

ADDITIONAL REMARKS ON
THE IMAGERY OF HELLAS IN SLOVENE LITERATURE

In my article «The Imagery of Hellas in Slovene Literature» (BS 14, 1973, pp. 116-130) I devoted some pages to, among other questions, Jernej Kopitar, a great Slovene philologist and Philhellene from the first half of the 19th century. In the meantime, I have received written information from Professor Poly Enepekides (Vienna), who calls my attention to some of his contributions in which he elucidates Kopitar's relationship to his Greek contemporaries and to Greek culture in general. I can only regret that I did not know of these studies before, so that I could have argued Kopitar's Philhellenism more extensively and more critically. It is also a pity that these significant contributions are not better known in Kopitar's native country: they are not mentioned in any of the histories of Slovene literature, which otherwise include good bibliographical data.

The first of these works «Kopitar und die Griechen», was published in *Wiener Slavistisches Jahrbuch* 1953, pp. 53-70, and then it was also published in a Greek adaptation in the collection *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Griechentums seit 1453* (vol. 2, Athens 1967, pp. 161-196). To the latter a reprint of sixteen of Kopitar's shorter articles was also added; they include reviews of Greek books or books referring to the Greeks. The author of these articles mainly investigates two fields in which Kopitar's Philhellenism becomes obvious: Kopitar's activity as a censor of the Austrian government for Greek books, and his friendly relations with Greek scholars. Even as an official censor, Kopitar could not conceal his sympathies for oppressed and freedom-loving Greeks. He showed unbelievable courage, even diplomatic cunning towards the dreaded ministers of police, and he knew how to persuade them when he desired to make possible the printing of some Greek literary text. An interesting witness to such endeavours is the censor's report on Perdikari's novel in rhymed verses «Hermillos» (from the year 1816). Enepekides is right in stressing alongside this report that Greeks living in Austria «found in Kopitar's personality an excellent propagandist of their spiritual creations and a courageous defender of their needs and desires before the Austrian authorities».

Among Kopitar's Greek friends such outstanding personalities can be found as, for example, Antimos Gazis, an archimandrite of the Greek church in Vienna; Adamantios Korais, a scholar of an international reputation; Kon-

stantinos Kumas, the writer of a world history. Kopitar's attitude toward their writings was one of warm sympathy, and he reviewed their works with sincere enthusiasm. «And what Kopitar wrote was read, it was esteemed. Thus the Greeks found in him a friend and an advocate, who ardently acclaimed their efforts and endeavours for the resurrection of their enslaved country in Austrian newspapers» (Enepekides).

Kopitar's lively interest in the Greeks and the Greek language can also be observed in his extensive correspondence with the leading scholars of Greek culture of the time, e.g., with Karl Benedict Hase, editor of the new edition of Stephanus' *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*. This correspondence was published by J. Matl *Slavisticna revija* 10, Ljubljana 1957, pp. 194-210; cf. also M. Ibrovac, *ibid.*, pp. 211-213. Another important correspondent of this kind is Fr. Thiersch, a philologist from Munich, whose correspondence with Kopitar was published by P. Enepekides in *Annales Instituti Slavici* I 4 (*Cyrillo-Methodianische Fragen*, Wiesbaden 1968, pp. 183-190).

All this material offers us an impressive, an essentially enriched insight into Kopitar's relation to the Greeks, which can be denoted as Philhellenism in the real and most extensive meaning of the word. For this Philhellenism includes the Greek culture in all of its temporal extensions and all of its forms of appearance—from Homer to contemporary Greek writers, from heroic folk songs about struggles against the Turks to learned discussions about the most suitable Greek orthography. Kopitar himself defined his relation to the Greeks in his autobiography as his «secret love» (*heimliche Liebschaft*). We can say that this love was never extinguished and that he remained true to it all his life. In his youth, as he asserts in the same autobiography, his favourite author was Aristophanes; and in his last great publication, mainly dedicated to Greek culture, he wrote these words which can be taken as his Philhellenic Credo: *Graeci enim ipsi sine exemplo aliis omnibus exempla reliquere sempiterna* (*Hesychii glossographi discipulus*, Wien 1839, p. 62).

I think that it is not inappropriate to underline and support the significance of Kopitar's Philhellenism somewhat more extensively with bibliographic data, although this goes beyond the selective framework of my article. Of course, there are personalities who are—from the point of view of Slovene literary history—more significant than Kopitar, and whose attitudes toward the Greeks have been discussed by a number of authors. Such a personality, for example, is France Preseren, the greatest Slovene poet. However, data concerning him are much more easily accessible, clearly arranged, and better known. Besides, Preseren is not so unconditionally devoted to everything Greek as Kopitar: in spite of the relatively high importance of the Greek mythos, Greek history and the Greek countryside in his poetry, it still remains an open

question whether Preseren's greater debt is to Rome or to Hellas, whether it was not «a Roman variant of the antique culture which was prevalent in his works», as was recently asserted by J. Kos (*Preseren in evropska romantika*, Ljubljana 1970, p. 242). But in Kopitar's case such a question could not even be raised. His acknowledgement of Philhellenism is unquestionable, although his role as a propagator of Greek values in the framework of Slovene cultural history has not yet been sufficiently stressed and evaluated.

Let me be allowed to correct another deficiency which crept into my article on the basis of some oral information. On page 119, the transcript of Greek folk songs is mentioned. It was found among Matija Cop's manuscripts and noted some decades ago. Lojze Krakar did not discover it (as is mentioned in my article), he only undertook to investigate it and to publish it. His findings will soon be accessible in a study entitled «The Fight of the Balkan Peoples Against the Turks, and Slovene Romanticism».

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