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Lojzka Bratuž, *Manoscritti sloveni del Settecento. Omelie di Carlo Michele d'Attems (1711-1774) primo arcivescovo di Gorizia*. Udine: Università degli studi di Udine. Istituto di lingue e letterature dell'Europa orientale. 1993. 109 pp.

Stimulated by a new realization of its ability to edify, the sermon flourished during the Reformation and Counter-Reformation as part of religious observance, but many sermons acquired a literary importance which went beyond their religious impetus. In English literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the sermon came into full bloom in the hands of such practitioners as Lancelot Andrewes, John Donne, John Tillotson, and Jonathan Swift. In the Slovene lands too at this time, though works of literature written in Slovene were not numerous, the sermon achieved literary prominence. Among the Slovene sermons that have come down to us are those of Matija Kastelec, Janez Svetokriški (alias Tobija Lionelli), Peter Pavel Glavar, and Karel Mihael Attems (1711-74). Attems, in particular, has recently attracted a good deal of interest, leading to the examination and disclosure of archival sources, the organization of conferences, and the appearance of a number of valuable publications, to which Lojzka Bratuž now adds a volume containing six of his previously unpublished Slovene sermons, accompanied by a useful commentary.¹

In 1752 Pope Benedict XIV consecrated Attems Archbishop of Gorizia, committing to him the see newly instituted for the Austrian part of the suppressed Patriarchate of Aquileia. His diocese, stretching from eastern Friuli and the Karst to Carinthia and Styria (thus including the greater part of present-day Slovenia), was a multilingual area, in which the Italian, Friulian, German, and Slovene languages (to say nothing of Latin) were in everyday use. Attems, motivated by pastoral solicitude and

¹ A further twenty-eight sermons by Attems were recently published by Professor Bratuž in a separate volume. See my review of: Karel Mihael Attems, *Slovenske pridige*, edited and published by Lojzka Bratuž (Trst/Trieste, 1993), in: *Slovene Studies*, 14/1 (1992 [1994]), 113-17.

following the instruction of the Council of Trent on the use of the vernacular, was accustomed to preach to his flock in their own languages, as he travelled round the parishes of his predominantly mountainous diocese. His Slovene sermons, now published from the manuscripts, cannot, on a literary level, bear comparison with the work of the leading European practitioners of this genre, but his message, clear and persuasive, is conveyed with engaging simplicity and immediacy. From the point of view of the ordinary Slovene parishioner archiepiscopal visitations and sermons must have been events of great solemnity (they were, after all, extremely rare), but Attems's approach was straightforward. For him the main thing was to make close contact without delay by adopting a familiar tone, as the following extract (pp. 44-47) shows:

“I have come again after seven years to this respected parish to visit you and your loved ones. I come as a father comes to console his children and to help them in their spiritual need. I am here as a doctor who comes to cure sick souls, as a shepherd comes to count and examine his sheep, to save them from the jaws of the infernal wolf and to carry them in my arms before the heavenly Redeemer. I have come to bring you comfort, joy, the peace of God, and sacred blessings on you, your houses, your cornfields, and your vineyards. I have also brought you the plenary holy indulgence of Rome, if you are ready in purity and with a contrite heart to confess truly and to receive with reverence our Saviour's body. Then I shall offer up my sacred mass to the Lord God and raise my eyes to heaven. I shall weep in humility for my sins and yours and for divine castigation. I shall with all my heart ask God to give you happiness and peace and to hear our prayers in this house chosen by God, to help you mercifully in your needs and misfortunes.”

An important question raised by Professor Bratuž in the essay which accompanies the texts (p. 87) is whether Attems was familiar with Slovene literature. One of his sermons (not published in this volume)² contains a version of Rom. 13:11-12: “[...] that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.” Professor Bratuž's comparison of Attems's version with that in Jurij Dalmatin's translation of the Bible (for Protestants) (Wittenberg, 1584) reveals a remarkable similarity. Attems has *od spaina* where Dalmatin has *od sna* “out

² Attems, *Slovenske pridige* (see note 1), 52.

of sleep” and *odversimo* where he has *versimo od sebe* “let us cast off.” Attems lacks “than when we believed.” Otherwise the two versions are almost identical. Nevertheless, without considering the Vulgate and the originals used by Dalmatin, it would be premature to draw any conclusion based on textual comparison. More tangible is the evidence offered by Attems’s spelling, which is clearly similar, though not consistently so, to that devised by Adam Bohorič and used for the first time in his *Arcticae horulae* (1584). Whether Attems was familiar with Slovene literature or not, however, Professor Bratuž thinks that he was not of Slovene origin (p. 92) and that Slovene was not his mother tongue (pp. 96, 102). Her hypothesis is that, having grown up in the Gorizia region, which at that time was linguistically even more heterogeneous than today, Attems must have had first-hand knowledge of Slovene from infancy, but may have lost touch with it when his years as a student and as a young cleric took him away from the Slovene region. On his return to Gorizia as Archbishop he renewed his acquaintance with the language and now, probably for the first time, came to use it in its written form. Coherent with this view is the observation that the linguistic competence revealed in his Slovene writings, none of which antedates his consecration as archbishop, appears to improve as time passes (pp. 95-6).

Attems’s Slovene bears many signs of German and, especially, Italian interference, and Professor Bratuž carefully identifies them in her commentary. But it would be rash to assume that they all result from his own multilingualism. The Slovene he learnt, whether from literature or orally, already embodied many Germanisms and Italianisms. His use of such Germanisms as *glichi visi* “in the same way,” *leben* “life,” *guisno* “surely,” and *gnada* “grace” is not a result of his own knowledge of German, for such words are found in the works of other authors and must have been in common circulation. It may be true, as Professor Bratuž says (p. 96), that incoherences and defects may be perceived in Attems’s Slovene which are attributable primarily to the fact that he was not a native speaker, but it is difficult (though not impossible) to make a distinction between those particular defects for which he was himself responsible and those which were in general use. Prudently, perhaps, Professor Bratuž refrains from making this distinction, but it is a task which must be undertaken if the diachronic study of Slovene is to make headway. Among the syntactic features she lists, for example, is the use of an infinitive governed by a preposition, as in *sa slissat* “to hear” (Italian *per sentire*) or *bres uprassati* (*senza chiedere*) “without asking” where one would otherwise expect a final or modal clause, such as *da bi slišal* or *ne da bi vprašal* (p. 98-9). It would be useful if we could establish whether this feature is found in Slovene dialects, past or present, or in the language of other

writers. If not, it is one piece of evidence that Attems's Slovene was dominated by his knowledge of Italian or Friulian.³ Another result of interference is the use of the reflexive possessive pronoun *svoj* in cases when its antecedent is not the subject, as in *imamo saupat na suoju nasgruntano milost* "we must trust in His infinite mercy" (p. 98). But we need not attribute this feature to the dominance configuration in Attems's psychology, for it also occurs in the Slovene of Janez Svetokriški as one of the Italianisms of which (according to Mirko Rupel) "he was not conscious and therefore did not avoid, for they had been fully naturalized and are today still alive in western Slovene dialects."⁴ Svetokriški, nevertheless, was aware that there was a difference between his own dialect (that of Vipava) and the literary language.⁵ How Attems viewed this distinction we do not yet know. His texts await analysis, but their study promises to shed light on the whole question of the dichotomy between dialect and literary language. Although his manuscripts were intended for his own use, not for publication, they will now acquire a place in Slovene literary history, and this too awaits assessment. Meanwhile we must be grateful to Professor Bratuž for having made his work accessible in such an attractive edition.

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³ For the term "dominance," see Uriel Weinreich, *Languages in Contact. Findings and Problems*, 2nd printing (London-The Hague-Paris, 1963), 79-80.

⁴ *Sacrum Promptuarium Janeza Svetokriškega*, ed. Dr. Mirko Rupel (Ljubljana, 1937). Reprint (Ljubljana, 1991), ed. Matjaž Kmecl, xxxvii-xxxviii.

⁵ *Sacrum Promptuarium*, xxxvi.