

Temeljna je odrednica etnologije svakako sam pojam *ethnos*, s njime stoji i pada znanost nazvana po njemu. Taj je pojam ukorijenjen u Kollárovoj definiciji etnologije. Druga je njen osnovni cilj, sadržan u toj istoj definiciji: rekonstrukcija etničke povijesti kroz proučavanje kulture.

Ishodeći iz etnologije, mogu se (i trebaju) proučavati pojedine kulturne pojave i samostalno, nezavisno od ethnosa, i u sklopu sustava u kome postoje, proučavati sami sustavi sa svim svojim značajkama (funkcijama, vrijednostima itd), dijakronijski ili sinkronijski; svi su pristupi proučavanju kulture legitimni, no oni će biti etnološki jedino ukoliko imaju u vidu etnološko ishodište (*ethnos*) i cilj (rekonstrukcija etničke povijesti kroz proučavanje kulture). Tu su, čini mi se, dometi i granice etnologije.

AN ARGUMENT FOR ETHNOLOGY AS A HISTORICAL SCIENCE CONCERNING ETHNIC GROUPS

It is unnecessary to emphasize (everybody will agree) that ethnology is in a state of permanent crisis. The crisis is of such an extent that it calls into question the subject matter of ethnology, its approaches, methods, definitions and its very name. Relying on the old wisdom that the solution of a problem is partly in its history, I shall try to point to some moments in the development of ethnology which determined its history and eventually contributed to the above-mentioned crisis. This review will not, of course, solve the problems, but it may help to illuminate and thus better understand them.

Ethnology, as far as we know today, (new discoveries may change the picture) was founded, named and defined in the second half of the eighteenth century in the eastern parts of Central Europe (more exactly: the Danube valley) as a discipline which should contribute to the unravelling of the problems created by ethnic variety in the Danube valley after its liberation from the Turks. The word "ethnology" and its definition were for the first time used in *Historiae iurisque publici regni Hungariae amoenitates* by A. F. Kollár, published in 1783 in Vienna. The role of ethnology was clear enough:

Ethnologia (...) est notitia gentium populorumque, sive id est id doctorum hominum fluidum, quo in variarum gentium origines, idioma, mores, atque instituta, ac denique patriam vetustasque sedes eo consilio inquirunt, ut de gentibus populisque sui aevi rectius iudicium ferre possint. (p. 80-81)

Ethnology, according to the above, started as an intellectual activity which, by studying the speech, customs and institutions of various peoples (*gentium and populorum*) discovered their origins, native countries and settlements. The aim of ethnology was to reveal ethnogenetical processes, i. e. to establish the ethnic history of various human groups by studying those elements of the cultures of particular peoples which contained their ethnic characteristics.

Kollár's final aim - better understanding between the nations of his time, resulting from the ethnological comprehension of their history, - surpasses the limits of science

and shines uncomfortably brightly in the darkness of mutual national misunderstanding in southeastern Europe today. If not for anything else, at least for its humanistic value, Kollár's opinions should not be forgotten.

Ethnology, defined in this way, developed in an environment permeated by ideas of national autonomy, among which a prominent role was played by the so-called "Baroque Slavism", deeply rooted in Croatian medieval historical thought. Consequently, there is nothing strange in the fact that in the eastern part of Central Europe this understanding of ethnology survived even when in western Europe ethnology changed its subject matter. This understanding was completely preserved by Katančić (*Specimen philologiae et geographiae Pannoniorum*, Zagreb 1795, *De Istro eiusque adcolis commentatio*, Buda 1798.), and Čevapović (*Recensio observantis minorum provinciae S. Ioann. a Capistrano... commentariis ethnol. ...illustrata*, Buda 1830.) and it has not entirely disappeared even today.

Independently of this "Pannonian" ethnology, another science, at first without a name, a science about "a people", was formed in western Europe. It was formed at the sunset of the absolutist monarchies, by scholars of the French Enlightenment. Its *people* is not defined ethnically (it is not a *gens* with its languages, customs, institutions distinguishing it from any other gens) but politically: it is that good part of "a people" which will remain in the state after a "bad" monarch is dethroned together with his state apparatus and the social class which supports him. The scholars found the authentic model for this "people", originally good, gentle, but spoiled by civilization, in the "savages" from newly-discovered countries; Rousseau's "bon sauvage" was created and the rudiments of later cultural anthropology and sociology were laid down.

Four years after Kollár's Amoenitates Alex. César Chavannes published in Lausanne his *Essai sur l'Éducation intellectuelle avec le Project d'une Science Nouvelle* in which he outlined a theory of anthropology as a *science générale de l'homme*. In chapter eight, entitled "*Ethnologie ou science de l'homme*", he defined ethnology as a separate anthropological discipline:

Mais la science générale de l'homme demande qu'il soit aussi considéré comme appartenant à une espèce répandue sur la surface de ce globe & distribuée en divers corps de communautés dont les individus agissent en vue d'un commun intérêt, & qu'on recherche avec soin la manière dont ces sociétés se sont formées, établies, réglées, & comment, se trouvant placées dans ces circonstances diverses, elles se sont élevées peu à peu & successivement à divers degrés de civilisation.

Chavannes continued:

Tel est le second objet de l'Anthropologie prise au sens général, & la partie qui lui seroit destinée, nous l'appellons Ethnologie (de nation). (Str. 98).

In this way Chavannes transferred the name of "Pannonian" science about peoples (i. e. ethnology) to the "western" science. "Western" ethnology was gradually developing into an independent science, but it was still closely linked to anthropology (see: Waitz, *Anthropologie der Naturvölker*) and sociology (Condorcet, Comte, Spencer), sometimes to biological anthropology (W. F. Edwards).

The first and basic confusion in ethnological theory is rooted in this fact: ethnology has two definitions of its subject matter, and the definition which has prevailed does not correspond to its name.

The first definition, the one by Kollár, puts an emphasis on the ethnic characteristics of the culture of a certain group of people (*gens*); its criteria are cultural, its orientation is historical, with an accent on ethnic history, and its name is derived from its subject matter.

The second definition, the one by Chavannes, puts an emphasis on the understanding of the laws of the general development of mankind, its nominal subject matter is "people" as a political, i. e. sociological category understood as a unit which has reached a certain stage of development recognizable by certain indicators; although its orientation is historical too, its aim is to reconstruct the universal cultural development of all mankind. In such a concept "people" becomes another word for a certain stage of development in the hierarchy of universal history; his culture is considered as a representative of this stage and ethnic characteristics of the culture become irrelevant. Nevertheless, this "western" science which concentrated on the development of general culture claimed the name of the "Pannonian" one which concentrated on ethnic events.

The second disagreement, which was equally far reaching in its practical consequences, arises from the lack of wish or ability to study European *ethnic* cultures together with the cultures of "savage, native", exotic non-European peoples. This inability reaches its peak in the fact that in German language it is impossible to name these two scientific activities with a common name. This leads to a division into "*Volkskunde*" and "*Völkerkunde*", the division into separate sciences. This German language peculiarity influenced the nomenclature of other European sciences. National ethnology, the ethnology of European nations (*Volkskunde*) was regularly confined to its own national preserves while the studying of non-European peoples was called ethnology and was separated from the first one.

While non-European ethnology fought successfully for its right of citizenship and owing to the activity of Bastian, Tylor, and Morgan entered university departments, associations, magazines and museums, national ethnology was faced with the threat of being drowned in domestic science. It had its recourse to national philologies, of course at the expense of its independence. Jagić's approach to the ethnology of Slavic nations is indicative in this sense. In his inaugurating speech in Vienna in 1886 in which he defined Slavic philology, Jagić included in it, besides philological and linguistic studies, research on folk poetry, ethnology, mythology, etc... Jagić consciously avoided the word "*ethnology*"; the subject matter of ethnology does not deal with its own nation, that is the field of ethnography as a part of philology (however, where the word "*ethnology*" crept in, it was used in the sense of "Pannonian" ethnology).

If we compare the attitudes of Jagić (a philologist) and Kollár (a historian) we shall see that the difference between them is only in the matter of priority. Both of them had the same group of subject matters, the same group of disciplines before their eyes; the only difference is that, for Kollár, ethnology was a superordinate discipline, and for Jagić ethnography was *ancilla philologiae*. Both of them took interest in ethnic characteristics

of the culture (the Slavist Jagić was, of course, interested in the Slavic culture) and both of them aspired to reconstruct ethnic history which was not understood as consisting of stages.

Among the Croats this view was fundamentally shaken by Antun Radić who, having found his theoretical inspiration in Michelet's *Le Peuple* - in 1898 formed his theory of a people as the subject matter of ethnology. For Radić, "people" was ethnically characterized, but within Radić's Croatian science about people these characteristics were irrelevant.

Approximately at the same time anthropologically oriented ethnology (*Völkerkunde*) divided itself, due to the methodological weakness of evolutionism, into at least three branches. One branch tried to find new methods and approaches to historical research of culture being aware that the spatial dimension of culture phenomena (their dispersion in space) is of great importance and that the temporal dimension (European cultural-historical tendencies and Boas's culture anthropology) could be read only of the spatial dimension.

The second branch gave up - according to its consideration - useless historical questions and took to the research of, apparently, ahistorical points of culture - its functions, and later, its structures.

The third branch eventually, denying any scientific logic, converted evolutionism of Morgan's type into a dogma ("Marxist" ethnology in Stalin's era).

National ethnology (*Volkskunde*) sometimes came closer to the tendencies in general ethnology and sometimes kept its autonomy. Only a few great synthetic works have tried to unite the results of both ethnologies. Within Europe, *Ethnologia Europaea*, has successfully worked on the synthesis of various national ethnologies since 1957.

The idea, that by observing the diffusion of particular phenomena in space we can reconstruct a historical development, not only of these phenomena, but also of particular ethnic groups who carry these cultures led to a number of widely outlined theories in general ethnology (such as Schmidt's *Kulturkreislehre*) which proved to be a failure. But in national ethnologies this idea resulted in the work on national ethnological atlases in almost all European countries. These ethnocartographic enterprises are theoretically founded in the ideas close to Gracnec's *Methode der Ethnologie* (1911) but their main traits can be recognized in the long forgotten "Pannonian" ethnology.

The idea that any phenomenon should be, in the first place, observed in its spatial dimension in order that out of it (spatial dimension) we could reconstruct its history (temporal range) has necessarily created the need for cartographic presentation of culture phenomena and their derivations as a technical means of help in an ethnological scientific procedure.

This idea is actually the very element which makes ethnology an independent historical science, different from culture anthropology and sociology. If this fact is not respected, the limits between sciences become blurred. In spite of all aspirations towards the unification of scientific branches we should keep in mind the old saying "*qui bene distinguit...*".

Now, at the moment when the Centre for ethnological cartography after almost thirty years of quiet work goes into public with its publications (editions of *Ethnological Atlas of Yugoslavia* and *Studia Ethnologica*) it is an opportunity to re-think and redefine fundamental ethnological principles.

The fundamental ethnological term of reference is the very notion of ethnos; the science called after this word owes its maintenance or failure to it. The notion of ethnos is rooted in Kollár's definition of ethnology. The other term of reference is its main aim, contained in the same definition: a reconstruction of ethnic history through the study of culture.

Particular culture phenomena, coming out of ethnology, could (and should) be studied on their own, independently of ethnos and within the systems in which they exist, as well as these systems themselves with all their characteristics (functions, values, etc...), diachronically or synchronically; all the approaches to the study of culture are legitimate, but they are ethnological only if they pay attention to the starting point of ethnology (ethnos) and the aim of ethnology (the reconstruction of ethnic history through the study of culture). These are the ultimate aims as well as the limits of ethnology.

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