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STATE CULTURE AND THE LABORATORY OF PEOPLES: ISTRIAN ETHNOGRAPHY DURING THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN MONARCHY

Contextualising Austrian sources dating from 1867 until the end of World War I, this paper gives a critical overview of historical texts about the culture of Istria. By the mid-19th century and towards its end, ethnology, the so-called *Volkskunde*¹ started to be promoted and emphasised by the very leadership of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as important in the definition and production of State culture, and was then implemented on the level of ethnographic collection, both objects and in the form of writings about traditional life. Such an approach to ethnology in Austria was embodied in the personage of the Crown Prince himself and implemented by Michael Haberlandt, founder of the Vienna Ethnographic Museum. However, this view of Istria was preceded by the work of the statistician, Karl Freiherr von Czoernig, published as early as the mid-19th century. It is asserted that these three writers created basic stereotypical constructs which became the formal framework for all evaluation of Istrian culture.

Keywords: Istria, Austrian Empire, ethnographic method, stereotypes

The mid-19th century was the period of the first ethnographic studies in Istria. Since the "people" (and/or the "peasantry") had been understood since the 18th century as nation-bearers, it is no surprise that both scholarly and aesthetic interest in the results and the formation of the "popular spirit" was highly

¹ In Austria as in Germany, as in some other countries (Norway, Sweden, etc.) there still persisted more or less a division into *Volkskunde*, which related to ethnography/ethnology (depending on whether the collected material was on the descriptive level, which would correspond with ethnography, or the scholarly, interpretative level, when ethnology was in question), i.e., the science on culture within the borders of one's own country, and/or, people (sometimes also including the ethnology of Europe), and *Völkerkunde*, the science about extra-European cultures.

developed, particularly regarding customs, costume, architecture, and folklore, which also gave an incentive to collect the corresponding articles. Superficial collection was more important than careful evaluation of material, which is obvious precisely in the example of Istrian ethnographic collection.

Volkskunde could also be considered as the "legitimising science" of the nation (Stachel 2002:324), in which it had a homogenising effect at the national level, contributing to the nationalisation of culture. For its part, the peasantry was the crown witness to the former, and now once more desirable national culture. The idea of "national character" (whereby efforts were made to find the particular characteristics of a certain people or ethnic group, which was supposed to differentiate them clearly and unmistakably from others) can be monitored right up to the 1960s (Johler 1993:314); themes that had previously been selected, refined and then standardised were incorporated in its description, in which they actually created constructs. At the same time, one could say that this was "mass production of tradition" (Johler 1993:315) in which particular elements of the village way of life were translated into national "popular culture" (*Volkskultur*) and were thus given a new place and significance in the context of national symbolism and its self-awareness. Understood in this way, "popular culture" was homogenised and simplified, in order to create a strongly associative force.

Birth of the stereotype: Czoernig's presentation of Istria

One of the pioneers of Austrian ethnology, **Karl Freiherr von Czoernig**, published his first major work, "The Ethnography of the Austrian Monarchy" in 1857. The influence of this work continued until the Monarchy's end. Czoernig was the head of the Imperial and Royal Bureau of Statistics. His core interest was the history of the peoples, their linguistic borders and the so-called linguistic islands, observed as features of the national affiliation of the Monarchy's diverse peoples. He expressed ideas that were to be stressed even during coming decades, based on the suppression of national separatism, melding into the "distinctive and unique" variety and interweaving of peoples and ethnic groups which would not then demand independence for individual ethnic entities. In order to achieve that aim, it was necessary to engage a new science – ethnography – and to infuse it with significance and purpose. In Czoernig's opinion, science was power (*Wissenschaft ist Macht*), while, as a conservative technocrat, he wanted it to contribute to the Monarchy's modernisation.

Instead of the eleven main nations that were generally thought to live in the then-Empire, he counted 137 ethnic groups and peoples that he called *Volksstämme* (tribes), and 22 linguistic groups within the four main historico-linguistic categories (Germanic, Hungarian, neo-Latin and Slavic). He thus prompted and established a view of the Monarchy's population through the

prism of "tribes" (*Volksstämme*) – but not peoples and/or nations – which was to be one of the key words in the rhetoric of those who would attempt to reduce the importance of the emerging national identities in the coming decades, emphasising supranational identity and patriotism on the level of the entire Monarchy.

Where the Southern Slavs were concerned, Czoernig was largely influenced by Šafařikov's interpretation that separated the Serbian "tribe" from the Croatian, with Bulgarians, Bosnians, Montenegrins, Slavonians, and Dalmatians, as well as the Serbs in Hungary and Turkey, belonging to the Serbian "tribe", while the Croatian comprised only Kajkavian Croats and those in Western Hungary. Following this conception, it is no wonder that Czoernig, apart from Slovenians, also saw "Serbo-Croats" and Serbs in Istria. According to him, "Serbo-Croats" were those Slavs who had come to Istria during the first migratory wave, largely during the 7th century. For their part, Serbs were settlers from Dalmatia who had moved in mainly during the 16th century to those parts of Istria that had been emptied by disease and warfare. Interestingly enough, in another part of his book, he describes Morlachs in Dalmatia (von Czoernig 1857:172) as also having settled in Istria in the 16th century, claiming that they were also of "Serbo-Croatian" attributes and language. However, after their arrival in Istria he categorises them as Serbs. He considered that a mixed Sloveno-Serbo-Croatian area began at the Dragonja River and on southwards and stretched as far as Buje, Oportalj and Sovinjak, while the Sloveno-Serbian linguistic border began south of there; however, he believed that it was difficult to detect the differences between Serbo-Croatian and Serbian speech. For its part, the border between the Slovenian and Serbo-Croatian language stretched from Sovinjak northwards to Rakitovac: the region west of that belt was Slovenian, and Serbo-Croatian to the east (used by the "Serbo-Croatian" Fućki and Čiči). He thought it particularly difficult to set the Serbo-Croatian/Italian border, since the coastal towns and some towns in the interior had prevalingly Italian populations surrounded by "Serbo-Croats" as, for example, in Buzet, Motovun, Pazin, Galižana, Labin, Plomin, Krk, Cres, Osor, Rijeka, etc. Admittedly, he established that Pazin had no continuity in Italian settlement, but rather that the speaking of Italian had been spurred by sporadic settlement by Kmjel (Friulian) weavers. According to Czoernig, there was an almost uninterrupted swath of Italian coastal towns and settlements from Muggia to Pula.

Czoernig regarded the national and ethnic picture of Istria as very complex, and defined that region as one of those where he had the most difficulties in determining the relationships between the diverse groups. He wrote:

In relation to the quantity of so many remnants of diverse nationalities, there are no regions in the Monarchy where their very recognisable remnants have endured (even more in language, costume and customs)

as on the small Istrian peninsula, a land in which the oldest cultures of our part of the world are contiguous with, in today's terms, the lowest level of civilisation within the entire Monarchy. But what is confusing is not only the thirteen ethnographic nuances in themselves, which the undersigned was able to establish – Italians (direct descendants of the inhabitants of Rome and Venice, Romanians (Wallachs), Albanians, Slovenians (Šavrini, Brežani and Brkini), Croats (inhabitants of the hills, coastal area and islands, Bezjaki and Fučki), Serbs (Uskoks, Morlachs and Montenegrins) and the enigmatic Čići – but the very melding and connecting of the various segments which live side by side, even those resistant tribes that do not have a written form of their language (even their oral expression is unravellable) and whose few educated individuals find it hard to decide which written language would be the most suitable for their language. One meets not only Croaticised Slovenians and Slovenicised Croats, but also Croaticised Wallachs, and further, Italianised Croats who have partly forgotten their own language (on the western coast), and then Croaticised Italians, among whom the case is similar (in the interior), and again a mixed people whose costume is Italian, customs Slavic, and language a mixture of Serbian and Italian (von Czoernig 1857:Part 1, page X).

Czoernig's views were influential. Austrian (and other) authors quoted him for more than fifty years after the publication of his *Ethnographie*. In this way, "truths" about Istria's ethnic make-up became deep-seated. He influenced also some Italian historians of Istria, such as Carlo Combi, who used Czoernig's conclusions in his own irredentist-oriented interpretations of Istrian history (Bertoša 1978:66). Czoernig also expressed value judgements and impressions of Istria which gave rise to recognisable stereotypes,² and were then repeated for decades, supplemented and constantly "re-discovered" and proven. One stereotype was the view of Istria as a region with an exceptionally high number of ethnic groups and peoples who, in mutual contact and interaction, once again formed new cultural phenomena. Czoernig called that *Mischung* (mixture), and *Verschmelzung* (melding, joining) which was later to receive such as *Hybridismus* and similar. In Czoernig, the Čići were defined as an enigmatic people, and they became an inescapable symbol of poverty, backwardness, and almost "savagery" and, to a great extent, an object of exotification in many later publications, including tourist guide books. Contrasting Pula and its rich Roman heritage with the villages in the interior (probably the Čići villages, which were considered the poorest in the entire Monarchy), he prompted later authors to use similar poetics. For example, at the end of the 19th century, the impoverished villages of the Čići

² According to the definition in the Hutchinson Reference Library (Helicon Publishing and Penguin Books, 1996), stereotype is "... a fixed, exaggerated, and preconceived description about a certain type of person, group, or society. It is based on prejudice rather than fact, but by repetition and with time, stereotypes become fixed in people's minds, resistant to change or factual evidence to the contrary."

were often contrasted with the brilliance of Opatija or the lightning speed of Pula's growth, as the Monarchy's central Naval Base.

Ethnology in the service of the State idea

An even more comprehensive work, intended for the broadest reading public, was the series of books entitled "The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Words and Pictures" (*Die Österreichisch-Ungarische Monarchie im Wort und Bild*), a literary version of sorts of the idea of the Monarchy. Its initiator was no other than the Heir Apparent Rudolf himself, who engaged a wide circle of associates. A very important aspect of this work is the fact that it introduced the term ethnography/ethnology – *Volkskunde* – consistently and in the context of description of individual regions, in the same sense (largely) that it is used today. Ethnology was given the core role within which, as an exceptionally patriotic scholarly discipline, one had to contribute to the strengthening of mutual understanding, and, thus, to the internal unity of the Monarchy. In all its comprehensiveness, it was a work that marked a new beginning in the development of ethnology, inspiring new research and the founding of many new institutions in the field of ethnology and anthropology. It was published in 24 volumes, each of which was dedicated to one or more regions of the Monarchy.

That work of the Heir Apparent, i.e. the *Kronprinzwerk* was permeated by the motto *Wissen is Versöhnung* – "Knowledge is Conciliation", under which it was considered that the more the peoples, i.e., the "tribes" (*Volkstämme*), knew about each other, the more they would understand each other and get along, thus creating an internal bonding within the Empire. Feelings of deep mutual solidarity (which was to connect all the peoples and ethnic groups in the country), in combination with developed supranational patriotism, were intended to strengthen the Empire and eliminate the danger of its disintegration. Precisely ethnology was chosen to serve that political purpose and to play the role of gluing the structure which was threatening to fall apart.

If one tries to define the genre or style of this work, the *Kronprinzwerk* is a text somewhat between a travel guide and a political discourse. Although it activated the above modern scholarly apparatus, the work was meant to be popular in character, so that Crown Prince Rudolf's introduction to Volume I invites readers to take an imaginary journey through the Empire – a "journey on paper", as Georg Schmidt called the entire work. Its exotic and picturesque quality, as though one were looking through eye-glasses of sorts to observe life in the Monarchy, led to the work having its very own aesthetic character, in which, as Schmidt interpreted it, "there was ornamentation instead of explanation" (Schmidt 1994:103). Everything unfolds in a framework without temporal definition, and changes are not mentioned. There is no mention of

any type of problem in life and coexistence; instead, a romantic vision of the harmonious way of life in the Monarchy is offered, and one gains the impression of endless idealisation. The "historical truth" promoted by the *Kronprinzwerk* was a construct of sorts, which was supposed to act auto-suggestively, like a myth. Attention should also be paid to the authors of the ethnographic descriptions in the "*Kronprinzwerk*", most of whom could not be called ethnologists in the contemporary sense but who were usually historians, linguists, geographers, and sometimes teachers, priests, etc.

Notwithstanding the above, it is still surprising that the *Kronprinzwerk*, as the last attempt at the Monarchy's overall self-presentation, is a poorly known work, since it does indeed contain material relevant for ethnologists, historians and similar professionals. Perhaps the reason lies in the fact that this was primarily a popular work. The contemporary Slovenian ethnologist, Maja Godina-Golija, criticizes that the culture of the individual regions was shown as the culture of feudal lords and rich peasants, and that the other social strata were not represented at all. Her view is that the upper strata of the peasantry manifested a representative cultural structure that matched the national and political interests of the Monarchy at the end of the 19th century (Godina-Golija 1988:33). Vitomir Belaj sees its basic deficiency in the fact that literature is not cited at all; no sources are mentioned that would clarify how and in what manner the material for the *Kronprinzwerk* (Belaj 1998:18) was collected. Evaluating the work as a whole, Konrad Köstlin writes of ethnology adapted to bourgeois taste and of a typical comprehension for that era) of ethnographic specificities, in which the Other becomes pliable and, thanks to picturesque folklorisation, also safe. This is a perspective which still today makes so-called popular culture so attractive (Köstlin 1998:34)

The presentation of Istria in Volume 9 was left to an Istrian. Moreover, the review of traditional life was written by one of the leaders of the Croatian National Revival in Istria, **Vjekoslav (Alojz) Spinčić**. He was a priest, translator, author, and representative in the Istrian Regional Sabor (parliament), where he also held the position of chair of the Croatian-Slovenian club, right up until the Sabor was disbanded in 1916. His text was entitled "The Folk Life of the Slavs in Istria" and related to the Croats and the Slovenes, stressing that the Croats were far and away the largest Slavic group in Istria. Spinčić. commenced with a description of the community way of life, mentioning traditional social institutions. He emphasised that the Venetian authorities of the time had described the Slavs as "peace-loving, faithful, moderate and, above all, hard-working and skilful tillers of the land." He also mentioned the *Ćići*, explaining that they were largely Croatian, except in the village of *Žejane* in which Romanian was spoken, as among the *Ćiribirci* in general, mentioning that their material culture was on an even level with that of the surrounding Croatian culture.

Spinčić then went on to describe the basic branches of the economy (farming, sheep rearing), also inserting descriptions of costume and folklore elements. He mentioned the economic activities on the islands, in Liburnija and Ćićarija, adding the Slovenian Šavrinke and their mediating trading services in northern Istria. He also wrote that the "favourite Croatian folk dance, the *kolo* (or circle-dance)" was danced to a *sopela* (Istrian shawm) or goatskin bagpipe accompaniment. In describing annual calendar customs, the convincing nature of Spinčić's text is evident. These descriptions indicate the broader context and system of values in society, linking folklore elements that relate to the same theme in a way that would be impossible for researchers from outside of Istria, especially those not knowing the language. He concluded his text with the observation that "*the Istrian Slavs, Croats and Slovenes, do not differ much on the whole; they are strong and lively, sturdy and live to a ripe old age. They are hard-working, bright and witty, and self-taught and folk poets are often found among them... They are not only devoted to the King and Emperor, but dedicated in body and soul. They show particular love for their faith, nation and homeland*". (Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie im Wort und Bild. Das Küstenland 1891:229)

It is impossible not to note Spinčić's positivistic approach and Enlightenment tone, especially when he tries to explain the origins of some specific customs. However, what dominates is his Croatian Revivalist orientation, within which he stresses the similarity or identical nature of Istrian and broader Croatian (Slavic) cultural elements, sometimes going so far as to calling the dance most performed in Istria the *kolo*, which he denotes as the favourite Croatian national dance, although this was in fact called the *balon* or *balun*. According to Spinčić, the Croats (and the Slovenes) were all without exception peace-loving, pious, clean and hard-working. Indicating the high degree of similarity between the Croats and the Slovenians was characteristic on many levels of both groups in Istria at that time, because they were brought together, associated and mutually invigorated by their common political struggle against the dominant Italian social and political structures. Despite how biased and idealised Spinčić's text may seem to today's readers, it should be born in mind that one of the first texts on the ethnography of Istria was written in an affirmative tone, not showing the inhabitants in the already stereotyped way of external observers – as impoverished, neglected, but exotic, hot-blooded savages, or as a plebeian mass of unclear origins, as was often found in texts by predecessors and contemporaries.

Spinčić's text preceded "Popular Life in Istria (with the exception of the Slavs)" by **Peter Tomasin**. Writing about (traditional) culture in the Italian towns of Istria, Tomasin presented material on several occasions from the city of Trieste, which perhaps contributed to the fact that he referred with regret to several places in which the majority of the old customs had died out

(especially those associated with baptisms and weddings), along with traditional costume. So he did not pay much attention to songs at the end of the 19th century, because he regarded them as being "largely of erotic content, which had been composed in Trieste for Carnival and then spread throughout peninsula with the speed of lightning. Early domesticated songs were unfortunately lost, except in Rovinj". (Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie in Wort und Bild. Das Küstenland 1891:208) He commented on the disappearance of traditional costume in the same way, mentioning that it had been retained only in Vodnjan, but he gave no description of that costume. Conversely, he gave a surprising amount of space to games, food and descriptions of the urban-type Carnival.

In another place in the same book, Tomasin wrote a text about the life of Slovenes in Trieste, which, unlike the above, was written with more feeling and detail. One gains the impression that the traditional life of the Italians in Istria was not such a stimulating theme as far as he was concerned, so that he judged from the outset that it was considerably modernised and thus less relevant for ethnographic description. Therefore, he omitted to note material that could have been interesting and useful to later readers. In this way, he encouraged the already emerging stereotype of Austrian ethnographers about the urban, traditional culture of Istrian Italians, somewhat spoiled by civilisation, which was less interesting in comparison with the vital archaic cultural elements among the Croats and the other Slavic peoples in Istria. Of course, this meant that Istrian Italians were interpreted too uniformly in the cultural sense, without consideration of the considerable differences between the everyday culture of the inhabitants, for example, of Rovinj and Koper, or Vodnjan and Motovun.

From Evolutionism to Romanticism: Michael Haberlandt, founder of the Austrian Ethnographic Museum

The Viennese Anthropological Society was founded in 1870. One of the fundamental personalities of the entire period, important in the emergence of a series of new institutions in ethnology, came from this circle: **Michael Haberlandt** founded the Society for Austrian Ethnography/Ethnology in 1894. Its main endeavours were directed to the founding of the accompanying ethnographic museum. A year later, the Society set up the Ethnographic Museum in Vienna, now the Austrian Ethnographic Museum. Haberlandt oriented his variegated and multi-faceted activity towards various parts of the Monarchy, particularly the southern Slavic lands in the Balkans, but also to a great extent towards Dalmatia and Istria. It could be said that Haberlandt tried to embody the premises evident in the *Kronprinzwerk*: to show all the colourfulness and richness of the peoples and ethnic groups in the Monarchy, particularly in respect of their authentic spiritual values. Defined by his

evolutionist idea, he wanted to penetrate to the natural forms and lower strata of the cultures of the peoples and ethnic groups that he researched. In his view, their elementary economy reflected the "primitive" way of life and the original state of the spirit, which Haberlandt wanted to comprehend in their "original" forms. It could be concluded that Haberlandt's ethnological interest and research profile had been shaped by the fact that there existed a series of regions (like Istria) in the country in which he lived, whose populations were part of the "people", comprehended in the sense of the illiterate masses in whose culture ethnographers of the time recognised (still) surviving archaic "lower strata" and "original" values. Such interest was more than reconciled with Viennese Court policy, and with the (neo) Romantic interest in the exotic and archaic, also expressing thereby a "pseudo-colonialism" of sorts (which some contemporary authors recognise under the term cultural imperialism). One of the characteristics of Haberlandt's professional approach was his aesthetic criterion, and it was just such evaluation of ethnographic material that had a far-reaching effect on the formation of the collecting of that time, and on the experience of traditional culture in general. Haberlandt published a series of his views of that theme in the journal of the Society for Austrian Ethnology, which he also set up in 1895, under the title *Zeitschrift für österreichische Volkskunde*.

Because of overlapping interests and priorities in Haberlandt's professional efforts and those of the political authorities of that time, it is not surprising that the young Society for Austrian Ethnology received support from members of the highest social and political strata, including that of Crown Prince Franz Ferdinand, after the death of Rudolf. So it is no wonder that many claimed that Michael Haberlandt thematically developed and popularised the State idea: ethnographic characteristics and picturesque cultural specificity elevated to a national level that, homogenising the State's joint territory, had to reflect it as the natural territory of all its peoples and groups who were supposed to share in its common past and patriotism (Johler 1995:70).

Unfortunately, the large number of laymen in the Society for Austrian Ethnology reduced the possibilities for development of a scholarly approach in the profession. Criticism of Haberlandt's work, particularly by Leopold Schmidt also related to the scholarly aspect, in which Schmidt wrote that Haberlandt was more a feuilletonist than a researcher (Schmidt 1982:22). In Haberlandt's obituary, Giuseppe Vidossi mentioned other criticism related to his insistence on the concept of "Austria as an entity created by 'Nature and history'", which resulted in reservations on the part of various irredentist trends. There was even stronger criticism of Haberlandt's "Slavophilism". Some tried to interpret this on the basis of facts from his personal life: Haberlandt's father had lived temporarily in Gorica (in the Slovenian language) or Gorizia (in Italian), a town with contact between Italian,

Slovenian and Austrian cultural components and Haberlandt had spent some time there. Moreover, during 1896, he married the Croatian woman Carola Malovich in Trieste (as recognised by Leopold Schmidt [1960:25]).

It is known that Haberlandt had on several occasions acquired ethnographic material from Croatia, including Istria, either directly or with the help of intermediaries. This happened largely in the early phase of the accumulation of the ethnographic collection that was kept in the Natural History Museum in Vienna prior to the founding of the Ethnographic Museum in 1895. The catalogue printed for the occasion already mentions a series of objects from Istria that were displayed in that exhibition. In the first part there were dishes and distaffs from Istria. Costumes from Čićarija (i.e. what was considered to be that costume) were on show among the textiles in the form of full male and female traditional costume. It can be seen in the catalogue that exhibits bought in Kanfanar were called Čići costumes. This resulted in one of the entrenched mistakes made by Austrian ethnographers and collectors (Ludwig Hans Fischer in this case), who regarded the majority of the Croatian-speaking inhabitants of the Istrian interior as Čići. In this way, Kanfanar came to be interpreted as a place where Čići lived.

A group of exhibits called the "Istrian Kitchen" undoubtedly left a great impression on visitors. For years and even decades later, that staging of the hearth continued to be very popular and experienced as a symbol of sorts of Istria. So it was displayed again as part of a new exhibition, which was put together in the new museum building at the Schönborn Palace in Laudongasse in Vienna in 1917-1918, just as the Monarchy was disintegrating. It remained on display there for many years after the disappearance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. With two photographs in mind, it is obvious that various objects that belonged more to an urban (probably Italian) kitchen were mixed in this display with completely elementary rustic inventory from some simple, poor village home. Despite the fact that such a kitchen could not have realistically existed and despite the superficial and partial approach, it became a certain "topos", a symbol of Istria, displayed time and again in museums and shown in photographs and texts, while its popularity outlived the Monarchy.

Male and female costume from Čićarija, or at least what was regarded as Čići costume, was also on display. They provided illustration of poverty that was one of the favourite themes of ethnography at that time. What is paradoxical is the fact that the so-called Čići costumes that L. H. Fischer bought in Motovun and called "Čići Costume from Motovun" was not in fact from Čićarija, but from the environs of Motovun.

Over a prolonged period, the Čići remained interesting and inspiring, both to Haberlandt and to many other ethnographers, due to the fact that their origins seemed so mysterious (and were additionally mystified along the way). Everyone who wrote about them, whether as part of diverse travelogues or in ethnographic texts, stressed the poverty of their everyday lives, and their

backwardness and "primitiveness". This indicates that a stereotype had been created earlier, which was then repeated time and again and transcribed in the context of the existing exoticisation of this group. Ethnographers – Haberlandt and his associates – believed that "the lost link" had been found, a people whose culture could illustrate the earlier cultural groups and phases through which more "civilised" parts of the Monarchy had gone long ago.

Haberlandt experienced the Slavs of Istria, more precisely the Čići, as the most authentic and archaic population of Istria, varying the constant interpretation of them as the "authentic people" of Istria and/or as an archaic and "backward" population, which, as Elka-Nicola Kappus wrote, entered into "various Croatian, Slovenian, Yugoslavian and Italian national ideologies, where, depending on the individual current national project, they were evaluated in various ways, re-interpreted and instrumentalised" (Kappus 2002b:48). A characteristic of the Čići was just their marginality, which was later ethnicised and "culturalised". Experienced as an ethnic group that had not yet been spoiled by decadent urban culture, and still as yet undefined by national categorisation, they embodied Haberlandt's "principle that follows after nationality". (Haberlandt 1895:1). The people of Istria (i.e. the Slavs in Istria) as a whole were understood and constructed as multicultural, a-national and hybridised (as K.F. von Czoernig had postulated several decades earlier). Such an "unspoiled" people, according to that view, could renew the Monarchy from within since they represented the healthy roots on which the Monarchy could grow its future. That culture unfolds in some timeless, undefined past, and terms such as "old and ancient", "very early", and "archaic" are used in its description, which undoubtedly have a romantic and thus, less scholarly connotation.

It seems that the culture of the Italian townships was not of much interest to Haberlandt; by that time the Istrian Italians had attained a certain level of national awareness. They lived largely in urban communities, which also defined their material culture. But still, when the collection of Istrian ethnography was being put together, it seems that Haberlandt and his associates could not ignore the fact that a host of those objects met their overall aesthetic criteria. These included lovely pieces of embroidery, carved tables and boxes, votive offerings, and many other richly ornamented objects, as well as colourful glazed ceramics. The ceramics had not been made in Istria, but had been imported from manufacturers around Pordenone and Pesaro. The fact that these ceramics had been imported did not make them essentially less Istrian, but it is definitely indicative that neither Haberlandt nor his associates paid any attention to ceramics – to the dark, unglazed, scorched black and undecorated Istrian ceramics, made particularly in Rakalj and then in other pottery centres (Čukarija near Hum, Pauletići, Zubini, in the environs of Livade and/or Oprtalj, etc.). They could not have missed seeing it because it was found everywhere, but was obviously ignored because of its

lack of aesthetic value. Selection of certain elements from the overall culture of a particular area, coupled with lack of recognition or ignoring of certain others, has occurred and continues to occur in each epoch. That which is identified and selected speaks much of the spirit of the particular time, the subjectivity of the researcher, taste, his/her ideological stance and many other factors. So it is not surprising that later researchers in Istria through the next half-century identified quite different objects and chose them as being representative of Istria. Therefore, the ethnographic collection from Istria at the Austrian Ethnographic Museum is not a false one, but nor does it offer a fully authentic cross-section of the material culture of Istria. It is partly authentic in the same way as other, later ethnographic collections that wanted to present the culture of Istria.

At this juncture, we should refer to an important critical text written by **Attilio Tamaro**, which shows how the Italians experienced Haberlandt's interpretations and touches on national and ethnic evaluations, but on a more professional, ethnographic level (Tamaro 1914:389-398). In fact, Tamaro largely refers to Haberlandt's text *Peasant Art in Austria and Hungary*, which was published in the English journal, *The Studio*, in 1911, and contains a fragment about Istria. His objection was that Haberlandt did not sufficiently elaborate the comparative approach to the material, and that he remained very superficial in his analyses. He reproached him for often not being able to understand the essential characteristics of the objects, and that he forgot spirit, i.e., the spiritual values of such objects, when comparing them, which Tamaro regarded as the detail that most differentiated individual objects. In addition, when comparing objects, in Tamaro's view Haberlandt did not mention what it was that made them similar. He also lacked knowledge about the individual styles of traditional art that lead him (Haberlandt) to the absurdity in Tamaro's opinion, of naming one group as belonging to "Slavic Littoral-Romanic Austrian Traditional Art". In the style of an authentic Italian citizen and nationalist, Tamaro did not agree with what in his opinion was a hybrid, unscholarly and inconsistent term but was of the opinion that this was Italian, and not some sort Austrian art. He also criticised Haberlandt's opinion that Slavic and Italian (Veneto) elements were intensively mixed in Istria and Dalmatia, for which Haberlandt provided no proof in his text, but employed this as a mere phrase. According to Tamaro, there is a great difference between Slavic and Italian traditional art. He also objected to phrases such as "Italian influence" or "import from Italy" into the towns by the sea, because Tamaro regarded them as being completely Italian, no less than if they had been located in the Veneto or Lombardy regions. After criticism of this type, he moved on to the diverse groups of ethnographic objects, pointing to Haberlandt's superficiality and incompetence in interpreting Istrian ceramics, lace and embroidery, wood-carving, *cimaroli* (wind-vanes on ship masts), and votive and religious examples of traditional art. That discussion is also

interesting because it underscores the ethnographic material mainly (but not exclusively) of the Istrian Italians, which does not exist in Haberlandt's collection, nor can it be found today in the depots of Istrian museums. Tamaro mentioned several types of ceramics that arrived in Istria from the territory of today's Italy, which Haberlandt did not even mention. It surprised him (as it does us today) that he did not even notice the presence of unglazed *rakija* (fruit brandy) ceramics, nor that from Pavletići and Zubini, which, according to Tamaro, was similar to prehistoric ceramics and was characteristic to the Slavs of Istria (he provided three sketches of those ceramic objects in his article). He described in detail the lace of Istria, which he systematised into three style groups, adding that Haberlandt had not even noticed it. He then moved on to jewellery, identifying Vodnjan, Pazin, and Piran particularly, as the centres of filigree-work and gold-smithing. According to Tamaro, Haberlandt had also ignored the existence of certain styles of wooden chests, probably from Cres, characterised by their specifically rich carvings that, in the opinion of the Italian, contained certain details which, in a muted form, derived from the Slavs (even though, at the beginning of the text, he strictly differentiated the traditional art of the Slavs and the Italians, which, ostensibly, had no points of contact). He also showed a sketch of such a chest. In addition, he drew a conclusion in connection with the *cimaroli*, the decorative wind-vanes used, one assumes, on Istrian fishing boats. Because Haberlandt had bought *cimaroli* in Istria, on the islands of Cres and Krk, he interpreted them as being Istrian, but Tamaro thought that he must have bought them from Chiogga fishermen, who fished in the sea off Istria and in the Quarnero Bay. Tamaro concluded his text with the statement that Haberlandt had also not collected even one of the numerous votive pictures (for example, with scenes of sailors being saved from a stormy sea), which were found in all the coastal houses; or even one *pacienza*, a scene of the crucifixion which seamen from Cres patiently, with *pacienca*, created inside glass bottles. In the end, he finally concluded with resignation that there was a long list of shortcomings in Haberlandt's approach, and expressed the hope that the Trieste Museum of History and Art would soon have its own ethnographic collection – which never happened.

Tamaro's review of Haberlandt's text reflects the basic ideological differences in opinion between the Austrian and Italian elite. The former (Haberlandt), as has already been shown, tried to minimise national discord and place cultural and political themes under a neutral common denominator – the Austrian one, also repeatedly finding and producing reasons and arguments for the existence of that multinational State. Italian political and cultural self-awareness, which often escalated at that time, particularly in Istria, into nationalistic tones and activity, could not for its part tolerate the minimisation and questioning of the Italian character of Istria and its belonging to the Italian cultural circle and the national corpus. Tamaro's

points could be seen also within the context of numerous texts written by Italian authors on Istria in the 19th and the early 20th century. Some of them related to the origins of Istrian population and culture in general, therefore they could be viewed, at least partially, as ethnographic texts as well. Authors such as Pietro Kandler influenced some Austrian texts as well.

Concluding remarks

Summarising the contribution of the authors dealt with here, it should be stressed that all evaluations and qualifications regarding the Istrian rural population that they referred to, or amplified in the framework of their texts and initiatives, remained at the level of rhetoric and did not, in fact, undergo detailed professional analysis. There was no detailed research into those "clear traces" and "missing links", but rather they constantly repeated the stereotypes whose sources can be found in the works of earlier historians and travel writers (largely from the beginning and/or middle of the 19th century).

Emphasising the differences between the ethnic groups and peoples, especially their "hybrid" inter-combinations, contributed to the idea of deconstruction of already emerged and emerging national identities in the mosaic of small and "interesting" ethnic components. It is no wonder that what they found most interesting in all that colourfulness were the inhabitants of the Istrian interior, whose authenticity was also measured by their being marginalised, underdeveloped, with poor political and national identification and/or awareness (Kappus 2002:326). Apart from that, the Slavic peoples (Croatians and Slovenes in this case) were regarded as being more "loyal" than the Italians, who were already clearly and firmly aiming at the ideal of their own national State. Namely, what was necessary was to show the way of "a more profound developmental principle than the national", as Michael Haberlandt put it (Haberlandt 1895:1), despite how false and rash that ideologically constructed idea of modern nations and emerging national movements may have been. The Istrian peoples were seen as ideal and were therefore interpreted as a-national, hybrid and multi-national (just like the population of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as Elke Nicole Kappus concluded), disseminated into entangled units of mysterious ethnic groups according to origins unclear to them (Morlachs, Bezjaks, Šavrini, Čiči, Kraševci, etc.). In addition, this was not merely a matter of fascinating historical remnants, but of models, i.e., alternatives for the present and future of the Monarchy. These facts could also explain to the certain extent the lack of the interest for the maritime traditions of Istrian coastal towns. Their inhabitants were more urbanised, Italian (and therefore more nationally defined), more modern and their traditions at the first sight showed many similarities with those of the other towns along the shores of the Adriatic sea influenced very much by Venetian culture and its "lingua franca". In their

everyday life they were much more a part of the then "globalised" Mediterranean world and therefore less interesting for Austrian ethnographers.

Apart from descriptions and interpretations of Istria within the initiatives of these personalities, several texts about Istria by various authors were being published at that time, mainly in journals for ethnography and anthropology, these having been considered to be ethnological and/or ethnographical. Apart from these qualities, which characterised those texts to a greater or lesser degree, there was an evidently growing trend towards stereotypes, exoticisation, race theory, a mocking tone, and endless transcription and copying from texts published earlier. Those texts open up questions of cultural imperialism, moreover, a type of internal colonialism. However, their evaluation would require the framework of an additional article.

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DRŽAVNA KULTURA I LABORATORIJ NARODA: ISTARSKA ETNOGRAFIJA ZA VRIJEME AUSTRO-UGARSKE MONARHIJE

SAŽETAK

Prilog nastoji kontekstualizirati i pružiti kritički pogled na austrijske pisane izvore nastale nakon godine 1867. pa do konca Prvoga svjetskog rata koji tematiziraju istarsku (tradicijsku) kulturu. Od sredine, pa sve do kraja devetnaestoga stoljeća najviši su državni autoriteti naglašavali relevantnost etnografije, tj. etnologije (shvaćene kao *Volkskunde*) za definiranje i promoviranje državne kulture Austro-Ugarske Monarhije. Aktivnost se odnosila na skupljanje građe diljem Monarhije i nastajanje muzejskih zbirki te na tekstove o običajima, folkloru, fizičkim značajkama etničkih skupina itd. Važnost etnografije i etnologije za bolje međusobno poznavanje naroda Monarhije osobito je naglašavao prijestolonasljednik Rudolf, što je evidentno u njegovu izdavačkom projektu "Austro-Ugarska monarhija u riječi i slici". U tom nizu knjiga tiskan je i prikaz Vjekoslava Spinčića o "narodnom životu Slavena" u Istri, možda jedini koji nije slijedio uobičajene stereotipe o Istri. Oni su nastali još sredinom devetnaestoga stoljeća zavaljujući i statističaru Karlu Freiherru von Czoernigu i njegovoj "Etnografiji Austrijske Monarhije". Na razini muzejskih zbirki, ali i tekstova o narodnoj umjetnosti, državnu je misao "znanje je pomirenje" praktično primjenjivao Michael Haberlandt u austrijskom etnografskom muzeju koji je osnovao (kao i Društvo i časopis za austrijsku etnografiju). On je svojom interpretacijom istarske "narodne umjetnosti" pridonio stereotipnim konstrukcijama o tradicijskoj kulturi Istre koje su dominirale u analiziranim tekstovima toga doba.

Ključne riječi: Istra, Austro-Ugarska Monarhija, etnografska metoda, stereotipi