

Karabová, Katarína

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Content and Linguistic Comparison of Ideological Structures of Slavic Reciprocity in the Works of Slovak and Croatian Thinkers at the End of the 18th Century

Katarína Karabová
(Trnava University)

Abstract

The last two decades of the 18th century present an interesting opportunity to explore the origins of the idea of Slavic reciprocity as witnessed in the analysis of literary works written in Latin. The paper addresses the question of where and if there is an imaginary boundary of nationally tuned texts. The research should be primarily based on the works written at the end of the 18th century in the Slovak and Croatian milieu. Based on the analysis of content as well as linguistic analysis of the ideological intent in the literary texts of the contemporary authors (P. M. Katančič, J. Severini, J. Papánek and others), the author of the presented study aims to determine potential backgrounds. The research is based primarily on historically tuned works that at that time brought comprehensive insights into the history of individual nations and the related sensitive questions that are raised to a greater or lesser extent even today. The focus of the analysis on the content and language of ideological imaginations may be significant in the search for a milestone. It is clear that historical compendia had been written even before 1780, therefore the comparison of these works is more than beneficial, as it could bring new insights and give us the answer with regard to the development of the idea of Slavic reciprocity.

Keywords

baroque literature; nationality; Slavic reciprocity

Introduction

The last two decades of the 18th century present an interesting opportunity to explore the origins of the idea of Slavic reciprocity as witnessed through the analysis of the Slavic idea even in literary works written in Latin. The paper addresses the question of where and if there is an imaginary boundary of nationally tuned texts. The research should be primarily based on the works written at the end of the 18th century in the Slovak and Croatian milieu. Based on the analysis of content as well as linguistic analysis of the ideological intent in the literary texts of the contemporary authors (P. M. Katančič, J. Severini, J. Papánek and others), the author of the presented study seeks to determine potential background. The research is based primarily on historically tuned works that at that time brought comprehensive insights into the history of individual nations and the related sensitive questions that are raised to a greater or lesser extent even today. The focus of the analysis on the content and the language of ideological imaginations may be significant in the search for a milestone. It is clear that historical compendia had been written even before 1780, therefore the comparison of these works is more than beneficial, as it could bring new insights and give us the answer with regard to the development of the idea of Slavic reciprocity.

One of the most important sources of national awareness was interest in Slovak history. The basic features of Slovak national ideology date back to the 17th century. Clarification of the origins of Christianity was credited to the Jesuit Melchior Inchofer (1584–1658) and Martin Cseles (1641–1709), professor at the Trnava University. According to Shore (2012: p. 226), their works had significant influence on the formation of Baroque Slavism. A Czech exile Jakub Jakobeus (1591–1645) wrote a historical record *Viva gentis Slavonicae delineatio*,¹ which addressed the most ancient history of the Slovaks. In the earliest stages, he associated historical growth of the Slovaks and their language with the history of the Slavs. And in contemporary history, he pointed out the history of the Slovak ethnic group and its language. Just as important are the views of Martin Szentiváni (1633–1705) who considered the *Iazyges – Metanastae* (whom he classified as the Slavs) to be the ancestors of the Slovaks that settled between the Carpathians, the river Tisza and the Danube. The development of the ideology of Slovak reciprocity in the 17th century was also greatly influenced by the linguistic and national positions, as well as the praises of the Slovak nation, which can be found as historical discursions in the works of Daniel Sinapius-Horčíčka (1640–1688), Tobiáš Masník (1640–1697), Ján Simonides (1648–1708) and others. These works, dedicated to Slovak nationality, to its history and language, testify of a high degree of national awareness.

1 See Šmatlák (1997: p. 188) for more information.

Significant national potential in the literature of the 18th

In the 18th century, the notion of an ethnic territory of the Slovak nationality became even clearer, and political unity began to deepen. In his extensive work *Notitia Hungariae novae historico geographica*, Matthias Bel (1648–1749) states that the territory of the Slovaks spreads over 13 counties in the North of the Kingdom of Hungary.²

The 2nd half of the 18th century is marked by the “enlightenment criticism”. There was a significant shift in the study of ethnogenesis of both the Slovak nation and Slovak nationality. The development of Slovak nationality in the 17th and 18th centuries may seem complicated in terms of the language use as well. In the 17th century, the use of cultivated Slovak was widespread in schools, as well as in written agenda of the nobility, in municipalities and county offices. In this period, the use of the Slovak language also increased among the Christian clergy (both the Catholic and the Evangelical). However, in this period, Latin continued to hold a leading position in the field of science, culture, education and religious literature. This is evidenced by the work of Slovak educators.

The 18th century is marked by important changes in social life. Development of culture at that time was very specific and characterized by many contradictory tendencies. The first half of the 18th century is the peak of Baroque in Slovakia, while the second is marked by the gradual rise of enlightenment. Late Baroque in the Kingdom of Hungary was characterized by its ability to apply its style and opinions to all levels of society. In this period, all religious movements and groups sought to present and defend their views. At the same time, it was logical – and resulting from the very essence of that time – that orthodoxy played the main role for both the Catholics and non-Catholics. According to Čičaj (1990: pp. 125–130) this resulted in the fact that it was hard to express more progressive thoughts and opinions in these groups.

In the 2nd half of the 18th century, however, the ideas of enlightenment were gradually expanded in Slovakia and Hungary. An important propagator was Adam František Kolár (1718–1783), who worked as a custodian in the court library in Vienna and was also the advisor to Maria Theresa. In his work *De originibus et usu perpetuo potestatis legislativae circa sacra Apostolicorum regum Ungariae* (1764), he advocated the absolutist power of the sovereign and the subordination of the church to the state on the basis of the most ancient laws of the Kingdom of Hungary. He also criticized medieval privileges of the nobility received for military service. The book caused a great outburst in the Diet of Hungary, and the nobility demanded a punishment for the author. The book was to be publicly burnt (Šmatlák 1997: pp. 316–317). Another propagator of the enlightenment ideas was the rector of the evangelical lyceum in Bratislava Jozef Bencúr (1728–1784). In his work *Ungaria semper libera*, he disputes with members of the Hungarian nobility stating that they cannot limit the power of the sovereign.³

2 Pozsony, Nyitra, Trenčín, Turóc, Árva, Liptó, Zólyom, Nógrád, Bars, Hont, Gömör és Kishont, Sáros and Zemplén. Bel denoted this area using the expression “parva Slavonia”.

3 Compare Pražák (1950: pp. 309–310).

The year 1780 is said to be the beginning of the Slovak national revival. However, it may rather be seen as a symbol in the process of transforming a feudal society into a modern nation. Gradual internal changes of the Slovak society started much earlier and continued long after 1780. The first history of the Slovak nation *Historia gentis Slavae*, written by Juraj Papánek (1738–1802), was issued in 1780. A relatively extensive work is divided into 14 chapters. The chapters are preceded by a prologue and dedication. In the prologue, Papánek says:

“I would like to address you briefly in the introduction, my dear reader. I want you to know this. I would never have thought that on the following pages I would write memoirs of everything that the Slovak nation had accomplished over the past centuries. Because no one would demand from someone dedicated to daily priest’s duties to write an extensive work. Such author can only please historians with short periods, even though I will talk about them more extensively, while I shall leave the worldly chronicles to the knowledgeable public.”⁴

Significant figures of cultural life in Slovakia in the second half of the 18th century undoubtedly include Ján Severini (1716–1789). He was a rector of the Evangelical Grammar School in Banská Štiavnica. In addition to remarkable pedagogical activity, he published works mainly in the field of history. Of all eleven Severini’s works, six are historical, one geographic, one rhetorical, one philosophical and the last one is scientific. As argued by Marsina (1981: p. 404), they are mostly compilatory textbooks, although the historical works are close to research. Severini describes his views and combinations, and he also addresses sharp exchange of views with the then significant Hungarian historians. According to Severini, history is the recording of memorable events. Historical sources come from credible writings – in this respect he refers to chroniclers, inscriptions, laws, public records, deeds and coins. In his words, a great deal of support for history is provided by geography and chronology, as well as heraldry, genealogy and prehistory studies. A renowned Slovak historian Richard Marsina believes that the relatively narrow interconnectedness of geography and history in Severini’s understanding is based on the fact that, despite the differences between the various geographical areas, political geography predominates in his work as well as the works of his contemporaries. In this case he refers above all to the extensive work by Matthias Bel *Notitia Hungariae novae historico-geographica*. Severini expressed his views on the history of Slovakia thoroughly in *Commentatio historica de veteribus incolis Hungariae Cis-Danubianae*. With regard to the earliest history, he uses ancient authors and relies mostly on the work of a significant Hungarian historian – Samuel Timon. It is clear from Severini’s work that he mastered the resources and literature also used by other historians of his time.⁵

4 *Pauca te in vestibulo monitum velim, amice lector. Illud te scire cupio: mentis meae nunquam fuisse, omnium eorum memoriam haec in folia cogere, quae retro actis seculis gens Slavonica egit, quod ut opus longe maximum foret, ita ab eo nemo exiget, qui quotidianis curis parochialibus distentus, non nisi per brevissima temporis intervalla se historicis potest commodare. Quamquam haec fusius concinnabo, dum annales sacro-profanos publico commiserero.* Papánek (2018=1780: Prooemium).

5 See Marsina (1981: pp. 406–414) for more information about Severini’s views and literary work.

Following the analysis of Severini's work, it can be stated that he was – with respect to his time and standards – a very learned historian, who mastered both local and foreign professional literature and sources. He limited his own research to the issues of earlier Hungarian history, and he dealt in more detail with the inhabitants of the pre-Danubian region of the Hungarian Kingdom. His great knowledge of professional literature and sources enabled him to correct the misconceptions of the authors he used as his sources. In his work *Conspectus historiae Hungariae*, which at that time was an accepted textbook, he tried to avoid any criticism and disagreement. He did so by failing to mention some facts and phenomena, by generalizing others, and restricting the problematic ones. Slovak origin and Slovak thinking were most evident in his earlier works. The closer as well as broader environment in which he worked had undoubtedly great influence on the way and degree of formulation of Severini's opinions. Overall, he can be described as an enlightened and educated historian. *Conspectus*, the work which will be addressed in detail, was published in 1778 in Bratislava. The structure of *Conspectus* is based on a certain traditional concept of historical works of the second half of the 18th century. It is divided into two parts. The first one is dedicated to the Huns, Avars and Hungarians who are the topic of three books. The second part – divided into three periods – addresses deeds of individual kings. At the end of the work, there is the pedigree chart of the Hungarian kings and the *index rerum* developed particularly for both parts.

Matija Petar Katančić and the origins of Croatian settlements

Balkan authors also began to present their history systematically at the end of the 18th century. In 1795 *Specimen philologiae et geographiae Pannoniorum* was published in Zagreb. It was written by a Croatian writer, literary theorist, professor of aesthetics and archaeology Matija Petar Katančić (1750–1825). The renowned lexicographer was born in 1750 in the Slavonian town of Valpovo. Between 1772 and 1778 this Franciscan studied philosophy and theology in Osijek, where he later worked as a professor. His admirable writing activity reflects the knowledge gained during his study of a number of scientific fields. He used his linguistic knowledge when translating the Holy Scriptures (Marijanović 1995: p. 103). Moreover, he wrote a very successful poetic work *Fructus autumnales*,⁶ which was published in Zagreb in 1791. Katančić proved himself as a literary critic and translation theorist in a writing *De poesi Illyrica libellus* from 1817. Matúš Peter Katančić died in Buda in 1825.

The article shall now focus on *Specimen philologiae et geographiae*. The author dedicated his work to four important men of his time. The first of them is Juraj Alojz Szerdahely, canon of the St. Mauritius Cathedral in Vác, who studied philosophy (inter alia) in Vienna and theology at the University of Trnava. He later worked as a professor of aesthetics (Fejér 1835: p. 121). The fact that he was truly a prolific author is proven by his writing activity, which – in addition to historical and rhetorical writings – includes

6 Ijsewijn & Sacré (1990: p. 95).

poetry and works on theory of literature, such as *Ars poetica generalis*, *Poesis narrativa* and *Poesis Drammatica* all written in 1784. The second person to whom Katančić dedicated his *Specimen* was a professor at the University of Pest Stephanus Schoenwisner, author of a collection *Compendium antiquitatum Romanarum*. Next one in the short introductory dedication profiles is a Franciscan Josip Jakošić. He studied epigraphy and his knowledge in this field inspired Katančić himself. The last one is Josip Pavišević, a member of the Franciscan Order, who completed his study of philosophy and theology in Rome and later taught grammar and theology at the Franciscan school in Slavonia.

Katančić used a prologue – a completely common element of literary works of the 18th century – as a comprehensive explanation of his motives that led to the creation of his work. He emphasized the fact that some parts of the work had appeared in print before, while others were offered to readers in a book version for the first time, although they had already been written earlier. He further explains his approach used in the description and examples of epigraphic monuments, examples of which are found in *Specimen*. In the last section of the prologue he refers to the parts related to geographical data with reference to Ptolemy and St. Jerome, who was born in the Croatian city of Stridon.

The actual work is divided – as is apparent from the title – into two main parts: *Specimen philologiae* and *Specimen geographiae*. The first book focuses on the origins and ancient Croatian settlements. In seven paragraphs he studies the ancient homeland of the Croats and their ancestors. The interpretation refers to the periods dating back to the 6th century and in the fourth paragraph – with regard to historical sources – Katančić suggests that the Croats are an autochthonous population. The second book addresses the language of the Pannonians. In the opening paragraph, the author refers to various assumptions about the language in order to point out later the etymology of the word Pannoni according to the interpretation offered by the aforementioned Jesuit and author of the encyclopaedic work *Curiosiora et selectiora variarum scientiarum miscellanea* – Martin Szentivány. In the third paragraph, one may observe an attempt to refute the arguments of some earlier writers who were inclined to believe that the language spoken in Pannonia had some origins in Greek. After mentioning several authors who had addressed the issue in the past, Katančić concluded that the Pannonian language developed over the centuries from a common Slavic language. The third book titled *De literatura Pannoniorum* addresses the issue of Croatian literary monuments on the background of several epigraphic monuments transcribed in their original form. In the first part, the author offers and discusses epigraphs related to Catherine, Bosnian queen. The second part is dedicated to gold letterings, the third focuses in more detail on the epigraphic monuments of the ancient Roman city Neviodunum, which is now part of the Croatian town of Drnovo situated few dozen miles Northwest of Zagreb.

The second main part of the *Specimen geographiae* studies in four separate books geographical issues related to the location, description and literary heritage of ancient cities from the period of Roman empire, the *Andautonium* located in the area of today's Zagreb, Siscia – today the town of Sisak in central Croatia, south-east of Zagreb, Neviodunum, Poetovio – today Ptuj Northwest of Varazdin, Remista and Aqua Viva in the area of what is now Varazdin. Besides the location, the author carefully observes the lit-

erary monuments that bear witness to the antiquity of these cities, thus presenting their importance in the period of their creation and of the greatest development.

Let us go back to the first part of the work, which among other things talks about the autochthony of the Croats in Dalmatia and Pannonia. The author does not conclude this argument by entering into the issue *in medias res*. He carefully chose the content in the previous chapters, where he prepared an argumentative framework to proclaim such significant argument. It is already the first chapter, which addresses the earlier views of the ancient homeland of the Croats. The renowned historians of the period mentioned herein also include Samuel Timon (1675–1736),⁷ whose work is dedicated to the history of the Kingdom of Hungary and whose attention focuses on the issue of its origin and history of each area. Katančić comments that he was the first to set in order matters related to *res Pannonicae*; and he agrees with the opinion of the authors mentioned earlier in this paragraph – Peter Gregorius, Martin Svätójánsky – that the territory of Pannonia was inhabited by the Slavs – *Slavae* already in ancient times. He consequently supports this argument by Ritter's work *Annales Croatiae*, Jordan's *Regnum Slavorum*, Kerceselich's *Praeliminares historicae*, Severini's *Populi Hungariae Cisdanubianae*, Schlözer's *Historia septentrionali* or Kollár's *Amoenitates iuris Hungarici*. However, even such authorities would not be satisfactory enough and thus in the third paragraph, he continues searching for the etymology of the term ἀπό τῆς Βαγιβαρείας from Porphyrogenitus' text that he interprets as *Babia gora*, which – according to his own words – could indicate a part of the Carpathians. According to Katančić it is quite naturally a Slavic word, but translated into Greek and denoting *Vetularum montes*. Again he underlines these arguments using testimonies of historical works written by his contemporaries and then he gives a number of similar examples in terms of etymology. All these efforts are directed at the presentation of the following statements in the fourth paragraph: 1. *Croatarum nomen in Pannoniis ortum*; 2. *Croatas et Porphyrogeniti aetate et ante ipsum, ad tempora usque Avarum, Slavos*; 3. *Gothorum ac Longobardorum imperio Suavos*; 4. *Romanis heic dominantibus Pannoinos fuisse nuncupatos*, while he speaks to the reader directly in the text in order to tell him that the designation of the Croats was created by the Pannonians; the Croats were called *Slavi* at the time and even before the time of Porphyrogenus; they were called *Suavi* under the Goths and Lombards; and the Romans who ruled here called them *Pannoini*.

In the fourth paragraph Katančić also clarifies the origin of the word *Croatae* or *Horvatae*. He supposes that this word originated in the times of Porphyrogenitus, which is documented in the literature of the 9th century in one of Lucius' texts. The author obviously attempts to provide the earliest evidence. Hence it is no wonder that the following text also includes a term *Arivates*, which Katančić found in Pliny; or Ptolemy's *Carvanca*, and he is trying to find a link with the word *Harvatae*. He finds the link – as is clear from his statements – in Ptolemy's use of the term *Carvanca* for a Celtic tribe inhabiting the boundaries of *Norica* neighbouring to the east with *Pannonia*. Pliny who travelled through the territory from west to east, as was geographers' tradition, used the term *Arivates* to refer to the tribes, that – under an assumption expressed in one of

7 For more extensive information, see Marsina (1980).

our author's works – inhabit ager Zagoriensis. The term Horvati, which was later spread widely, originated in this area.

Throughout the work, the author refers to several authors, who addressed similar issues in their works and their findings supported Katančić's arguments in different parts of the work discussed herein. Often they were recognized authorities in particular field and the work as well as statements offered in such critical approach add respect and credibility. In an attempt to prove his views and opinions, the author uses a verified procedure of paraphrasing or quoting works that support his ideas. In several cases, he begins his arguments with supporting opinions of his contemporaries; one can often notice that he is not satisfied only with their reasoning, hence he goes deeper into the past and he even uses views of ancient authors. Nevertheless, this was entirely legitimate procedure of the writers in the late 18th century, who – unlike their predecessors – insisted on the indication of sources they had used, especially if such sources supported and proved their ideas. To the contrary, in *Specimen philologiae et geographiae* one may rarely encounter an explicitly contradictory judgement. Even if one finds such place in the text, the author presents it more out of curiosity and specially to highlight the contrasting perception of the fact, which he himself vehemently does not disprove in any way, and he rather leaves it to the reader's consideration, who is already convinced – thanks to a number of examples – of the truth of Katančić's arguments.

The fact that Katančić really elaborated the structure of the discussed work is proved in a section presenting samples of several monuments located in the territory of Pannonia and Dalmatia, which only underline his claims about the autochthony of the Croat population. His agility in the reasoning does not lie so much in the amount of the presented samples – although their number is not insignificant – but rather in their intended use. Many are ethnographic in nature and give evidence of the ethnographic monuments, yet that quite logically fits into the argumentation framework of the author.

The importance Katančić's file may be understood, in particular, in the context of national revivalist efforts penetrating into the literary writings at the time of the work's origin. Such efforts may be also noticed in the concept of other national literatures in Hungary. It may be assumed in connection with *academica peregrinatio* that national personalities in different parts knew each other and communicated well together on issues related to patriotism and national revival attempts. The means – in this case literary works – they have chosen to point out the issue on the one hand, and to present conclusive evidence on the other hand, are perceived with regard to their nature and level as legitimate and effective. Especially if they provide coherent argumentation led by a critical approach.

Conclusion

Parallels between the authors may be observed at multiple levels. First of all, they are educated authors who emphasize their education by citing the authors and referring to the works of their predecessors from the ranks of recognized historians. It is indis-

putable that they use their scholarship in order to support nationally-minded efforts emerging throughout the Europe. An important element in both works is the emphasis on historical authorities, and although attempts by historians in the 2nd half of the 18th century may be perceived as simple sketches of their own history, their works refer to much more distinctive elements of criticism than might be seen at first glance. It is clear that historical science, as we know it today, has been formed for a longer period of time thanks to sophisticated and extensive work of many historians. After all, the information they provided is used by today's investigators (of course not all of it).

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Mgr. Katarína Karabová, PhD. / katarina.karabova@truni.sk; kkarabova@gmail.com

Department of Classical Philology

Trnava University, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts

Hornopotočná 23, 918 43 Trnava, Slovak Republic



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