

## **ETHNIC STEREOTYPES IN EARLY EUROPEAN ETHNOGRAPHIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE HABSBURG ADRIATIC C. 1770—1815<sup>1</sup>**

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The ethnological writings from the late eighteenth century noticed that there were cultural differences among peoples. Those differences were attributed to genetic factors and to innate national spirit of each nation, both of which are responsible for a nation's basic characteristics. The paper deals primarily with the reports on Austrian Istria, written between 1770 and 1815, in which stereotypes about the population are fixed and turned into clichés the same way as about the population of other Slavic countries. This perception of Istria affected the political programmes of all ethnic groups that lived there, as well as the later division of Istria.

The subject of '*Volksmoral*'<sup>2</sup> concerning both Germans and non-Germans was established as a legitimate area of study in the latter half of the

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<sup>2</sup> Wilhelm Wille, *Die Sitten-lehre in Denk-Sprüchen der Deutschen*. Cassel - Göttingen 1781) p. XVII.

eighteenth century within both academic and popular German-language writing. This *Volksmoral* established such criteria as to whether peoples were clean, hard-working, deferential to authority and whether they had recognisable political traditions. Most importantly, by the late eighteenth century German ethnographic literature had established that there were differences between peoples or *Völker* and that cultural variants such as language or religion were fixed by genetic rather than environmental factors. All peoples were deemed to possess a 'spirit' (*Volksgeist* or more commonly *Nationalgeist*),<sup>3</sup> which gave them their essential characteristics. *Völker* were then perceived as essentially separate entities or what Michael Burleigh has referred to as 'ethnic totalities'<sup>4</sup> and general explanations for a particular groups cultural traits and political destinies were offered, which followed on from this *völkisch* point of departure. One such text, written in 1792 stated that 'every people (*Volk*) in Europe... has its own temperament or *Nationalgeist*, which is a characteristic sign of nature (*Stempel der Natur*), to which they remain true (*treu bleiben*), and upon which they base patriotism and national pride.'<sup>5</sup>

The growth of *Ethnographie* as a evaluative science is associated with work carried out at the University of Göttingen in the latter decades of the eighteenth century by (among others) Ludwig Schlözer, Christoph Meiners and Carl Gottlob von Anton.<sup>6</sup> The work of these scholars influenced the vocabulary of the descriptions of ethnic groups, which were to be found in academic histories, in travel literature and various forms of cultural geography as well as the new discipline of *Ethnographie* or *Volkskunde/Völkerkunde*. Anthropological historians have argued that the focus of this discipline was important component in the discursive formation of national identities.<sup>7</sup> Comparing the Czech scholar Adam František Kollar with his contemporary Schlözer, Han Vermeulen has remarked that 'both focused on nations and peoples in Northern, Central and Eastern Europe, from a historical and a contemporary perspective... both men were working on the same problem, the origins of nations...'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. IX.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Burleigh, *Germany turns Eastwards* (Cambridge 1988), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Anon, *Über den National-Charakter der in Siebenbürgen befindliches Nationen* (Wien 1792), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Han Vermeulen, "Frühe Geschichte der Völkerkunde oder Ethnographie in Deutschland, 1771–1791". In *Völkerkunde Tagung*. 1991. Matthias S. Laubscher und Betram Turner, eds. München: Akademischer Verlag, part one, 327–44.

<sup>7</sup> Vitomir Belaj, 'Plaidoyer za etnologiju kao historijsku znanost o etničkim skupinama/An argument for ethnology as a historical science concerning ethnic groups' *Studia Ethnologica*, vol. 1 1989, pp. 9–17.

<sup>8</sup> Han F. Vermeulen, 'Origins and institutionalisation of ethnography and ethnology in Europe and the USA, 1771–1845' in Han F. Vermeulen and Arturo Alvarez Roldan

An interest in the origins of nations, in both the cases of Schlözer and of Kollar, was intimately tied to developing national consciousness. The most famous theorist of cultural nationalism at this time was Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) whose work influenced scholars across Central and Eastern Europe and paved the way for later political nationalism, which it predated in the case of the Germans and other Central Europeans by several decades. The concept of a national or ethnic spirit was crucial to Herder's philosophy and it is he who is given most credit for disseminating this idea, although it does occur in the work of his close contemporaries working on similar problems and must be seen as part of a *Zeitgeist*.

To argue that there was and remains a decisive link between cultural forms of national ascription and later political forms of nationalism implicitly refutes Isaiah Berlin's celebrated distinction between the two.<sup>9</sup> For Berlin, Herder and Vico were positive thinkers in this regard whereas Hegel (who had also been a student at Göttingen) was negative. But as John Edwards has rather coyly observed of Herder, 'that the high priest of cultural and linguistic nationalism was himself prone to, shall we say, lapses of taste is indicative of the dark side of the phenomenon. That while logic does not require that fellow-feeling be accompanied by disdain for out-groups, a sense of groupness has usually had such an accompaniment'<sup>10</sup>. Herderian cultural nationalism did not just have a psychological dimension to it in which 'groupness' was established, but it also has an implicit geographical dimension. By discovering that 'Slavs' had a different kind of *Volksgeist* to their neighbours, the question of what we might euphemistically call territorial incompatibility would eventually have to be raised, which was crucial in the multiethnic milieu of Central and Eastern Europe. According to Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, Herderian cultural nationalism was used 'to legitimise German rule over former West Slav and Polish territories. In this case a number of ethnic stereotypes, some of which originated in the Middle Ages, were imbued with racist aspects'.<sup>11</sup>

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(eds.), *Fieldwork and Footnotes: Studies in the History of European Anthropology*, (London 1995) pp. 46–47.

<sup>9</sup> Nathan Gardels, 'Two concepts of Nationalism: An Interview with Isaiah Berlin' In *New York Review of Books*, November 21st 1991 pp. 19–23. He makes this point in more detail in his *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas* (London, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> John Edwards, *Multilingualism*, (London, 1995) p. 131.

On Herder see, for example, Ernst Bilke, 'Herder und die Slawen' in Walter Hubatsch (ed), *Schicksalswege Deutscher Vergangenheit. Beiträge zur Geschichtlichen Deutung der Letzten Fuenfzig Jahre*, (Düsseldorf, 1950) pp. 81–102.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945*, (Cambridge, 1991) pp. 25–6.

If we examine the descriptions of ethnic groups found in any of the above mentioned genres it is indeed the 'dark side' of this phenomenon that emerges. Geographical regions in East-Central Europe that had a long established variety in their ethnic or linguistic composition such as Silesia, Transylvania and the Habsburg Adriatic were almost testing grounds for theories about ethnicity that had been codified in the Academy. According to an anonymous author in the late eighteenth century, who described ethnic groups in the Habsburg monarchy, 'The German... sincere, honourable, truthful, faithful. diligent, thrifty and clean (*aufrechtig, ehrlich, hält auf Treue und Glauben, ist arbeitsam, sparsam und reinlich*)'.<sup>12</sup> This was in stark contrast to the Poles who 'possess a restless, pugilistic spirit (*besitzen einen unruhigen kriegerischen Geist*)', but are merry, generous and hospitable (*munter, freygebig und gastfrey*).<sup>13</sup> Perhaps the most astonishing description was reserved for the Jews for whom the author felt that 'their character, business practices and their external appearance are too well known for me to dwell them on further'.<sup>14</sup> Michael Burleigh has argued that 'German perceptions of Eastern Europe were inevitably influenced by the fact that from the late eighteenth century Germans governed Poles. Power over a part complicated perceptions of the whole'.<sup>15</sup>

These 'complicated perceptions of the whole' can be examined by focussing on descriptions of ethnicity in the Habsburg Adriatic, which before 1815 included the port of Trieste, the Karst Hinterland and part of the Istrian littoral. The coastal area of the Habsburg monarchy had been ethnically mixed for many centuries, its population consisting of people who spoke Croatian, German, Slovene, and Italian as well as numerous smaller languages and dialects. The growth of the port of Trieste in the later eighteenth century also led to an influx of people from the Levant and other maritime populations which further complicated the ethnic character of the region. The growth of the Adriatic port and the corresponding increase in visitors means that a great deal of commentaries

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<sup>12</sup> Anon, *Über den National-Charakter*, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* p. 7. Elsewhere Slavs were perceived as 'gastfrei' See for example, *Lebrecht's Reise von Wien nach Paris durch Kroatien, das ungarische und österreichische Littorale, den dem Theil von Italien und über Toulon, Marseille und Lion*. (Pest, 1790) 'Der Kroatische Adel lebt auf einen sehr artigen Fuss, ist sehr ungänglich, über all Massen gastfrei, und sucht gegen Fremde sich gefällig zu bezeigen. Überhaupt schien mir der Karakter dieser Nation edel, aufrichtig und gutherzig' p. 71–2.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid* p. 99.

<sup>15</sup> Burleigh, *Germany*, p. 3.

exist about the character of this region written both by commercial and leisure travellers, as well as early ethnographic studies.<sup>16</sup>

Writers from a German language milieu who went to the Habsburg Adriatic often emphasised the fact that they felt that they had arrived in the 'South'. The botanist Joseph von Seenus felt that Trieste area represented 'the borders between North and South Europe.'<sup>17</sup> Karl Friedrich Schinkel's description of his visit to the port, written in 1803, was tinged with optimism.

Throughout the whole town was the noise of loud joy, quarrels and rough sailors... the liveliness of the Southern nation (die Lebhaftigkeit der südlichen Nation) manifests itself in all business and for the German this is new and exiting (frappant)!<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, the negative side of this theme of the 'North' and 'South' was that the latter was geographically closer to the Balkans and to wild areas beyond the control of the monarchy. Schinkel noted the presence of bandits on the Karst roads 'going towards Turkey and Istria' reporting rather credulously of daily robberies and murders'.<sup>19</sup> (This is not dissimilar to a later description of Istria left by J. G. Wilkinson, who stated that the peninsula had been neglected and underexploited due to the 'wildness and predatory habits of its inhabitants').<sup>20</sup>

Observers of the people in this region very often described languages. Johann Seume, in characteristically witty form, described the conversation of a priest that he heard whilst staying in Prewald in 1802 as 'just a mixture (*Jargon*) of German, Italian and Slovene and the aesthetic quintessence of each of these languages and, as you can imagine, I hardly understood a word of it.'<sup>21</sup> Because these languages had a quintessence which differentiated them and a mixture was perceived as a '*Jargon*' with questionable status, it was easier to establish moral ascriptions. According to Gerning, 'the simple people (*das gemeine Volk*) speak Carniolan,

<sup>16</sup> Travellers commented on this new culture, much as they did in other multinational milieus such as Batavia. For a comment on this phenomenon see Michael Harbsmeier, 'Towards a pre-history of ethnography: early modern German travel writing as traditions of knowledge' in Vermeulen and Roldan (eds), *Fieldwork*, pp. 29–30.

<sup>17</sup> Joseph von Seenus, *Beschreibung einer Reise nach Istrien und Dalmatien verzeuglich in botansicher Hinsicht*, (Nuernberg/ Altdorf, 1805), p. 13. Similarly, Heinrich Stieglitz was moved to write in Triest in 1845, 'Schreite freudig in deinem Entwicklungsgang, du unternehmungslustiges Triest, du unermüdlich rege, eifrig fördernde Vermittlerin zwischen Süd und Norden, Deutschland und Italien!' in his, *Istrien und Dalmatien, Briefe und Erinnerungen*, (Stuttgart/Tübingen, 1845) p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Karl Friedrich Schinkel, *Reise nach Italien*, (Berlin, 1979) pp. 29–30.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid* p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> J. G. Wilkinson, *Dalmatia and Montenegro*, part one, (London, 1848) p. 41.

<sup>21</sup> J. W. Seume, *Spaziergang nach Syracus*, (Leipzig, 1802) p. 226.

Slovene and Illyrian and the higher orders (*die nicht gemeine Welt*) speak German, French and Italian'.<sup>22</sup> Another observer linked language and general acquisition of culture stating that the simple people mostly speak 'Wendisch', adding that they remained in relative darkness ('*noch in ziemlicher Finsterniss*'), whereas the middle classes and the nobility were well educated.<sup>23</sup> Another traveller, whose work was published in the 1780s noticed that 'among the country people, there are very few who understand German. But one can notice here the strong influence which language has on character. The inhabitants are rebellious against the Germans and compared with them they are not so honest and hardworking'.<sup>24</sup> What emerges from these descriptions is that there remained even after the mid-eighteenth century a close division between economic function and language and that the Slavonic dialects had not entered into the world of the Triestine bourgeoisie, despite the expansion of the port. In their descriptions, travellers attached moral characteristics to estate and thus to ethnicity or language group. According to one writer, 'the Gottscheer (ethnic German from Kočevje) is pious, very diligent, lively and an example of thrift ('*from, sehr fleissig, munter und zum Exempel der Sparsamkeit*'). The Slovene on the Italian side is of good physique, but is a slow worker, lazy, quarrelsome and begrudging' ('*bey der Arbeit träg, faul, zänkisch und zur Nachsucht geneigt*').<sup>25</sup>

Such stereotyped notions are not just used to describe the Slavs of the Habsburg Adriatic. The scholar Christian Garve observed in 1796 that 'Poles and Germans are both inhabitants of Silesia but the different character of both groups is always apparent ('*die Charakter der beyden Nationen zeichnen sich noch immer merklich aus*').<sup>26</sup> He then ascribed the following characteristics to the Poles: 'Mistrust, antagonism, treachery, sloth and begrudging behaviour' ('*Misstrauen, Widerspruch, Türk, Trägheit, Gedanklösigkeit*').<sup>27</sup> Looking eastwards in 1789, Johann August Donndorff wrote that 'The Cossacks are large and well-built and have a good appearance: they are tough and enduring (*stark und dauerhaft*) very jealous of their freedom, but fickle and rather unreliable, but nevertheless

<sup>22</sup> J. Gerning, *Reise durch Östreich und Italien*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1802), part one, p. 109.

<sup>23</sup> Anon, *Reise von Venedig über Triest, Krain, Kärnten, Steuermark (sic) und Salzburg*, (Frankfurt/Leipzig, 1793), p. 42.

<sup>24</sup> Gottfried von Rotenstein, 'Bemerkungen auf einer Reise von Wien durch Steiermark, Crain und Friaul', in Johann Bernoulli (ed.) in *Bernoulli's Sammlung kurzer Reisebeschreibungen*, Part 16 (Berlin/Leipzig, 1785), p. 243.

<sup>25</sup> Anon, *Reise von Venedig*, p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> Christian Garve, *Über den National Charakter der Bauern und ihr Verhältnis gegen die Gutsherren und gegen die Regierung*, (Breslau, 1796) p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13 ff.

sociable and merry'.<sup>28</sup> Again we encounter the good physique of the Slav, but without the necessary Germanic characteristics to make good their political and economic deficiencies. Donndorff then continued, making a clear link between cultural ascription and political nationalism that 'the Ukraine was a region just waiting for more numerous and hard-working inhabitants (*Die Ukraine; ein Land, das nur auf mehrere und fleissigere Menschen wartet*)'.<sup>29</sup> According to Burleigh and Wipperman 'this cultural-political form of imperialism was given an historical-messianic quality through the claim that the Germans had a mission to resettle territories once inhabited by ancient Germanic tribes. Looked at in this way, the Slavs were history's squatters'.<sup>30</sup> In one of the clearest passages that emphasised both this sense of a German mission and the infiltration of Atlantic colonial discourse in Central Europe, Christoph Meiners wrote:

'Inherent privileges (Erbliche Vorrechte) are acceptable and natural when based upon inherent superiority. By right, the Germans enjoy the liberties they were born with in all the Slavonic lands where they have settled. By right Europeans occupy all foreign parts of the world, where they dominate or merely tolerate the black, red, yellow or brown inhabitants of these lands'.<sup>31</sup>

Meiners attributed moral characteristics to races, which he felt were formed during thousands of years of separate histories. For him, the Slavonic peasant was by nature 'sluggish' (*träge*), 'negligent' (*sorglos*) and 'dissipated' (*liederlich*), and it was through sheer necessity that German masters were obliged to enserf this unwilling worker.<sup>32</sup> For Meiners, real virtues such as thriftiness (*Sparsamkeit*), diligence (*Fleiss*), fortunate marriage (*glückliche Heirathen*), and superior intellect (*vorzuegliche Kenntnisse*)<sup>33</sup> resided with the Germano-Celts, who were, 'the most noble race of people, yet to inhabit the Earth'.<sup>34</sup> Again the more broadly 'political' implications of these virtues were spelt out by a later commentator who felt that 'the predominant character of the Transylvanian Germans is one of economy and diligence (*Ökonomie und*

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<sup>28</sup> Johann August Donndorff, *Über Lebensart, Sitten, Gebräuche und Natürlich Beschaffenheit verschiedener Völker und Länder*, (Erfurt, 1789), p. 392.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 392.

<sup>30</sup> Burleigh and Wipperman, *Racial State*, p. 26.

<sup>31</sup> Christoph Meiners, *Geschichte der Ungleichheit der Stände unter den Vornehmsten Europäischen Völkern*, (Hannover, 1792), part one, p. 600.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 628–9.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* p. 94.

<sup>34</sup> Christoph Meiners, 'Über die Natur der Germanischen und Celtischen Völker', *Göttinger Historisches Magazin*, VIII, 1791 p. 1, cited in Alexander Ihle, *Christoph Meiners und die Völkerkunde*, (Göttingen, 1931), p. 58.

*Arbeitsamkeit*) Handicrafts and manufacturing in this region, in so far as they exist, can largely be credited to the efforts of the Germans'.<sup>35</sup>

The preconceived nature of these descriptions of ethnicity and language become more apparent if we examine the work of a non-German writer. The Russian Vladimir Bronevskij, who travelled from Trieste in 1810, recorded that 'general prejudice labels the Slovene as perfidious and untruthful (*hinterlistig und verlogen*), but it seems to me that these vices are a consequence of the fact that they are under a foreign yoke. The Slovenes have preserved the virtues inherent in Slavs. They are diligent, courageous, patient, of keen intelligence and quick to learn (*arbeitfreudig, mutig, geduldig, von schneller Auffassungsgabe und gelehrig*). In some mechanical skills they will soon surpass their German masters'.<sup>36</sup> Here, what we have is an almost complete hermeneutic inversion of the racism of Meiners and Garve, a Slav ethnocentrism which precisely and deliberately mimics its adversaries. By staring into the 'convex mirror' and discovering and defining his own Herderian *Volksggeist*, the Slav begins to perceive himself as possessing the same 'virtues' that he has been denied by racialised discourse. Henceforward the process of radicalisation was completed at a discursive level and the real political potential of polytaxis excluded.

Descriptions of ethnicity in the Habsburg Adriatic indicate that these ethnic stereotypes quickly became fixed and even clichéd. For example, a text written by Joseph von Liechtenstein in 1818 and first published in Meissen in 1822<sup>37</sup> emphasised the differences between the ethnic groups in Koper, as reported to the author by a Herr von Roth. He described the Italians as 'usually faint-hearted, impatient, hot-headed and conspiratorial (*kleinmüthig, ungeduldig, aufbrausend, zu Kabalen geneigt*).'<sup>38</sup> Liechtenstein then continued inland and found that the inhabitants were,

'mostly Slavs, whose national character and clothes are very similar to the Slovenes, except that (according to Herr von Roth) they are 'somewhat more cunning, obstinate, treacherous, hot-headed and more rebellious' (*verschmitzer, halsstarriger, tückischer, aufbrausender und zum Aufruhr geneigter*)... Both (Istrian Slavs and Slovenes) avoid

<sup>35</sup> Anon, *Über den National-Charakter*, p. 55.

<sup>36</sup> V. B. Bronevskij, *Putesestvie ot Triesta do S. Petersburga v 1810 godu*, (Moskva, 1828) p. 29, cited in A. S. Mylnikov, 'Die Slawischen Kulturen in den Beschreibungen Ausländischer Beobachter im 18. und zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts', in B. I. Krasobaev et al, *Reisen und Reisebeschreibungen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert als Quellen der Kulturbeziehungs-forschung*, (Berlin, 1980) p. 151.

<sup>37</sup> Ivan Pederin, *Jadranska Hrvatska u austrijskim i njemačkim putopisima*, (Zagreb, 1991) p. 62.

<sup>38</sup> The stereotype of Italians as 'Cabalist' is also to be found in P. C. Dies, *Bemerkungen über den Charakter und Sitten der Italiener*, (Göttingen, 1790) p. 69.



work, whenever they can... the laziness of the Istrian Slavs can be demonstrated by their food. Maizemeal has an important place, because preparing the daily polenta is less complicated than the kneeding and baking of... bread.

... Commonly the inhabitants eat polenta with salt, milk and cheese or also with preserved saltwater fish, their appetites having been whetted by wine or spirits so that they delight in little more. They are not much diminished by this lifestyle and seem to be healthy and robust.<sup>39</sup>

This text delineated, as it were, a hierarchy amongst the inhabitants of Istria, who were reported to vary not only in their language from their Carniolan and Italian neighbours, but also in their habits and indeed natures. The rustic simplicity of the Slavonic Istrian peasant, whose food matched his temperament in its coarseness can be found elsewhere in ethnographic literature. Balthasar Hacquet described the Dalmatian as a '*Naturmensch*' whose lifestyle was characterised by frugality and subsequent moral simplicity.<sup>40</sup> Franz Sartori, writing in 1812, noted that 'The Slavonic peasant is modest in his tastes (*Der windische Bauer ist genügsam*), he is satisfied with maize, millet and oats, with the milk from his little cow. He is unconcerned that the German Knecht consumes so much during his feastdays (*Hauptfesten*), as he is pleased if his whole family have enough. His rough beer and wine are as good as Cyprus wine and Tokay'.<sup>41</sup> Again we can detect the aroma of colonial discourse in German-language writing, with the Slavonic peasant reduced to as it were, a state of nature which allowed him to enjoy the simple things in life, uncorrupted by civilisation and artifice.

Many used their sojourn in Trieste to make far more generalised pronouncements about ethnic or racial types. For Hammer-Purgstall, Trieste was a suitable place for the '*Menschenkenner*' and '*Menschenbeobachter*',<sup>42</sup> a kind of visit to the human zoo:

'So many groups, so many types of people from far flung lands -  
- distinguished by their clothes. Many used the relative freedoms here to exchange clothing. The Orientals and their neighbours in particular do this (*Besonders lieben die Morgenländer und ihre Nachbarn solche*

<sup>39</sup> R. von H.....g (Joseph von Liechtenstein), *Reisen durch das österreichische Illyrien, Dalmatien und Albanien im Jahre 1818*, (Leipzig, 1835) pp. 10–12.

<sup>40</sup> Balthasar Hacquet, *Physikalisch-politische Reise aus den Dinarischen durch die Julischen, Carnischen, Rhätischen in die Norischen Alpen im Jahre 1781 und 1783*, (Leipzig, 1785) cited in Pederin, *Jadranska Hrvatska*, p. 44.

<sup>41</sup> Franz Sartori, *Neueste Reise durch Österreich, Salzburg, Berchtesgaden, Kärnthen und Steyermark*, part two, (Leipzig, 1812) p. 281.

<sup>42</sup> J. Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall, *Zeichnungen auf einer Reise von Wien über Triest nach Venedig und von und da zurück durch Tyrol und Salzburg im Jahre 1798*, (Berlin, 1800) p. 15.

*Verwandlungen*). Slavs dressed like Albanians and Albanians like Slavs. Armenians and Greeks not only wear the white turbans of the Turks (for which they would be punished on pain of death in Constantinople) but also wear green turbans which are reserved for the Emirs... in the Ottoman states.<sup>43</sup>

But in spite of these freedoms, for Hammer-Purgstall '*Bildung*' and '*Körperbau*' remained unchanged; for he added, 'the bold, free Dalmatian, the serious indolent Turk, the sly, shifty Greek, the lively, dramatic Italian, the pensive, hard-working German, the high-cheekboned, humorous Slovene cannot easily be mistaken for one another (*Der grosse, kühne, freie Dalmatier, der ernste, indolente Türke, der schlaue, schalkkügige Grieche, der lebhaft dramatische Italiänier, der bedachtsame fleissige Deutsche, der gulgelnde braune Araber, der breitwangige witzige Krainer können nicht leicht mit einander verwechselt werden*)'.<sup>44</sup> Thus it was established that although clothes were interchangeable, physical and moral attributes essentially predetermined.

In a text published in 1783, *Erste Linien eines Versuches über die Alten Slawen Ursprung*, Carl Gottlob von Anton argued that the Slavs had stemmed from the same homeland as *Morgenländer*, and therefore had the same sort of moral characteristics. This analogy is also found in later literature of an ethnographic nature. Writing in 1816, Breton de la Martiniere observed of the Slavs of the Adriatic that 'their way of life, clothing and customs are similar to the Tatars and other Caucasian people'.<sup>45</sup> He then continued that 'like most Asiatics the Slav is dirty to the highest degree, although he passionately loves bathing (*Der Slave... ist, wie die meisten Asiaten, ob er gleich das Baden leidenschaftlich liebt, im höchsten Grade unreinlich*)'.<sup>46</sup> Both the element of lack of hygiene and supposed 'oriental' characteristics were stereotypes which were found elsewhere. In 1801 the historian Johann Friedrich Reitemeier had declared that 'the uncleanness of Slavs was notorious from the earliest times'<sup>47</sup> and later writers classified Slavs amongst the 'passive races' whose skull shape linked them to Asia.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

<sup>45</sup> Breton de la Martiniere, *Illyrien und Dalmatien oder Sitten, Gebräuche und Trachten der Illyrier und Dalmatier, und ihrer Nachbarn*, (Pesth, 1816), p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> Johann Friedrich Reitemeier, *Geschichte der Preussischen Staaten vor und nach ihrer Vereinigung in eine Monarchie*, (Frankfurt an der Oder, 1801–5), p. 33, cited in Burleigh and Wiperman, *Racial State*, p. 26.

<sup>48</sup> See, for example, August Zeune, *Über Schädelbildung zur festern Begründung der Menschenrassen*, (Berlin, 1846), p. 24 ff.

Ethnic considerations applied to apparently 'neutral' descriptions of land and landscape, again suggesting that cultural nationalism went beyond the psychological into the realm of the geographical and thence to the political. To some extent, these descriptions reflect the natural exhilaration of German '*Landratten*'<sup>49</sup> when seeing the blue Adriatic after travelling across the inland. Gerning found a 'pleasant contrast' between the 'dancing, blue waters and green hills' and the 'infertile steppes'<sup>50</sup> where the Slav peasants lived. Kuettner's description of his journey over the Karst was similar:

The distance between Postojna and Triest about 33 miles is principally a desolate, thinly inhabited and still worse cultivated country. That part of the way is particularly dreary which goes over the Karst, a considerable mountain tract of which naked rocks compose by far the greatest portion.<sup>51</sup>

This impression of desolation in the Triestine hinterland was by no means inaccurate, as many of the autochthonous deciduous trees in the region had been destroyed to make Venetian galleys in the early modern period.<sup>52</sup> And travellers did indeed emphasise the bareness. As Krickel recorded in his diary, 'I believed myself to have been transported to stony Arabia (*petraische Arabien*), one sees only stony mountains and stony rocks'.<sup>53</sup> But the wildness of the Karst was soon to be compensated for as one traversed to the coast. As Küttner wrote, after his 'dreary' journey:

At length you arrive at the end of the Karst, and suddenly find yourself on the brink of a precipice which would make you shudder did you not anticipate the appearance of Hesperia's enchanting plains... what a contrast to the country we had just traversed. The spectator would imagine he had been transported ten degrees further to the South'.<sup>54</sup>

Again the contrast between the Adriatic and the Karst was given moral overtones: the port was seen as part of a 'Hesperian' civilisation that did not extend into the hinterland, which could even make the traveller 'shudder' due to its different latitude.

Homi Bhabha has argued that the stereotype 'is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already

<sup>49</sup> Carl Baudenbacher writing in 1844, quoted in Franz Otto Roth, 'Eine "Biedermeier"-Reise durch Innerösterreich', *Blätter für Heimatkunde*, 1983, vol. 57 (3), 1983, p. 83.

<sup>50</sup> Gerning, *Reise*, p. 109.

<sup>51</sup> Carl Gottlob Kuettner, *Reise durch Deutschland*, (Leipzig, 1801), p. 157–8.

<sup>52</sup> P. B. Alexander, *Land Utilisation in the Karst Region of Zgornja Pivka, Slovenia*, (New York/Washington, 1967), p. 38–9.

<sup>53</sup> A. J. Krickel, *Fussreise durch den grössten Theil der österreichischen Staaten in den Jahren 1827 und 1828*, (Wien, 1833), p. 292.

<sup>54</sup> Küttner, *Reise*, p. 157–8.

known, and something that must be anxiously repeated...'<sup>55</sup> He continues, 'the process by which the metaphoric 'masking' is inscribed on a lack which must then be concealed gives the stereotype both its fixity and its phantasmic quality - the same old stories... must be told (compulsively) again and afresh, and are differently gratifying and terrifying each time.'<sup>56</sup> For Benedict Hermann, 'the Karst is a lively picture of waste... everywhere one looks is destruction'.<sup>57</sup> In 1808, Heinrich Georg Hoff used exactly the same words to describe the Karst as Hermann, writing some twenty years earlier.<sup>58</sup> Compulsive retellings of the wilderness of the Karst, which are then contrasted with the Mediterranean warmth of the port are too frequent and insistent to be dismissed as a mere textual accident. Like the *epigoni* of Christoph Meiners, those who emphasised the bareness of the Karst could have written their descriptions from the comfort of their studies, without ever confronting the Slavonic 'steppes', blown by the *bura*.

The ethnographic content of German language descriptions of the Habsburg Adriatic c. 1770–1815 were deeply influenced by contemporary racialised discourse. How this affected the political programmes of Italian, German, Croatian or Slovenian nationalists as well as those who remained *Kaisertreu* or turned to political solutions such as Panslavism or Illyrianism in the later nineteenth century is another story. However, it is probably fair to state that the 'division' of the Istria (last decided by the Treaty of Osimo in 1975, but complicated by the break up of Yugoslavia in 1991), was **anticipated** when Europeans began to construct their identities along perceived ethnic, rather than regional or patriotic lines. Therefore, the nationalisms that emerged in Istria in the later nineteenth century were, in part, the product of a particular moment in the analysis and description of European cultures. As Robert Young has observed of late eighteenth century discourses, 'What we are dealing with here is the dominance of racial theory so widespread that it worked as an ideology, permeating both consciously and implicitly the fabric of almost all areas of thinking of its time'.<sup>59</sup> If this is the case then in order to understand modern European nationalisms we must seriously consider the role of the creation of ethnic stereotypes as part of a gradual process of radicalisation between Völker

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<sup>55</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Other Question. Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism' in *idem*, *The Location of Culture*, (London, 1994), p. 66.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>57</sup> Benedict Hermann, *Reisen durch Österreich, Steyermark, Kärnten, Krain, Italien im Jahre 1780*. (Wien, 1791), vol two, p. 140.

<sup>58</sup> Heinrich Georg Hoff, *Historisch-statistisch-topographisches Gemälde von Herzogthums Krain und demselben Einverliebten Istrien*, (Laibach, 1808), vol. three, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire. Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, (London, 1995) p. 64.

and ethnic essentialisation that were intellectual products of the Enlightenment.

## ETNIČKI STEREOTIPI U RANIM EUROPSKIM ETNOGRAFIJAMA: PROUČAVANJE/PRIMJER HABSBURŠKOGA JADRANA OD OKO 1770. DO 1815.

### SAŽETAK

Krajem 18. stoljeća njemačka je etnografska literatura ustanovila da među narodima postoje kulturne razlike, a varijante kao što su jezik ili religija ustanovljene su genetskim, a ne okolišnim čimbenicima. U istoj se literaturi susreću termini *Volksmoral*, koji podrazumijeva utemeljene kriterije o urednosti naroda, njegovoj radinosti, te političkoj tradiciji, i *Volksgeist*, prirodan nacionalni duh koji je zaslužan za osnovna obilježja naroda i na temelju kojega se baziraju patriotizam i nacionalni ponos. Zanimanje za porijeklo naroda krajem 18. stoljeća bilo je usko povezano s razvojem nacionalne svijesti. U to je doba Johann Gottfried von Herder, teoretičar kulturnog nacionalizma, svojim radom uvelike utjecao na znanstvenike srednje i istočne Europe i tako utro put kasnijem političkom nacionalizmu. Prema M. Burleighu i W. Wippermanu, Herderov je kulturni nacionalizam iskorišten za legitimizaciju njemačke vladavine nad bivšim zapadno-slavenskim i poljskim područjima.

Područja istočne i srednje Europe sa stoljetnom etničkom i lingvističkom raznolikošću (Silezija, Transilvanija, Habsburški Jadran), postala su pogodno područje za ispitivanje (ili potvrđivanje) takvih teorija o etnicitetu. U čitavom su nizu tekstova istaknuti izrazi kojima putopisci kao predstavnici "više" kulture ocjenjuju druge etničke skupine, uglavnom tretirane kao primjer inferiornih kultura, stvarajući pritom relativno ograničen niz stereotipa. Posebna se pozornost posvećuje tekstovima o austrijskoj Istri nastalima između 1770. i 1815. godine. Stereotipi o stanovnicima te regije fiksirani su i klišeizirani, posve analogno onima koji nastaju o stanovnicima drugih slavenskih zemalja. Istra se smatra jugom, područjem na kojem se govori mješavina različitih jezika upitnoga statusa, sa stanovništvom uglavnom negativnih moralnih osobina. U njemački se pisanim tekstovima osjeća aroma kolonijalnog diskursa kad slavenskog seljaka svode na prirodno biće kojemu je omogućeno uživanje u jednostavnosti života zbog svoje neopterećenosti civilizacijskim pogodnostima i napretkom. Takva percepcija istarskog čovjeka i prostora utjecala je na političke programe svih etničkih skupina koje su na njemu živjele, naime podjela Istre je bila anticipirana kad su Europljani počeli graditi svoje identitete u skladu s percipiranim etničkim, a ne regionalnim ili patriotskim razdvojenicima. Drugim riječima, nacionalizmi koji su se u Istri pojavili kasnije, u 19. stoljeću, barem su dijelom bili proizvod određenog trenutka u raščlambi i opisu europskih kultura, obilježenoga rasističkim diskursom.