

## AUSTRO-SLAVISM AS THE MOTIVE OF KOPITAR'S WORK\*

Sergio Bonazza

Austro-Slavism is relatively little researched. There are for this cultural-political current, which arose at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the Danubian Monarchy, merely short, episodic treatments concerning various individuals who were in any way associated with it. A complete monograph about the extent and character of Austro-Slavism is yet to be done. And yet Austro-Slavism had in the history of the Danubian Monarchy a significant impact and effect. Numerous Slavic intellectuals in the Monarchy had identified their creativity with this idea throughout the nineteenth century and up to the outbreak of the First World War. Interesting scholarly initiatives and projects were devised in its service. For some scholars Austro-Slavism was the motive of their activity, and among these the most ambitious advocate, the one who tied Austro-Slavism to all his other cultural and scholarly work, was the Slovene Slavacist Jernej Kopitar.<sup>1</sup>

Even while Kopitar was living in Ljubljana he dreamed of a position at the Vienna Court Library, so that he might settle in Vienna and devote himself fully to his studies.<sup>2</sup> After this dream was realized and Kopitar had moved to Vienna, his first works were less scholarly investigations than the results of his pondering the Austro-Slavic theme. This is especially true of his "Adresse der künftigen slavischen Akademie,"<sup>3</sup> and "Patriotische Phantasien eines Slaven."<sup>4</sup> Contact with the imperial city had caused a profound change of heart in Kopitar. In Vienna, where in concentrated form the socio-political changes of the entire monarchy were reflected, Kopitar could come to grips with the evolution of any and all forces that might destabilize the structures of the Austrian state: these were especially German and Slavic nationalism and the open and enthusiastic appeal to Russia on the part of the great majority of the Slavic population. Kopitar most certainly pondered long and hard the complex problems of this multinational state and in particular of the Slavs living in it. Early on he as a realistic and perspicacious man realized that the South Slavs and those of Central Europe had only two

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options for their future cultural, social and political development: either to be integrated into the Austrian state or to be exposed to the expansionist policies of the Russian tsars. Since Kopitar was convinced that it profited the Austrian Slavs more to seek resolutions to their national problems within the Austrian state, and also that it was in their own national interest to do so, he invested all his efforts in a campaign to convince his compatriots of these ideas, in order to create a suitable climate to serve the Austro-Slav ideal. The principal reason for the difference of opinion among the Austrian Slavs was, in his opinion, the Russophilism (that is Pan-Slavism) of many of them. His cultural program took on as a result definite anti-Russian characteristics. Kopitar opposed the Pan-Slavism of St. Petersburg to the Austro-Slavism of Vienna. In this policy he had two simultaneous goals in mind: to strengthen a healthy patriotism in the Austrian sense, on the one hand, and to limit Pan-Slavism on the other. His campaign always moved along on these two rails, in all directions, to the highest posts in the land, the emperor and Count Metternich. It was precisely these he addressed with memoranda whose thesis was that Russia was Austria's greatest enemy, and that at a time when Metternich was seeking Russia's friendship at any price since he thought Austria's enemies were the western powers. Kopitar's struggle in the Austro-Slavic sense encompassed the entire broad range of his activities: from the broadly cultural to the specifically technical, his position as Court Librarian as well as his work as Censor, his input as government advisor in Slavic matters to his journalistic work. To realize his own Austro-Slav program Kopitar was also ready to support initiatives that ran counter to Metternich's.

According to Kopitar's Austro-Slavic concept Austria was the center of Slavdom and not Russia because all the Slavs except the Lusatian Sorbs were represented in the Austrian Monarchy. Kopitar considered this theory to be historically grounded as well, in that Old Church Slavic owed its beginning to Cyril and Methodius in Pannonia, therefore to Austrian soil. Only later was this language applied by the Russians to religious ends. Austria was therefore in Kopitar's view both geographically and historically entitled to become the center of Slavdom. Among other things he planned to erect in Vienna, the spiritual center of the state, a central Slavic academy of sciences whose branches would be located in the individual Slavic capitals of the Monarchy. This last item is particularly significant in that it looked to a kind of regional government within a centrally governed state, moreover on the basis of ethnic rather than the usual regional/geographical units. Kopitar was active above all in cultural matters. Nevertheless the political impact of such thoughts is quite evident, since cultural policy can scarcely stand in contradiction to politics per se. In any event we must understand that in Kopitar's Austro-Slavism the stress was on the "Austro" rather than on the "Slavism".

If Vienna was to become the center of Slavdom, then it had to possess the appropriate institutions for this purpose. Above all it had to have an outstanding library of Slavic books and codices. Then it needed a competent press with Slavic fonts to match the Russian advantage in matters of printing. Unfortunately however the Court Library was weak in its Slavic collection. Kopitar complained of this in a letter to Dobrovský in 1809:

Schade, dass ich nicht eine Anstellung bei der Hofbibliothek habe: in einer Bibliothek eines Kaisers, dessen Staat zu  $\frac{3}{4}$  aus Slaven besteht, keine Rücksicht auf Slavica!<sup>5</sup>

When Kopitar won the position of Court Librarian, the situation concerning Slavic changed fundamentally. Knowing full well how important a full complement of Slavic books was for his cultural program, he undertook everything in his power to enrich the Slavic holdings of the Court Library. He followed the book market and various book auctions closely and prompted the Court Library, in just a few years, to buy up private collections. He struggled mightily to acquire the private library of the Serb Pavle Solarić, however without success. If the government did not permit the library to purchase a collection, Kopitar would frequently purchase it for himself, with plans to bequeath it later to the Court Library. He also appealed to private holders of Slavic materials for contributions. Among these was the Serb Lukijan Mušicki, who donated valuable books to the Library. The acquisition of Slavic codices and valuable collections assumed a special position in Kopitar's Austro-Slavic *Kulturkampf*. In this arena too his efforts reflected the already mentioned double goal of his strivings: first to equip Vienna as center of Slavdom with Slavic cultural riches, the better to counter the Russian influence, and second to prevent that these same cultural riches fall into the hands of the Russians. He never tired of stating that in the matter of acquiring cultural materials Austria must not allow itself to be outstripped by Russia. A high point of all these efforts was doubtless the acquisition of Slavic manuscripts from Mt. Athos. In 1817 Robert Walpole's book, *Memoirs Relating to European and Asiatic Turkey*, appeared in London. Kopitar learned from this book that two English travelers had, in 1816, discovered more than a thousand Slavic codices in the monasteries of St. Paul and Hilandar on Mt. Athos, and that the monks considered them worthless. Kopitar's interest in these codices was so great that he decided to go personally to Mt. Athos. It would have been customary to ask his superior to cover his travel expenses; however due to the great importance of the situation and its extraordinary delicacy he approached a Maecenas, the Croatian bishop Maksimilijan Vrhovac. How much care the matter demanded can be deduced from Kopitar's own words:

Wenn diese Angelegenheit dikastraliter verhandelt werden sollte, die Russen, bei der Menge von Spionen, die sich überall und selbst in

Wien unterhalten, es bald erfahren, und auch alles anwenden würden, um die Absicht von Österreich zu vereiteln.<sup>6</sup>

At the end Kopitar did not travel to Athos: in 1822 a personnel change in the Austrian *internuntiatur* in Constantinople took place which served his purposes. The new Austrian *internuntius*, Franz Freiherr von Ottenfels, was a good friend of Kopitar's and gave him to believe that he would help to get the Slavic codices to Vienna without a long and difficult trip on Kopitar's part. After a number of misunderstandings twelve old Slavic codices did eventually arrive in Vienna and Kopitar was entrusted with their bibliophilic and scholarly evaluation. He composed an extensive report, *Bibliothekarischer Bericht bei Gelegenheit 12 altslawischen Mss. vom Berge Athos* and added to it a personal letter to Metternich.<sup>7</sup> Kopitar stressed in the report that the language of these codices was originally at home in Austria and that therefore the manuscripts belonged to Austria's national heritage. Moreover he pointed out their political significance in an anti-Russian sense. This report is doubtless among the most important documents of Austro-Slavism, not only because of its scope and clear lines of reasoning but also certainly because of the high rank of its addressee, Count Metternich.

Mention has already been made of the necessity publicized by Kopitar for a competent printing press with Slavic fonts in Vienna. This press was to compete with the Russian monopoly and also to permit the possibility of producing fundamental works of Slavic studies in Vienna, so that they would not have to be published in Russia. Josef Dobrovský's Old Church Slavic grammar was given as an example of this. For Kopitar it was of the utmost significance that the first scholarly grammar of Old Church Slavic was printed in Vienna. Thus he helped Dobrovský not only in compiling the work but also in organizing a typography equipped to handle such publications. Till that time Slavic books had been printed in Pest, where a printing house had been granted exclusive privileges by the government for this purpose. According to the government decree, however, these privileges were to be transferred in 1825 to the publisher and printer Anton Schmid in Vienna, and he, with financial support by the government, was to have by then new Slavic letters cut and cast. Dobrovský's grammar was to appear several years earlier, however, the Kopitar wanted it to appear in Vienna, which would confer upon it a certain primacy. Therefore he convinced the publisher Schmid to have the letters prepared earlier. Schmid of course lost the financial support but gained one goal, however, namely his long held wish to be knighted, in which Kopitar indirectly assisted him. When the grammar was in production, Kopitar wrote a memorandum to the authorities in which he brought the imminent publication of the grammar to their attention and at the same time proposed a suitable reward for the publisher:

Der Verleger Schmid dürfte sich glücklich schätzen, wenn dieses sein neues Verdienst beitrüge, den wegen seiner Erhebung in den Adelsstand im Kabinette liegenden Vortrag zu erledigen. Man könnte ihm sogar, in der Entscheidung die Erwartung zu erkennen geben, dass er seine slawische Druckerey vollständig einrichten werde. Bisher hat er nur eine slawische Schrift (mit der das Slawische in der neuen Grammatik gedruckt ist): er sollte aber deren 5-7 haben, um mit den Russen sich auch nur von weitem messen zu können.<sup>8</sup>

In the Tyrol in 1829 a Church Slavic codex in glagolitic script was discovered; it was later given the name Clozianus, after its discoverer and owner.<sup>9</sup> Great significance must be attached to this codex in connection with Kopitar's Austro-Slavic campaign. Till then the Ostromir Gospel, discovered and kept in Russia, was considered the oldest Church Slavic codex. As Kopitar studied the Codex Clozianus with the purpose of publishing it, he determined that it was at least as old as the Ostromir Gospel and moreover displayed a script that in all probability was even older than the cyrillic of the Ostromir Gospel. The Codex Clozianus gave Austria therefore the opportunity to eliminate the Russian primacy in owning the oldest Church Slavic codex. Naturally this circumstance was made abundantly clear upon publication of the work in 1836, which of course took place in Vienna.<sup>10</sup>

A further peculiarity distinguished the Codex Clozianus from the Ostromir Gospel. It belonged to the Catholic Church, while the Ostromir Gospel represented the Orthodox faith. This too had great symbolic significance for Kopitar. In his cultural policies Kopitar made use of the Catholic Church to the same extent that Russian Pan-Slavism utilized the Orthodox Church. The Codex Clozianus was to be in Kopitar's Austro-Slavic concept a tractical weapon that proved that in the question of Slavdom in no important point was Austria inferior to the Russian state.

And so the question of the relations between Austro-Slavism and the Catholic Church, or between Kopitar and Catholicism must be touched upon. Too often this delicate question is incorrectly interpreted. Kopitar was realistic enough to know that in a Catholic state a promising cultural program of necessity must involve the Catholic Church. His positive attitude to the institution of the Church and his benevolent cooperation with its highest exponents are parts of his cultural-political concept and not somehow signs of submissiveness or clerical-mindedness.<sup>11</sup> It is also not true that his Austro-Slavic concept "vor allem eine römisch-katholische und antirussische Einstellung kennzeichnete," as is often maintained.<sup>12</sup> His ideology was characterized above all by a definite patriotic and anti-Russian attitude. In

his programmatic writings on the topic of Austro-Slavism he used designations like "vaterländisch" [patriotic] and "antirussisch" [anti-Russian] time and again, never however "römisch-katholisch" [Roman Catholic]. One can say he merely used the Catholic Church to achieve his goals, as, for example, in 1842/43, at the Vatican, when he tried to convince the Propaganda fide to establish a chair for Church Slavonic and to organize a press for Slavonic books.<sup>13</sup> In this event it was not Kopitar who performed a service for the Vatican, but vice-versa, it was he who succeeded in involving the Pope and the Holy See in Austro-Slavic matters.<sup>14</sup> This initiative coincided with a moment of particularly tense relations between the Holy See and Tsarist Russia, nor was the Austrian government unaffected by it. This delicate political situation was caused by religious intolerance and repressions of every sort inflicted upon the Ruthenians, the Catholics of Byzantine rite, by both the Orthodox Church and the state authorities in Russia.

Russia always promoted Russification in matters of religion in occupied territories, therefore conversion of the population to the Orthodox Church, simply because a population espousing another faith was considered to be a potential enemy. For the tsars the Orthodox Church represented in all places a position of power, it could be used as a weapon in internal and external politics. In the reign of Nicholas I (1825-1855) this tactic was pursued with special vigor. The slogan of the time, "Autocracy, Orthodoxy, Nationality," reveals clearly that the political powers were exerting all their energy to achieve a national coalition in the sense of a Great Russia. It is certainly no happenstance that the spread of the Slavophile idea in Russia coincided with the reign of Nicholas I.<sup>15</sup>

In the Vatican developments among the Ruthenians were followed with care and increasing unease, and were reacted to with all available means. Kopitar too watched events in the East carefully and with deep sympathy, but for different reasons. Russification of the Polish territories and in a broader sense the tsar's increased influence on the Slavonic peoples went against his cultural program. In consideration of the difficult situation of the Ruthenians the intention was expressed in Rome to revive the Greek College, the seminary for Catholics of the Byzantine rite. It had been founded in 1576 and closed in 1805. In the newly reopened College the Propaganda fide planned a chair of Church Slavonic and the production of Slavonic books. When the problem arose of whom to name to the chair, Kopitar appeared on the scene. With his candidacy he hoped to achieve a concrete advantage for Austro-Slavism. The historical moment as well as the geographical facts in connection with the Ruthenian problem seemed to him of extraordinary importance, for his mission was not only to assume the chair of Old Church Slavonic and assure its functioning or organize the printing of Slavonic books, but also to

advise and direct the Holy See in its decisions concerning the Ruthenian Uniates and the Orthodox Church. His profound knowledge of the situation was decisive.

As a further example of Kopitar's understanding and use of Church events for the sake of Austro-Slavism, his role in the Dalmatian church union may serve. The Orthodox Church had for a long time been in crisis there. Numerous church unification attempts had brought no results. In 1826 the secretary of the Orthodox Cathedral in Zadar, Arsenius Popović, addressed the Viennese Court in three Serbo-Croatian documents. He described the religious situation of Dalmatia's Orthodox population, and proposed a more or less forced conversion to the Roman Church. The government entrusted Kopitar with the translation of these letters of 25, 28 and 30 October. In addition to the translation Kopitar also composed a personal commentary on Popović's letters as well as a description of the general religious situation along Austria's southern military boundary and of the Serbs as a whole. In his view Kopitar did not advise a forced union but "einer festen Handhabung der Toleranz und Achtung der Nationalsitten."<sup>16</sup> In his commentary he also drew attention to the fact that Austria's entire southern boundary was populated by Orthodox, on both the Austrian and Turkish sides, and that while the Russian colossus was pressing Austria from the east. In a war against Russia the Turkish Montenegrins and the Serbs as Russia's proteges would not hesitate to betray Austria if they were treated by Austria with force and cunning in so important a matter as religion. The Serbs like the Bohemians, Poles or Croats must be treated as a separate Slavic group and allowed to develop a national awareness so that they would not merge with the Russians.<sup>17</sup> It would also be, so thought Kopitar, in Austria's interests if the Serbs had their own literature in their own language since that would slowly weaken their cultural and emotional ties with Russia.

These important excerpts from Kopitar's commentaries make clear his extraordinary interest for and particular attention to the Serbs. As is well known, Kopitar was the discoverer, promoter and helper of Vuk Karadžić in his reform and codification of the modern Serbian literary language. Kopitar helped him achieve international recognition, especially in Germany, in order to facilitate the success of his language reform at home. It was Kopitar who had urged Karadžić to collect and publish Serbian folk poetry. He translated the poems into German and published them in German journals so that the new Serbian literature would be recognized internationally. Before he published the poems, Kopitar sent them even to Goethe in Weimar so that "Goethe . . . might transplant [them] to the German Parnassus."<sup>19</sup> In this truly extraordinarily important scholarly contribution which made Karadžić the principal figure and both gave the Serbs a modern literary language and

brought about their recognition, Kopitar played the role of director and advisor. It is certainly noteworthy that Kopitar did this all in the first place as a function of his Austro-Slavic cultural program.

The Austrian government did not oppose the Austro-Slavic tendency, for it saw a political weapon in it with whose help the rising tendencies toward liberalization of the peoples of the Monarchy could eventually be restrained. Even Metternich, who opposed vigorously every initiative that might leave the nations of the Monarchy a bit more free space, greeted and supported some of Kopitar's projects. In no way, however, should we think of some sort of restorational collaboration between Kopitar and Metternich, as many critics do. Kopitar's cultural program was completely independent of Metternich's policies. When Kopitar's position occasionally coincided with Metternich's it was only when that suited the Austro-Slavic concept. Kopitar's opinion was not infrequently in opposition to Metternich's. A typical example of that would be the so-called "Barišić Affair",<sup>20</sup> a conflict which occurred between 1832 and 1846 between Bishop Barišić and the Catholics of Bosnia. This was a conflict of great proportions, which caused much dissatisfaction among the population and seemed difficult to resolve. On the basis of the strategic significance of the area—it was the border territory between Austria and Turkey—the affair soon acquired an international character and involved the diplomatic representatives of many lands. The Russians did not miss the opportunity to send their agents there to throw more fuel on the fire. Metternich sided with Barišić, as did Ignazio Cadolini, the then secretary of the Propaganda fide. Kopitar, who possessed firsthand information, was of another opinion. Since the danger existed that Russia would interfere too much in the internal affairs of a South Slavic land and since Bosnia was under Austria's protection, Kopitar could not remain indifferent because the matter was in the context of Austro-Slavism. On this basis he sent on his own initiative to the Holy See information which contradicted Cadolini's, and recommended to the Vatican that it withdraw its confidence in Cadolini and remove Bishop Barišić from his post. The Vatican listened to Kopitar, withdrew Barišić from Bosnia and deprived Cadolini of his position. It is not important in the matter at hand that the Holy See paid more attention to Kopitar's advice than that of the secretary of its Propaganda fide; it is however important to establish that Kopitar dared to cross Metternich's diplomatic negotiations when they were not in the spirit of Kopitar's Austro-Slavic cultural program. This proves the independence of Kopitar's Austro-Slavism.

The Austro-Slavic idea was alive in the Danubian Monarchy before Kopitar appeared on the cultural stage of that land. It was however a matter of general oaths of allegiance to Austria on the part of individual Slavic intellectuals. It was Kopitar who gave Austro-Slavism cultural



and political content and created its ideological basis. In this regard Kopitar must be seen as the true founder of Austro-Slavism.

## NOTES

1. See S. Hafner, "B. Kopitar und die slawischen Handschriften der Athosklöster", *Südost-Forschungen*, XVIII (1959) 89-122; ibidem, "Das austro-slawische kulturpolitische Konzept in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts", *Österreichische Osthefte*, 5/6 (1963), 435-444; F. Hayer, "Augustin Theiner, Präfekt der Vatikanischen Archive, in seinem austroslawischen Engagement", *Kirche im Osten*, 14 (1971), 115-134; J. Pogačnik, "Jernej Kopitar and the Issue of Austro-Slavism", *To Honor Jernej Kopitar 1780-1980* (Papers in Slavic Philology, 2) (R. L. Lencek and H. R. Cooper Jr., eds.), (Ann Arbor: 1982), 25-40.

2. "Der Wunsch meines Lebens wäre [ . . . ] an eine reiche Bibliothek, etwa die Kaiserliche in Wien, zu kommen, und—der Slavischen Geschichte das zu werden was Muratori der Italienischen ist" (Kopitar to Dobrovský, Ljubljana, 30 March 1808, In: *Briefwechsel zwischen Dobrowsky und Kopitar (1808-1828)* (=Istočniki dlja istorii slavjanskoj filologii I), V. Jagić (ed.), (Berlin-St. Petersburg: 1885), 3-4.

3. *Vaterländische Blätter*, 10 April (Vienna 1810), 411-414.

4. *Vaterländische Blätter*, 5 Juni (Vienna 1810), 87-93.

5. Jagić, *Istočniki I*, 51.

6. Hafner, "B. Kopitar und die slawischen Handschriften der Athosklöster," 93.

7. See E. Winter, "Eine grundlegende Urkunde des Austroslawismus. Der Brief B. Kopitars an Metternich vom 7. April 1827 mit bibliothekarischem Bericht", *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 3 (1958), 107-124.

8. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Polizeihofstelle, Nr. 938.

9. See S. Bonazza, "Aus der Korrespondenz Andreas Di Pauli (Beitrag zur Clozianus-Forschung)", *Wiener slavistisches Jahrbuch*, 19 (1973), 7-13; ibidem, "Una corrispondenza inedita di B. Kopitar con il conte P. Cloz", *Ricerche slavistiche*, XX-XXI (1973-1974), 205-225; ibidem, "Der Glagolita Clozianus—ein altslawischer Kodex auf Tiroler Boden", *Der Schlern*, 54/4-5 (1980), 203-211.

10. B. Kopitar, *Glagolita Clozianus*, Vindobonae 1836, Praefatio.

11. See S. Bonazza, "Zur Rezeption Kopitars bei den Slowenen", *Contributi italiani all'VIII Congresso internazionale degli slavisti (Zagreb-Ljubljana 1978)*, (Rome: Associazione Italiana degli Slavisti, 1978), 7.

12. See E. Winter, *Zeitschrift für Slawistik*, 107.

13. See S. Bonazza, *Bartholomäus Kopitar, Italien und der Vatikan* (=Geschichte, Kultur und Geisteswelt der Slowenen, XVI) (Munich: Dr. Dr. Trofenik, 1980), 75-93.

14. See Hayer, *Kirche im Osten*, 119.

15. See also A. Tamborra, "Jernej Kopitar a Roma (1842-1843) e la politica slava di Gregorio XVI", *Storiografia e storia* (Studi in onore di Eugenio Duprè Theseider), (Rome: 1974), 947-974.

16. Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Wien, Polizeihofstelle, Kopitar.

17. "Denn während von Osten her der russische Koloß auf Österreich drückt; unsere südliche Grenze von der Bukovina bis Cattaro, von meist bewaffneten Griechischgläubigen bewohnt und besetzt ist, und hinter ihnen, durch die ganze europäische Turkey, lauter griechischgläubige Christen wohnen. . . . Und nehme man z.B. einen Krieg mit Rußland -, würden da nicht die türkischen Montenegriner, und Serbier als Rußlands Schützlinge es leicht haben, unsre in der dem Menschen heiligsten Angelegenheit mit Gewalt und Hinterlist gekränkten Grenzer, von Cattaro bis Czernowitz, zu verführen! . . . . Es ist vielmehr nicht ohne Nutzen, daß die Illyrer sich als einen besondern slavischen Stamm, wie die Böhmen, Polen, Kroaten, ansehen lernen, indem sie sonst mit den geliebten Russen zusammenfließen würden, (was die Mönche u. der Metropolit wünschen, und daher alle Literatur in der gemeinen Umgangssprache hassen und verfolgen.)" Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. See too J. Pogačnik, *Bartholomäus Kopitar. Leben und Werk* (=Geschichte, Kultur und Geistewelt der Slowenen, XV) (Munich: Dr.Dr. Trofenik, 1973), 35.

20. See Tamborra, *Storiografia e storia*, 970-973, and Bonazza, *Bartholomäus Kopitar*, 87-89.

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