga.' Geschichte des original Textes und ihre Übersetzungen," Sitzungsberichten der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Klasse, 103 (Vienna), 413-490. [3. Aus den Briefen von Talvj an B. Kopitar," 462-489]
- Milović, J. M., 1941 TALVJs erste Übertragungen für Goethe und ihre Briefe an Kopitar. Leipzig (Veröffentlichungen des Slavischen Instituts an der Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Berlin, 33) [Talvjs Briefe an Kopitar," 36-103]
- Nahtigal, R., ed., 1945 Jerneja Kopitarja Spisov II. del. Srednja doba, Doba sodelovanja v "Jahrbücher der Literatur," 1818-1834. 2. knjiga. Ljubljana.
- Ottův Slovník naučný Ottův Slovník naučný; ilustrovaná encyklopaedie obecných vědomostí (Prague, 1888-1909), 28 vols.
- Vasmer, M., ed., 1938 B. Kopitars Briefwechsel mit Jakob Grimm. Abhandlungen der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Jahrgang 1937. Philosophisch-historische Klasse, Nr. 7. Berlin.