

ENTHUSIASM FOR A HEREDITARY ENEMY: SOME ASPECTS OF THE ROOTS OF HUNGARIAN TURKOPHILE SENTIMENTS

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This paper examines the changes that took place in the image of the Ottoman Turks in Hungary during the 19th century. Though the Ottoman attacks in the 15th and 16th centuries destroyed the medieval Kingdom of Hungary and the following 150 years of the Ottoman rule in Hungary had considerable negative consequences, by the end of the 19th century negative sentiments regarding the Turks shifted, and during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 there were enthusiastic pro-Turkish demonstrations in Budapest. The paper analyses the causes of this turn in Hungarian historical thinking and demonstrates, e.g. through the themes of the most popular historical paintings of the 19th century, that more recent anti-Habsburg and anti-Russian sentiments among the Hungarians led to active support for the Turks, if only in a peaceful way, since the foreign policy of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy remained neutral.

Keywords: Ottomans, Mohács, historical painting; 1848; Russo-Turkish war; anti-Habsburg sentiment, Compromise of 1867, Kossuth

The 150-year-long Ottoman rule over Hungary's territory had very negative effects, demographically, economically and politically. While before the 16th century the Kingdom of Hungary had been a Central European great power, in modern history the country played only a peripheral role as part of the Habsburg Monarchy. There were – and still are – numerous Hungarian historians who consider the Ottoman occupation to have been the biggest catastrophe in the history of the nation, and according to them this militaristic empire should be held responsible for almost all the misfortunes of later Hungarian fate.¹

Though modern Hungarian historiography regards these historical processes as more complex,² it is obvious that there were no other empires and countries in Hungarian history that were inimical to the Hungarian state of nation for a longer period of time than the Ottomans. King Louis the Great was the first Hungarian king who fought against the Turks in the middle of the 14th century, and Austria, with considerable numbers of Hungarian soldiers in the imperial army, led the last war against the Ottoman Empire as late as the period between 1788 and 1791.

But not only is the length (more than 350 years!) of these hostile confrontation of the two (Hungary and the Ottoman Empire) important, the battle at Mohács in 1526 also acquired symbolic significance. It brought the powerful and prestigious medieval Kingdom of Hungary to an end. Hungarian tradition associates the fall of the medieval kingdom with the single battle at Mohács. All the humiliation, suffering, and loss of life and livelihoods that preceded and followed it, in the 150-year era of Ottoman rule, have been compressed into this one word: Mohács.³ This battle is seen as having been the most tragic event of Hungarian history, and the Turks have often been referred to as the scourge of God, who wanted to punish the Hungarian nation for their sins. (In the 16th and 17th centuries the Catholics and the Protestants blamed each other. A well-known Lutheran preacher, István Magyari, wrote in 1602 that the Turks were our enemies well before Luther was born, so the Protestants cannot be to blame for this blow of divine justice.⁴ His great disputant, the later Archbishop and Cardinal Péter Pázmány, stated that Hungary was victorious over the Turks during the Catholic centuries, and the catastrophe of 1526 happened only after Protestant thought had found its place in the country.⁵)

Modern historians do not think, however, that some historical events or even the most radical changes could be explained only by transcendental factors, so it is more important to realize that the tragic Mohács battle was seen as a great national catastrophe by both sides. And there is no question that all major political groups during the so-called Ottoman age wanted to expel the Turks. Even the political elite of the Principality of Transylvania felt that their vassal position was only a forced situation due to the power relations, and not a rationally or emotionally sought-after alliance. So it is not surprising that the Turks became symbols of the evil foreigners, the hated pagans, who were often depicted in terrible caricatures in propaganda texts written with the hope of obtaining help from the Christian West. And Mohács became a symbol for national mourning as later generations looked back on (or portrayed in cultural and historical artefacts) the battle with sorrow and regret.

However, at the dawn of the era of modern Hungarian nationalism, the symbolic meaning of the tragic Mohács battle slowly began to change. There were several poems, dramatic plays, articles, and pamphlets that had one main goal: to make the apparently sleeping nation, which was blamed for the not particularly glorious condition of the country, awake. For these romantic generations, history provided examples to follow or to avoid. The medieval significance of Hungary during the Árpád or Anjou dynasty's rule made these romantic nationalists very proud of their historic origins and their national roots, and they were embarrassed because they felt they had lost this power. The medieval kings, great military leaders who defeated their enemies, were praised as national heroes, and their virtues were presented as exemplary legends for the contemporary youth. From this point

of view, the lost battle at Mohács was a turning point, as Mihály Vörösmarty, a famous poet of later decades, wrote in one of his earliest poems: “Mohács, cemetery of glory, my name is the curse of the Hungarians.” The Catholic bishop of the nearby city of Pécs ordered to build a small chapel at the battlefield in 1813, and since 1817 the priests of the diocese have organized memorial holy masses on August 29, the anniversary of the battle. One of the priests, János Kövér, said in his sermon in 1837: “The Mohács tragedy hurts to every real Hungarian, and, in particular, when he thinks about those golden ages, when our glorious fatherland stood with its one leg upon the Black sea, with the other upon the Tyrrhenian, blood flows from his heart...” In 1842 the noble estates of Baranya county suggested building a national monument to the very place where king Louis II died in the battle in order to draw the attention of later generations to heroes of the past. They were seen not only as victims, but also as heroes who sacrificed themselves, who died for the fatherland. This self-sacrifice and heroism was presented as an example to follow, and the tragic meaning of the historical event became an inspiring recollection of the national past. József Eötvös, one of the finest political thinkers of his day – and a less talented poet – wrote in his poem *Mohács* in 1847: “The faithful bosom, who lived for the fatherland / fertilizes its soil as he returns to ash / and his spirit remains by the grave / urging descendants to act.”⁶

So, the optimism of the so-called Reform Era (the 1830s and 1840s, when the Hungarian political and cultural elite made tremendous efforts to revitalize the country by pushing through political and social reforms in order to create a system that resembled the developed West European countries) changed the symbolism of Mohács, too. The “awakeners” used this poetic picture for their own purposes, claiming that even after such a terrible catastrophe there a better period in history could come if their contemporaries were worthy successors of their heroic ancestors.

Though the symbolic meaning of the Mohács battle and the whole Ottoman period changed a great deal in the Romantic era, the fights with the Turks remained the most popular historic age, apart from the medieval Hungarian great power. The themes of the most celebrated historical paintings of this period offer evidence of this. Romantic nationalism was very keen on presenting the dramatic events of the past, so these genres of paintings enjoyed considerable popularity in the 19th century. There were paintings with themes related to the Ottoman period among the earliest paintings: the monumental canvas of Peter Krafft from 1825, showing the last storm of Miklós Zrínyi at Szigetvár 1566, and another painting of rather low quality by an artist from Vienna depicting a Hungarian warrior, Mihály Dobozi, whose wife asked him to kill her rather than allow her to fall into the hands of the Turks.⁷ These historic paintings portrayed the martyrdom of Hungarian men and women as patterns to be followed, if perhaps in a more modern and less bloody way. Other later works of art portrayed the most popular family of the

medieval Hungarian Kingdom: the Hunyadi family. János Hunyadi, the governor, who defeated the Ottomans in numerous battles, first at the victorious siege of Nándorfehérvár/Belgrade in 1456, and his son, the great Hungarian king, Matthias (1458–1490), for whom the Hungarian noble diet (the parliament of the estates) wanted to set up a national monument in the 1840s, though they were unable to collect enough money.⁸ So a more glorious past had become popular by that time, adapting to the more optimistic national sentiments.

The Turks were represented in these paintings always as *hostis naturalis*, hereditary enemies of Hungary. The greatest national heroes were those who had been able to defeat the Turks and the greatest national martyrs were those who perished at their hands. Thus the Turks, perhaps not surprisingly, were the perennial enemies for Hungarian national consciousness in the first half of the 19th century, as the devastating wars against the Turks could be cast as the historic age that had had the greatest and most overwhelmingly negative impact on the face of the country and nation.

Some decades later, however, during the 1876–78 wars in the Balkan Peninsula, Hungarian public opinion was mostly *in support of* the Turks. There were several demonstrations for the Ottoman Empire, students and the main opposition parties (not just the radical democratic parties of the so-called Independence Party, but the conservatives, too) demanded a pro-Turkish foreign policy.⁹ The university students decided to present a fancy sword to General Abdel Karem, who defeated the Serbs in a couple of battles in 1876. They travelled to Constantinople and on January 13, 1877 they gave their gift to Abdel Karem Pasha. They were received by the Minister of War Affairs, as well.¹⁰ Some months later, in April 1877, the Sultan, Abdül-Hamid II sent back three dozen illuminated manuscripts, which had been kept in his treasury since his ancestor, Suleiman the Great, captured Buda. These manuscripts, some of them from the old library of King Matthias, were seen as signs of the friendship between the two nations. This Turkish delegation had traveled to Vienna, because they were not allowed to visit Budapest directly, as the Austrian foreign ministry wanted to avoid any kind of complications with the powers at war. So they left the books there, and three days later a small group of librarians brought them from Vienna to the Budapest University Library quietly, without any great celebration.¹¹

But some days later another Turkish delegation arrived in Hungary. Though this was a non-official visit, they were received enthusiastically. Their train stopped at all major railway stations, and distinguished committees, headed mostly by the mayors and other celebrities, greeted them on behalf of the given towns. On April 29, 1877 the Turkish delegation was received by a huge Budapest crowd of 20,000 or 30,000. The speakers praised the Turkish nation and the Sultan, and expressed their hopes that after such long wars in the past, the Turkish and Hungarian nations would be friends forever, as they were brother nations.¹²

This visit of 15 men from the Ottoman Empire took place when the Russians declared war on the Ottoman Empire. At the beginning of the war the Turkish troops were able to defend themselves, first and foremost at the fortress of Plevna, where several thousand Russians died while attacking the Turkish trenches. The Hungarians were delighted, the defender of Plevna, Osman Nuri Pasha was celebrated as a hero, and the Hungarian newspapers – pro-government and opposition newspapers alike – all wished for the victory of the Ottoman Empire.¹³

Moreover, there was a smaller group of Hungarian patriots in Transylvania, who wanted to do more than just pray for the victory of the Turks. During the summer of 1877 some noblemen in the eastern region of Transylvania, the Magyar Székelyföld, decided to organize a smaller army to attack the Russians. They knew of course that a few thousand Hungarians would not be able to do considerable harms to the colossal army of the Tsar. They planned only a sabotage action in the hinterland of the Russians, namely, with several thousand brave volunteers they wanted to move forward to the Sereth River and blow up the bridge over it. They hoped to hinder the supply of the Russian troops fighting in the territory of contemporary Bulgaria, so they could be defeated by the Turks.¹⁴

Though this so-called Székely coup was denounced in September 1877, and the leaders Gábor Ugron and Miklós Bartha, young members of the radical opposition, had to flee, no one was punished and the king (following the advice of the government) decided to end the legal proceedings. This story demonstrates the general sympathy towards the conspirators. When the conspiracy was revealed, the leaders had to hide from the gendarmerie, but Miklós Bartha happened to meet Gábor Bethlen, one of the Transylvanian lord-lieutenants (leader of a county, appointed by the government) who asked him: “Where are you going?” “To Nagyszeben”, was the answer, a nearby bigger city in Transylvania. “Not enough”, confided the government official, instead of arresting him, so Bartha traveled to take refuge among relatives in the far northern part of the country.¹⁵

After bloody fights, Plevna was captured and the Russians were able to pass through the Balkan Mountains and by March 1878 they were only a few miles from Constantinople. Hungary was concerned, students and workers protested against the neutrality of the Habsburg Empire, and the crowd attacked even the palace of the prime minister.

All who are familiar with the history of 19th century Europe know what happened next. Alarmed by the extension of Russian power into the Balkans, the Great Powers forced modifications of the treaty at the Congress of Berlin. The main change here was that Bulgaria would be split, according to earlier agreements among the Great Powers that precluded the creation of a large new Slavic state, and so Russian dominance over the Balkans was over. The great powers wanted to prevent the Balkans from falling under the influence of their rival, Russia. But how should one understand the enthusiastic demonstrations in Hungary

for their hereditary enemy? Why had the Hungarians forgotten the bloody wars against the Turks? Why did they think that the Turks were their friends or even their brothers?

It is rather difficult to understand how the Hungarian national sentiments towards the Turks could change so dramatically in the space of only a few decades. These decades were, however, full of highly important historical events. The so-called Reform Era concluded with the lawful revolution of 1848, when the Habsburg kings let Hungary turn into a parliamentary monarchy and the April laws guaranteed the autonomy of Hungary within the Habsburg Monarchy. 1848 can be called the rebirth of the Hungarian nation, and Kossuth, Deák, Batthyány, Eötvös, Széchenyi and their compatriots established the modern Hungarian state. But this independent modern Hungary did not enjoy freedom for long. The Habsburg dynasty wanted to get back the rights the April laws had given to Hungary. By the end of 1848, Hungary, led by Lajos Kossuth, found itself forced to fight for its liberty against not only the rioting ethnic groups (first and foremost Serbs, Romanians and Croats), but the Austrian imperial army too. After sustaining bitter defeats, the Hungarian military force was able to start a counter-attack in the spring of 1849, and during the glorious spring campaign, the Hungarians defeated the Austrian imperial army in many battles, so the new emperor, the young Francis Joseph, had to ask for military aid from the most absolutistic monarch in Europe, Tsar Nicholas I. The Russians sent a huge army to fight against the Hungarians (200,000 men, the biggest army in Europe since the Napoleonic wars!), so there was no question about the defeat of Hungary.¹⁶

Kossuth and some other Hungarian leaders fled to Turkey and the Sultan, backed by Britain and the USA, refused to deliver up the Hungarian emigrants to the victorious Austrians, and in doing so saved their lives. Though Kossuth had no chance to return to Hungary, 18 years later Francis Joseph and the Hungarians negotiated the Compromise of 1867, which gave somewhat smaller autonomy to the country within the Habsburg Monarchy. Austria turned into a double state officially called the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and while the Hungarians enjoyed total autonomy in internal affairs, they had practically a veto right in the foreign affairs of the Habsburg Empire.

Some of the important changes that took place during the three decades before 1876 had a very important impact on the way Hungarians began to think about their neighbor to the south, the Ottoman Empire.

First of all, I would like to underline that the 1848–49 war of independence was the most decisive experience in the formation of the modern Hungarian nation. Though this struggle ended with a military defeat, the Hungarian patriots could be proud of their achievement, because the joint forces of two European great powers were needed to defeat them. And this heroic and partially victorious struggle brought together the heterogeneous parts of the Hungarian society: the noble mid-

dle class and the former serfs, who had just been liberated due to the April laws, fought together for Hungarian freedom and independence, as they must have felt that they were defending the new and free modern Hungarian state and their own personal freedom. If 1848–49 can be called the decisive experience in forging the modern Hungarian nation, then Lajos Kossuth was the leader of this romantic and uniting struggle. From that point on, Hungarians could not be indifferent to his personal fate. He was called “our father, Kossuth” by the peasants, as they thought of him as the person who had liberated them.¹⁷

The huge significance of Kossuth in the souls of the Hungarians is one of the things that helps one understand why sentiments towards Turkey changed so dramatically. The peasants, who might have been taught about the old wars against the Ottoman Empire in the primary schools, had a direct and personal experience of 1848–49. They might have admired the heroism of Zrínyi, Dobó and other historical figures from the 16th or 17th centuries, but Kossuth was a living national hero for them. (The former governor of Hungary died in 1894 in his exile in Italy.) And the Turks might have been blamed because of their attacks on Hungary in bygone centuries, but the conflicts had taken place so long ago, whereas the willingness of the Ottomans to provide an asylum for Kossuth and other Hungarian refugees was part of the present. Something said by an old man after listening to the long speeches of the Turkish delegation in Budapest in April 1877, which he, of course, could not understand, offers a good illustration of how people may well have reacted: “Though we do not make sense of it, it is enough to know that they received our compatriots wholeheartedly.”¹⁸ And if we can trust the articles of a young journalist named Kálmán Mikszáth, written some months later, in August 1877, some participants in the demonstrations in Budapest who were celebrating the victorious Osman Pasha cheered for Kossuth, who actually had not done anything at the time, but he played an important role in popularizing the Turks, so it was not a mere coincidence that he was mentioned together with Abdül-Hamid II.¹⁹

But if we want to understand the sudden sympathy felt for the Turks, we have to consider some other factors as well. We could mention some more historic paintings just after the defeated Revolution of 1848, which show struggles from the Turkish age again. But the meaning of these works of art had been modified. The heroes of the anti-Turkish struggles could be understood during the 1850s as personifications of the later Hungarian efforts to defend the country’s independence, as well. Of course, the Habsburg censor did not allow people to praise the 1848–49 heroes openly, but a historic painting with a double-meaning could not be banned, as it depicted only some ancient fights against the Turks. So the images of Turks in these paintings did not refer to real Turks. Rather they were symbols of the perennial enemies of Hungary in general, which at the time meant the Austrians.

On the other hand, a new topic emerged among these historic paintings, namely, the events of the so-called “*kuruc*” – “*labanc*” struggles. These pictures had more sensitive meanings, as the *labanc* party was the loyal pro-Habsburg option, while the *kuruc* figures in the paintings recalled the anti-Habsburg warriors of 1848–49.²⁰ We can add some pictures to this group that portrayed the 15th century Hunyadi family, but not the traditional figures, the brave and mostly successful warrior János Hunyadi or King Matthias, but László Hunyadi, the elder brother of Matthias, who was executed by King László V, who apparently belonged to the Habsburg dynasty.²¹ The painting, which depicts the immense pain of the executed László Hunyadi’s mother and bride, reminded the spectators of the perfidy of Francis Joseph, who ordered the execution of leaders of 1848–49. After the Compromise of 1867, this veiled anti-Habsburg orientation lost its popularity, as the majority of Hungarians accepted the new political situation. The liberal institutions of the new political system gave more freedom for the expression of anti-Habsburg sentiments as well, so the political minority, the so-called opposition of 1848, was allowed to give expression to their anti-Habsburg feelings, but it was not as widespread and general as it had been in the 1850s.

As one can observe, by the mid-1870s the former assessment of the Turks had undergone a shift. Moreover, the contemporary Ottoman Empire was seen as a weak state, a dying old empire, often called “*the sick man of Europe*”, which, of course, could not be hated anymore, as it was more pitiful than terrifying. Modern nationalism created a new enemy: the Russians, who were not only responsible for the tragic defeat of the Hungarian war of independence, but remained an autocratic, despotic great power, an archenemy of all European liberals in the 19th century. The Hungarian war of independence was defeated by the Habsburgs and the Romanovs together, but after the 1867 Compromise the bitter hatred against the Austrians eased. (Actually, the reign of Francis Joseph became legal as he became the crowned king of the country.) So there remained one real enemy: Russia. Moreover, the colossal Russian empire was feared because of Pan-Slavic tendencies too: some influential St. Petersburg circles were blamed for having allegedly inciting the Slavic ethnic minorities in the Habsburg Monarchy.

So the Turks were celebrated in 1876–78, not only because of their past positive role, the help they had given Hungarian refugees in 1849, but because of their present struggle against the Russians, the same autocratic empire that had helped Francis Joseph defeat the Hungarian war of liberty. Following very simple logic, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend”, the Ottoman Empire’s successful fight against Tsarist Russia could have been seen as revenge for 1849. This anti-Russian sentiment was so general that Balázs Orbán, the third main organizer of the Székely coup, agitated among the Székely peasants by saying the following: “We are going to pay back these Russian dogs for 1848 and 1849!”²² And the meetings after the fall of Plevna in December 1877 all over the country demanded almost in

unison, to quote Mikszáth again: “Lead us against the Russians! ... We wish to go to war.”²³ So the hatred against the Russians was greater than the love for the Turks, who enjoyed popularity among the Hungarians only for a short time.

The Hungarians loved the Turks because of radical national sentiments. The Turks were fighting against the Russians, defeating the symbols of tyranny, and taking vengeance against the oppressors of the Hungarian fight for independence of 1848–1849. Had the Turks gone to war against any other nation than the Russians, the Hungarians would not have been so enthusiastic about them. The Turks only played a role that theoretically could have been played by other nations as well, and in this case, the Hungarians would have cheered for them as they did for the Turks at the time.

However, these friendly sentiments for the Ottoman Empire made it possible for the Turks to lose their image as an enemy forever. They might have been considered the hereditary enemies of the Hungarian nation earlier, but since Hungary had in the meantime found other enemies, the negative consequences of the Ottoman wars were put a bit to the side.

Notes

- ¹ One of the first modern summaries of the effects of the Ottoman rule in Hungary: Szakály, Ferenc, 1988. *Mi veszett Mohács után? A magyarországi török uralom mérlege* [What was Lost after Mohács? The Balance Sheet of Turkish Rule in Hungary]. *Valóság*, 1988/3, 39–51.
- ² An excellent summary on the changing image of the Ottomans in Hungarian historiography: Ágoston, Gábor, 2008. *The image of the Ottomans in Hungarian historiography*. *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.* Volume 61 (1–2), 15–26.
- ³ Perjés, Géza, 1989. *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary: Mohács 1526 – Buda 1541*. Co.: Boulder, N. J.: Highland Lakes, Columbia University Press, xix.
- ⁴ Magyari, István, 1979. *Az országokban való sok romlásnak okairól* [On the many Reasons for the Destruction in the Countries]. Published by Katona, Tamás. Budapest: Magyar Helikon.
- ⁵ Pázmány, Péter, 1983. *Felelet az Magyari István sárvári prédikátornak, Az ország romlása okairól írt könyvére* [Reply to Pastor István Magyari of Sárvár and his Book on the Reasons for the Destruction in the Country]. In: Tarnóc, Márton, ed. 1983. *Pázmány Péter művei*. Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 5–25.
- ⁶ All these texts are cited in B. Szabó, János, ed. 2006. *Mohács*. Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 489–496.
- ⁷ Szvoboda Dománszky, Gabriella, 2001. *Régi dicsőségünk... Magyar történelmi képek a XIX. században* [Our Ancient Glory... Hungarian Historical Paintings in the 19th century]. Budapest: Corvina, 16–22, 25.
- ⁸ Mikó, Árpád and Sinkó, Katalin, ed. 2000. *Történelem – kép. Szemelvények múlt és művészet kapcsolatából Magyarországon* [History – Picture. Excerpts on the Relationship between the Past and History in Hungary]. Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galéria, 668–671.
- ⁹ Diószegi, István, 1983. *The Hungarian Opposition Parties and the Austro-Hungarian Common Foreign Policy*. In: Diószegi, István, *Hungarians in the Ballhausplatz. Studies on the*

Austro-Hungarian Common Foreign Policy. Budapest: Corvina Kiadó, 260–319, esp. 296–298.

- ¹⁰ Tóth, Béla, 1877. A díszkard átadása Abdul-Kerimnek [The Bestowal of the Ceremonial Sword to Abdul-Kerim]. *Vasárnapi Ujság*, February 18, 1877, 99–102.
- ¹¹ Erődi, Béla, 2001. *Csok jasa. A török küldöttség látogatásának emlékkönyve* [Csok jasa. Presentation Volume of the Visit of the Turkish Delegation]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó – Magyar–Török Baráti Társaság, 17–31. I would like to thank Professor Géza Dávid for his generosity and kind help that he presented this book to me. Fodor, Pál, Ivanics, Mária and Sudár, Balázs, 2011. A magyarok oszmán és török szemmel [The Hungarians through Ottoman and Turkish Eyes]. *Magyar Tudomány*, 2011/4, 416–424.
- ¹² Erődi, 2001, 32–92 and 112–118.
- ¹³ Diószegi, István, 1985. *Die Aussenpolitik der Österreich–Ungarischen Monarchie 1871–1877*. Wien, Köln, Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 294–5.
- ¹⁴ Szádeczky Kardoss, Lajos, 1927. A Székely Nemzet története és alkotmánya [The History and Constitution of the Székely Nation]. Budapest: Franklin-társulat, 379–385.
- ¹⁵ Szádeczky Kardoss, 1927, 384.
- ¹⁶ An excellent summary on the Hungarian War of Libery in English: Deák, István, 1979. *The Lawful Revolution. Louis Kossuth and the Hungarians, 1848–1849*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- ¹⁷ Another, typical metaphor for Kossuth was used by a Hungarian private in Debrecen who called him as Moses of the Hungarians, which symbolized the eminent role of Kossuth, who led his people from slavery into freedom. Hermann, Róbert, ed. 2006. *Kossuth Lajos, “a magyarok Mózesese”* [Lajos Kossuth, the Moses of the Hungarians]. Budapest: Osiris Kiadó.
- ¹⁸ Erődi, 2001, 45.
- ¹⁹ Mikszáth, Kálmán, 1877. Fecsegések [Gossiping]. *Budapesti Napilap*, September 20. Published in: Mikszáth Kálmán, 1968. *Cikkek és karcolatok* [Articles and Sketches] Volume III. Published by Bisztray, Gyula, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 30–2. Mikszáth as a young journalist wrote his articles for oppositional newspapers, but some years later he turned to be a rather cynical member of the governing party.
- ²⁰ Viktor Madarász, a romantic painter who was educated in Paris might have had the most radical anti-Habsburg emotions. Almost all of his historical paintings were in connection with the defeat of Hungarian struggles, and he painted a picture entitled *Kuruc and Labanc*, too. (Mikó and Sinkó, ed. 2000, 602–3.)
- ²¹ Benczúr, Gyula’s *László Hunyadi’s Farewell* (1866) and Madarász, Viktor’s *Mourning of László Hunyadi* (1866), both paintings are in the Hungarian National Gallery, Budapest.
- ²² Szádeczky Kardoss, Lajos, 1920. *A székely puccs 1877-ben. Székely légió szervezése az orosz-török háborúban* [The Székely Putsch of 1877. The Organization of the Székely Legion in the Russo-Turkish War]. Budapest: Erdélyi Magyar – Székely Szövetség, 24.
- ²³ Mikszáth, Kálmán, 1877. A drágakövek [Precious Stones]. *Budapesti Napilap*, December 18. Published in: Mikszáth, Kálmán, 1968. *Cikkek és karcolatok* [Articles and Sketches] Volume III. Published by Bisztray, Gyula, Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 243–4.

**THE OTTOMAN STATE AND SEMI-NOMADIC GROUPS
ALONG THE OTTOMAN DANUBIAN SERHAD
(FRONTIER ZONE) IN THE LATE 15TH AND
THE FIRST HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURIES:
CHALLENGES AND POLICIES**

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The main subject of this article is the relationship between the Ottoman state and semi-nomadic groups in the Ottoman Danubian frontier zone (*serhad*) in the late 15th and the first half of the 16th century. Taking the two extremities of the Danubian frontier zone – the provinces of Smederevo in Serbia and Silistre in the northeastern Balkans – as case studies, the article compares the ways in which the Ottoman state dealt with semi-nomadic Vlachs at one end of the frontier zone and Turcoman *yürüks* (and related groups) at the other. Placing the subject in the broader context of the historical development of the Danubian frontier zone, the author analyzes the Ottoman state's changing policies toward these two groups. Taking into account the largely different historical legacies and demographic make-ups, the article analyzes the many commonalities (as well as some important differences) in the way the Ottoman government integrated such groups in its administrative structure. It highlights the process in which such semi-nomadic groups, traditionally utilized by the Ottoman state as auxiliary soldiers, were gradually “tamed” by the state in the course of the 16th century, becoming gradually sedentarized and losing their privileged status.

Keywords: Ottoman, frontier, 16th century, semi-nomads, Vlachs, Yürüks

The frontier and (pastoral) nomadism are two concepts that have fascinated (Middle Eastern and) Ottomanist historians from the very conception of these fields of historical inquiry. While in world historiography the frontier has been conceptualized in a great number of ways – as a zone of separation or contact, zone of settlement, as a “barrier”, or a linear demarcation delimiting the extent of political authority (Power, 1999, 1–12), in Ottoman historiography the frontier in the early modern period has traditionally been perceived as an active expansion frontier zone. The Ottoman frontier zone conceptualized as *uc* (lit. “end”, “extremity”, often translated into English as “marches” or “marchlands”) in the late 14th and 15th centuries and more often as *serhad* in the 16th and 17th centuries, has been viewed

as a part and parcel of the Ottoman *ghaza* (Holy War against the infidel) ideology. In this context “the Ottoman frontier against Christendom therefore must serve principally as the stage on which the *ghazi* drama is continually played out” (Heywood, 1999, 232). Central to this conceptualization of the expansionist Ottoman frontier based on Paul Wittek’s ‘*ghaza* thesis’ (Wittek, 1938) is the understanding that the continuous expansion of the frontier very much determined the empire’s social and economic structures and the predominance of its military class (Agoston, 2003, 15). The Ottoman frontier in the process of its expansion at the expense of Christendom was also a zone of mutual adaptation of conquerors and conquered – a process of intense cultural and material exchange and negotiation of identities (Kafadar, 1995, 62–90). It was in this process of exchange and negotiation that the Ottomans – famed for their political pragmatism – articulated their essential mechanisms of political and administrative control. As the frontier was continuously moving farther, lands that once had been part of the frontier zone would gradually become part of the ‘core’ (or hinterland) Ottoman territories. In fact, as the Ottoman state itself originated as a frontier principality in northwestern Anatolia ca. 1300 (it did not acquire a true ‘metropolis’ till the conquest of Constantinople in 1453), all Ottoman territories in the Balkans (and, with certain limitations, in Anatolia as well) had once been part of the frontier zone.

While certainly of no smaller importance, the role of pastoral nomads in the history of the Ottoman state has received much less attention. Wittek made a distinction between early Ottoman *ghazis* and *pastoral* Turcoman nomads whereby he saw the latter as playing a subordinate role – following victorious Ottoman warriors for the faith into newly conquered territories (Wittek, 1938, 25) – given the current state of the field in the social sciences Wittek would not point out that the early Ottoman *ghazis* were, for the most part, pastoral nomads. While the connection between pastoral nomads and pre-modern state formation has been well recognized in the broader Middle Eastern historical discourse (Lapidus, 1990), there are only a few well-known monographs dealing with this issue in Ottomanist historiography (Gökbilgin, 1957; Orhonlu, 1963; Lindner, 1983; Kasaba, 2009). In his work Lindner discusses the early Ottoman principality’s transformation from a semi-nomadic chieftaincy to a sedentary agriculturalist state and following that, analyses the bureaucratic Ottoman state’s policies that aimed at the suppression of pastoral nomads in Anatolia, as the latter, having been once “valued military specialists” (Lindner, 1983, 105) who played a crucial role in bringing the Ottoman state into existence, had become a liability in the context of the development of the Ottoman centralist imperial enterprise by the mid-sixteenth century. If this process received attention in other studies, it has usually been reduced to the analysis of state-nomad relations in Ottoman Anatolia and the Arab provinces (Murphey, 1984; Orhonlu, 1963). The one well-known monograph that deals with Ottoman Turcoman (semi-)nomads in the Balkans provides valuable empirical

data, but does little in the way of conceptually integrating the incorporation of Balkan Turcoman pastoralists into the broader framework of Ottoman state-formation (Gökbilgin, 1957). As for non-Turcoman Balkan pastoralists, such as the Vlachs, their history has been treated more narrowly as a part of the respective ‘national histories’, in the case of Vlachs in the western Balkans – Yugoslav, Serbian, and Bosnian history (Bojanić-Lukač, 1971; Đurđev, 1984; Filipović, 1974, 1983). The most recent work on the Ottoman Empire and its nomads presents an evolutionary perspective and argues that it was only in the modern period that the Ottoman state pursued systematic policies aimed at controlling and sedentarizing nomadic and semi-nomadic groups (Kasaba, 2009).

This paper will deal with a specific geographic and thematic aspect of the Ottoman Danubian *serhad* (frontier zone) in the late 15th and the first half of the 16th century (partly venturing into the 1560s as well). Looking at two geographic extremes of this frontier zone – the Ottoman *sancak* (province) of Smederevo (Tr. Semendire) in north-central Serbia in the west and the *sancak* of Silistre (mod. Silistra) in the east, which largely encompassed the historic region of Dobrudja in modern Bulgaria and Romania, I will make some remarks, in broad strokes at this stage, about the patterns of settlement, demographic transformation, colonization and conversion to Islam and, broadly speaking, Ottoman population management along the Ottoman Danubian frontier zone, with an emphasis on the countryside, i.e. the rural population and the balance between sedentary and (semi-)nomadic populations. I will focus specifically on the way two semi-nomadic groups – the Turcoman *yürüks* (and related or similar groups) in the province of Silistre and the Vlachs in northern Serbia, were integrated in the Ottoman administrative system. Both groups traditionally practiced pastoral nomadism (as well as, to a limited extent, agriculture) and had developed military skills whereby they played prominent roles in the defense system of the Danubian frontier zone and enjoyed a privileged status in exchange. They were also important agents of colonization and would be often encouraged or tacitly allowed by the Ottoman authorities to settle in sparsely populated parts of the frontier zone. Special attention will be paid to the changing status of the two groups in relation to the consolidation of Ottoman control in the Danubian frontier zone.

The rationale for doing this is that while these two geographic extremities of the Ottoman Danubian frontier zone had largely different demographic make-ups and patterns of development, the management of the Danubian frontier zone was conditioned by a number of common imperatives and strategic priorities for the Ottoman state. Looking at how the Ottoman state responded to different chal-

lenges at the two opposite ends of the frontier zone could provide us with some insight into the patterns of Ottoman political and territorial expansion into South-eastern and Central Europe and also possibly shed more light upon the nature of early modern political centralization.

The Ottoman Danubian frontier zone emerged in the late 14th and further developed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ottoman expansion in the Balkans reached the Danube in the late 1380s when Çandarlı Ali Pasha invaded the Bulgarian Kingdom of Turnovo and conquered Silistre in the process (with Firuz Bey being its first *sancakbeyi*) (Dimitrov, Zhechev & Tonev, 1988, 8–10). In 1395 Bayezid I (1389–1402) was the first Ottoman sultan to lead his troops beyond the Danube to fight the Wallachian *voevode* Mircea the Elder (1386–1418). The Ottoman victory over the Hungarian King Sigismund at Nicopolis in 1396 marked the definitive conquest of the medieval Bulgarian kingdoms of Turnovo and Vidin as well as the Despotate of Dobrudja (Fine, 1997, 422–5). Thus, at the end of the 14th century the Ottomans had established the Danube as their northern frontier to the east of Serbia.

As for Serbia, after the Battle of Kosovo (1389) it became a vassal of the Ottomans and, just as Wallachia, would be caught in the power struggle between Hungary and the Ottomans in the following decades. As the Ottomans stepped up their pressure after despot Stefan Lazarević's death in 1427, the Ottomans temporarily occupied the Despotate of Serbia with its capital Smederevo (1439–44) and then ultimately conquered it in 1459. Thus Smederevo, which had served as the capital of the Serbian Despotate since 1430, became the capital of a new Ottoman *sancak* and would feature as the most important Ottoman fortress along the border with Hungary until the fall of Belgrade in 1521, when the latter became capital of the province (Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 39–45).

By the mid-15th century the Danube had established itself as the frontier line between the “Abode of Islam” and the “Abode of War” in both Ottoman practical policy-making and political imagination. It could serve as the ultimate defensive line against Hungarian or Wallachian attacks. On the other hand, crossing the Danube promised the riches of conquest or martyrdom to Ottoman *ghazis*, no matter whether the campaigns were led by sultans, famous frontier lords such as Mihaloğlu Ali Bey, or were carried out by smaller bands of Turcoman raiders. As the Ottoman poet Şeyhi (d. 1429) put it: “The Danube River (which lies in our neighborhood) is to be preferred to the spring of Paradise” (quoted in Panaite, 2000, 102). Being often described by Ottoman chroniclers in the late 15th and 16th centuries as a “gazi river” (Panaite, 2000, 102–3), the Danube very much pre-

served its status as a frontier line between Christendom and Islamdom till the mid-16th century.

While the principality of Wallachia had been intermittently paying tribute to the Ottomans since the times of Mircea the Elder, it was often a disloyal neighbor, and sometimes a dangerously aggressive one, as Vlad Dracula's invasion across the Danube in 1461–62 demonstrated. Bayezid II's campaign against Moldavia in 1484 and the resulting Ottoman conquest of the fortresses of Kili (Chilia) and Akkirman that controlled the northwestern Black Sea coast paved the way to the consolidation of Ottoman control over the two Danubian principalities. Wallachia was steadily incorporated as an Ottoman vassal by 1525 and would remain so till the 19th century despite occasional revolts of Wallachian *voevodes* (such as that of Michael the Brave's in 1595) (Panaite, 2000, 156–64). Similarly, Moldavia, which had been tentatively drawn into the Ottoman sphere of influence in the mid-15th century (1455), became a firm Ottoman vassal only after Süleyman I's campaign against the *voevode* Petru Rareș in 1538 (Panaite, 2000, 164–8). Silistre and its *sancakbeyi* would play a strategic role as an outpost of Ottoman control over the Danubian principalities and as a springboard for the Ottomans' northern campaigns (Dimitrov, Zhechev & Tonev, 1988, 8–14, 76–82).

Simultaneously, the other end of the Ottoman Danubian *serhad* also saw momentous developments in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. The Ottoman capture of Belgrade in 1521, the victory at Mohács in 1526, and the emergence of Ottoman Hungary in 1541 led to a situation in which the *sancak* of Smederevo (with capital Belgrade) lost its frontier status and was transformed into an interior province of smaller importance that became part of the governorate-general (*beylerbeyliği*) of Budin (Buda). Yet, Belgrade would continue to play a major role as a base for Ottoman campaigns in central Europe (Šabanović, 1955, 62–3).

Utilizing Ottoman administrative sources, above all Ottoman *timar* tax registers as well as the attendant provincial law-codes, a comparison between the demographic development and Ottoman population management of the two provinces may shed more light on a number of commonalities despite the fact that the two provinces had very different demographic make-ups and development from the late 15th through the mid-16th century. For the *sancak* of Smederevo one may rely on several *timar* tax registers starting from 1476 and ending in 1560 – detailed (*mufassal*) registers from 1476, 1516, 1527, 1536, and 1560, and a synoptic (*icmal*) one from (1530). These have also been a subject of a number of modern scholarly works, mostly by Serbian authors (most notably Miljković-Bojanić, 2004; Zirojević, 1973; Bojanić-Lukač, 1971). Conversely, for the province of

Silistre we possess just two registers with attendant law-codes – a synoptic one from 1518 (whose demographic data is also available in a 1530 synoptic register) and a detailed one from 1569; research on them has been limited (Dimitrov, 1983; Dimitrov, 1997–9).

General Nature of Demographic Development

The most obvious differences between the demographic nature of the two regions relate to overall population dynamics, the ethno-religious structure of the population, and the balance between settled agricultural populations, with the status of *re'aya*, that paid regular land tax (*çift resmi, ispençe*), the canonical tithe on agricultural produce (*öşr*) and extraordinary levies (*avarız-ı divaniye ve tekalif-i örfiyye*) on the one hand, and semi-nomadic groups, such as Vlachs and *yürüks* who enjoyed special status, on the other.

In terms of overall population dynamics, the province of Smederevo was characterized by a relative stability of the overall size of the rural population which was also more or less uniformly Orthodox Christian with the exception of urban centers. The Ottoman conquests in the western Balkans in the second half of the 15th century and the ensuing Ottoman campaigns against Hungary up to the mid-16th century did cause substantial, but not sweeping demographic changes. These included population migrations into enemy (Hungarian) territory and a high percentage of abandoned villages – around 17 per cent according to the tax registrations of 1476 and 1516 (Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 177), which the Ottoman government managed by encouraging the resettlement of abandoned lands by populations from neighboring districts. In most cases these were semi-nomadic Vlach groups that would settle in sparsely populated lands (especially in the western part of the province), enjoying a number of fiscal privileges. Indeed, it has been forcefully argued that it was only in the decades immediately following the Ottoman conquest of the Serbian Despotate in 1459 that Vlachs migrated in large numbers from their traditional lands of habitation in the western Balkans – Bosnia, Hercegovina, Montenegro, and Stari Vlah in Serbia to the flatlands of northern Serbia (i.e. what became the *sancak* of Smederevo) (Đurđev, 1984, 24–5).

Thus Vlach colonization contributed substantially to the stabilization of the settlement network in the province of Smederevo in the last decades of the 15th and the early 16th century. While villages of settled agriculturalists were small to mid-sized, with an average size of around 20 households, Vlach villages were predominantly small – in 1476 85 per cent of them had under 20 households (47 per cent under ten), with an average of 13 households; this nature of Vlach settlements had not changed substantially as reflected in the Ottoman tax register of 1516

(Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 159–72). The small size of Vlach villages may be explained with the recent arrival of Vlachs in northern Serbia as well as with the pastoralist nature of their lifestyle. After 1536, when the Vlachs lost their privileged status, some of the Smederevo Vlachs left the province, while the rest gradually became part of the settled agriculturalist population of the province.

The province of Silistre, on the other hand, represents a very different case. While not much is known about the medieval demographic history of the region, we know that in the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth century Dobrudja (then known as Karvuna or Little Scythia) was subject to frequent invasions of nomadic Turkic peoples from the Ponto-Caspian steppe (Petchenegs, Ouzes, and Cumans) which must have contributed to the continuous depopulation of the area (Diaconu, 1970, 39–49, 62–5, 79–81; Diaconu, 1978, 41–58, 130–3). At the same time we know of the migration of Turcomans from Anatolia under the leadership of the legendary Sarı Saltık in the 1260s, although the demographic dimensions of this migration remain vague. Fifteenth-century developments such as the Ottoman civil war (1402–13), the revolt of Sheyh Bedreddin in 1416 that started in Dobrudja and neighboring Deliorman, as well as the Crusade of Varna (1444), further contributed to the region's depopulation so much so that a participant in the Crusade of Varna – Andreas di Palazzio described the region between Varna and the Danube as “desertum” (Dimitrov, Zhechev & Tonev, 1988, 16). The invasion of Dobrudja by the Wallachian *voevode* Vlad Dracula in 1461–62 had a similar destructive effect.

The Ottoman tax registration data of 1518 (replicated in a 1530 register) suggests a sparsely populated Dobrudja with a large number of small or very small Muslim villages inside Dobrudja (overwhelmingly below ten households in size) and a small number of large Christian villages along the Danube and the Black Sea coast. Taking the district (*nahiye*) of Silistre in particular it had 223 villages of which 208 were Muslim and only 15 were Christian. Eighty per cent of the rural population was Muslim (BBOA TD No. 370, 383–398). The size and toponymics of the Muslim villages suggests that those villages were founded by recent nomadic or semi-nomadic arrivals from Anatolia – the overwhelming majority of these recently founded Muslim settlements bore the name of their founders and/or a water source (e.g. Küçük Ahmed Kuyusu, Murad Pınarı). The population in 20 per cent of these new Turkish/Muslim settlements was registered as *cemaats* – lit. ‘community’, ‘group’ – usually characterizing nomadic or semi-nomadic groups in this context – in many cases their names suggested their origins or lifestyle – e.g. Saruhan Cemaati (coming from Saruhan in western Anatolia), or Cemaat-i Ekmek Yemez (lit. “those who do not eat bread”) (BBOA TD No. 370, 388). As we do not possess an earlier register for the province one may speculate about the possible reasons for this mass migration, but it most probably took place in relation to the Ottoman-Safavid conflict as it developed during the reign of Sultan

Selim I (1512–20). This conflict pitted against one another the newly founded Safavid (and officially Shi'ite) Empire of Iran against the Ottoman Empire which styled itself as an upholder of Sunni orthodoxy. The main factor behind the repopulation of Dobrudja likely was Selim I's massive repressions against numerous Turcoman nomads in Anatolia perceived to be sympathetic politically and religiously with the new Shi'ite regime in Iran. The 1518 registration shows 1784 "households" (of which 650 are dubiously registered as "bachelors") as a separate group of deportees – deported from Anatolia into the southeast part of the province in the district of Pravadi; a note attached to this registration makes this clear (*zıkr olan ta'ife bundan evvel Anadolu'dan Dobruca'ya gelüb*) and further specifies that the deportees had the freedom to settle wherever they liked, that is, they could migrate to other parts of the province, and possibly beyond (BBOA TD No. 370, 436); the attendant law-code suggests that those were accompanied by relatives whose migration the Ottoman government could not control firmly (Akgündüz, 1990–, vol. 3, 467). Thus, the province of Silistre, being a potential zone of conflict along the Danubian frontier was serving as a safety valve that assimilated deportees and migrants from another zone of conflict (Anatolia).

The Ottoman State and the Semi-nomadic Vlachs and *Yürüks*

With around 15 per cent Vlachs in the province of Smederevo (in 1516 the province of Smederevo had 12,000 extended Vlach households of around 100,000 households total) and around 80 per cent Turcoman population in the district of Silistre the balance was obviously diametrically skewed, yet the Ottoman state's approach to these populations in the two provinces was not dissimilar. On the one hand, it was aimed at the use of these semi-nomadic groups (that naturally possessed developed military skills) to its own purposes in the Danubian *serhad*, usually giving them special privileged taxation status, on the other hand the Ottoman state made persistent efforts to tie them to the land, thus sedentarizing them and territorializing their communities.

The Vlachs of Smederevo

The Vlachs of the late Middle Ages were the most prominent semi-nomadic group in the Balkans prior to the Ottoman conquest. They were Romanized stock-breeders scattered throughout the Balkan peninsula – initially in Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, the Pindos Mountains, and Moesia, and from the eleventh century onwards in the western Balkans as well (Vasary, 2005, 19). Their continuous contact with Slavs led to a significant degree of Slavicization and it was for this reason

that, especially in the western Balkans, the term 'Vlach' came to be used to denote a socio-economic status and not necessarily ethno-linguistic identity. While medieval Serbian rulers imposed restrictions on the intermarriage between sedentary Serbs and semi-nomadic Vlachs, these efforts do not seem to have been effective, in 1336 Stefan Dushan abolished these policies (Solovjev, 1926, 93; Filipović, 1963, 75). By the early 16th century Vlachs had Slavicized to the extent that the overwhelming majority of Vlachs registered in the Serbian lands would have Slavic names (Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 215).

The Vlachs in the pre-Ottoman western Balkans were organized in groups known as *katun*, each having a different number of households, from 10 to 105 as late medieval Serbian legal sources show (Filipović, 1963, 47–50). Each *katun* was led by an elder known as *primikjur*, and larger Vlach communities, consisting of several *katuns* were headed by *knezes* (Filipović, 1963, 83–7).

What distinguished Vlachs in the late medieval western Balkans from the rest of the population was not just their semi-nomadic lifestyle based on animal husbandry, primarily sheep-breeding, for there were other semi-nomadic groups as well, including Slavs. Vlachs owed special services to their lord, be it the ruler, local notables, or monasteries (Filipović, 1963, 51). They, unlike most other semi-nomadic groups in the area, were also horse breeders, and thus performed service as horse-drivers (*celatori*) and mounted soldiers (*vojnici*) (Filipović, 1963, 76–81).

With the conquest of Serbia (1459) as well as Bosnia (1463) and Hercegovina (1481) the Ottomans inherited the Vlach organization as it had developed in the medieval western Balkans and integrated it into the Ottoman political, military, and administrative structures. The Ottoman adaptation of the Vlach organization as reflected in contemporary tax registers and the attendant law-codes suggests a degree of regularization of the structure of Vlach communities in relation to their military service duties as well as taxation. To this one should add the increasing territorialization of Vlach communities in the several decades following the conquest of medieval Serbia, whereby Vlachs in the province of Smederevo were registered as tied to the land, each Vlach household registered on a family farm (*baština*) as early as in 1476 (Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 158–9, 230; Đurđev, 1963). Thus, the Ottoman state seems to have taken advantage of the Vlachs' migration to the northern Serbian lands in the second half of the fifteenth century to implement measures aiming at their gradual sedentarization.

Thus, from the second half of the fifteenth century (i.e. upon the Ottoman conquest of the western Balkans) the Ottoman state treated the Vlachs in Serbia, Bosnia and Hercegovina and parts of northwestern Bulgaria as a special social group that performed specific military duties and enjoyed a number of fiscal privileges as compared to the regular agricultural subject population (*re'aya*). Taxes

were levied on them per household and per *katun*, whereby the latter can be viewed as both a unit of social organization and an auxiliary unit of taxation. The earliest Ottoman provincial law-codes concerning Vlachs in the *sancak* of Smederevo set the size of a Vlach *katun* at 50 households (the case of Braničevo Vlachs was an exception, whereby they were initially organized in *katuns* of 20 households as of 1467, but this regulation did not last) (Bojanić-Lukač, 1971, 261; Inalcik, 1954, 156).

According to the law-code for the province of Smederevo for 1476 Vlachs in the province paid only the equivalent of one *filori* (Venetian ducat, equivalent to 45 Ottoman silver *akçe* in the late 15th and early 16th centuries) as well as the monetary equivalents of a ram (15 *akçe*), a sheep with a lamb (20 *akçe*) per household, 5 *akçe* for small misdemeanors (*cürm ü cinayet*), and 2 *akçes* for administrative expenses. A *katun* paid collectively 150 *akçe* as the monetary value of various items (a tent, two rams, two ropes, two pieces of cheese, and three horse halters), bringing the total tax liability per household to 90 *akçe* – much less than what an agricultural *re'aya* household paid – usually more than 150 *akçe* (Akgündüz, 1990–, vol. 1, 527–8; BBOA TD No. 16, 378, 623). Being exempt from all other taxes, Vlachs were to provide one soldier (*voynuk*) per five households who could serve in the defense of strategic locales or participate in raids led by the governor (as specified in a later provincial law-code from 1527) (Barkan, 1943, 325), a *katun* had to supply one servant (*hizmetkar*, *komornic*) to the governor (Akgündüz, 1990–, vol. 1, 528). Half a century later, as a 1527 law-code informs us, these regulations had not changed significantly, one important addition was the obligation to provide one soldier per household if necessary – obviously reflecting the intensification of warfare at the western end of the Ottoman Danubian frontier zone in the 1520s (Barkan, 1943, 325). The Vlachs of Smederevo enjoyed a considerable degree of self-rule under the leadership of their *knezes* and *primikjurs*, the latter offices were generally hereditary within the community and new holders were only confirmed by the Ottoman authorities, they could not be removed from office unless they had openly violated the law (Akgündüz, 1990–, vol. 1, 528; Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 232–3). The law-code of 1476 mentions of a supreme chief (*re'is*) of the Vlachs in the province, a certain Maloga, son of Nikola who presided over 20 other *knezes* and 331 *primikjurs* (Akgündüz, 1990–, vol. 1, 528; Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 238).

As already mentioned, as early as in 1476 the Ottoman state strove to give each Vlach household a (*filorcijska*) *baština* – a small farm of 7–15 hectares (depending on the quality of land) usually along the frontier in abandoned villages, *knezes* and *primikjurs* had *baštinas* several times larger, and the highest ranking among them could also be *timar*-holding *sipahis*. Thus the mentioned Maloga held a large *timar* worth 10,246 *akçe* in 1476 (Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 237).

The Vlachs of Smederevo enjoyed their privileged status associated with auxiliary military service until 1536. According to the provincial law-code for that year that accompanied a new comprehensive tax survey of the province the Vlachs were abruptly deprived of their privileges – most probably a result of the province’s loss of its frontier status following the Ottoman conquest of Belgrade in 1521, the Ottoman victory at Mohács in 1526 and the subsequent Ottoman expansion in Hungary. Similar changes regarding the status of Vlachs took place in neighboring provinces – the *sancaks* of Vidin, Kruševac, Zvornik, and Bosnia. The 1536 law-code describes in detail the privileged status Vlachs had until that time, the tax exemptions they had enjoyed and the services they had provided to the state (including service in ship-building, not mentioned in earlier law-codes). Without specifying the reason for that, the law-code states that from that moment onwards the Vlachs would be registered as regular *re’aya* (taxpaying population), paying *cizye* (the poll-tax for non-Muslims) as well as land taxes, taxes on agricultural produce and extraordinary taxes (Akgündüz, 1990–, vol. 5, 358). The Vlachs retained some of the major features of their communal organization, whereby *knezes* and *primikjurs* would continue to act as representatives of the Vlachs vis-à-vis the state and would assist in the collection of taxes (Akgündüz, 1990–, vol. 5, 358; Đurđev, 1949).

Most of the Vlachs in the province of Smederevo accepted this decision of the government and adapted. For example, the Vlach village of Rudo Polje (Karanovac) grew from 17 to 21 households from 1540 to 1570, paying *ispence* and all other appropriate taxes (Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 240). Others did not and sought to relocate, especially to the provinces of Bosnia and Vidin in which Vlachs were temporarily restored to their privileged status in 1540; in the second half of the 16th century some Vlachs would migrate into Habsburg territory where they would enjoy (at least for a time) the privileges they had had in the Ottoman lands prior to 1536 (Miljković-Bojanić, 2004, 239–40).

The *Yürüks* (and Related Groups) in the Province of Silistre

Looking at (the district (*nahiye*) of) Silistre as of 1516, in which, as mentioned in the preceding section, 80 per cent of the rural population were Turkish Muslims mostly of semi-nomadic stock, one can see that only 45 per cent of the Muslim population in the countryside (921 of 2028 households) were regular Muslim *re’aya* tilling the land and paying all regular taxes (*çift resmi, öşr, avarız-i divaniyye*) – the rest, i.e. around 55 per cent, had special military (or logistic) duties and enjoyed special tax privileges. The overwhelming majority of the rural Muslim population were registered as “*çiftlü*”, including those with special duties

and privileges (i.e. they had been given a plot of land (*çift* or *çiftlik*), similar in size to the *baştina* – from 7 to 15 hectares, depending on the quality of the land). Most of those 55 per cent that had special duties were integrated into the *yürük* auxiliary military organization in which Turcoman (semi-) nomads, in many ways similar to the Vlachs, were organized in units (*ocaks*) of 25. According to a law concerning Balkan *yürüks*, dated 1530, five members of each unit, known as *eşküncüs*, would participate in military campaigns and the rest would serve as reservists (*yamaks*) and would have the duty to equip and finance the *eşküncüs*, each reservist paying 50 *akçe* in lieu of extraordinary taxes (for which reason these reservists were also known as *ellicis*) (Barkan, 1943, 260; BBOA TD No. 370, 365). Apart from the *yürüks*, those 55 per cent consisted also of falconers (*doğancıs*), horse breeders (*güreci*), butter-makers (*yağcı*) etc. While the term *güreci* has often been transliterated as *küreci*, from *küre* (in the meaning of smelting furnace) and thus has been associated with mining in the scholarly literature, a more appropriate reading (especially given that these were found in various parts of the empire that did not have established mining centers) would be *güre*, meaning a (wild) colt, hence *güreci* – a colt/horse breeder, whereby *gürecis* were those who raised colts (up to three years old) where after these were directed to the sultan's stables to be used in the army (Dimitrov, 1997–99, 289). Similarly, *yağcıs* had the duty to supply the army or charitable institutions (within the framework of the *waqf* institution) with specified amounts of butter.

According to the provincial law-codes of Silistre for 1518 and 1530, all these groups enjoyed a number of fiscal privileges, not dissimilarly to the Vlachs in the province of Smederevo. They had greater freedom to settle where they wished, paid only 12 *akçe çift resmi* (instead of the regular 22 *akçe*) if they farmed a plot, and were exempt from extraordinary taxes (*avarız-ı divaniye*) in exchange for their duties (Akgündüz, 1990–, vol. 3, 466–8; BBOA TD No. 370, 379–81; Dimitrov, 1997–99, 290–1). The deportees from Anatolia mentioned above enjoyed similar privileges (BBOA TD No. 370, 436).

How had the situation changed by 1569 according to the detailed tax registration and the attendant provincial law-code (BBOA TD No. 483) that were issued in that year? The overall population in the countryside of the sub-province had risen to 8139 of which 83 per cent (6798 households) were Muslims. In other words, the overall countryside population had risen more than three times, with the weight of Muslims slightly increased. The number of Muslim villages had risen almost by 50 per cent, but that increase has to be attributed mainly to village neighborhoods that had become separate, independent villages. The average size of a Muslim village had doubled to 20 households, and would have been greater if not for the former village neighborhoods (*mahalles*) that had split off to form separate villages. Most of the 63 *mezra'as* (not settled or not stably settled farming plots) from the 1518 tax register had become fully-fledged villages. (As for the

Christian villages, their number had remained very much unchanged although their average size had more than doubled).

Regular tax-paying rural Muslim *re'aya* constituted 82 per cent, and those Muslim groups with special duties discussed here – only 13 per cent, down from 55 per cent in 1518 (the remaining 5 per cent belonged to other exempt groups – religious personnel, *waqf re'aya*, descendants of the Prophet, elderly and disabled, etc.). Moreover, the *yürüks* and the related or similar groups now paid regular land tax, and most of them – extraordinary taxes. That is, in addition to the fact that the percentage of such privileged semi-nomadic groups among the rural Muslim population had dropped around four times, their privileges had been very much curtailed, and did not give them many advantages compared to the regular peasant *re'aya*, while they were expected to provide the assigned services to the state.

Thus, one might argue that despite the great differences in the demographic dynamics and make-ups of the provinces of Silistre and Smederevo, the Ottoman state followed similar approaches to managing frontier populations, especially as pastoral semi-nomads were concerned. In fact, as it has been acknowledged that the *yürüks* were much better organized as an auxiliary force in the Balkans as compared to Anatolia (Çabuk, 1986, 430–5), one may suggest that the way in which the *yürük* organization was shaped in the Balkans may have been influenced by the tradition of the Vlach auxiliary organization which the Ottomans inherited from the medieval Balkan states (most notably from Stefan Dushan's Serbia). Yet, one might say that while the Ottoman state's treatment of Vlachs in Smederevo and Turcomans in Silistre reflected a number of common imperatives along the Danubian frontier zone, the integration of the Turcomans in Silistre was part of another general process – the struggle of the centralizing Ottoman state to tame the Turcoman nomads – a process discussed in greater detail by scholars such as Ira Lapidus and R.P. Lindner. While the Ottoman state could afford to abruptly take away the privileges of the already historically 'tamed' Vlachs, it had to be more cautious and accommodationist vis-à-vis the Turcoman nomads who posed a much greater challenge.

I would also like to make some additional remarks on two issues. Regarding the question of *sürgün*, or forced deportations, I would like to address briefly the classic thesis of the prominent Turkish historian Ö.L. Barkan. In a seminal article on forced deportations in early modern Ottoman history, Barkan developed the argument that in the 14th–16th centuries the Ottoman state repeatedly and successfully intervened in the internal political, economic, and demographic developments in

the empire by forcibly resettling at will, and with ease, numerous populations from one area in the empire to another with the aim to address population pressure, improve regional economic productivity, suppress politically disloyal groups and individuals, etc. (1949–54). This emphatically statist view that emphasized (and glorified) Ottoman state centralism, is not definitively borne out by the evidence. That the Ottoman state could easily and often move populations “like balls on a pool table” (to borrow Barkan’s expression) in the above presented context would be an exaggeration – the most important Ottoman state-controlled forced deportation was the deportation of 1784 Turcoman households from Anatolia to the province of Silistre in the early 16th century, but as one can see, those were accompanied by relatives and other followers whose migration the state could hardly control. Most of those who migrated to Dobrudja (and the neighboring region of Deliorman) in the first half of the 16th century were not organized deportees. We also know of the deportation of some of the defenders of Belgrade to Istanbul after the conquest of the city in 1521 (Emecen, 1994). All in all, the Ottoman state was not fully in control of these processes, especially regarding nomadic and semi-nomadic migrations, but was fairly quick to follow up, adapt, register and tax such populations – i.e. it showed an ability to integrate such demographic developments in its overall policy-making framework.

The other question that I wanted to briefly address is a classical one in Balkan historiography – the issue of Islamization, in the specific meaning of conversion to Islam. Balkan nationalist historians have advanced numerous arguments supporting the thesis that the Ottoman state intentionally and systematically, directly or indirectly, pushed for the conversion to Islam of large groups of the indigenous population in the Ottoman Balkans (Zhelyazkova, 1990, 105–11; Aleksov, 2005, 158–190). This is also not definitively borne out by the evidence, and in the concrete context of this paper, conversion played a very little role in the countryside in the province of Smederevo, not only and not that much because of the role that the Orthodox church played in the preservation of the Christian identity of its parishioners, as many Balkan historians have argued, but above all because of the lack of contact between Muslim populations and potential converts. In the case of Silistre in the Eastern Balkans, the situation is different as there was a massive migration of Muslim population in the first half of the 16th century. The detailed register of 1569 shows that 4 per cent of the Muslims in the countryside in the district (*nahiye*) of Silistre were converts, which is a significant proportion, indeed conversion rates in the neighboring region of Deliorman in the same period are twice as high (BBOA TD No. 382). One likely major reason for the relatively low conversion rates in the countryside of Silistre (as compared, for example, to the neighboring region of Deliorman), despite the massive presence of Muslim new-comers, is that Christians and Muslims lived far away from each other in the countryside – the Christians in a few large villages along the Danube and the

Black Sea coast, and the Muslim colonists – inland. Most of the local converts to Islam lived in the cities, where contact between Christians and Muslims was much more intense and direct and possibilities for social advancement of new converts were significant. Moreover, a convert in the city could escape the ostracism of his former co-religionists which was an important factor that acted against conversion in the countryside. Urban Muslims also enjoyed certain visible tax privileges – while urban non-Muslims were exempt from the respective land tax (*çift resmi*) provided that they did not engage in agriculture, urban Christians uniformly paid *ispençe* – usually understood to be the *çift resmi*'s equivalent land-tax for non-Muslims, but in this case functioning more like a head-tax (in case they did not practice agriculture), in addition to the canonical *cizye* (Vasić, 1986, 69–70). In the context of all these factors, it is not surprising to see that of 833 registered Muslim adult males in the town of Silistre in 1569 (not counting the military personnel in the fortress), 119 were local converts and 30 were freed slaves (BBOA TD No. 483, 239–49); similarly in 1536 in Semendire, 21 per cent of the Muslims in the *varosh* were new converts (BBOA TD No. 187, 101–4).

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CLERGYMEN BETWEEN THE CULTURES OF CHURCH AND VILLAGE: CONFLICT AND COOPERATION IN LATE MEDIEVAL HUNGARY

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The paper aims to explore the scenario of lay-clerical conflicts and their negotiations by reading petitions of pardon handed in to the papal curia in the late fifteenth and early 16th century from the Kingdom of Hungary. In course of the negotiation of violent conflicts, which very often entailed the killing of a priest, ordinary laymen and members of the rural pastoral clergy alike fabricated stories which they thought would best serve the forgiveness of their sins. However, as the paper argues, the act of petitioning to the papal curia in fact served other ‘non-official’ functions in the process of conflict negotiation. In the gaps of these short narratives we can detect that lay-clerical everyday disputes were in fact neighborhood conflicts deriving from their close co-existence.

Keywords: lay-clerical conflict resolutions, everyday life of the rural pastoral clergy, honor, language of insults

Most Holy Father! Herman, the son of Martin, a layman from the diocese of Zagreb, the beloved son of Your Holiness humbly and respectfully related that he had, by devil inspirations, killed a priest and thus suffered the penalty of excommunication. Therefore he requests the Holy Father to absolve him from the above sentence and the sin of killing a priest together with his other sins.

Herman turned to the Apostolic Penitentiary from the Kingdom of Hungary with this petition in 1456. (The sources quoted below come from the *Archivio Poenitentiaria Apostolica* (Roma), *Registra Matrimonialium et Diversorum*, vols 1–745). Between 1450–1520, hundreds of laypersons asked papal absolution at this Roman office for killing a priest, and more than a hundred for committing violence against clerics. By the 15th century the Office of the Apostolic Penitentiary had become the chief and the cheapest route to both the salvation of souls and justice on earth in Renaissance Rome, handling violations of canon law ranging from irregular clerical ordinances and marriages to such heinous crimes as murder, sod-

omy or sacrilege. Other papal offices, such as the Datary and Chancery, also dealt with similar affairs. However, the common man, peasants and lesser nobles from villages and market-towns as well as some burghers, rather tended to ask papal pardon at the Penitentiary, since the letters issued there were considerably cheaper (Salonen and Schmugge, 2009).

The primary aim of my study is to understand the local interests and relations behind the conflicts of the common men and their priests with the help of their petitions of pardon construed subsequently. The relationship of the laity and clergy is difficult to grasp, however, from the perspective of laymen, due to the brevity of their written reports, while the lengthier version of the events was most probably reported by them orally before curial judges. In contrast, the petitions of clergymen about committing or being involved in homicide cases, which rendered them officially inept to perform their priestly services and have a benefice, are not only numerous (373 petitions) but also fairly verbose. As a result, the clerical narratives, while busy with forging their own innocence and reporting in detail the events, are much more informative concerning the status of parish clergy in rural communities, which is our main concern.

The clerical narratives of homicide will be read here as representations of lay-clerical conflicts. What were the issues at stake? What were the strategies of conflict resolution? Why did the parties go to court? When they did, how did they represent the conflict and their enemies in public? And what kind of rhetoric tools served them in their efforts to justify their innocence? How was it possible at all to legitimate violence? The answers to these questions will bring us closer to understand how the common man perceived and dealt with social relations in general and what was the place attributed to and taken by local clergy, in particular.

While the crisis of the established Church served to account for the protestant reformation, violence against the clergy in the late middle ages seemed evident: lay discontent with the negligent, immoral and parasite clergy developed into general anticlerical sentiments, which manifested in violent acts against priests. More recent accounts of the protestant reformation are varied, but unanimously argue the opposite: the reformation rooted in a rich and diverse religious culture based on regular lay engagement in the spiritual and devotional services (baptism, marriage, funeral, holy mass, processions) offered by the established Church, which makes it more difficult to account for lay-clerical conflicts (Dixon, 2011, 34–43). As the argument goes, lay-clerical relations were primarily constituted by the laity's expectation that the clergy should mediate effectively between the other and this world by delivering the sacraments. Lay-clerical rivalry over the access to the sacred could have given rise to occasional conflicts, since laymen tried to bypass clerical control by developing independent religious practices such as the use of sacramentals, pilgrimages and the veneration of local saints and relics, which the clergy often labelled as superstitious (Scribner, 1987, 32–41). It is generally ar-

gued, furthermore, that under the impact of the protestant reformation, lay-clerical relations, which in the late middle ages were primarily structured by the clergy's mediating function, substantially transformed. The medieval differentiation between the clergy and laity disappeared under the impact of Lutheran teachings such as the priesthood of all believers and justification by faith, which deprived the clergy of its mediating role. As a result, the argument follows, the laity turned to the clergy with a new set of expectations based on more secularized values: they considered the local pastor as a model person, as an exemplary husband and father and an honest member of the community fulfilling his duties also in his profession (Dixon and Schorn-Schütte, 2003, 1–38).

In contrast, by conjecturing the common people as active agents instead of passive subjects blindly following abstract ideas, I will explore those situations when the relationship of late medieval villagers and their priests was rather shaped by secular values and social relations. I will direct the attention to the moments when they played similar roles and had shared experiences, and consequently argue that late medieval pastoral clergy lived in close co-existence with the laity. The killing of priests, and in general, violent lay-clerical conflicts represent, as will be suggested, not the difference and opposition of clergy and laity, but rather their similarities and interdependence. The analysis of stories about violent lay-clerical conflicts is intended to highlight some of the – from further away – invisible dimensions of this close co-existence at the end of the middle ages.

Parish Priests as Members of Local Communities

We meet parish priests in their own petitions playing social roles similar to those of their parishioners: when they are not mediating the sacred or represent the legal authority of the church, but they are relatives or neighbors, and consequently, friends or enemies in the eye of the village community. Their conflicts with laymen seem to derive primarily from family- and neighbourhood relations and turn around the issue of honor.

First of all, they appear as *pater familias* taking care of the safety, prosperity and morals of their households. A parish priest usually lived together with an elderly or a 'girl' female relative in charge of housekeeping. Moreover, the parish priest usually tutored his nephew(s) for the priesthood, kept a chaplain who helped in performing religious liturgies and had some servants in the household. The pastor enters the scene as an authoritative and responsible patriarch imposing punishments "in accordance with the committed crime" on "impertinent", "irreverent" and "badly behaving" matrons and nephews.

The story of the parish priest of Siófok also attests to such a conflict within the household. He mentions only incidentally that the servant whom he insulted and

beat on their way home in the night, a year earlier battered his adopted father. Adapting his story to official expectations, he did not explain his reasons for insulting his servant, but rather went into the details of the road brawl which finally ended with the death of the servant. Only a close reading of his story makes it possible to notice that, in fact, he retaliated an earlier insult premeditatedly, which he, however, for the sake of granting absolution, tried to depict as an occasional quarrel that was triggered by his irresponsible behaviour due to his drunkenness and ended with his killing the servant out of self-defence. Therefore we can rightly suppose that the physical clashes demanding the life of priests were also the episodes of long-standing disputes between families and neighbors. As we can learn also only by chance from the story of Miklós, son of Mátyás, that the priest, whom he had killed, was in fact his brother.

Besides safeguarding order and morals within the household, the patriarch was also responsible for the well-being and safety of household members within the local network of relationships. Pál Albi, the parish priest of the Saxon village of Schattendorf, gave one of his female servants, endowed with a respectable dowry, as wife to a male servant. After a while, however, the husband started to beat his wife and when, one day, he even tried to kill her, as the parish priest related the events, the desperate wife took refuge in the priest's house. Since the husband continued to trouble his wife, the priest Pál could not bear it with "a peaceful soul" and one night he sneaked into the man's house and stabbed him in bed. The story reflects beside the parish priest's responsibility for the members of his household that anti-violent behaviour served as an effective argument, falling in line with expectations, in the process of receiving papal grace.

Parish priests continued to farm lands, and dealt severely with negligent servants wasting wealth and with neighbors caused some damages. The priest Ambrus Cserepes lost his temper and beat the pastor who, notwithstanding his earlier warnings, continued to graze his cattle in his garden. Pál Horvát was even ready to ride out daily to his lands in order to defend springing crops from alien cattles strolling over.

The stories reporting violent acts (beatings, woundings, mutilations) against clergy only exceptionally reveal that the anger was not directed against the priest's person, but rather against his family. Mátyás Menecsics, for example, briefly mentioned that the layman who cut off a piece of his finger was an enemy of his brother. What has seemed to be a lay-clerical conflict also turns out to be a single episode in a long-standing family feud in cases of assaults against the parsonage. House-raids were the most common acts of "rightfully" avenging by force an earlier offence. The enmity is signaled in the stories by the workings of hatred (*odium*). "Gergely Pap, a priest from the village Orbányosfalva related that a layman called Demetrius nurtured such a tremendous anger against him and his servant that he regularly threatened to kill them. One day Dénes came to his house

and impudently killed his servant while he was absent”. Informed about the homicide, the priest Gergely set off for home accompanied by some of his friends, and in such an upset state of mind he ran into Dénes, who, “being overcome by anger” (*furore repletus*), started to chase him with a sword and an axe in his hands. Gergely could only be saved from death with the help of his friends, who battered Dénes “according to Hungarian ways” (*hungarico more*) so severely that he died six weeks later.

Considering the social integration of laity and local clergy, it is not surprising that they spent together their leisure time, which, in contrast to postindustrial societies, was not yet separated from the time designated for work (Thompson, 1967). Their common leisure, however, often supplied additional occasions for debates and brawls. Priests and laymen appeared together in groups on the roads not only when heading for markets, but also for buying wine. This kind of “wine-tourism” served both the uploading of empty barrels at home and the entertainment of common wine-tasting, too. The priest János from Szalatnok also joined to the people leaving from Vidóc, a little village in Slavonia for a nearby village. They were on their way home, in other words, after having consumed a good amount of wine, when a man started to hit in jest the parish priest with a rod, which he responded by playful counter attack. The game, however, ended with the man’s death, whose bleeding knee had got bitten by a dog.

Even in face of the prohibitions of its superiors, formulated in synodal decretals, the local clergy casually participated in tavern drinkings. They did not feel necessary to apologize for visiting taverns even afterwards, just as laymen considered it natural to invite local clergymen for private dinners. One evening, the cleric Pál from Szepetk entered a tavern together with his parish priest “where they spoke and drank together with laymen in an honorable manner” – this was the usual way of setting the scene of joyful gatherings that often turned into verbal and physical conflicts. Pál’s story went on: the laymen who arrived later gathered at a nearby table and when they were already totally drunk, one of them threw a roast goose over to their table, but yet discontent with such an insult attacked the parish priest and his company with a naked sword.

The local clergy not only shared casually the happy hours in the taverns, but did not find anything wrong either in the popular games and gatherings following religious rituals and festivities, in which they also participated. The priest Ambrus, after performing the funeral ceremonies, joined with his chaplains the villagers’ feast “celebrated with abundant eating and drinking according to local customs”. In a village in southern Hungary, after the parish priest and the parishioners had celebrated a mass offered for the Virgin Mary so that she would free them from the plague devastating the region, they joined in a great convivial evening. Blasius priest participated together with his kin, although – as he wrote in his petition – he left earlier, asking the permission of his fellowmen.

As sacred and profane rituals intermingled, so did priests and laymen join in one company not only at the table of great village festivities tied to cyclical festivals but during family occasions, too. Márton, the parish priest of Mecske, a tiny village in southern Hungary, was invited for a wedding in a nearby village. As he went together with his parishioners on the road, in the outskirts of the village, a young mate approached him and asked him to lend him his horse. Unmarried youth “were building hedges as was the custom of the region” and organized a tournament of horse-jumping. The parish priest must have had a very good horse, since everyone wanted to ride it once they had seen it.

As reflected by the above situations and stories, rural parish priests were local boys rather than outsiders. Even at first glance, they looked like their parishioners: they also had a beard, traveled on horseback, and wore a sword untroubled by church prohibitions. At the level of social practices, the similarity extended further: they also inherited family property, ran a household which provided for their relatives, were tied with affinity and consanguinity to the village community, they continued to be farmers, drank together with parishioners in the local tavern, and participated in local feuds and brawls. All this was partly due to the fact that they usually came from the same social groups they served. Village priests were typically the sons of peasants, who were tutored by village priests and schoolmasters either in their own village or further away. Even if they went to study to other regions, they seem to have returned to their village of origin, therefore being finally natives to the regions they served (Erdélyi, 2011).

The Hidden Script of Lay-Clerical Conflicts

Interestingly, the varied but always very concrete causes of feuds surfaced in a symbolic language in course of the verbal battles. Even in the tavern, people decried their clerical enemies as bad priest rather than as their malicious neighbors. The personal enemy thus appeared as a priest abusing local expectations or failing to fulfil his clerical duties, which injured communal interests, and consequently, could be debated also in front of public authorities. At court, the peculiarities of neighborhood conflicts, loaded with individual interests and emotions, were translated into the universal issue of priestly honor comprehensible for the general public (Burghartz, 1989). Priestly honor, similarly to female honor, revolved primarily around sexual virtue (Gowing, 1996, 111–38). The sexual abuses of wives threatened the honor of their husbands just as the illicit relationships of priests Swanson, 1999, 163–4).

The script of verbal fights is easily readable in the petition of Imre Corcuncntal, a cleric serving the parish priest of the St Jacob church in the village Majsa in Tolna County. A layman called Balázs “falsely denounced him” (*fornicatione ...*

calumpnose accusavit), as he claimed, for fornication first at the landlord's tribunal and later before the parish priest. Unsurprisingly, Balázs is displayed by Imre as "a perverse man of ill repute" (*perversus vir et male fame*), who behaved aggressively with Imre. The charges against Emericus however fell flat, both the landlord and the parish priest recognized, as Imre contended, his "innocence" and the "malevolent intrigues" of his enemy, who, however, denied at court to make peace and ask sorry for the defamation. At this point, it seems, the efforts of the man to defeat his priest-enemy with the support of legal authorities, came to nought.

Finally, one night, as Imre continued, on his way home, Balázs assaulted him with insults and threatenings, to which he responded something like 'Blasius, I have had enough of your defamations, be considerate of Christ's passion and leave me in peace'. Blasius, bursting into diabolic anger, replied: 'Rascal and son of a bitch, I have recently failed to ravage you, but today I'll drag you out of your house, spoil you, drink over your tunic and pass my sword through you.'

The battle of words, performed in the language of honor, developed into a fist fight, leaving the priest on top and the actual reasons of their hostility unveiled. Not his mother's, but his own alleged sexual misconduct served as an insult against the priest Mátyás: "Pastor, give us your concubine!" – shouted his enemy while trying to open the front door of the parsonage. When Mátyás himself opened the door, his enemy continued: "You'll see now what you deserve: you will have to die shamefully!" Yet, during the ensuing row described at great length no woman hidden in the house appears on the scene.

In a case from the village Toplica (Zagreb County) the actual motivations for damaging priestly reputation come to the surface exceptionally due to the lucky circumstance that not only one, but two of the participants tried to present an acceptable story about the same events before the papal office. Pál from Worsck, the priest of the Holy Trinity parish church fabricated a homicide story, in which the conflict lay between two of his parishioners, Mihály Borbély ('Barber') and Péter Varga ('Cobbler'), on the one side, with his chaplain, Lukács Scopzich, on the other. The laymen accused the chaplain with adultery, in other words by seducing a married woman. The parish priest tried to mediate and make peace between the parties, but his reprehensions were enough only to draw upon himself the anger of Mihály Borbély. In his version the conflict reached its climax when Borbély unexpectedly killed his fellowman, Péter Varga. This outcome is totally incomprehensible: why did the two men turn against each other when it seemed that they got into trouble with the sexually abusive chaplain? We learn from Lucas chaplain's story, handed in to the Penitentiary the same day, December 13, 1487, that he had

only been a minor character in the conflict of the two laymen: the two neighbors engaged in a dispute over something, during which both men called the other's wife the chaplain's lover. Most probably the neighborhood conflict developed over a certain kind of material damage, as it was most often the case, but this went unnoticed while they debated publicly the virtues of their wives. We know nothing about the final settlement of the conflict and the fate of Mihály Borbély who shot to death his neighbor by an arrow, since he did not ask for papal pardon. The two priests entangled in the neighbors' affair, however, needed the pope's letter declaring their innocence. The parish priest, whose mediation came short, felt himself responsible for the death of one of his parishioners. No surprise, as priests traditionally were expected to be the promoters of peace within the parish (Castan, 1983, 239). Although he played only a secondary role, he presented himself as the protagonist in his story, distorting, as a result, the laymen's conflict into a lay-clerical antagonism. His version must have seemed though credible at the Roman office, where stories about laymen killing priests were handled in daily routine.

As we have seen, the honor of priests, which turned around their sexual virtues, served as a tool to discuss in public – either in the tavern or at court – neighborhood conflicts. When such an attack on honor brought no success, and the use of violence seemed more effective, the language of the ongoing battle shifted from priestly to worldly honor. Rival parties called their personal enemies “rogues” and “rascals”, which served to legitimate violent self-help (Tringli, 1998, 19). Following this script, the cleric György Rojcsai also criminalized his enemy:

for the sake of leisure he visited once a house, where many had gathered already. After talking for a while, a man, who had attacked already a cleric that day and committed several homicides ... , turned against him by quarelling and insulting words. He called him and his parents thieves and rogues and therefore unworthy of the company of virtuous men. He responded to the insult: ‘neither me nor my parents have ever been thieves or rogues, and I ask you in the name of God to leave me in peace, since I have nothing to do with you, neither good nor bad’.

Soon afterwards, swords and knives were taken in hands.

Clergymen preferred to call their lay enemies murderers and describe them as stubbornly hostile and aggressive toward priests. Balázs Zábó, a priest from the diocese of Győr in western Hungary shared a dinner in a big company in the house of Mihály Babos, when Miklós Német (‘German’), who arrived later, started to insult him “out of envy”. “Since the priest Balázs has already heard Mihály confessing to have beaten a priest, he tried to calm him very kindly, saying ‘my dear friend, do not speak like that’.” His kindness, however, only heightened the spirits of Miklós, who, in response, sought to damage his enemy's priestly reputation:

“in fact, he even has a son” – he claimed suddenly. This was the moment when the parties, according to the usual script, took in hand rods and axes, and the slanderer lay dead on the floor soon afterwards.

Both the verbal assault on priestly honor in the courtroom and the criminalization of priests in moments of violent self-help were episodes in the process of conflict negotiation, which most often ended with peacemaking (Smail, 2003). Nicholaus cleric was denounced, as he claimed in his petition, unjustified by a man called Mayus. As the phrase he uses (*apud banos et gentes diffamasset de quodam crimine*) suggests, he was probably proscribed by the county assembly as a *malefactor*, who could be killed by anyone. Miklós got so scared, he says to have been at a loss, having no idea what to do, since the more he implored his enemy to stop slandering him, the more desperately he vexed him. Unable to bear this further, he ordered his men to tear out his enemy’s tongue. In fact, they cut off only a little piece, and as Miklós claims, his enemy has recovered quickly, but was afterwards killed by others “due to his bad tongue” (*propter malam suam linguam*). In his petition he argued emphatically that his enemy made peace with him before his death (*ante tamen mortem cum dicto exponente in plena concordia amicitie remansit*). While the conflict evolved, the concrete reasons of which remain again unclear, one of the parties sought redress in public, the other used sheer violence. This suggests that the use of courts and the use of violence were varied strategies within the process of conflict negotiation. Violence was not considered as an act of brutality, but similarly to litigation, it was a meaningful social practice serving to overcome an enemy or pushing him towards concord – which was also the outcome of the hostility between Miklós and Mayus.

The identical functions of self-help and actions at law is suggested by the rivalry for the parsonage of the village Belesz in southern Hungary. The parishioners expelled from the parsonage the parish priest, János Csonka (‘Maimed’) due to his negligency and long absences, and invited György Vágó in his place. The thrown-out parish priest sought redress by denouncing his heir in the parsonage at the diocesan court. As a result, the priest György tried to cut short a long lawsuit by offering an agreement out of court, which was accomplished with the mediation of arbiters. János, however, broke the contract: he decided to demand extra money from his heir. Considering the erratic nature of his enemy, yet it seemed to György more effective to pursue the hostility at court: he denounced János to the vice-archdeacon’s tribunal. On his way home, however, he ran into János and his brother, Antal, whom he told – out of mischief – that he had just initiated a procedure against János. He did not have the slightest chance to regret this: the two men got so enraged by such news that they responded by force, which Georgius did not survive.

If one went to court, thus publicized the enmity, which could have served, however, varied ends and entailed different interpretations depending on the particu-

larities of the situation and the participants. In the above case of Mayus, the publicizing exacerbated the conflict, since the denounced party interpreted it as an act of revenge and his public humiliation, which instigated him to behave violently afterwards. Since in customary law, unjustified slander was punished by the tear out of the tongue (Csukovits, 2005, 217), he, by assuming the role of authorities, committed legitimate violence. Denunciation to courts based on unjustified slanders were not the least interpreted by contemporaries as “more civilized” or “more rational” than acts of physical violence. It was only another field of social competition, performed not by swords but the – both financially and psychically more burdensome – armory of legal expertise (Kagan, 1981, 161). In the first phase of the affair of the two priests, the initiation of the lawsuit urged parties to reach a private agreement. Later on, however, since to the hot-blooded János priest such a battle in the courtroom seemed harmful and dangerous, it prompted him to commit violent self-help.

As suggested by the above stories, people did not expect from courts to settle their conflicts, neither did they consider litigation a more acceptable or friendly way of conflict-settlement. They entered the courtroom as another field of social competition, where their honor and reputation was at stake. Thus, they only entered when it offered their advancement, and evaded if seemed to their detriment.

As we have seen, people tried to display their personal enemies as criminals, who behaved aggressively “without any sound reason”. As another story-telling strategy, they represented their own violent acts as legitimate. The argument supporting it was most often self-defence. This suggests that they adapted their stories to official expectations, which distinguished between purposeful violence, which was generally outlawed, and self-defence, which, if proven, went unpunished. Moreover, in the process of constructing their own innocence, they strove to define their own emotions as legitimate anger due to some earlier damages they had suffered, while their enemies were claimed to have been motivated by malignant hatred. Put otherwise, they followed a different logic, which differentiated not purposeful and casual, but legitimate and illegitimate violence. Besides, actions, as they perceived, directly followed from emotions. They could not imagine any human action independent of emotions. As we have seen, for Pál Albi, the parish priest of Zalatna it seemed a perfect justification to say that he could not bear anymore with a “peaceful soul” the vexations of the man he killed.

The stories fabricated about the killing of priests also reflect the workings of intense emotions. Some of the petitioners asked for curial confessors to absolve them instead of the local bishop, since “in fear of death they do not dare to return to the presence of the bishop and the place of the committed crime”. In other words, after the events they were so scared that they ran as far as Rome. But what were they afraid of? Most probably they dreaded the imminent revenge of the kin and friends of their victims. They could have been also afraid of the death penalty,

which was the official punishment of homicide. This was however more easy to evade than the wrath of enemies. Death penalties were rarely executed, since in practice hostilities rather ended by peacemaking procedures and the payment of fines (*homagium*) (Tringli, 2007).

The killing of a priest was also punished spiritually: the sentence of excommunication, which ensued automatically, could be absolved only by the pope in these cases. The rite of absolution included the public penance of sinners on the spot, which was meant to serve the prevention of crimes: the sinner requested for himself a penance that, as the established formula goes, served “his own salvation and the deterrence of others”. Besides averting divine anger, however, the wrath of the offended party also needed to be handled. Since violent crimes against the clergy fell under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the relations of the victim could turn to the diocesan vicar’s tribunal. In course of the ensuing legal procedure the parties usually reached an agreement, which included the payment of fines. In this context, it seems probable that those sinners ran to Rome, for whom the usual script of peacemaking was not a possible solution and they rather reckoned better to disappear for a while. From this perspective, the petitioning to the Roman office served to suspend the enmity and to avert the vengeance of their outraged enemies.

Irrespectively of legal norms, men and women embedded in the local network of relationships were seldom sentenced to death. More precisely, even if the court passed a capital sentence, instead of its execution, it functioned as a stage in a process heading, as generally expected, towards the peacemaking of hostile parties. The situation was very different for those, however, who were outsiders in the community which arrested them. Robbers and highwaymen with no ties to local communities had a good chance to end on the gallows. The notaries and judges of the Penitentiary regularly met with dramatic stories about such executions. Clerics robbed and wounded on the road, in their petitions tried to explain how they were forced by the villagers or townspeople, who arrested and sentenced to death their assaulters, to take an active part in the hanging. In a world of social reciprocities, only the offended party could initiate a suit, and when he was himself an outsider to the community that took action against his robber, he was also expected to participate in performing the punishment (Mezey, 2007, 357–8). Clerics placing the knot on robbers’ necks were thus pushed to play the extremely profane role of hangmen, having a difficult time to justify it before ecclesiastical authorities afterwards.

Lóriné Nádasdy knew the ins and outs of dramatic story-telling. He was galloping alone in deep snow across the woods – he writes, provoking immediately the sympathy and anxiety of the reader – when highwaymen assaulted him, took away his cloths, horse and money, cut off one of his ears and tied him to a tree. He was just about to freeze to death when out of God’s mercy he escaped. This was how-

ever not the last twist of his story: when he reached the nearest village, he witnessed the following:

One of the robbers, sitting on his horse and wearing his cloths, was just presented by the village judge, who asked him: 'Whose cloths and money are these?' The robber turned towards the cleric Lőrinc and replied: 'They belong to that priest.' The judge again: 'And to whom belongs the horse?', 'To the same priest.' – answered the robber. 'And who cut his ear off?' – interrogated further the judge. 'I did.'

After the robber had thus confessed everything, Lőrinc, as the person offended, was forced to hang him. We are even able to imagine vividly the tension that vibrated in the crowd gathered to watch the execution. "After having escorted the robber to the scaffold, the robber said: 'I ask you by the love of God not to hang me, just ascend and tie the knot to the column and then leave. I have sinned against you, still I beg you to intervene for me by God'." Lőrinc then ascended the stairs, tied the knot and left him. "The robber meanwhile begged to the crowd to pray for him, after which he jumped off the stairs and died." Although priests were officially expected to refrain from all forms of violence, let alone execution of criminals, neither laymen nor possibly clerics, even if they apologized thus subsequently, were a bit concerned about this.

Conclusions

Ordinary people perceived and registered that their priests differed from them in certain ways. Miklós Babos, who started to insult Balázs Zábó priest, "was scorned by the inn-keeper in a friendly manner that he should not speak about a priest with such words", and his fellow-taverners "also told him off for speaking with such a disrespect with a priest". The special attitude towards priests was connected to their role as mediators between this world and the sacred realm. People needed their services, they expected their priests to absolve them from their sins and deliver the sacraments, whose transcendent powers were believed to have a direct influence also on this-worldly affairs.

Nonetheless their role as mediators, the local clergy, and especially rural parish priests continued to control large household and farm lands, and were socially integrated – by kinship, affinity and friendship – into local communities. They spent together their leisure time with their parishioners. Their everyday disputes were neighborhood conflicts and tavern brawls, deriving from their close co-existence. Since they were embedded in the local network of reciprocal relationships, they applied the same tools of conflict negotiation as their parishioners did. They used

violent self-help or went to court to their own advantage. The clergy also used the same language, reflecting their similar way of thinking, when they had to account for their conduct in course of evolving enmities: they argued to have committed violence legitimately since it followed from their emotions, hatred or love. But their enmities with laymen, according to the accepted script, most often ended with peacemaking. Priest-killings occasionally occurred yet when peacemaking procedures for some reason broke down.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that in their everyday practices people set the same norms to their priests. They expected them to be friendly neighbors, honest farmers, responsible household heads in terms of duties, and cheerful companions when it came to leisure. When the priest Lőrinc Baktani visited his mother and sister in his village of origin, the dinner consumed in high spirits ended in bloodshed: his brother-in-law invited him to continue drinking together in the night, he, however, would have preferred to go to sleep considering his duty of celebrating mass in the next morning.

The contradictions inherent in lay expectations towards the clergy derived from the duality of their sacred and social-secular roles. The complexity of their status is also reflected by the language of insults, which targeted either their priestly or their worldly honor. Playing a variety of sacred and profane roles from hangmen to the minister of the Eucharist, they had a difficult time in fulfilling both ecclesiastical and lay expectations. Although they also had family, a household and a farm, their structure differed from those of their parishioners. The differences between a house-maid and a wife, a niece and a son, as well as their exemption from taxes in contrast to the serf-plots, their moderate drinking as opposed to drunkenness were ever lurking behind apparent similarities.

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TOWNS, VILLAGES, DEPOPULATED SETTLEMENTS – POPULATION MOVEMENTS IN OTTOMAN HUNGARY

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The demographic history of Hungary is full with question marks, mainly due to the lack of reliable sources until the end of the 18th century. Especially, the number of the population throughout the Ottoman period (1521–1718) constituted a ‘black hole’ for a long period of time and related issues were characterized by a great number of unfounded *clichés* and prejudices. Identifying the best Turkish and Habsburg archival documents containing more or less detailed data on tax-payers or houses and using estimations for Transylvania where such material is missing, one can establish the total number of the population of the country at the end of the 16th century with considerable accuracy, give details about the ratios of town and village people, characterize the average number of inhabitants in rural settlements and as a whole on one km², the proportion of depopulated villages, the ethnic composition of certain areas and occasionally even follow migration patterns between the 1540s and 1590. Unfortunately, almost no usable registers were prepared during the 17th century; therefore this time span will always remain a *terra incognita*, only estimations can be ventured regarding the number of inhabitants around 1700.

Keywords: towns, villages, population movements, migration, ethnic changes, Ottoman Hungary, Hungarian Kingdom

The demographic history of Hungary is full with mysteries and question marks at least until the end of the 18th century when the first official census was prepared. We do not know – among other things – how many people arrived with chieftain Árpád to the Carpathian Basin at the end of the 9th century and how many and what sort of earlier settlers they found there. Regarding Árpád’s folk, a figure mentioned by more or less contemporary, partly disappeared Arabic sources has been used as the basis of computation, according to which he had a military force of 20,000 horsemen. Knowing that even today it is quite difficult to establish the quantity of participants at a demonstration (and organizers give five times higher values than the other party), the reliability of such a round number from the 10th century is highly questionable. I even venture to think that if any of the estimated totals for the population of Hungary around 900 (Kovacsics, 1997, 14, 21, 22;

Kristó, 2007, 18) is more or less correct, it is almost independently so from the value given by the Arabic sources. The situation is not much better after hundreds of years, although we have more data but they are usually sporadic.

In this connection it seems appropriate to quote T. H. Hollingsworth (1969, 12), an influential author in the field of historical demography, who gave the following characterization concerning the reliability of population data before the modern period in general: “And all historical arguments are more or less weak, for no one can ever be totally certain or totally uncertain of anything.” (This sentence is not completely accurate, to state, for instance, that the population of Hungary was either 5 or 10 million or 5 or 10 thousand around 1000, is nonsense.) He is, however, right in saying that: “The degrees of certainty run from ‘sure’ to ‘very likely’ to ‘probable’, to ‘possible’, and on through ‘unproved’, and ‘rather unlikely’ to ‘presumably wrong’ and ‘wrong’.”

Hollingsworth is basically right as far as ambiguities are concerned: Even in the case of countries which had a considerably more peaceful history than Hungary, and where parish registers, which are the best sources of demographic studies for centuries, had been introduced much earlier, it is quite difficult to give reasonably exact figures concerning several demographic aspects not to speak of the total number of the population.

Our present issue is even more intricate since we are going to deal with a very turbulent period of Hungary, overshadowed by wars, in the 16th and 17th centuries. Therefore the results which can and will be presented here are often tentative and reach the level ‘possible’ or ‘probable’ at the best on the above-mentioned scale.

One of the basic questions, of course, is the quantity and reliability of extant sources. This is not the place to introduce them one by one. Let it be enough to say that the best types of them are tax/land registers on both sides. These are comparatively numerous in the 16th century but they almost fully disappear or lose their source value by the 17th century, which is, of course, a serious handicap. On the Ottoman side one can rely on the detailed *defters* of the sub-provinces (*sancaks*) and a head-tax list of the province (*vilayet*) of Buda from 1577–78 (Dávid, G., 2007, 137–40). Within the Habsburg sources by far the most complete is the house-register of 1598 (Dávid, Z., 2001). Regarding Transylvania we have much fewer similar data (Dávid, Z., 1997, 17–22; Draskóczy, 2007).

Needless to say, none of these surveys can match a modern census (of which Fernand Braudel (1975, 2) stated that they also suffer from deficiencies amounting to 10 per cent or so). These lists were prepared for taxation purposes, and since nobody likes to pay taxes, there have always been attempts to remain outside such rolls. Consequently the danger of under-registration is always present. In spite of this, as we shall see, some of the Ottoman *defters* contain surprisingly minor details about the population.

From the point of view of settlement networks or historical geography and also historical demography, the great problem with the Ottoman registers in Asia Minor and the Balkans is that fairly often there is almost no possibility of checking the validity of data preserved in them. Ottoman Hungary is in a much more favourable position in this respect. We have some 500,000 documents from before 1526 and several tax registers from the period before 1541. These contain – among other things – so many place names that the medieval network of settlements could be reconstructed with high accuracy even in most of those counties which were in Ottoman hands. The four-volume historical geography by Dezső Csánki (1890–1914) which is complemented by other works is a very useful tool for everybody trying to identify place-names mentioned in the Ottoman lists. It is to be emphasized that with the help of relevant works on historical geography of Hungary, all the towns and most of the villages (more than 90 per cent) figuring in the *defters* can be identified, and not rarely even uninhabited places. (As a contrast, in the *sancak* of Akşehir, situated between Eskişehir and Konya in central Anatolia, one could find merely 42 villages with the same and 20 others with changed names out of 155 registered in the 16th century, which gives a low ratio of 40 per cent (Ertürk, 2011, 45).

Issues of population number and movements have belonged to one of the most heatedly debated topics concerning Ottoman Hungary and the ones characterized by several, often erroneous, commonplaces. Many authors dealing with these questions based their argumentation on observations of contemporary travelers or exclusively on data coming from Habsburg tax-lists thus arriving at rather negative and discouraging results. Large numbers of burned up and depopulated villages, seriously decreasing population, hundreds of thousands of captives driven out of the country are typical elements of this depressive picture. (I have to add: not only in Hungary; a recent American book asserts that Süleyman left Hungary after the Battle of Mohács with 105,000 captives (Watts, 2012) obviously a gross exaggeration; also technically and physically impossible; think of feeding them during the long route home. We can find the same figure in the entry Hungarian Turkish War 1521–1526, in the *Encyclopedia of Wars*, 584. Both works go probably back to the 11th edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published in 1911, more than 100 years ago!)

Population loss seemed to be considerably high because estimations for the end of the 15th century, when we have the first set of data for almost the whole country, were too optimistic, and since they were made by a very careful historian of good reputation, they have not been disputed for decades. Accordingly, Hungary had some 3.5–4 million inhabitants around 1494–95 (Szabó, 1963, 97–8). Later research, however, revealed that his equation of one taxation unit in the list with two families, is open to doubt (Solymosi, 1984), therefore his figures are too high, at

least in several counties. Consequently the more realistic value should be around 3–3.2 million (Fügedi, 1992, 41; Kubinyi, 1996, 153).

If we wish to come to a conclusion about the population of Hungary in the Ottoman times we also have to know the extension of the three parts into which medieval Hungary was split into. This extension changed several times. Moreover semi-official or military boundaries were not necessarily the same as the line until which the respective side was practically able to prepare an almost full list of its tax paying inhabitants – this turns out from the analysis and comparison of the sources of both (Habsburg and Ottoman) parties. At the end of the 16th century, when we have the best population data, the relevant parts can be characterized with the following territorial size and number of inhabitants (Dávid, G., 2007, 141–2, 145–7):

Ottoman Hungary covered 120,000 km², roughly 47,000 mi². There lived some 850,000 Christians and approximately 50,000 Muslims, altogether 900,000 souls here. (We have to emphasize that earlier estimates gave half of this value due to the fact that less reliable data and less expedient methods were used when calculating them (Bakács, 1963, 133).) Rests of the Hungarian Kingdom also had an extension of approximately 120,000 km², once again nearly 47,000 mi², with some 1,800,000 inhabitants. Transylvania was smaller, only some 60,000 km², or 23,500 mi², with circa 800,000 inhabitants.

This means that the total population of the country amounted to 3.5 million at the end of the 16th century. This value testifies to a modest population increase in the country within 100 years, mainly in Habsburg Hungary and to a lesser extent in Transylvania. In Ottoman Hungary we have to reckon with population decrease in the periods of warfare and stagnation with slow recovery in more peaceful times and areas.

It can be remarked here that the two confronting areas were quite militarized. On the Habsburg side the ratio of garrison troops was over 1 per cent of the total population and this proportion was nearly the double – including the timariots – on the Ottoman front line. A comparison with early 18th-century standing armies in Austria and France, constituting 1.25 and 2 per cent of the total population, respectively, renders the Ottoman ratio over 2 per cent in the defense zone quite considerable (Dávid, G., 2013, 300).

Regarding the end of the 17th century, as I have referred to it, our knowledge is much more limited. It seems undisputable that primary data from both the Ottoman and Habsburg sources after 1590 and 1598, respectively, cannot be used to draw conclusions of demographic relevance. Notably, after 1608, one “*porta*” was legally equal with 4 serfs with land or 12 villains without land. Parallel to this practice, head-tax units on Ottoman territories – similarly to the extraordinary levy units (*avarız hanes*) – were composed of several families ranging from 3 to 20 households in the 17th century (Hegyí, 376–7), which resulted in serious de-

crease of totals either on settlement or on district level in the relevant tax-registers. These, however, should not be taken at face value, and if they show anything, it is the economic strength of the place or region in question (Dávid, Z., 1993). What remains, is to make estimation backwards on the basis of the first census of 1784–87. We can say that the population of Ottoman Hungary, on a somewhat more extended territory, must have been approximately 1,000,000 persons, that of Habsburg Hungary around 2,100,000 and that of Transylvania some 900,000. Thus we reach a total of 4 million people around 1700 which means a modest increase again (Dávid, G., 2007, 173).

Coming to urban and village population, it can be maintained that by the time of the Ottoman occupation, a rather large network of urban and semi-urban places had developed in Hungary, though on a lower level of urbanization than their Western European counterparts. Legal practice differentiated two types of towns, called *civitas* (“free royal town”) and *oppidum* (“market town” or German: *Marktflecken*), respectively. The number of settlements belonging to the first group was rather low until the Ottoman period; of them merely four were occupied in the 16th century (Buda, Pest, Székesfehérvár, and Esztergom). The second category was much more numerous; some of them had considerably larger population than royal towns but they lacked city-walls in compliance with their official status. Many of them fell under Ottoman rule.

An often discussed question after 1945 was trends of (semi-) urban development. Some scholars claimed that progress was uninterrupted until the Ottoman period and only their rule stroke a blow at it. Others argued that stagnation started a bit earlier, namely at the beginning of the 16th century due to local and international reasons. The testimony of the Ottoman registers seems to corroborate the second view. The argumentation runs as follows: since the Turkish scribes faithfully followed their local informants in categorizing the settlements’ legal status, a decrease in the number of towns and market towns would prove that the set-back in urbanization had started before the Ottomans made their first surveys. Former calculations arrived at 750 *oppida* in Hungary (without Transylvania and Slavonia) in the second half of the 15th century. Half of the territory concerned came into Ottoman possession. On that part of the country some 225–250 (out of them 170–180 being situated on the territory of modern Hungary) settlements were regularly designated as towns in the Turkish surveys throughout the 16th century. In Habsburg Hungary 122 places were entered as towns into the house registration of 1598 which clearly shows the enormous decrease in the number of market towns also in the northern regions for which the Ottomans cannot be made responsible. This result first leads us to the conclusion that the above-cited value for the number of urban settlements at the late Middle Ages must be unacceptable; in all likelihood it was gained by adding up all of the related data from the 15th century without trying to check their contemporaneity. At the same time, it

also indicates that the *oppidum*-status had lost its prestige for a number of settlements (for more details and literature see Dávid, G., 1995, 332; Dávid, G., 2007, 149).

Earlier researchers made efforts to give an approximate value for the proportions of urban and semi-urban population. Counting with the above-mentioned high quantity of *oppida*, a ratio between 16 and 20 per cent was achieved (Szabó, 1971, 197). Using the Ottoman registers, it became evident that out of 67,000 Christian heads of families in 15 administrative units in the provinces of Buda and Temesvár, some 15,000 (more than 22 per cent) lived in towns and market towns around 1568–80. If Muslims were added, this value would be even higher since these latter almost exclusively lived in castles. By and large the same high ratio can be obtained for Habsburg Hungary in 1598, which implies that the average size of towns grew within 100 years. The negative aspect of the matter is that almost no urban settlements could uninterruptedly develop in the Ottoman zone, just on the contrary: after promising rises, sudden drops can be witnessed. It cannot always be clearly established what caused the sudden decay of seemingly flourishing places. Many of the towns belonging to the most unfortunate group were administrative and/or military centers from where the original population fled sooner or later. It can be also supposed that places specializing in wine-production were more vulnerable than those where the major occupation was cattle-breeding or wheat-growing, but under-registration also comes to mind at least as far as 1590 is concerned, when most of the sudden drops are observed. It is perhaps unexpected that the largest decrease took place in a seemingly peaceful, small sub-province around Szekszárd with more than 50 per cent town population in 1565 of which more than the half had disappeared by 1590. In contrast to this sub-province, we see a mere 12 per cent loss among Hungarians in the urban settlements of the provincial centre, Buda (Dávid, G., 1995, 339, table 2). Unfortunately, I cannot find a good explanation for the difference.

To give an impression about the largeness of urban centers north of the river Dráva: the largest towns had some 10,000 inhabitants at least for a period of time during their 16th century history; there were three of them (Kecskemét, Szeged and Tolna). If we consider that almost none of 15th century Hungarian towns appear to have been dwelt by 7 to 10,000 persons we shall better appreciate these values. Further, we find 11 towns with more than 400 families in one of the registers; this means a minimum of 3,000 inhabitants. Most of the places in question had purely Hungarian residents. With their over 2,000 (later somewhat fewer) Ottoman soldiers each, the three former governing and ecclesiastic centers, Buda, Esztergom and Székesfehérvár can also be added to this category.

Then we have places with more than 100 and less than 400 registered taxpayers; this group includes 34 settlements. Some of them, especially those in the *sancak* of Temesvár, were almost unknown to Hungarian historiography – their

first population data come from the Turkish sources. Some further settlements occasionally also show up values over 100 heads of families but later they become insignificant, therefore they were left out from the above figure. Lastly, “towns” with less than 100 married men form a group with some places having just a few houses or having lost almost completely their original settlers with the passing of time.

What can be said about the distribution of towns in Ottoman Hungary? Disregarding the regions south of Lake Balaton and to the east, south-east of the river Tisza, a network of towns of considerable size can be detected, undoubtedly of medieval origin. Another peculiarity of the geographical location is that many of these towns were founded near rivers. The importance of rivers as transportation facilities, as grinding, crawling and fishing potential is well-known – even our example supports the rule.

Arriving at this point we can mention that András Kubinyi (2000), the best authority of late 15th century Hungarian history, has worked out a set of criteria in order to establish the real importance of towns in medieval Hungary. He gave from one to six points to all the urban settlements from 10 different aspects. Following his approach we can also try to find certain, clearly significantly less, decisive factors which could help us construct a relative hierarchy among urban settlements in Ottoman Hungary which list could be compared with Kubinyi’s results for previous times and we could see which towns preserved their eminence and which sank back in the hierarchy or lost their significance altogether.

Which could be these criteria? Besides the number of the population, we can easily decide if the place was an administrative center (seat of a province, a sub-province or a district) or a Muslim religious focal point (with a kadi-court, a *cami*/mosque or a *mescid*/smaller mosque, a *türbe*/mausoleum, a bath, a pious foundation or a dervish lodge). We can also locate all the castles and fortifications with a regular military force – the number of soldiers can also modify the rank of the place. We have short but useful entries concerning local weekly markets and larger fairs “standing” only once, twice or three times a year. River ports, bridges or crossing points are somewhat less habitually mentioned. As regards main roads and those of secondary importance and the number of places which one could directly reach from a town, data can be – in all likelihood – taken over from Kubinyi’s work since there was no significant change in this respect. (It is another question that primary routes of cattle trade were modified.) Much less information can be collected for surviving Christian ecclesiastic buildings and activities and about functioning guilds. Slaughterhouses should probably be also added to our criteria since they exclusively appear in towns. I have no doubt that in spite of its considerably modest population Buda will be on the first place as a result of such an investigation. It is more difficult to guess the sequence of the rest of the settlements in question.

As for the villages, we can posit that in principle they were more vulnerable in periods of war than towns. Therefore one would expect that the average population of villages under Ottoman rule showed a decreasing tendency as compared to the same indicator in the 15th century. Against this anticipation we find that average village size grew both in Ottoman and Habsburg Hungary. We have the following values: At the end of the 15th century there lived 120 persons per village in the country. In Ottoman Hungary we have 140 persons per village (this average was attained in 2,300 settlements). In Habsburg Hungary we find approximately 150 persons per village.

If we look at population density, however, we observe a significant difference between Habsburg and Ottoman Hungary. While on the Habsburg territories 15 persons lived on one km², this indicator was only seven and a half in the Ottoman regions. The great dissimilarity is partly due to geographical factors and previous developments.

The most persistent *clichés* in the field of demography can be read concerning depopulation in Hungary. Again, especially people dealing with local history are apt to give credit even to the least reliable data in this respect. The Ottoman sources once again shed light on certain features of this important issue.

Accordingly, after a short period of non-negligible losses, when nearly 20 per cent of the villages became empty, an almost undisturbed epoch followed, with insignificant damages in the settlement structure (Dávid, G., 1974; 2007, 159). This observation, however, is valid only for territories in modern Hungary, while other regions, chiefly those south of the Danube–Dráva line suffered a much more serious decay of inhabited places, occasionally amounting to 70–75 per cent (Engel, 2000). It is a rather difficult task to find out the date of depopulation of places which disappear from the map during the 17th century; the so-called “wars of liberation” are often blamed for their losses (while the Rákóczi war of independence between 1703–11 is usually forgotten as a possible factor).

Another aspect of population movements is migration, which is getting more and more importance in our present age (think merely of immigrants from Mexico to the USA and from Muslim countries to Europe) but had considerable significance in earlier epochs, too (for examples in the Ottoman Empire see: Barkan, 1950, 1952, 1954; Schütz, 1988; Emecen, 1994). It is quite difficult to follow the migratory tendencies in the 16th century in general and also on the Ottoman territories. Exceptionally, an inquiry in this direction is possible in the sub-province of Buda between 1546 and 1559. One of the surprising results of this examination is that merely 6 persons moved to a place in Habsburg Hungary. The second interesting message of the pertinent data is that 75 per cent of the migrants moved to the nearest village or town (for details see: Dávid, G., 1991). One would have expected considerably more people to escape from the allegedly insecure, war stricken, and chaotic region.

Conversion from Christianity to Islam was an extremely rare phenomenon in Ottoman Hungary. We know just a few garrison soldiers and even fewer persons from among the ranks of the nobility. Another small, this time Orthodox, group of renegades can be demonstrated in the sub-province Szeged, where one regularly encounters one single Muslim in each village while the rest of the inhabitants are Christians without exception (Halasi-Kun, 1964). In our interpretation, the sincerity of conversion can be questioned with good reason in such cases and the real motivation behind it must have been a practical consideration: it was hoped that a Muslim in the community had better positions in bargaining with the Ottoman officials (Dávid, G., 2001, 154).

My last words are about changes in the ethnic composition of the population of Hungary in the Ottoman period which are closely related to migrants in various epochs. Again, we have no exact figures from before 1526. However, it seems undeniable that the ratio of Hungarians had diminished by the second half or the end of the 16th century. At this point, as it can be inferred from the *defters*, some 60 per cent of the 900,000 people were Hungarians, the rest were first of all Southern-Slavs, then Muslims of various origin (just a few real Turks), Slovaks, and Romanians. It is perhaps useless to mention that in the central parts almost everybody was Hungarian (except for the Muslims), while the other ethnic groups lived in a belt around the kernel parts. The diminishing ratio of Hungarians within the Carpathian Basin was characteristic of the rest of the country as well: within 200 years their proportion sank from 65–70 per cent to 50 per cent. If we want to postulate no numerical loss within this community by 1700, when 2 million Hungarians can be estimated, we have to reckon with a starting population of 3 million, and two thirds of Hungarians among them, in 1494–95. Even in this case, some 666,000 persons are missing (who not necessarily died but partly could not be born as a result of early losses) so as to represent the original proportion. This clearly indicates that the Hungarian element suffered the most during the Ottoman times, especially before the real occupation of the southern regions from where it disappeared altogether (Dávid, G., 2007, 172–3). In other words it can be concluded that in spite of certain positive tendencies, the final outcome of the Ottoman period was the diminishing of the Hungarian community which had long-lasting, from its own point of view negative effects.

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CROATIA AND SLAVONIA IN THE EARLY MODERN AGE*

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Slavonia and Croatia belonged to the Habsburg controlled part of the Kingdom of Hungary. As a result of the Ottoman conquest, the two provinces merged into a single territorial entity, and this study discusses this process. The noble society and the public administration of Croatia and Slavonia had fewer and fewer links with the Hungarian institutions due to economic, religious and military reasons. However, in the meantime they established close relationships with the Habsburg dynasty and the Austrian hereditary provinces. The local nobility developed the idea of the independent Croatian state in the 16th–17th centuries, and thus, the territory could not re-integrate completely into the Kingdom of Hungary in the early 18th century.

Keywords: early modern age, Kingdom of Hungary, Kingdom of Croatia, Habsburg monarchy, Ottoman conquest, development of the state, estate monarchy, Slavonia

This work deals with the history of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia. Both geographic concepts have changed significantly in the past centuries. Croatia was a joint kingdom with the Kingdom of Hungary for eight centuries, while the latter was a most important province in historic Hungary. Present-day Croatia comprises regions and provinces of different cultures and pasts, which is also reflected in the country's coat of arms where the medieval coats of Ragusa (Dubrovnik), Dalmatia, Istria and Slavonia crown the gules and argent checkerboard of the escutcheon. It is impossible to show the early modern history of Croatia in a comprehensive framework, as the pasts of Istria, the Dalmatian cities under Venetian control and the independent Ragusa turned out differently, and the area of the medieval Kingdom of Croatia dominated by the Ottomans also developed differently from the remaining Croatia and Slavonia.

The two provinces transformed considerably in the early modern age: their area diminished, the majority of their population changed, their regions were re-

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named and after their recapture, they only faintly resembled their medieval selves. The majority of medieval Croatia was still a border province of the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century and these areas were increasingly often marked by maps as Bosnia. On a map drawn in 1688, only a narrow strip of land by the sea held by Christians and the southern area of the county of Zagreb lying between the River Sava and the River Una were called Croatia. Several decades had to pass until a map from 1799 marked the areas north of the Drava and west of the Babócsa-Kutina line as *Croatia*. However, the latter region can be termed Croatia only after 1920, and thus, it is anachronistic to depict the 16th-century events from this aspect.

Slavonia also went under major territorial changes. The term Slavonia first referred to the western part of the area lying between the River Drava and the River Sava. This was recorded on Domenico Zenoi's military map drawn in 1566 and also on another one from 1640. However, the most precise maps were drawn on the Court Council of War's authority and the Italian architects, Natale and Paolo Angiolini named the Slavonian areas controlled by Christians Vendvidék (Windischland) on their works (1564, 1574). The *Speculum Orbis Terrae* published by Cornelius de Jode in 1593 also used this name. The medieval counties of Pozsega, Baranya and Szerém were often mentioned as Rácország (Rascia) in the 17th century parallel to the emerging "(Turkish) Slavonia" expression as one can trace on Joan Blaeu's map entitled *Atlas Maior* and published in 1662. By the time the Turks were expelled from the area, it had become a generally accepted custom to call the eastern areas lying between the Drava and the Sava Slavonia.

By that time the merging Croatia and Slavonia had drifted away from the Kingdom of Hungary in many aspects, although there were still close ties between them. Therefore, the Kingdom of Hungary, in fact, did not split into three but rather into four parts after the Ottoman conquest.

Relationship between Croatia and the Kingdom of Hungary

In the Middle Ages, *Croatia* covered the area lying between the Mountain Gvozd and the Adriatic Sea. Saint Ladislaus I occupied the territory in 1091 and put it under his nephew, Álmos's control. King Coloman finished Croatian extension when he crowned himself Croatian king in Biograd in 1102. In that year Croatia became a joint kingdom (*pars annexa*) of Hungary, and their fate joined inseparably for 800 years.

Due to the co-existence, Croatian nobles developed the myth of a common homeland and a certain "*hungarus*" consciousness, and they implied themselves into the notion *Hungaria* and regarded Hungarian kings as their own. Croats had also developed a strong cult of the Holy Crown, which was also demonstrable in

the late 18th century. It was not simply a religious cult because Croats (similarly to Hungarians) considered Saint Stephen's crown as the foremost attribute of their statehood. The doctrine of the Holy Crown of Hungary advocated that the Kingdom of Hungary and all the joined parts (real and demanded) belonged to the Holy Crown and were members (*membrum*) of it, and the king crowned by the Holy Crown got his power and royalty from the Crown.

Insistence on the Hungarian crown might arise from the fact that Croatian royal election had not become a tradition and it had disappeared without a trace. After the crowning ceremony in Székesfehérvár, Hungarian kings became the kings of Croatia as well and the titles King of Croatia and that of Dalmatia appeared among his titles in a foremost position. Croatian nobility was satisfied with the circumstances because Croatia never integrated into Hungary but remained a separate kingdom also a member of the Holy Crown. Despite the fact that their king was the Hungarian ruler, Croatian nobility always regarded their kingdom as independent. Therefore, Croatia was not a province but rather a joined part of Hungary, in spite of the fact that for the very reason of the difference in their size, they were not on a par.

There were close links between the two countries and their relationship cannot be described as a simple personal union. The independent Croatian royal court disappeared after 1097 and thus, Croats also lived in the medieval royal court, although it did not show any Croatian characteristics. There were not any government organizations specializing in Croatian affairs, neither formed an independent Chancellery or Chamber. The Royal Treasury and the Royal Chancellery competent in the whole territory of the Kingdom of Hungary dealt with the cases relating to the areas south of the River Sava.

The Royal Council operating in the court in Buda took decisions about the most important issues relating to the future of the country and they were the ones to decide upon the high ranking magistrates, the issue of war and peace and other diplomatic affairs. The Croatian–Dalmatian ban heading Croatia – Dalmatia came under Venetian rule in 1420, and thus, the Hungarian jurisdiction also came to an end – was also a member of the Royal Council and, following the palatine and the judge royal, was the third most prominent person of the Kingdom of Hungary. Although Croatian interests were represented by him in this important legislative body, his real significance lay in the fact that, relying on the royal estates in Croatia and in Dalmatia, the ban held enormous power. His influence was further increased by the fact that beside the armed forces he commanded due to his office, he also disposed over the royal and banderial armies mobilisable in the province. The ban was appointed by the king and only the members of the Royal Council could give their opinion on the chosen person. In the 15th century, when several royal estates were taken over by nobles, the size of the ban's estates also increased in importance and the approval of the local nobility became essential. Therefore,

by the Jagiellonian era, the king had to enter into negotiations about the ban's person who was chosen from the local aristocratic families.

The fact that the ban did not exercise unlimited authority in his territory also showed the close links surpassing a personal union. Since in the late Middle Ages the palatine claimed military and judicial jurisdiction over the whole territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, he could also take measures in Croatia and Dalmatia, moreover, from 1485 onward, the palatine held the office of the high judge of Dalmatia. As a result of the palatine's role, the ban cannot be regarded as a royal deputy in Croatia. The examples picked out also reveal that the medieval network of relations between the two countries was more complicated than in the case of a simple personal union. However, the Ottoman conquest and the development of the estates transformed this relationship in the early modern era.

Slavonia in the Late Middle Ages

The area stretching from the Mountain Gvozd to the River Drava was called Sclavonia, a country inhabited by the Slavs, as early as the 11th century. It had probably come under Hungarian authority in the middle of the 10th century.

In the 14th–15th century, Slavonia was headed by the Slavonian ban, who usually held other offices as well. He was often appointed as Croatian ban and this twin office-holding became a generally accepted custom in 1476. At the beginning, usually 2 people were elected to the position running two different apparatuses in the two provinces. Sometimes, the ban appointed a Slavonian nobleman as his Croatian vice-ban but the merger of the two offices had finished only by the middle of the 16th century.

Medieval sources referred to the province as a regnum. However, it did not mean a kingdom, but it can rather be interpreted as a country inhabited by the Slavs. Its organization and position within the Kingdom of Hungary was somewhat similar to that of the voivodeship of Transylvania. The Hungarian county system was also introduced here. However, the greatest difference between the two systems was an intermediate level of administration (controlled by the ban) positioned between the county level and the central administration. However, the common law used in the province (unlike the one applied in Croatia) was in harmony with the Hungarian legal system.

The chief institution of the separate Slavonian nobility was the provincial assembly (*congregation nobilium regni Sclavoniae*). In the beginning, it was convoked on the orders of the king, but as of the 1450s, due to the weakening royal power, it could be regarded as an independent political authority passing decrees related to internal affairs. It was regularly convoked as of the Jagiellonian era when it had the right to discuss political issues, elect delegates, levy taxes or draw

up petitions on behalf of the Slavonian nobility. The king sent special commissioners to the assembly to communicate his orders and represent his authority. Until the middle of the 16th century, the Slavonian provincial assembly held its meetings separately from those of the Croatian Sabor. The merger of the two institutions in 1558 was also the result of the Ottoman conquest.

The inhabitants of Slavonia spoke different South Slav dialects. They consistently distinguished their Hungarian and Croatian villeins, which showed that they did not consider themselves as any of them but as Slavonian. The local nobility was multi-ethnic, the overwhelming majority of the big and medium landowners were of Hungarian origin with the exception of the areas of the county of Zagreb lying south of the Sava where Croatian big landowners acquired lands as early as the first decades of the 15th century. Considerable Croatian immigration started only in the late 15th century due to the Ottoman conquest. Presumably plenty of castle warriors and castle serfs belonged to the lesser nobility who fostered sense of particularism. Thus, it is possible that Slavonian particularism rooted in ethnic and legal peculiarities and resulted in the formation of the general assembly of the Slavonian nobility in the late 15th century. Slavonian nobility included every person of noble origin having estates in the province – their estates entitled them to be members of the local noble community and identity. However, it is important to stress that the Slavonian nobility of heterogeneous origin was linked by the universal Latin culture and literacy as well as their marked *hungarus* consciousness. The lesser nobles in Slavonia shared the anti-German feelings of the Hungarian lesser nobility gathering in Rákosmező and accepted John of Szapolyai's kingship in the months following the battle of Mohács. Historical traditions and the consciousness of their belonging to the Holy Crown proved to be so strong that the question of splitting off Hungary did not arise among them at all. However, the changes brought about by the Ottoman conquest weakened their links to the Kingdom of Hungary and offered them the possibility of redefining their constitutional status.

The Impact of the Ottoman Conquest

The Ottoman advance after the fall of Bosnia in 1463, with its day-to-day looting and plundering profoundly influenced the early modern history of Croatia and Slavonia. King Matthias I improved the border castle system developed by King Sigismund, organized the banates of Jajca and Srebernik in the Bosnian territory, established the captaincy of Zengg in 1469 with the center of Zengg (Senj) captured from the Frangepans and in 1476, merged the office of the ban of Croatia-Dalmatia with that of the ban of Slavonia. Although King Matthias was able to defend Slavonia to a certain extent with these measures, Croatian areas

started to become deserted as the inhabitants moved to more northerly areas. Peasants and nobles both headed for safer places and their presence seriously influenced the ethnic composition of the area, moreover, Croatian nobility's sense of history played a key role in the future of Slavonia.

Neither King Matthias I, nor the Jagiellonian rulers could organize the adequate defense of the territory. The Croatian army led by ban Imre Derencsényi suffered a crushing defeat near Udbina on September 9th 1493. Although this disaster did not result in territorial losses, it was regarded as the *Mohács of the Croats* and adversely influenced the relationship between Croatia and the Kingdom of Hungary. Croatian aristocrats possessing Slavonian estates became more and more distrustful of the royal court and increasingly often sought help from Venice and the Habsburg monarchy. Moreover, local nobility becoming more and more militarized in the constant warfare developed the idea of the "bulwark of Christianity". With reference to this view, they applied to Vladislav II for an own coat of arms in 1496, which proved to be an ideological base for their provincial separatism.

Helplessness against the numerical superiority of the Ottomans and countless military failures frustrated Croatian and Slavonian nobility with good reason, and they regarded the weakness of the Hungarian royal court and the arrogance of the Hungarian estates as the main reason for the problems. Contemporary sources and 17th-century interpretations reveal both issues and they might have caused the first break in Croats' positive view of Hungarians. Although the central government did everything it could, border defense was not efficient. The Ottomans captured Knin, the center of the medieval Kingdom of Croatia in 1522, and the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand (of Habsburg) had to spend more and more money on warfare. Therefore, Croatian nobility raised the question of free royal election in their political argument in 1527, and mentioned it as a living possibility as of the death of King Zvonimir. At their meeting in Cetin on January 1st they acknowledged Ferdinand as their king and formally broke with the Kingdom of Hungary. A Kingdom of Croatia separate from Hungary was of course a political fiction, Ferdinand made a claim on Croatia by means of the Holy Crown and the central administration did not change, either. The Hungarian Chamber continued to collect taxes, the palatine's jurisdiction still extended over Slavonia and Croatia and the royal judge was the supreme authority in all lawsuits. As the ideology of Croatian independence also determined the development of the Slavonian state, it is not in vain to dwell on the issue. Ferdinand first assumed the title *rex Sclavoniae* in 1529 and he used it permanently after 1542. On a twin royal seal made in 1558 for Ferdinand, this title followed that of the King of Croatia. Moreover, the Slavonian flag appeared in Maximilian's Hungarian coronation ceremony in 1563. Thus, by the first half of the 16th century, Slavonia, surpassing the characteristics of the Transylvanian system, had developed the ideology and the symbols

of authority of an independent kingdom (*regnum Sclavoniae*). Croatia, losing almost its whole territory but preserving the myth of independence, provided the model for the independent state, whose nobles, having moved to Slavonia, took part in provincial administration in growing numbers. This process went on until the 17th century. However, in the meantime several Croatian–Slavonian aristocrats entered into the Habsburg imperial aristocracy while they similarly considered the Kingdom of Hungary as their homes. Due to their military and political roles, several Slavonian and Croatian nobles received baronies: the Rátkays and Márk Horváth-Stancsics in 1559, the Draskovich family in 1567 and the Kasztellánfys in 1569. A large numbers of Hungarian letters were written by these families, many of whom served in the Hungarian theatre of war. Many Croatian–Slavonian lesser nobles appeared in their companies north of the Sava who preserved the idea of belonging to the Kingdom of Hungary well after their return.

Different Ways of Development

The so far discussed questions only partly explain why the new political formation drifted so far away from the Kingdom of Hungary. However, many events occurred differently in Slavonia than in the areas north of the Drava. These differences (military administration, the intensity of the war, the impact of the Reformation or the position of the Catholic Church) were strongly felt in everyday life.

During King Matthias's reign, the aids of the Holy See, then in the Jagiellonian era the financial support of Venice helped to defend Hungary against the Ottomans. However, after 1521, the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand became the most important supporter of the border defense system in the south. The defense of Croatia and Slavonia was of vital importance for the Austrian hereditary provinces, thus, they sent military aid to the area as early as 1522, and they appointed Niclas Graf zu Salm as the commander-in-chief of the Carniolan, the Carinthian and the Lower Austrian armies. Therefore, the defense against the Ottomans became twin controlled. While Salm's armies acted independently, the castles, the royal troops and the banderial armies were still led by the ban. Croatian aristocrats increasingly often entered into Ferdinand's service because he was the one who could afford to spend a significant sum on defense. Following the battle of Mohács, a lengthy debate on power took place between the royal commanders-in-chief delegated by Ferdinand and the officers being members of the Hungarian estates. Due to the Ottoman threat and the weakness of the province, the debate relatively early came to an end in Croatia as royal troops were sent to Senj and the castle of Klis in 1527 and Bihács (Bihać) also got out of the ban's control the following year. The "old Croatian military frontier" (*alte krabatische Grenze*) was first organized in 1538 under the leadership of Erasm von Thurn. At that time

it did not extend over Slavonia but following the warfare of the 1540s, the system was improved. The reorganization was mainly the achievement of the commanders-in-chief sent to the Croatian–Slavonian area, notably that of Hans Ungnad, under whose leadership more and more border castles were taken over by the king, forming the basis of the Slavonian frontier (*windische Grenze*). While the defense of Hungarian and Slavonian territories was controlled uniformly in the 1540s, it was divided in 1550 for the sake of success. Although the bans and their troops also participated in the struggles, and Miklós Zrínyi, appointed in 1542, was extremely successful in his fights, by that time defense was not based on these forces.

Permanent Ottoman advance made new changes necessary. Thus, Ferdinand appointed Hans Lenković as the commander-in-chief of the Croatian–Slavonian borderland. He controlled the reformed border defense system and the army paid by the hereditary provinces. The ban's authority considerably diminished as the border castles got out of his control – they were supplied by the Austrian hereditary provinces – and thus, he could rely only on the noble insurrection, the relatively weak troops sent by the counties and the ban's army of 4–500 soldiers. Border castles came under the control of the Inner Austrian Council of War (*Innerösterreichischer Hofkriegsrat*) in Graz in 1578, and the military frontier became reorganized with the centers Károlyváros (Karlovac) south of the Sava and Varasd (Varaždin). These territorial units were further divided into smaller captaincies in order to repel Ottoman attacks effectively.

Following the military reforms, bans were entrusted with new tasks: they had to defend the castles along the River Glina and the River Kulpa with their army of 500. After the fall of Bihać in 1592, these castles protecting the area formed the so-called Kulpa confines (*banische Grenze*) in the early 17th century. Thus, the ban's jurisdiction became divided and they fulfilled their border defense duties as border captain-generals, which was also indicated by their new title (*banus, necnon confinium Colapianorum, regni Sclavoniae supremus capitaneus*). Since the castles controlled by the ban were financed by the war tax levied by the Croatian–Slavonian estates and other Hungarian incomes, they belonged to the Court Council of War in Vienna instead of the Council of War in Graz.

The minor changes made in the organization of the Croatian–Slavonian military frontier in the 17th century did not touch its essence. Except for the Kulpa confines, the military frontier was financed and controlled by the War Council in Graz and Hungarian estates could not supervise or intervene in the processes. The majority of the peasant-soldiers serving in the territory were Orthodox vlachs/uskoks, and due to their collective rights, they managed to get out of the county system and the estates framework (a part of them in 1535, and the remaining group in 1630). Therefore, they were loyal exclusively to the Habsburg dynasty and the Habsburg military leaders. Because of their vital military role, Cro-

atian–Slavonian nobility could neither consolidate nor abolish them. However, neither party expected the resolution of the problems from the Hungarian estates, but applied to the Habsburg ruler instead. The position of the Croatian ban was interwoven with the areas they were entrusted with. The military operations rarely allow the Croatian–Slavonian nobles emerged to the office to leave the territory, and the family residences of the Erdődys, the Keglevich and Draskovich families and the Zrínyis also lay in Slavonia. Their official duties forced them to visit Graz, Vienna or Bratislava and, except for some campaigns, they had no connection with the Hungarian public administration. As a result, military ties loosened between Croatia, Slavonia and the Kingdom of Hungary.

The intensity of frontier skirmishes was also different in Croatia and in Slavonia. The Lika and Krbava areas of Croatia became deserted as early as the late 15th century. Scardona fell in 1522 and thus, the Ottoman forces were at an arm's length from the Adriatic Sea: they captured Obrovac in 1527 and Klis in 1537. As the Bosnian sancakbey Ferhad's troops occupied Cazin and Kladusa in 1576–78, Croatia lost the territory among the Rivers Una, the Glina and the Korana. Following the last wave of the Ottoman advance, after the fall of Ripacs and Hrasztovica in 1591 and Bihács in 1592, the River Kulpa marked the permanent border. The majority of the Croats fled to Italy, Western Hungary, the Austrian provinces and the remaining parts of Slavonia. Croatia lost almost 1 million people in the 16th–17th centuries. Vlach marauders settled in the deserted areas and many of them moved to the other, Habsburg-controlled side of the border in the 17th century, increasing the considerable number of Orthodox peasant-soldiers.

The bloody war reached Slavonia a few decades later and it caused more serious damage than the one Hungarian areas had to suffer, except for Bács (Bač SRB), the military road along the Danube, and Inner Somogy. The enormous losses had geographic and political causes as well. Tens of thousands of people from Slavonia fled to safer areas as early as the 1530s, at a time when Ottoman forays spared other regions yet. The dense network of border castles and the many rivers made hostile advance difficult and thus, frontlines changed slowly. Nekcse (Našice) fell in 1541, Rahlca (Orahovica) in 1542, Valpó (Valpovo), Pakrác (Pakrac) and Fejérkő (Bijela Stijena) were captured in 1543 while Velike (Kraljeva Velika) was occupied the next year. Verőce (Virovitica), Csázma (Čazma) and Dombró (Dubrava) were seized in the mid-16th century and the borderline was established on the western brink of Kőrös (Križevci) county in the next few decades. Permanent warfare made the conquered areas of Požega and Kőrös counties almost completely deserted. Ottoman defters showed that the population of the invaded territory had completely changed by the end of the 16th century but the situation was very similar on the other side of the border, too. Vlach people from the Balkan moved to the deserted areas and fulfilled the task of bor-

der defense as peasant-soldiers. However, their presence generated more and more problems.

Population change in the Slavonian areas occupied by the Ottomans also brought about major changes as the newcomers did not have memories of the medieval administrative system and the old landowners. Therefore, Christian taxation was impossible in the region and the so-called system of condominium could not develop except from a small area. It is not by chance that whereas data do not suggest the Islamisation of rural population north of the Drava, half of the population had been converted to Islam and 14 per cent of the people had become Orthodox in Slavonia and in Srijem by the last decades of Ottoman rule. The emigration of the aborigines blurred the borderline between the original church and lay administration units and thus, the new public administration had been established only by the middle of the 18th century. However, the borderlines of the new administrative units rarely matched those of the medieval ones. Moreover, the majority of the Slavonian area was formed into a military frontier for the Orthodox border guards and therefore, the formerly uniform area became divided on denominational grounds. Christians could retain a territory of hardly 7000 square kilometers, and the war also made itself felt in the region. Due to the loss of the richest areas, only 3298 tax-paying plots could be listed in 1582. The war stopped embourgeoisement, disarranged internal markets and the dense network of market towns thinned. Only big landowners could take part in long-distance trade: the Zrínyi and the Frangepán families traded with cattle, copper, salt and cloth. Poorer nobles attempted to have a share in army supplies. Although every landowner wanted to extend their allodial lands, they achieved limited success as big landowners settled more and more Croatian lesser nobles in their estates and put bigger and bigger lands in pawn in return for their military assistance. At the end of the 16th century, Croatian lesser nobles held 48 percent of the plots in the county of Varasd (Varaždin) and their number had also tripled in the county of Zagreb. Social rise became even more difficult in these areas as landlords required produce in return for land usage and due to their pre-emptive rights they also prevented their civic-peasants from getting to the market. Corvée performed by villeins in border castles, lack of the prerequisites for peaceful production and excesses committed by landlords provoked discontent even among townsmen. The increase of burden led to many revolts, for instance in the abbey of Topuszkó (Topusko) between 1549 and 1555, and in Ferenc Tahy's estates between 1568 and 1572 – the ban's troops could defeat Matej Gubec's rebellious army of 15,000 only years after. It seems that the great losses suffered by the Croatian–Slavonian areas in the 16th century did not allow the territory to enjoy the golden age of civic-peasant enterprises common in the Hungarian territory, which also weakened the links between the province and the Kingdom of Hungary.

The most significant difference between the Kingdom of Hungary and Slavonia was the spread of the Reformation. While the popularity of the Protestant ideas swept the Hungarian areas, despite its early success it did not produce spectacular results in Slavonia. However, one should not forget about Stjepan Konzul and Antun Dalmatin's Gospel translations published in the ča dialect of the Istrian peninsula, and Primož Trubar's Croatian Bible. The printing house in Urach established by Hans Ungnad published several Protestant works and planned a mission into the Balkanian peninsula. György Zrínyi, who had been converted to Lutheranism with the Erdődy and the Batthyány families, established a short-lived printing house in Nedelistye (Nedelišće) in Međimurje, which published a Croatian version of the Tripartitum among others. The conversion had lost much of its impetus by the end of the century, aristocratic families returned to their original religion, and lacking their support, preachers also had to leave. In the 1630s only a handful of people followed Protestant ideas.

Complicated reasons explain the different spread of the new ideas. It is important to note that Catholic hierarchy did not collapse in the region and the episcopal seat in Zagreb remained in Christian hands. Moreover, while in Hungary a considerable amount of Catholic wealth became secularized, the bishop of Zagreb remained one of the richest landowners in Slavonia. Besides, Catholic reform was also launched really early in the area: the Zagrebian bishop György Draskovich announced the decrees of the Council of Trent as early as 1574 and established a seminary in 1578. The Catholic reform was helped by strong Italian cultural relations all the time. The center of Croatian clerical education was in Bologna where Paulus Zondinus established the Collegium Hungaricum et Illiricum in 1553. The Catholic Church – similarly to the Protestant denominations – became increasingly intellectual and the reformed monastic orders achieved considerable success in the field of pastoration and education. The Jesuits took up residence in Zagreb (1606) and in Varaždin (1633) where they also established colleges and a royal academy (1669) by Leopold I's permission. Capuchin monks settled in Zagreb in 1618, while Pauline monks established a grammar school in Lepoglava in 1582 which became upgraded as an institution of higher education (*studium generale*) in 1674. The strength of the Catholic hierarchy, the vicinity to Italy and the maintenance of schools reveal that Protestantism suffered a cultural defeat in Slavonia, similarly to the Catholic defeat north of the Drava.

Finally, let's throw a glance at the position of the Catholic Church. It is obvious that the Catholic Church reacted strongly against the Reformation but it had a still far more important role in Slavonia. Due to their power, Zagrebian bishops were appointed increasingly frequently as bans, and thus, ecclesiastical and lay power also concentrated in their hands. As a result of this, in 1567 the Slavonian estates enacted an act that forbade Protestants from acquiring estates and holding offices in Slavonia. Thus, southern Slav Catholicism managed to build a new element

into the forming national ideology, because by the early 17th century Catholic religion had become a cornerstone of the identity of the Croatian–Slavonian nobility set exactly against the Protestant Hungarian estates. Therefore, it is important to note that Catholicism has become a fundamental basis of modern Croatian national ideology not against Serbian Orthodoxy, but rather against Protestant Hungarian nationalism. The Croatian ban János Draskovich's (1595–1613) outburst against the extension of the freedom of worship over Slavonia at the Diet of Pozsony is an outstanding example of it. "He protested with invincible heart claiming he and the kingdom were ready to secede from the Kingdom of Hungary, rather than allowing this depraving plague to enter and ruin the country during his term of office". (Rátkay, 1772, 169) Therefore, the aforementioned aspects of the 16th-century events separated the future of the two countries, and neither the following centuries could reverse this process.

Three Countries, One Homeland

The idea of an independent south Slav kingdom, which had been developed by the chapter of Zagreb and accepted by the Croatian–Slavonian nobility, blossomed in the 17th century. The process was facilitated by the fact that nobody knew exactly where the borders of the historical predecessor, Illíria lay and thus, the borderlines of the new state could be drawn up at will. Rátkay in his cited work included Srijem and due to Miklós Zrínyi, the castle of Sziget into the concept of Slavonia. However, the fact that the Croatian–Slavonian estates had to face different problems than their Hungarian counterparts was a more significant element. Their most important problems were the Habsburg centralization, the Vlach question and the postponement of the Ottoman attacks. The Hungarian events, Bocskai's movement and the struggle against the Transylvanian princes displeased them because all of them drew the resources from the fight against the Ottomans and thus, they were not willing to cooperate with the Hungarian estates. The *Statutum Valachorum* (1630) granting widespread rights to Vlach peasant-soldiers, as well as the foreign control of the frontier were a breeding ground for distrust against the court in Vienna. This led to the Croatian ban (1640–46) and palatine (1646–48) János Draskovich's invitation to Rátkay to prove the independent state status of the *Illyrian* areas. Although the work was finished, Péter Zrínyi and Ferenc Frangepán's execution temporarily dropped the matter of the formation of an independent Croatian–Slavonian kingdom with Ottoman help within the framework of the Habsburg Empire. However, the idea further blossomed and was spread by the Ladislaite Franciscan monks becoming independent in 1661, the big landowners embracing them, notably the Draskovich family and the Erdődys who particularly attracted by the Franciscan shrine in Tersatto. The

greatest proponents of the case were the Zagrebian canons recruited from the Croatian–Slavonian nobility and the bishops of Zagreb, mainly Ferenc Ergelich (son of a Muslim converted into the Orthodox faith), Benedek Vinkovich (who studied in Bologna, at that time the citadel of Illyrism), Péter Petretich (educated in Samobor which was pastorated by the Franciscans) or Bogdan Martin (coming from Nart along the Sava). A common trait of these bishops was the fact that neither of their families belonged to the *natio Hungarica* and thus, they were not of the double or triple identity generally characterizing the aristocrats of the region. The Zagrebian bishop Martin Borkovich attempted to make the pope declare his diocese an archbishopric on the grounds of this idea. This step would have promoted independence from the Hungarian church organization, however, at that time it did not have any reality.

There were many elements missing from a Triune Kingdom. It did not have a permanent center because the ban did not have a residence until 1808. It also missed royal insignia and a coronation ceremony, although the first signs of them appeared in the inaugural ceremonies of the bans in the 17th century and their carrying a scepter. The state would have also needed a king because the ban whose power had been the weakest ever since could not be regarded as a viceroy (*prorex*). Finally, one has to remember that the several centuries in a common homeland also left their marks on the Slavonian nobility because at that time many of them still supported a state belonging to the Kingdom of Hungary. Many more centuries had to pass until the bitter dream of an independent south Slav state could come true.

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THE TRANSITIONAL EMPIRE

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The Habsburg monarchy was conceived in 1527 as a borderland when the Ottoman march into the Pannonian plain united the Austrian, Bohemian and Hungarian lands. The latter's vulnerability encouraged a consensual relationship between the Habsburg court and domestic elites that positioned Hungary's political system between "western" European absolutism and the anarchical "royal republicanism" of Poland. The Habsburg claim to the entire kingdom helped sustain the vision of a united patrimony, ultimately realized following the triumph over the Ottomans and definitively confirmed in 1867. The combination of Hungary's borderline character and competing jurisdictions contributed to political instability during the 16th and 17th centuries. Only after the Habsburgs had pushed the Ottomans from the Hungarian plain, did the frontier begin a more conventional evolution. In a move that was a clear break with previous frontier arrangements, the Habsburgs and Ottomans clearly separated their territorial jurisdiction by drawing and demarcating the boundary that pacified the frontier regime more in keeping with general developments in Europe. Outer borders gradually assumed new functions. The permanent sanitary cordon that the Habsburgs established in 1728 along its entire length remained an unparalleled public health institution, effectively blocking the spread of plague from the Ottoman Balkans. In addition, it served as a migration control institution, signaling the ongoing transition to a modern international frontier, which would have been unimaginable without its mobility control function. This spacial transformation encouraged the kingdom's recovery and re-population, as well as its transition from a "borderland" into the "heart of Europe". The simultaneous colonization of Hungary from the west and southeast stimulated its economic and demographic recovery, while compounding its linguistic and ethnic diversity, particularly in border areas, thereby contributing to its dissolution in the age of nationalism.

Keywords: Hungary, early modern, transition, linear political borders, sanitary cordon, border

One of the staples of Habsburg history is the Czech historian František Palacky's exclamation that "If the Habsburg monarchy hadn't existed, it would have to be created." In fact, the monarchy was conceived in the late middle ages as a borderland and evolved into one of the continent's great powers by fulfilling that func-

tion with Hungary serving as the leading edge of its expanding eastern frontier. By the middle of the 18th century the dynasty's Austrian and Hungarian crown lands had transitioned from a "borderland" into the "heart of Europe" that now stretched to the Urals with two new players in its constellation of great powers. Over that time, the Habsburg *Gesamtstaat* transitioned not only in time but also institutionally between eastern and western Europe. My own scholarship has pointed to five principal attributes that defined Austrian exceptionalism, two of which are particularly germane to the subject of this volume and the conference from which it originated: the diplomacy of geopolitics and the reliance on consensus.¹

First and foremost is the role that diplomacy played in a meteoric ascent that was deeply influenced by geopolitical calculus. Until the middle of the 18th century the monarchy's central location was unique among the major continental powers. Both Spain stood at the end of the European peninsula while England readily evolved from hegemon to sole proprietor of the British Isles. France's essentially isthmian position greatly limited the number of potentially hostile neighbors. Like Spain and Britain, both Russia and the Ottoman empire benefited from privileged positions along the edges of the continent, along with massive stretches of uninhabited wasteland along their peripheries. If the Habsburg monarchy's central location exposed it to multiple threats, it also made it a valuable ally for other states against mutual adversaries. Indeed its greatest virtue rested in being sufficiently strong to serve as an effective counterpoise without being so powerful as to threaten the long-term security of its putative allies. Over the centuries, Machiavelli's dictum that neutral powers side with the weaker of any two belligerent powers was a prescription for allying with the House of Habsburg.

Admittedly, the monarchy's exposed central location brought with it the heavy burden of defending multiple frontiers, sometimes simultaneously. While their Ottoman adversary could typically pick and choose its preferred theater of operations and then act unilaterally, the monarchy was compelled to react to threats from multiple points of the compass, practicing a strategic triage designed to parry the blows of its enemies, rather than vanquish and occupy them. Historians have long appreciated the East–West dilemma that successive emperors confronted in the 16th and 17th centuries when choosing whether to repel threats in and around Germany or in the Balkans. Less obvious were incipient threats that emerged in the 18th century in Italy and Poland. A more comprehensive understanding of Habsburg statecraft visualizes all four areas as vital buffers that had to be vigilantly protected from salient military threats. Whenever any one of these four *glaces* was breached, the Habsburgs worked to restore it by all available means.² The first test came in Germany with the Reformation and in the Balkans following the Ottoman conquest of most of Hungary; hence the ensuing succession of Austro-Turkish wars that ended with the reconquest of the Hungarian plain. Just as this task was being completed, the extinction of the Spanish Habsburgs obliged

Emperors Leopold I (1657–1705), Joseph I (1705–11) and Charles VI (1711–40) to wrest control of Italy from the Bourbons, a struggle that began with the War of Spanish Succession (1701–14) and continued through 1748. By then, Frederick II's infamous rape of Silesia inspired Empress Maria Theresa (1740–80) to devote her entire reign and four "Silesian wars" to restoring the dynasty's previously hegemonic position in Germany. By then, Maria Theresa had resolved the Polish security crisis that had begun with the Great *Déluge* (1655–60), continued through the diplomacy during the Great Northern War (1700–21) and ended with the creation the monarchy's Galician *glacis* during the First Partition of the royal republic (1772).

If each Habsburg monarch employed different approaches in meeting these and other security crises, their exposed position necessitated that they strive for consensus in recruiting the largely voluntary support of the monarchy's foreign allies and domestic elites. This required remaining true to dynastically legitimate goals that invariably respected the territorial integrity of weak neighbors in all four regions. For good measure, successive emperors refrained from acting unilaterally prior to Emperor Francis Joseph's preemptive actions in Italy (1859), Bosnia (1878) and Serbia (1914). It also constrained the emperor to respect the privileges and other interests of domestic stakeholders, both to ensure their support and to dissuade them from fomenting rebellion – perhaps in conjunction with hostile foreign powers.

The necessity to compromise and forge consensus with them created a "transitional" state and society with institutions and values that represented an amalgam of East and West. Although successive emperors subscribed to the mantra of "one king, one law, one god" that inspired their Spanish cousins, the French and Spanish Bourbons, and the British Stuarts, they reluctantly forewent the option of progressive governmental centralization that ultimately created culturally and linguistically homogenous polities across Europe's western face. Even after Ferdinand II imposed the *Verneuerte Landesordnung* on the vanquished Bohemian lands in 1627, their estates continued to negotiate and collect tax levies until the middle of the 18th century – just as did their Austrian and Hungarian counterparts.³ Thus, the monarchy's estates reflected a constitutional middle ground between the "western" European absolutism of Portugal, Spain and France and "eastern" European models that ranged from the "Asiatic despotism" of tsars and sultans to the anarchical "royal republicanism" of Poland which retained elective kingship long after the institution had been discontinued in Bohemia (1627) and Hungary (1687). Which is not to fault either the Habsburgs for their timidity or the estates for their feudal obstinacy. As Fareed Zakaria has pointed out, the monarchy's mix of feudal absolutism and constitutionalism represented a form of "liberal authoritarianism" that protected human and civil rights better than most of the newly forged democracies of post-Communist Europe.⁴

Similarly, the Habsburgs were no more accepting of religious dissenters than their counterparts in the West but were nonetheless obliged to tolerate both Protestant and Orthodox Christians throughout most of their extensive Hungarian lands, much as the Ottomans favored them over Catholics in their own Hungarian lands. Certainly the survival of religious sects like Bohemia's Utraquists and Hungarian Unitarians were as much unlike western Europe as the large percentage of Jews in both kingdoms. Moreover, at a time when western Europeans were gradually adopting a single received language, all three of the monarchy's core lands remained as linguistically diverse as the Ottoman Balkans, Polish Confederation and Russian empire – and becoming more so with the persistent immigration of Orthodox Serbs and Romanians to Hungary. The monarchy's confessional and linguistic diversity was famously evident along the 1,900 km. long Military Border, where Serbs, Croats, Romanians, Szeklers, Vlachs and Germans shielded the monarchy from Ottoman incursions. Indeed, the Habsburg military establishment constituted another example of its transitional position within the European state system. The regular army could hold its own in conventional operations against France, Sweden and, eventually, Prussia in the West, but also featured the irregular formations and tactics of the celebrated *Grenzer*, *Uzkok* privateers, freelancing heyducks, and paramilitaries raised by Hungarian estate owners that paralleled Russian Cossacks and Turkish bashi-bazooks in the East. The same contrast obtained between the monarchy's stable western frontier and the erratic tempo and tactics along a Military Border that acted more like a line of scrimmage with "peacetime" raids bent on looting and kidnapping civilians for ransom; of course, these hazards were also common to those living along the Ottomans' Black Sea littoral or opposite the shores of Africa's Barbary Coast.

The monarchy's economy was no less transitional. Its Austrian and Bohemian lands sported significant industrial and commercial infrastructure and output to go with a self-sustaining agricultural base; the subsequent acquisition of the Spanish Netherlands and Lombardy added substantially to this bounty. Meanwhile, the Ottoman invasions devastated the commercial economy of Hungary's royal towns and forced much of the peasantry to forsake agriculture for livestock raising.⁵ Those of Hungary's peasants who continued to till the soil generally paid for the privilege and protection of Hungary's magnates by being reinserted. Once again, the "second serfdom" was a phenomenon that prevailed throughout the East – including Bohemia and Germany's East Elbian landscape – but was unknown in the monarchy's discontinuous western dominions or in the Austrian lands, although the prevalence of compulsory labor service in the archduchies and Inner Austria represented a middle ground between Europe's free Western and enserfed Eastern peasantry. If there was an exception to the East-West axis that defined the monarchy's structural orientation, it was in the world of culture. By the late 16th century, the dynasty had wholeheartedly embraced a Counter-Refor-

mation *mentalité* and representative Baroque forms that were more southern European; aside from southern Germany this, too, distinguished the entire monarchy not only from the Orthodox and Muslim East, but from Protestant northern Europe and even from the Baroque forms adopted in Catholic France. If we are to believe R.J.W. Evans, the mindset of the Habsburg Baroque was inherently irrational to the point of accepting the traditional forms in defiance of philosophical trends that were just beginning to seize the imagination of French, British and Protestant German high culture.⁶

To what extent did the Ottoman presence on its southern frontier affect this Transitional Empire? Certainly, it had a major impact, although its duration was finite both in time and consequences. The Ottoman–Habsburg relationship can be divided into three periods: (1) a confrontational phase (1526–1699) when the two were committed enemies, with neither side willing to recognize the other’s legitimacy, (2) a transitional period (1700–68) when the Ottomans feared, respected and recognized the emperor who, in turn, no longer deemed the Ottomans a threat to the monarchy’s security and accepted them as a tolerable presence along the borders of his empire at a time when Prussia and Russia had emerged as much more formidable neighbors,⁷ and (3) a standing policy of preserving the Ottoman empire (1769–1918) that began with its crushing defeats in the Russo–Turkish War of 1768–74. Much of our focus here will be on the first period, during which the Ottoman impact on the monarchy – and on Hungary in particular – has been judged quite negative. Certainly this was the view of the emperors’ contemporaries and subjects, many of whom lived in fear of Turkish raids and invasions, against which all of the core lands bore the burdens of taxation and military service.

Otherwise it is unclear how negatively Turkish threat impacted the monarchy as a whole. Certainly the dynasty and monarchy itself drew strength throughout its history from the succession of crises that built consensus, prompting badly needed internal reform and eliciting sometimes massive assistance from neighboring countries. After all, the Turks’ first appearance on the Hungarian plain provided the most convincing *raison d’être* for the monarchy’s existence that led to prodigious growth through the acquisition of Bohemia and Hungary. It also buttressed its successful pretensions to leadership of the often fractious German nation. Perhaps most important of all, the Turkish challenge greatly enhanced the unity of the core lands, with Hungary relying heavily on Austrian and, especially, Bohemian financial and human resources, while the German *Erblände* greatly appreciated Hungary’s survival and continued role as a buffer between them and the dreaded Turks. But there were limits to the bounty of the *Türkengefahr*. Whereas the great-

est benefits invariably accrued from *existential* crises that threatened the monarchy's very existence, the Habsburgs themselves never viewed the Ottoman menace as a death threat. Admittedly the Turks themselves bore some responsibility for this. With the minor exception of Sultan Suleiman's Hungarian campaigns of 1554–56, they never attacked the monarchy when it was fully engaged elsewhere. Even if such a *Dolchstoss* fell short of a fatal blow, it would have at least forced the emperor to conclude an unfavorable peace with his Christian adversaries. Yet, the sultan remained steadfastly neutral throughout the Thirty Years' War, during the four wars of succession that consumed the monarchy's attention for much of the 18th century, and in its subsequent struggle with revolutionary France. On two occasions during the Thirty Years' War and the Great *Déluge* he even frustrated Swedish operations against the monarchy's forces by recalling its Transylvanian surrogates from Hungary.⁸

Remarkably enough, the Habsburg–Ottoman wars did not by themselves significantly change either empire's overall political, economic, or cultural structure for the simple reason that the monarchy never felt sufficiently threatened. Although the Ottomans twice besieged Vienna, they never shook the confidence of the policy makers in Vienna, who felt that any losses would be but temporary, both because of their access to support from allies and because of the logistical problems that constrained the sultan's forces. If anything, the Turkish threat obliged successive emperors to retain the existing governmental and socio-economic system, albeit one that evolved within the cultural framework of Counter-Reformation. Right up until 1683, they gave precedence to meeting threats in the West, both because land there was seen as more valuable while territory lost in the East could be more easily recovered. The triumphant Holy League (1684–99) vindicated this calculus, further entrenching the monarchy's triarchical power structure, which celebrated its apotheosis with the self-congratulatory flourishes of the High Baroque right up until 1740.⁹ Rather, systemic change came only with the sudden loss of Silesia and the realization that the Prussian threat was truly *existential*.

Which is not to say that the Ottoman challenge did not elicit some additional benefits. Among the best-known was the Military Border which facilitated the restoration of agriculture, programmatic resettlement, and a general state of normalcy to the rest of the Hungarian plain, Transylvania and Croatia.¹⁰ Meanwhile, its *Grenzer* formations eventually grew to roughly a quarter of the Habsburg military and were eventually employed elsewhere in Europe at a fraction of the cost of regular army units.¹¹ The Habsburg–Ottoman frontier itself also contributed to the evolution of modern international borders.

Linear Boundaries

Sixteenth- and 17th-century Hungary was, in fact, a giant Habsburg–Ottoman borderland. The frontier was heavily militarized, dotted with fortresses and smaller fortifications. On the Habsburg side, border areas were organized into the Military Border, stretching from Adriatic Sea to the Carpathian mountains in what is today Slovakia. A similar organization existed in Ottoman frontier provinces. The provinces deeper inside both empires participated as well, sending soldiers and subsidies to the frontier. Even in official peacetime, there persisted a low intensity *Kleinkrieg* that featured intermittent raids, robberies, and kidnappings for ransom. Moreover, jurisdictions overlapped, with Hungarian nobles claiming feudal rights over certain communities on the Ottoman side of the border. The peasants in areas where jurisdictions overlapped were taxed twice.¹² Intermittent peacetime violence, insecurity, and competing jurisdictions were unusual in other parts of Europe. However, in many other aspects, the Habsburg–Ottoman border was not atypical during this period. For example, France’s border with the Spanish Netherlands was also heavily fortified.¹³ Central governments across the continent were organizing frontiers as defensive zones and had little interest in precisely defining their boundaries. Instead, the concept of sovereignty was based on the personal patrimonial bond between the ruler and his subjects. All rights and jurisdictions, such as the rulers’ responsibility to defend their subjects, derived from this relationship. In this arrangement, precise territorial limits were not important and were considered a matter of purely local significance.¹⁴

That changed at the end of the 17th century, when the Habsburg–Ottoman frontier was profoundly transformed by the peace congress of Carlowitz (1698–99). During the negotiations the Ottoman representatives proposed to organize the new border as a demarcated linear boundary. They were not unfamiliar with such a solution, having previously regulated their boundaries with Venice, Poland–Lithuania and other neighboring countries.¹⁵ The Carlowitz settlement introduced other changes, including the border’s total pacification from the moment that peace was concluded. Not only were robberies, abductions, and attacks of any sort strictly forbidden, but perpetrators were to be severely punished. A joint border commission traveled the course of the new frontier 1699–1701 determining the precise borderline by placing markers, such as piles of earth and wooden poles, then carefully describing them in delimitation protocols. The Habsburg side also created a series of maps representing the new border.¹⁶ Both parties recognized each other’s territorial sovereignty by clearly separating their jurisdictions over space and subjects. They even reduced the number of the existing border fortifications and prohibited the construction of new ones. Henceforth, their subjects were to be allowed to live in peace and security, despite their proximity to the border.

With the peace of Carlowitz, central governments assumed greater responsibility for their international borders. Rather than employing the traditional inventories of jurisdictions and rights that were standard in other parts of Europe, they introduced technical and abstract knowledge in the form of maps and demarcation protocols. With the information collected, the Habsburg central government could ideally redraw the borderline without local help and experience. In many cases, the central government actually disregarded or ignored local interests. In 1703, the Habsburg military expelled its subjects from their homes near the Bosnian town Novi, resolving the last territorial dispute with the Ottomans. At the later treaty of Sistova (1791) the Ottomans ceded a narrow strip of land in western Bosnia to the Habsburgs without consulting the locals, who were then instructed to sell their property on the “wrong” side of the new border.¹⁷ The new role of central authorities marks a gradual transition from personal patrimonial to a visually defined territorial concept of jurisdiction.¹⁸ It is visible in changing attitudes toward cross-border mobility. The Carlowitz Peace Treaty of 1699 allowed the joint use of the Maros (Mureş), Tisza and Sava Rivers, including the islands along them, with local residents freely crossing the line. During the Rákóczi Rebellion (1703–11), the Habsburg commanders carried correspondence through the Ottoman territory. The Ottoman governors complained only when armed Habsburg militiamen fleeing Hungarian rebels entered the Ottoman Banat without first seeking permission. In 1739, a stricter concept of territorial sovereignty was introduced. Physical space and the borderline in particular became an important part of state’s identity. The smallest border infringements were therefore viewed not as local incidents, but as challenges to state sovereignty. From that moment on, not even fishermen were allowed to cross the line, which divided the river frontiers in two. The Habsburg court complained when local Ottoman subjects did not adhere to this provision.¹⁹ Similar processes in southern, western and central Europe began several decades later.²⁰ Yet by then the Habsburg border with the Ottomans had gone one step further with the introduction of a permanent mobility control regime in the form of sanitary cordon.

Sanitary Cordon

The most fearsome epidemic of that time, the plague, was endemic in many parts of the Ottoman Empire. By the 14th century, Europeans had begun to realize that the only effective measure was the isolation of infected areas and of people coming from there. If a sequestered individual did not show signs of disease for a certain period of time (typically 40 days), s/he was considered healthy and allowed to continue traveling. From the 15th century onwards, most European ports established quarantine facilities and began sequestering all ships coming from the East-

ern Mediterranean. Epidemics spreading by land were harder to contain. Whole provinces had to be isolated by a protective cordon, across which all communication was strictly supervised, usually by the military, allowing only persons who underwent quarantine to pass. Such measures were introduced during the last epidemic of plague in western Europe, when France and neighboring countries successfully contained the epidemics that broke out in Marseille in 1720–22 within the county of Provence.²¹ Yet such protective cordons were temporary and were disbanded as soon as the danger passed.

When a plague epidemic swept through Hungary in the final phase of the Rákóczi Rebellion (1703–11), Emperor Joseph I ordered the formation of the temporary land sanitary cordon (*Pestfront*, *Kordon*) between Hungary and Inner Austria (1710). All travel and trade was redirected through heavily guarded quarantine stations that effectively prevented unauthorized contact.²² Once the danger had passed the central government abolished the cordon much as other European states had. Yet the monarchy's long and relatively porous land border with the Ottoman Empire placed it in a far more exposed position that demanded more than temporary measures. After all, plague epidemics regularly infested the Ottoman frontier provinces, placing Habsburg Hungary and, ultimately, the *Erblände* in permanent danger. In 1728, Emperor Charles VI established a permanent sanitary cordon along the entire Ottoman frontier.²³ Although this first effort collapsed during the Habsburg-Ottoman war of 1737–39, a second, more definitive *Pestfront* was erected following the Peace of Belgrade (1739) that lasted until 1857.²⁴

The sanitary cordon was a formidable institution, stretching roughly 1,900 km from the Adriatic Sea to Poland. For the most part, it followed natural lines and barriers such as the Una, Sava, and Danube Rivers and the Carpathian Mountains. It was closely monitored from watchtowers and through regular patrols to prevent unauthorized crossings. Illegal immigrants and their accomplices were tried before criminal or martial courts without the right of appeal and subject to severe punishment.²⁵ By the 1760s, when the Military Border expanded eastward into the Banat of Temesvár and Transylvania, replacing less effective service by local peasants, the entire sanitary cordon was congruent with outer boundaries of the Military Border. By 1776, the military administration had proven so effective that the sanitary personnel were placed under the direct authority of the War Council.²⁶ In 1770, the border could be crossed through nineteen quarantine stations, approximately one every 100 km. Here, the incoming travelers were identified, registered both locally and in the central records in Vienna, and provided with personal identification documents, passports and sanitary certificates (*Sanitäts-Foede*). The quarantine time usually ranged from 21 to 42 days.²⁷ Initially border control and supervision had two official purposes: protecting public health while preserving uninterrupted trade with the Ottoman Empire. By 1752, however, the central government officially acknowledged other functions, such as the preven-

tion of banditry, espionage, contraband, desertion, and unwanted peasant emigration, as well as the safe bilateral use of border resources that included pulling barges upstream on whichever side of the river was more convenient.²⁸ Meanwhile, the cordon consistently vindicated its initial *raison d'être* by blocking the spread of several outbreaks of plague.²⁹

In addition to being one of few linear boundaries in Europe, the Habsburg–Ottoman border was very advanced as a migration control institution for its time. It is difficult to find comparable systematic and comprehensive countrywide mobility control regimes in other parts of Europe. Similar regimes were eventually introduced in most European states after the French Revolution and especially after 1918.³⁰ In this respect, the Habsburg–Ottoman frontier signaled the evolution of the modern international frontier, which would be unimaginable today without its mobility control function. Specific needs and circumstances gradually produced quite a novel arrangement in the southern areas of Hungary, an important contribution to the development of the state and governance in modern times.

Whereas Hungary shared in the benefits of the *Grenzer* formations and sanitary cordon that protected it as well as the rest of the monarchy, the Ottoman impact on the kingdom was nothing short of catastrophic. The Malthusian demographic consequences have attracted scholarly research for generations. The initial Ottoman marches up the Danube valley in 1529 and 1541 reduced the levels of habitation by 70–90% through mass flight to Upper Hungary. As a result of this shift, population densities in the Hungarian plain fell to roughly half of the northern and western counties that formed the rump of Habsburg Royal Hungary. Thereafter, campaigning armies of both sides grievously afflicted the civilian populations across the kingdom, particularly during Long War (1591–1606). Although the latest data records marginal increases in population under Turkish rule, this was likely due to steady immigration of Serbs, Romanians and others who were drawn from the Ottoman Balkans with incentives from Hungarian estate holders who were eager to repopulate their depleted estates.³¹ The Habsburg reconquest was attended by the forced emigration of Turkish and other Muslim settlers, including 100,000 from the Banat at the end of the Austro–Turkish War of 1716–18. Two decades later, most of the colonists who had settled there were wiped out by wartime flight and disease. A sustained colonization program under Maria Theresa and Joseph II successfully repopulated the Hungarian plain and Transylvania well beyond pre-Ottoman levels. Nonetheless, the massive influx of *Reich* Germans and Habsburg subjects from the north and west, together with the concurrent immigration of Ottoman Serbs and Romanians from the south greatly reduced the Magyars themselves to a minority in their own country. The resulting linguistic

and confessional diversity of greater Hungary presaged the 19th-century nationalities conflicts and the kingdom's partition at Trianon [Treaty of Trianon, 1920].

Ottoman Hungary's demographic upheaval was attended by unfortunate socio-economic developments. The aforementioned commercial losses sustained by the royal towns reduced the size and strength of the bourgeoisie, even as the ranks of the nobility swelled through the ennoblement of fighters against the Turks and the wealth of reconverted Catholic magnates appreciated with royal patronage and the wholesale adoption of estate capitalism.³² Nor was the subsequent reconquest an unmitigated blessing. At no point during the Ottoman occupation had the government in Vienna psychologically accepted Royal Hungary as an equal constituent in the Habsburg *Gesamtstaat*. At a time when the Bohemia was earning equal billing with the Austrian crown lands as conjoint parts of the German "hereditary lands" or *Erblande*, Hungary never earned this appellation even after the Sopron Diet (1687) had adopted the Habsburg male line's right to hereditary succession. Hungarians were almost never admitted to the emperor's most powerful decision-making councils, which remained the exclusive domain of Austrian and German-speaking Bohemian nobles, plus a smattering of Italians and *Reich* Germans. As late as 1740 the kingdom existed as a discrete territorial appendage to be taxed, colonized and employed as a *glacis* against Ottoman empire.

Although the policy of extralegal taxation ended with Leopold I, his successors circumscribed the Hungarian and Croatian diets' jurisdiction over the Military Border, Banat, and Transylvania by entrusting their administration – including colonization efforts – to the *Hofkriegsrat* and *Hofkammer*. Nobody could have anticipated the role that the Habsburg kings' "southern strategy" would have in abetting the autonomist pretensions of the kingdom's non-Magyar populations. Nonetheless, the resettlement and administrative restructuring of the kingdom's *neo acquistica* conceived and incubated a diversity that would contribute to the kingdom's dissolution in 1918.

Much as the Ottoman invasion doomed Hungary to two centuries of political, demographic, and economic decline, it was the Prussian descent on Silesia in 1740 that shocked Vienna into adopting dramatic structural changes that greatly benefited the monarchy – including Hungary. This is not the place to recount the recovery that began under Maria Theresa. But it is appropriate to identify the admittedly few advantages that the kingdom derived from its difficult two-century-long division as a Habsburg–Ottoman borderland. If nothing else, the enduring Habsburg claim to the entire kingdom helped sustain the vision of a united patrimony that would not have been a priority for other invaders who would have readily dismembered it. The separately administered entities were themselves restored incrementally by Maria Theresa (Banat), Joseph II (Transylvania), and Francis Joseph (Vojvodina, Military Border). Although the kingdom's constitu-

tion was ignored or abrogated altogether on several occasions, it was periodically reaffirmed, most notably at Sopron (1687), Szatmár (1711) and definitively by the Dual Compromise of 1867, while the Austrian and Bohemian lands remained submerged in the conglomerate of crown lands collectively known as Cisleithania. Indeed, unlike all of the other Habsburg dominions – Austria and Bohemia, as well as the Austrian Netherlands, Lombardy, Galicia and Bosnia – Hungary is the only component of its patrimony that has continuously maintained the status of an independent state, albeit in the truncated form rendered at Trianon.

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- ¹⁰ As William McNeill (1964) noted, it was the return from itinerancy dependent on animal husbandry to established settlements engaged in agriculture that effectively closed Hungary's frontier society by the mid-18th century (*Europe's Steppe Frontier 1500–1800*. Chicago: University of Chicago).
- ¹¹ Dickson, P.G.M. 1987. *Finance and Government under Maria Theresia, 1740–1780*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, II: *Finance and Credit*, 354.
- ¹² Ágoston, Gábor, 2003. A Flexible Empire: Authority and its Limits on the Ottoman Frontiers. *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 9 (1–2), 15–32, here 24.
- ¹³ Nordman, Daniel, 1998. *Frontières de France: de l'espace au territoire : XVIe–XIXe siècle*. Paris: Gallimard, 233, 235, 250–51.
- ¹⁴ Febvre, Lucien, 1962. Frontière: le mot et la notion; Frontière: limites et divisions territoriales de la France en 1789. In: Lucien Febvre, 1962. *Pour une Histoire à part entière*, Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 18–19; Sahlins, Peter, 1989. *Boundaries. The Making of France and Spain in*

the Pyrenees. Berkeley: University of California Press, 78; Nordman, 1998. *Frontières de France*, 128–29.

- ¹⁵ Abou-El-Haj, Rifa'at A., 1967. Ottoman Diplomacy at Karlowitz. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 87 (4), 503–5; Pedani, Maria Pia, 2002. *Dalla frontiera al confine*. Venice: Herder; Kołodziejczyk, Dariusz, 2000. *Ottoman Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century): An Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents*. Leiden: Brill, 137, 152–3, 157–8; Kołodziejczyk, Dariusz, 2012. Between Universalistic Claims and Reality: Ottoman Frontiers in the Early Modern Period. In: Christine Woodhead, ed. *The Ottoman World*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 205–19, here 207–12.

- ¹⁶ *The Carlowitz Peace Treaty*, January 26th, 1699, articles 2–9, 18, http://www.ieg-mainz.de/likecms/likecms.php?site=site.htm&dir=&nav=233&siteid=133&treaty=428&lastsiteid=77&searchquery=%26is_fts%3D1%26filter_select%3D%26filter_wt%3D%26filter_id%3D%26filter_l%3D%26filter_p%3D%26searchlang%3Dde%26searchstring%3DKarlowitz%26date%3D%26year_from%3D%26year_till%3D%26location%3D (Accessed February 26th, 2013).

The Ottoman delimitation protocol between Bosnia and the Habsburg Monarchy is published in: Kovačević, Ešref, 1970–71. Hududnama Bosanskog vilajeta prema Austriji posle Karlovačkog mira. Kritičko izdanje teksta. *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 20–21, 365–436. The Habsburg maps of delimitations: Mappa geographico Limitanea in qua Imperiorum Caesarei et Ottomannici Confinia in almae pacis Carlovitzensis congressu decreta et duobus utrius que imperi Commissaris instituta solennie expeditione, [c. 1700], Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Vienna, Kriegsarchiv (hereafter OeStA/KA), KS, b IX c 634 (album).

- ¹⁷ Gavrilović, Slavko, 1994. Srbi u Hrvatskoj od Bečkog rata do rata 1716–18. In *Istorija srpskog naroda*. Belgrade: SKZ, vol. 4, no. 1: 65, 68; *The Treaty of Sistova*, August 4th, 1791, Article 8, OeStA/Haus- Hof- und Staatsarchiv (Hereafter OeStA/HHStA), StAbt Türkei III 7. It is not clear to which private property this article refers. At least in theory arable land was the property of the Ottoman sultan and his subjects could only own their houses and gardens. The reality was obviously different at the end of the 18th century.

- ¹⁸ For more on this subject, see Sahlins, *Boundaries*.

- ¹⁹ *The Carlowitz Peace Treaty*, articles 2 and 5; *Globitz to the War Council*, Szeged, July 9th, 1709, OeStA/HHStA StAbt Türkei I 178; The translation of the firman to the Firari Mustafa Pasha, the governor of Belgrade, November 1755, OeStA/HHStA StAbt Türkei III 4.

- ²⁰ See footnote 13.

- ²¹ Panzac, Daniel, 1999. Politique sanitaire et fixation des frontières: l'exemple Ottoman (XVIIIe–XIXe siècles). *Turcica*, 31, 91–2; Sahlins, *Boundaries*, 75–7.

- ²² *Pest Ordnung*, October 14th, 1710, OeStA/ Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv (hereafter FHKA) SUS Patente 43.15; Ingraio, Charles W., 1979. In *Quest and Crisis: Emperor Joseph I and the Habsburg Monarchy*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 216.

- ²³ Patent from October 22th, 1728, Lesky, Erna, 1957. Die österreichische Pestfront and der k. k. Militärgrenze. *Saeculum*, 8, 84.

- ²⁴ The sanitary cordon ceased to exist effectively in 1857. It continued to exist on paper until the 1870s, when it was formally abolished together with the Military Border. Rothenberg, Gunther E., 1973. The Austrian Sanitary Cordon and the control of Bubonic Plague: 1710–1871. *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 28 (1), 21–3.

- ²⁵ *Festsetzung der Todesstrafe...*, Vienna, January 16th, 1740, OeStA/FHKA SUS Patente 74.2; *Erneuerung der Kontumaz-Ordnung*, August 25th, 1766, OeStA/FHKA SUS Patente 159.31. The usual sentence was several years of hard labor (Schanzarbeit). The death penalty seems to have been carried out only in exceptional cases.

- ²⁶ Lesky, Die österreichische Pestfront, 84–90, 92.

- ²⁷ *Generalsanitätsnormativum*, January 2nd, 1770, *Sammlung aller k. k. Verordnungen und Gesetze vom Jahre 1740. bis 1780...*, 8 vols., Vienna: Johann Georg Mößle, 1786, vol. 6 (1770–1773), no. 1152. In the 1760s, the quarantine could last up to 84 days. In 1785, the quarantine duration significantly decreased, with no quarantine when there was no plague in the Balkans. Some examples of local quarantine records: [Weekly] Contumaz-Tabella, November 9–16th, 1742, Zemun (Semlin), November 16th, 1742, OeStA/KA ZSt MilKom Sanitätshofkommission Akten 1, 1742–November-3.
- ²⁸ *Maria Theresa to the Banat Provincial Administraton*, Vienna, March 27th, 1761, OeStA/KA ZSt MilKom Sanitätshofkommission Akten 1, 1761–Martius-5; *Anmerkungen über von H. Dr. Grosse... eingeschickten Vorschlag*, Vienna, 1752, OeStA/KA ZSt MilKom Sanitätshofkommission Akten 1, 1755–8; *Bartenstein to Maria Theresa*, Vienna, September 14th, 1762, OeStA/KA ZSt MilKom Sanitätshofkommission Akten 1, 1762–September-13.
- ²⁹ Such as the plague in Srem (Syrmia) at the end of the 18th century. Schraud, Franz, 1802. *Geschichte der Pest in Syrmien in den Jahren 1795 und 1796*. 2 vols., Pest: Mathias Trattner.
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TURKS, HUNGARIANS, AND GYPSIES ON STAGE: EXOTICISM AND AUTO-EXOTICISM IN OPERA AND OPERETTA

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The tradition of European “classical music” has long evoked the exotic, and two of the most prominent exotic referents in that tradition are the Middle East, first and foremost the Turk, and the Hungarian Gypsy, raising the questions of how these “exotic” traditions are related, and what their comparison might tell us about the idea of musical exoticism more broadly. In this essay, I briefly survey the “Turkish style” and its use in Classical-period opera; discuss its replacement by Hungarian-Gypsy style in the nineteenth century; and finally examine the interesting juxtaposition of Turkish and Hungarian-Gypsy topics in two fin-de-siècle Central European operettas, *Der Zigeunerbaron* by the Austrian Johann Strauss Jr. and *Gül baba* by the Hungarian Jenő Huszka. An examination of these works and their reception reveals fissures between the Viennese and Budapest versions of operettas featuring “exotic” topics and characters, and between the operetta industries in the two cities. These details offer a fascinating look at the dividing line between exoticism and auto-exoticism and at the significance of references to Turkish and Hungarian-Gypsy topics in the Central European cultural climate of this period – in short, a reconsideration of what it means to be Hungarian, and for whom.

Keywords: Hungarian music, exoticism, auto-exoticism, Hungarian-Gypsy style, Turkish style (alla turca), operetta, Johann Strauss Jr., Jenő Huszka

The tradition of European “classical music” has long evoked the exotic: “linking [works] to some especially fascinating, attractive, or fearsome place: to an Elsewhere and, usually, to its inhabitants and their supposed inclinations and ways” (Locke, 2009, 1). Two of the most prominent exotic referents in the European Classical tradition are the Middle East, first and foremost Ottoman Turkey, and the Hungarian Gypsy. So to a musicologist interested in Hungary, a conference on the historical legacy of Hungary’s Ottoman period invites the following question: how are these “exotic” traditions related, and what might their comparison tell us about the idea of musical exoticism more broadly? In this essay, I will briefly survey of the “Turkish style” and its use in Classical repertoire; discuss its replacement by Hungarian-Gypsy style in the 19th century; and finally examine the inter-

esting juxtaposition of Turkish and Hungarian-Gypsy topics in two *fin-de-siècle* Central European operettas, one by the Austrian Johann Strauss Jr. and one by the Hungarian Jenő Huszka. The comparison of these works also occasions questions about the dividing line between exoticism and auto-exoticism, about the significance of references to both Turkish and Hungarian-Gypsy topics in the Central European cultural climate of this period, and about the role of operetta and popular culture generally in exploring the questions of identity occasioned by such references.

Scholars have found powerful tools for the analysis of emerging modernity in the consideration of, in the words of Timothy Taylor,

[...] the various ways that “the West” [...] has confronted, represented, and appropriated those whom it has taken to be, or constructed as, its Others [...] western European modernity is predicated on a conception of selfhood that was made in large part in reaction to Europe’s Others [...] Others (gendered, racialized, and classed) were no longer construed as existing on some sort of continuum with western subjects, but were instead forced into the subordinate half of a binary opposition. [...] binary oppositions are by far the most salient means by which modern western bourgeois subjects made, and continue to make, conceptions of racial, ethnic, and cultural difference. Simply put, it is because of difference that modern western people can know who they are. (Taylor, 2007, 8–9)

Alla Turca as Dramatic and Musical Style Marker

As with other forms of Orientalism, we find musical exoticism rising alongside colonial encounters and clashes with the rising Ottoman Empire. Beginning at the turn of the 17th century, court ballets in France featured “figures from the far reaches of the world – Turks, Persians, Ethiopians, Moors, (South) Americans, or ‘masques assez hideux et sauvages’ – [...] drawn by the fame of the *beautez* of the French court [and] recit[ing] verses in their praise” (Whaples, 1998, 6). All over Western Europe, exotic characters regularly peopled the stage throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. While many of these spectacles referred to no exotic individual in particular, the prominence of the Ottomans in the international politics of period gave Turkish references a charge that other “Oriental” character types lacked. For example, the performance of one particularly extravagant “Turkish spectacle” in 1670, the climax of Molière and Lully’s *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, followed the real-life spectacle of an extended confrontation between the Turkish sultan’s envoy and the French court the previous year (Whaples, 1998, 12–13).

“Turkish style” also became the first exotic sonic referent to appear in a broad range of Western European works, primarily because of the military success of the Ottoman Empire. Their armies were always accompanied by band music, featuring trumpets, shawms, and drums; when the music stopped, the soldiers stopped fighting. These *mehter* or Janissary bands also provided ceremonial music for certain occasions, notably including the entry of the Grand Envoy Mehmed Pasha into Vienna on June 8th, 1665. Such bands made enough of an impression that certain European leaders began to feature Turkish sounds in their bands: the band of the Croatian regiment in Dresden featured “Turkish pipes and drums” by 1650; Polish kings Jan III Sobieski and Augustus II had Turkish bands in their own retinues in the last quarter of the 17th century, Russian Empress Maria Ivanova imported one from Constantinople in 1725, and Prussian forces were accompanied by Turkish bands when they entered Vienna in 1741 and Prague in 1744 (Pirker, 2001, 802).

We have little direct evidence of the sound of these bands, but their wide popularity is well documented, and went far beyond military contexts. A carousel at the Württemberg court in 1617 included “Turkish pipes and drums” (Pirker, 2001, 802); in the late 18th century, “pianofortes began to appear with ‘Turkish’ stops that would [...] create maximum racket while playing”, and a festival celebrating the crown prince’s birthday in Hohenzirze in 1802 included Janissary band music for the peasants in the crowd (Bellman, 1993, 43; citing Spohr, 1961, 18–19, on Hohenzirze festival). “Turkishisms” cropped up frequently in European art music from the 17th to the 19th century as well, whether in works for solo keyboard (with or without “Turkish” stops), as in Mozart’s famous *Rondo alla turca*; symphony orchestra, as in the Symphony no. 100 of Haydn and the Overture to *Die Ruinen von Athen* and finale to Symphony no. 9 of Beethoven; or on the stage, from *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* through Jean-Philippe Rameau’s “Le turc généreux” (one of the scenes of his 1735 opera-ballet *Les indes galantes*) and Gluck’s *La rencontre imprévue* (1764), among many others.

The vivid sonic markers of the “Turkish style” made it immediately comprehensible to the ear: simple harmonies (sometimes colored by “wrong notes”), square march rhythms, and harsh sounds dominated by brass, double reeds, and plentiful percussion—bass drum, tambourines, cymbals, triangles. These harsh sounds and rhythms are likely the key to the popularity of this style, as they are what made it so different from the prevailing musical aesthetic of the period: “it produced a kind of stylized noisemaking that was in direct opposition to everything a[n] [...] elegant piece of European music was supposed to be” (Bellman, 1993, 42). They were also particularly suited to the stage, where stereotypical “Turkish” characters – “cruel barbarians, magnanimous tyrants, keepers of harems, clowns” (Whaples, 1998, 6) – were frequent sources of entertainment

throughout this period. While these characters often were from Turkey, composers and librettists came to use these musical and dramatic characteristics not only for Turks, but also for other non-Europeans: “‘Turkish’ music was the all-purpose ‘exotic’ music, and Turks the default foreign Others” (Taylor, 2007, 50).

One of the most enduring “Turkish operas”, using all of Whaples’ character types, with colorful “Turkish-style” music, and actually set in Turkey, is Mozart’s 1782 singspiel *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* [The Abduction from the Seraglio]. Turkish topics in general were in the air in Vienna in the early 1780s, a time when the Habsburg forces were in preparation for conflict – a conflict that finally arrived in the form of the Austro–Turkish War of 1787. Mozart indicated the centrality of Turkishness to *Entführung* in a letter to his father almost a year before its premiere, when he wrote “I intend to write the overture, the chorus in Act I, and the final chorus in the style of Turkish music” (Anderson, 1985, 755, cited by Taylor, 2007, 58). The first two and another Turkish number, a drinking duet for the second act between one of the European captives, Pedrillo, and the cruel but clownish harem guard, Osmin, were also among the first numbers he completed. Turkish style is also used at other strategic points throughout Mozart’s opera, both to define conflicts between the European protagonists and their “Oriental” captors and to provide humor. In correspondence with his father about his “Turkish” numbers, Mozart “invariably ma[de] mention of Viennese partiality for this style, a partiality that had received recent gratification at the Burgtheater with a revival of Gluck’s *Die unvermuthete Zusammenkunft, oder Die Pilgrime von Mekka* (originally *La rencontre imprévue*)” (Bauman, 1990, 69). *Entführung* turned out to be Mozart’s first great operatic success, performed all over Europe within Mozart’s short lifetime.

But as delightful as Mozart’s work was, emphatically including his ingenious use of “Turkish style” to comment on the characters, it also illustrates the limitations of that style. Defined by its “pounding” and “jangling” (Bellman, 1993, 42), *Alla turca* was inflexible in tempo and had no lyric mode. Its limitation is implied by the way it is distributed almost exclusively to “lower-class” characters. In *Entführung* the character Pasha Selim is an archetypical “magnanimous tyrant”; after trying unsuccessfully to convince the prima donna, Konstanze, to accept his advances, he beneficently allows her and her companions go. If he were a European character, he would have at least one if not two arias to express his emotions over this difficult decision, but here he does not even sing. His Turkishness bars him from the style of serious opera, but his elevated rank makes Turkish style inappropriate for him—it is only for the chorus and the comically barbaric Osmin.

Hungarian-Gypsy Style as the New Favored Exotic

Given the limitations of *Alla turca*, then, musical Europe was ripe for an alternative exotic topos, and in Central Europe, a musically potent internal European Other – the Hungarian Gypsy – was on the rise. The term “Hungarian-Gypsy music” encompasses two main genres of Hungarian entertainment music that became known as Hungary’s national music: *verbunkos* (from the German *Werbung*, or “recruiting”) and *magyar nóták* (Hungarian songs). *Verbunkos*, which several scholars have termed “the core of 19th century Hungarian national art music” (Pethő, 2000, 199), refers primarily to the Hungarian recruiting and social dance repertoire of the late 18th and 19th centuries, and it includes not only music for *verbunkos* dances taken from military recruiting practices from the 18th and early 19th centuries but also music for national couples’ dances that developed out of them. When these dances were first introduced to ballrooms they were known simply as “Magyar”, but a distinction soon developed between the *palotás* [palace-style] and *csárdás* [country inn-style]. David Schneider summarizes the military policies that led to the development of *verbunkos* to recruit Hungarian peasants into the Habsburg army, from the early 18th century to the institution of universal conscription in 1849 (after the fall of Hungary’s revolutionary government), and describes its musical characteristics in his *Bartók, Hungary, and the Renewal of Tradition* (Schneider, 2006, 17–25).

This Hungarian dance repertoire began to emerge from oral practice in the mid-18th century, with its first publications appearing in the 1780s. The style occurred in a range of tempi, most simply reduced to two distinct modes, *lassú* [slow] and *friss* [fast], with different characteristics. Slow pieces might fluctuate in tempo so much that they were less intended to be danced than to be listened to, thus in Hungarian they became known as *hallgató*; quick dances were much more regular in tempo. Contemporary sources describe a performance practice that progressed from slow to fast or alternated. The tempo variations of Hungarian-Gypsy style are all the more striking in comparison to Turkish style. Early manuscripts of Hungarian dance music indicate that other key stylistic features – unconventional chromaticism, in the form of the augmented second (an interval that, to Western ears, has come to be marked as “exotic” in numerous contexts) and a profusion of instrumental ornamentation – were already in place by the mid-18th century and associated with Gypsy musicians almost immediately.

For Hungarian listeners, Hungarian-Gypsy music was a homogenous symbol of the nation; in fact, by the middle of the 19th century, many believed that “the Hungarian soul [...] express[ed] itself in gypsy music” (Frigyesi, 1998, 55). The rhythms of this music emerged from both specific Hungarian dances and the Hungarian language (see Hooker, 2013, ch. 4); those composers who can be identified

were mainly (though not exclusively) ethnic Hungarians or assimilated, and the songs used Hungarian texts, usually with folklike style and nostalgic lyrics evoking a Hungarian past. For these reasons, most Hungarians understood the label “Gypsy music” as applying only to the race of the performers, not the origins or essence of the music. The performers of this music existed mainly to serve the Hungarian audience, and were to be judged on how well they did so. Already in 1791, a Hungarian musician criticized the Hungarian Gypsies’ musical excesses in print (Sarosi, 1978, 107).

But from the non-Hungarian perspective, there was little to no difference between “all’ongherese” and “alla zingarese”, to use the Italian tempo markings found in so many musical works from the 18th and 19th centuries. Few outside Hungary felt a burning need to make a distinction between the two. Mixed references to Hungarian literature and Gypsy stereotypes in an 1873 Milanese review of a performance of Liszt’s *Hungarian Fantasia* appeared to suggest that these labels became masculine and feminine versions of the same phenomenon:

This fantasia is certainly one of the most forceful compositions of the Gypsy-Abbé [zingaro-abate], and so is almost worthy of a place alongside the symphonic ode entitled *Hungaria*. It is as if it were a canto of the *Zrinyiad*, [or] a hymn by Timódi [*sic*]; Hungarian solemnity and Gypsy fire alternate in a fantastic way. In places it is as if we heard in the quiet that ensues after the cracking rhythms the languishing voice of a despondent Gypsy woman. (cited by Szerző, 1987, 249)

At least in Central Europe, the Hungarian-Gypsy now took up the role of all-purpose exotic that the Turkish style had played earlier. Carl Maria von Weber’s incidental music for the play *Preciosa* (1820), based on Cervantes’ *La gitanilla* [The Gypsy Girl], illustrates this principle dramatically, as the Spanish-Gypsy title character (though she was a non-Gypsy adoptee, the audience is not told this until well into the play) and her companions perform largely in Hungarian-Gypsy, not Spanish, style (see Bellman, 1993, 142–144). Bence Szabolcsi went so far as to claim that “it is increasingly obvious that for Haydn and his contemporaries Slavonic, Gypsy, Rumanian and Turkish music formed one single – mixed but scarcely divisible – complex” (quoted by Sárosi, 1978, 112). While Bellman argues that “the Turkish style and the *style hongrois* were understood as separate entities and could be used as such”, he also gives examples of several works from around the turn of the 19th century in which these styles were “combined in an undifferentiated mix” (1993, 60), as in the Rondo all’Ongarese finale (also known as the “Gypsy Rondo”) from Haydn’s Piano Trio in G major and the “Turkish” episode from the finale of Mozart’s Violin Concerto no. 5 in A Major (see Bellman, 1993, 49–60).

From the point of view of “authenticity”, such indiscriminate mixture is easy to criticize, and Hungarian critics past and present have done so (see e.g. Pethő 2000). But for participants in the elite musical culture of Western and Central Europe, at least in the 19th century, authenticity was not the main concern; they usually sought only an attractive strangeness. In that regard the Hungarian-Gypsy style was more than a match for the Turkish style. Where the Turkish style was likely to be described as “noisy” or “jangling”, the Hungarian-Gypsy style allowed for virtuosic expression that was more lyrical. Beyond the musical attractiveness of Hungarian-Gypsy style, its extramusical associations – “freedom with all its positive and negative implications” and “extremes of emotion inaccessible to normal people” – perfectly fit the ethos of the incipient Romantic era (Bellman, 1993, 92).

Stage Gypsies and the Continuation of Turkish Connections: Strauss and Huszka

The 19th century provides many wonderful examples of compositions using Hungarian-Gypsy style, both by such canonical non-Hungarian composers as Haydn, Beethoven, Weber, and Brahms and by Hungarian ones, from the all-but forgotten to Hungary’s best-known national composers of the period, Liszt and Erkel. We also find many Gypsies on the 19th-century lyric stage, led by Carmen, the title character of Bizet’s 1875 opéra-comique. Most of those stage Gypsies, including Carmen, are not from Central Europe but from Southern Europe: Carmen is a Spanish Gypsy in a work by a French composer, and the Italian Verdi uses two characters generally identified as Gypsies, Azucena and her band in *Il trovatore* (1853) and Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera* (1859) (the ethnicity of Ulrica, based on a minor figure in Swedish history, is not as clear as the others, but her profession, fortune-telling, marks her as Gypsy on the stage). Given these characters’ geographic origin, though, they are not marked with Hungarian-Gypsy style. The genre that brought that style into full flower on the stage was Central European operetta.

Compared to more “serious” genres in both the concert hall and the opera house, operetta has often been dismissed as kitsch, and has drawn relatively little scholarly attention until recently. Many musicians and critics working at the height of its popularity, however, embraced the genre. This is clearest in the case of Johann Strauss Jr. and his works: he counted many luminaries of the Viennese musical establishment, including composer Johannes Brahms, conductor Hans Richter, and critic Eduard Hanslick, as friends and supporters; Mahler conducted the first evening performance of *Die Fledermaus* at Vienna’s Court Opera; Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern arranged his waltzes for their Society for Private

Musical Performances; and Richard Strauss paid homage to his predecessor with the use of the waltz in his 1911 opera *Der Rosenkavalier*. As a “cultural practice popular at a time when musical and social issues were hotly debated”, operetta serves as a cultural document, revealing its public’s “concerns, prejudices, goals, and fears” (Crittenden, 2000, 2).

Strauss’s 1885 *Der Zigeunerbaron* is an outstanding example of such a document. On the one hand, its appealing “fairy-tale story of romance and adventure”, which made liberal use of Hungarian-Gypsy musical elements and gave producers broad scope for use of such additional audience-pleasing elements such as Hungarian national costume and dance, led to a great success in Vienna, Budapest, and beyond. On the other hand, despite the fact that it was set in Hungary, based on a story by Hungarian writer Mór Jókai, its perspective is “exclusively Austrian” (Crittenden, 2000, 170). Created almost two decades after the 1867 Compromise, at a time of urban expansion in both Vienna and Budapest and of escalating political and economic tensions, it “reveals long-standing national tensions within the divided empire” (idem).

The work narrates a supposed historical encounter between Hungarians, Gypsies, Austrians, and Turks in the Banát region around 1740. The title character of *Die Zigeunerbaron*, Sándor Barinkay, is the son of a Hungarian nobleman who had fought alongside Rákóczi in the kuruc rebellion. (Jókai originally dubbed the character Jonás Botsinkay, but that name was changed since it was judged “scarcely pronounceable by foreign tongues” (editor’s notes to Jókai, 1971, 152).) When the Ottomans were expelled and the kuruc rebellion had been put down by the Habsburgs, the Barinkay family went into exile in Turkey. As the operetta opens, Sándor Barinkay returns to his ancestral lands, encountering Zsupán, a Hungarian pig farmer who has taken over the property, as well as a band of Gypsies who are camped there, led by an attractive and mysterious young woman, Saffi, and her mother, Czipra. Barinkay is escorted by an Austrian official, Carnero, who informs those living there that Barinkay has been “reinstated to the land and rights of his father by a decree of Her Majesty the Empress”, that is Maria Theresa (Strauss, 1951, 6).

In order to smooth over conflict with Zsupán, Barinkay proposes to marry his daughter, Arsena; but Arsena states that she will not accept Barinkay unless he can provide proof of his nobility. Her reason is that she is secretly in love with Ottokar, her governess’s son – whose long-lost father, it turns out, is Carnero, separated from his wife and infant son during the 1717 Battle of Belgrade. But Barinkay is furious at the demand from a pig farmer’s daughter that he justify himself. Meanwhile, the Gypsies pledge their loyalty to Barinkay as their hereditary lord and declare him their own “Gypsy baron.” This does not satisfy Arsena’s demand, so Barinkay declares he prefers the Gypsy girl Saffi, and they spend the night together, “married” by forest birds, to the shock of Carnero as Commis-

sioner of Morals. A bit later, Czipra reveals that Saffi is not actually her child, but rather was entrusted to her secretly. A document reveals that Saffi is actually the true daughter of the last Pasha of Temesvár – that is, a real Ottoman princess. Barinkay, who thought he was ennobling a humble Gypsy girl, suddenly feels unworthy of his bride; he thus feels he must leave until he proves himself her equal through military service. He joins the Hussars in a grand recruiting scene. (In Jókai's original, the hero joins up out of sheer patriotism, and does not break with Saffi; this break over class difference was introduced by Strauss' librettist to increase dramatic tension (Crittenden, 2000, 201).) When Barinkay returns as a decorated hero, he and Saffi are reunited and plan a legitimate marriage, to follow up on the earlier, less formal one.

“National” style of every sort is key both to *Der Zigeunerbaron*'s theatrical impact and to its view of the relative position of different nationalities. The presentation of Arsena as Barinkay's potential bride in Act I, the military recruiting scene in the finale to Act II, and the victorious entrance march at the beginning of Act III provide opportunities for production numbers with attractive national costumes, dancing, and scenery. In a letter to his librettist, Ignaz Schnitzer, Strauss described his vision of the Act III introduction thus:

Around 80 to 100 soldiers (on foot and horseback). Market women in Spanish, Hungarian, and Viennese costume, *Volk*, children with bushes and flowers – which they strew before the soldiers returning home, etc. etc. [...] it must be an impressive scene, since this time we want to imagine an *Austrian* military and *Volk* in a *joyful* mood about a victorious conquest! (quoted by Crittenden, 2000, 174; emphasis in original)

Strauss's notes on this scene demonstrate how *Zigeunerbaron* was to present “a seductive argument for Austrian hegemony [of the various nationalities] under the Habsburg crown”; a re-creation of history acts as entertaining pageant, serving to “rouse enthusiasm among performers and audience for the existing empire and its elegant capital” (Crittenden, 2000, 170, 175). The happy ending confirms the political status quo.

Though contrasts between West and East are central to these effects, the “authenticity”, musical or otherwise, of depictions of various nationalities is beside the point. Rather, ethnic characterization is one instrument in Strauss and Schnitzer's depiction of the power structure. András Batta has written how

[t]he csárdás represents the alignment to the East, the waltz to the West, one is national, the other internationally oriented. [...] The csárdás represents the village, [...] feudalistic, dominated by the long-established nobility and peasantry. The waltz is a domain of the city, the cosmopolitan and industrial center [...] (1992, 152–3)

While I agree overall with Batta's assessment of the contrast between the roles of the Hungarian csárdás and the Viennese waltz in operetta, the opposition he depicts this does not quite capture the power imbalance between the two. *Der Zigeunerbaron* illustrates this imbalance in the distinctly Austrian vantage point Strauss and Schnitzer use throughout, and in the way they blurred the line between their various Others, be they Hungarian, Gypsy, or Turkish. Right from the beginning of the show, Barinkay's costume is described in the original libretto as "half oriental, half Hungarian"; though he is linked by birthright to the old Hungarian aristocracy, a group who were so often decidedly Western in their outlook, Barinkay, as he relates in his entrance aria (the first aria in the show), has been traveling around making his living in professions that "contemporary urban audiences would readily have ascribed [...] to Gypsies" – entertaining as an acrobat, sword-swallower, animal-tamer, magician, and fortune-teller (Crittenden, 2000, 181). Another alteration from Jókai's original story shows Strauss and Schnitzer's Austrian point of view: Jókai sends Botsinkay back to his estate to reunite with Saffi; Strauss and Schnitzer's version sets that reunion in Vienna, where both can also join the celebration of the Austrians' military victory.

Strauss' score is also predominantly Austrian in its musical language. The overall aesthetic of the work, its "neutral" mode, is the common-practice tonal language of the "panromanogermanic mainstream" (Taruskin, 1997, 48); the Viennese waltz is used for a number of non-Austrian characters, including for Hungarian Barinkay, in his entrance aria just described, and for Barinkay along with Gypsies Saffi and Czipra, in the "Treasure Waltz" from Act II that became one of the show's biggest hits.

"Exotic" sounds are interspersed in various places, certainly more than in most of Strauss' operettas, but more to add color than to give an accurate depiction of a given character's sound based on ethnicity. The most prominent such "exotic" style in the show is the Hungarian-Gypsy style, illustrating both Hungarian and Gypsy character types. The recruiting scene that ends Act II is meant to be stereotypically Hungarian, with its rousing militarism and call to fight for the honor of the Fatherland. Saffi's entrance aria, labeled "Zigeunerlied" [Gypsy song], includes a short list of Gypsy stereotypes in its text, led by stealing of horses and children, and a longer list of musical traits of the Hungarian-Gypsy style: use of "Hungarian rhythms" and the minor mode with that "exotic" augmented second, a slow and flexible opening followed by a quick dance-like second part, and a profusion of instrumental ornamentation, particularly in the violins.

But the Hungarian-Gypsy style is not the only "exotic" mode used in *Der Zigeunerbaron*: the Turkish style also plays an important part. The first appearance of this style is in the form of simple tone-painting, when Mirabella, Arsena's governess and Carnero's long-lost wife, relates the dramatic story of how she and

the infant Ottokar were swept up in the Battle of Belgrade, with comically noisy Turkish-style percussion in the accompaniment to depict the conflict between Habsburgs and Ottomans. More significantly, the Gypsy characters are at times marked by Turkish rather than Hungarian-Gypsy style. The fast section of Saffi's "Zigeunerlied" uses not only numerous Hungarian-Gypsy markers but also triangles and cymbals, which may be heard as "Turkish percussion". We might interpret this sonic reference as a hint of Saffi's true identity, which is not revealed until much later; but another number, for the entire Gypsy chorus, makes an even stronger connection between stage Gypsies and Turkish musical elements. In the "Anvil chorus" in Act II scene 2, the chorus sings about the Gypsies' blacksmithing work. This number bears a strong resemblance in form, harmonic design, and instrumentation to Verdi's "Chi del gitano i giorni abbella" from the 1853 *Il trovatore* – a number also known as the "Anvil Chorus". In both choruses the Gypsies celebrate their carefree life in the out-of-doors; only Strauss' Gypsies are more patriotic, as they shift from forging items of daily use (keys, nails, knives) to making swords for the defense of the homeland. The straightforward duple meter and heavy percussion evoke the Turkish style so popular in the previous century. It appears that like Verdi, Mozart, Haydn, and other "mainstream" composers before him, Strauss found it less important to make a distinction between varieties of Oriental than to create an entertaining variety of sounds.

Where Hungarians, Gypsies, and Turks were all merely variations on the Other to Strauss and his audience, the distinctions between them could be much more important for a Hungarian composer. Operetta composer Jenő Huszka (1875–1960) is little remembered outside Hungary; his operettas appear to have been translated seldom if at all, and to have attracted only scanty commentary, and only in Hungarian. I would argue that it warrants more attention, though, not only because of its charm but also because of the interesting ways he deals musically with competing identities in at least two works on opposite ends of his career. *Mária főhadnagy* [Lieutenant Mária], from 1942, tells a lighthearted version of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848 from the point of view of a Hungarian girl who leaves Vienna, where she has been raised, to join Kossuth's army; the contrast between Hungarian and Austrian identities, in both high- and low-class versions and in rich musical variety, is central to the tale. *Gül baba*, from 1905, is even more complex, and offers an interesting comparison to *Zigeunerbaron*, as like that work it introduces Turkish and Gypsy elements in addition to Hungarian and Austrian ones. The significance of this mixture was recognized by a critic writing about a Szeged production in 1906: "in its music, it is always something in common [közös] from the Hungarian and the Oriental" (Sándor, 1995, 35). While not enjoying the international success of *Zigeunerbaron*, *Gül baba* has been revived repeatedly in Hungary, has been made into at least three different film versions, and spawned a few different hit songs that are still regularly performed.

The historical Gül baba, as many Hungarianists know, was an Ottoman Bektashi dervish poet and companion of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent who took part in a number of Ottoman military campaigns in Europe. He arrived in Buda in 1541 and died there in August of that year, either in the fighting below the city walls right before the Ottoman victory or in the first Muslim ceremony held after the victory. Suleiman, as not only Sultan but Caliph (temporal and spiritual head of Islam), declared Gül baba the patron saint of Buda and reportedly served as one of his coffin bearers. The Ottoman authorities in Buda erected a monumental tomb for him between 1543 and 1548 in what is now known as Rózsadomb – Rose Hill – because of the reputation of the Turks for planting roses, a practice linked to Gül baba himself: his name is often translated as “Father of Roses” (probably not accurately). The tomb then became a pilgrimage site. After serving as a Jesuit chapel after the expulsion of the Ottomans from Hungary, it again became a site of Muslim pilgrimage; the Turkish government funded restorations of the site around 1882, around World War I, and in the 1990s (see Gül Baba Türbe és rózsakert). Gül baba thus continued to hold affection or at least respect in Hungary long after the end of Ottoman rule there, despite the devastating effects of the occupation overall. As Iván Bertenyi writes in his contribution to this volume, the late 19th century also saw an improved regard for Ottoman Turkey among the Hungarian public, in part because the Ottomans had offered refuge to Kossuth.

Hungarians’ improved opinion of the Ottomans is reflected in Huszka’s operetta and in its variety of musical depictions. The curtain opens on a chorus of “Orientals”, but it is not a raucous military chorus but a chorus of pilgrims, singing pianissimo, bringing roses to the Father of the Roses, followed by (a simplistic rendition of) the Muslim call to prayer. We then meet in short succession Gül baba’s daughter Leila, singing a Viennese waltz; the suitor she is expected to marry, the tyrannical Ali Pasha, who wants her to be his 137th wife; and the Hungarian student-minstrel Gábor, seeking to present a rose to Leila (whom he had glimpsed briefly), accompanied by Mujkó, a Gypsy violinist. Gábor and Mujkó are shortly arrested by a clanging chorus of Turks for plucking Allah’s holy roses. In the extended confrontation that follows, the loud Turkish style (with the expected percussion) of the captors alternates with two different musical markers for Gábor: Hungarian-Gypsy style (*verbunkos* and *hallgató*), accompanied by Mujkó, as he introduces himself to his captors, and Viennese waltz as he offers the stolen rose to Leila, even while in chains. Ali Pasha sentences Gábor and Mujkó to death for this offense, but Gül baba offers to grant them one final wish. Gábor asks to be dressed in fine clothing and allowed to see his beloved again in the “heaven beyond the railing” – that is, in the harem, where men are forbidden to go. Mujkó asks to accompany him (with violin). Gül baba mercifully, improbably, and over Ali Pasha’s objections, grants their wish.

Within the harem, the women dance and then Leila leads a chorus of her father's wives and female slaves in a waltz inflected with "Oriental" intervals; the wives then debate the relative merits of being a Turkish woman or a Hungarian woman. Shortly after the entrance of the "Hungarian heroes", Gábor and Leila exchange songs: he sings of the magical atmosphere of the harem, then she sings a plaintive song about the "fate of the Turkish woman", who may live a luxurious life but may not hope for true love (Huszka and Martos, 1906, 74–7). Then Gábor introduces the residents to wine with a rousing drinking song and sings a passionate duet with Leila, while Mujkó fends off the advances of one of Gül baba's older, uglier wives. Mujkó's wife and children are admitted to take leave from him, a meeting that is both heartfelt and full of comic references to "Gypsy" stereotypes – from work-shyness, fortune-telling, and theft of livestock to musicality and love of nature; Mujkó offers as his only legacy to his family a silver button and the *hallgató nóta* "Darumadár fenn az égen" [Crane up in the sky] (Huszka and Martos, 1906, 89–90). They all go back to Ali Pasha to plead for the prisoners' release; in exchange for Leila agreeing to marry him, he appears to grant this request, but then reaffirms the execution order. Leila pleads with her father again to save the prisoners from their fate, and is joined by the both the women of the harem and their guards. As part of his effort to do that, Gül baba destroys the entire rose garden, weeping. When this destruction is discovered a loud chorus laments it "Turkish-style" (complete with clanging percussion); but Gül baba declares that for Allah, human life is more important than flowers, even holy flowers. The destruction of the garden is his final, successful argument to release Gábor and Mujkó. He bids Gábor and Leila to live happily together, and he envisions a future when "the roses will bloom again above [his] crumbling bones" (Martos, 1921, 24). His voice fades away, perhaps suggesting his impending death, and the setting shifts to a brief pantomimed epilogue in "present-day" Buda, showing a young Hungarian couple placing roses on the site of Gül baba's tomb, with a Gypsy violinist (Mujkó in modern dress) sitting and playing next to the grave.

This lengthy summary gives a sense of the interplay between both character types and musical topics in this operetta. The plot, of course, is packed with Orientalisms, and the music also owes much to the conventions of "exotic" music and characters, but with some key differences. Like Mozart's *Entführung*, *Gül baba* features a savage Turk, Ali Pasha, who along with certain choruses uses the Turkish style; also like *Entführung*, it includes a "generous Turk", the title character, who like Mozart's Pasha Selim does not sing much. Despite the fact that he has few solos, though, Gül baba has his own musical marker independent of the Turkish style: the Pilgrims' Chorus, which occurs not only at the opening of the entire work but also during the climactic destruction of the rose garden. An opera fan's first association with this name is the Pilgrims' Chorus from *Tannhäuser* by

Richard Wagner, one of the most prominent and prestigious composers in the panromanogermanic mainstream. Musically Huszka's Pilgrim's Chorus differs substantially from Wagner's: it is in duple rather than triple meter, and its harmony is not as complex. Still its weighty tone endows both the believers who sing it and Gül baba himself, the character for whom they have embarked on their pilgrimage in the first place, with a sense of pious dignity that is certainly far closer to the aesthetic of Wagner's chorus than to that of Mozart's Chorus of the Janissaries and that, furthermore, has been granted to few Muslim characters in all of opera.

Not surprisingly in the work of a Hungarian composer, it is in the role of Hungarian music that we find the clearest departure from the place traditionally allotted that music in Western European repertoire. Hungarian-Gypsy style is the "native language" of the Hungarian male protagonist, Gábor the student, and his musically potent Gypsy companion. Gábor, as a romantic protagonist, is fluent not only in Hungarian-Gypsy style but in the waltz, the first "language of love" in Central European operetta; this is also one of the main musical topics used by his Turkish love interest, Leila, even if she and her female companions sometimes speak it with a "foreign accent" ("Oriental" chromaticism). Unlike in Strauss's *Zigeunerbaron*, there is no confusion in Huszka's work in the relative roles of Hungarians and Gypsies: where Sándor Barinkay (whose own identity is a bit muddled) appears to cross racial and class lines to marry Saffi, Gábor the Hungarian student is the romantic lead, pursuing the daughter of a saint, while Mujkó the Gypsy violinist serves as musical support – he is told "Play, Gypsy!" [Húzd rá, cigány!] several times in the 1921 libretto – and as comic relief. His love interests in the show – both the older, uglier wife of Gül baba who pursues him in the harem or his (Gypsy) wife who appears with their children to plead for his life – are appropriately "low-class" and played comically rather than romantically.

The comparison between *Gypsy Baron* and *Gül baba* brings forth interesting issues in the division between the use of Hungarian-Gypsy style as exoticism versus its use as national style. Where composers like Strauss, working at the center of the Western art music tradition, could lump various Others together, composers from the periphery struggled with how both to participate in the musical life of the center and to differentiate themselves – to define their musical "native costume", without which "a 'peripheral' composer would never achieve even secondary canonical rank", but with which "he could never achieve more" (Taruskin, 2001, 700). Other scholars have argued that artists from the "belated national schools of poorer and/or more subjugated countries" are particularly susceptible to auto-exoticism – in the words of James Parakilas, "as a political plight, as a psychological condition, as an artistic dilemma" (1998, 189) – and, I might add, for the highly commercial genre of operetta, as marketing strategy. In *Gül baba*, Huszka depicts the external Other, the Turk; the internal Other, the Gypsy; and the self-as-other,

the Hungarian. Huszka's basic vocabulary of music-stylistic referents is at root very similar to Strauss', but the fact that the Hungarian is the protagonist raises the political, psychological, and artistic stakes of the nuances Huszka offers his different character types.

Gábor the Hungarian student is the character with whom the audience is most encouraged to identify, not just through the plot but also through his music, as he moves easily from *verbunkos* to waltz. It was likely Gábor's character of whom a Szeged critic was thinking when he wrote in a review of *Gül baba* that "its romantic music is ever Hungarian. It has in it vigor and, if you please, manly strength [virtus]. Because this is the characteristic feature of the Hungarian: manly strength" (cited by Sándor 1995, 35). But Huszka's score also makes a musical case for the universality of the title Turkish character, a dervish who is accompanied not by an anvil chorus but by a quasi-Wagnerian one, and the Gypsy musician character, Mujkó, who not only plays the violin but sings a plaintive farewell song in the musical dialect of his audience. (This song was seen as important enough that the 1940 film version of *Gül baba* took it away from Mujkó and gave it to the romantic lead, played by Hungarian film idol Pál Jávör.)

Kálmán versus Huszka: Exoticism and Auto-exoticism and Translatability in Silver Age Operetta

In the decades leading up to the time of Huszka, many in the Hungarian art music world were frustrated at the lack of success, both domestically and internationally, of Hungarian composers, and they struggled with problems of auto-exoticism as they debated the state of Hungarian art music, the place of Hungarian-Gypsy musical motifs, and the role of Gypsiness in Hungarian music (Hooker, 2013, ch. 3–4). Whereas in the 19th century most Hungarian musicians saw those Hungarian-Gypsy motifs as defining Hungarian folk style and as the only available basis for national composition, beginning right around the time of *Gül baba*, Bartók and Kodály (who, like Huszka, studied composition with Hans/János Koessler at the Academy of Music), along with other members of their circle, branded Hungarian-Gypsy music as "inauthentic"; they promoted new sources for national style, primarily the more archaic music of the rural peasantry. Bartók and Kodály were quite successful in the world of "serious" music, both nationally and internationally, although their audience in their time was a fraction of that for the commercial theater, and the force of their rhetoric combined with their critical success eventually broke the symbolic legitimacy of Hungarian-Gypsy music, relegating it forever after to the "merely" popular realm.

In that realm, where broad immediate appeal trumped questions of "authenticity", Hungarian-Gypsy style continued to reign well into the 20th century, along-

side other international popular styles—not only the waltz but also styles derived from ragtime and early jazz, such as the cakewalk. The division of popular music along national, racial, and ethnic lines meant that there, too, concerns about identity and dilemmas posed by issues of exoticism and auto-exoticism were inescapable. A brief comparison between the careers of Huszka and his slightly younger contemporary, Imre Kálmán (1882–1953), illustrates how these two Hungarian composers had to deal with the “exotic” expectations of their foreign, particularly Viennese, audience and patrons. Both Huszka and Kálmán were born in the provinces (Huszka in Szeged, Kálmán in Siófok) and moved as young men to Budapest, where they both studied composition with Koessler at the Academy of Music. Both had early theatrical successes in Budapest big enough to bring their works not only to the other capital of the Dual Monarchy, Vienna, but also elsewhere in Europe. Though Kálmán and Huszka were both “authentic representative[s] of Hungarian operetta,” however, their first works—Kálmán’s *Tatárjárás* [Tatar Action, known in English as Autumn Maneuvers or The Gay Hussars] (1908), a military-themed comedy with thoroughly civilized characters, and Huszka’s *Bob herceg* [Prince Bob], featuring a prince romancing a commoner in England—were “inadequate exemplar[s] of what the Viennese” and other non-Hungarians “believed to be the Hungarian spirit” (Baranello, 2013), and neither remained in the repertoire outside Hungary. Kálmán relocated to Vienna in 1910 and premiered most of his subsequent operettas there in German, with a Hungarian version following in Budapest a few months later. According to Micaela Baranello,

[i]t was in *Der Zigeunerprimás*, composed three years [after *Tatárjárás* – that is in 1911], that Kálmán found his stride in Vienna. If audiences wanted Hungarian fire, he seemed to decide, that was what he would provide, and as a true Hungarian he could do it better than a mere Austrian. (2013, 4)

In *Zigeunerprimás*, Kálmán and his librettist created an interesting amalgam: he used the now “outdated character types” of “Gypsy operetta”, in a modern, realistic-feeling setting that poked fun at those types. Musically this strategy allowed him to “have his cake and eat it too” – there were ample opportunities to use the Hungarian-Gypsy style the Viennese audience appeared to expect as the style of the title character, an aging *primás* (Gypsy violinist and bandleader) played by the legendary Viennese comic actor Alexander Girardi, “the living symbol of nineteenth-century operetta” (Baranello, 2013, 5), while using more modern styles, from quasi-operatic lyricism to modern ragtime-y dance numbers, for younger characters, including Gypsies. The cosmopolitanism (both dramatic and music-stylistic) found in Kálmán’s *Zigeunerprimás* score continues to be a feature of Kálmán’s later shows, as titles like *Das Hollandweibchen* (1920), *Die Herzogin*

von Chicago (1928), *Das Veilchen von Montmartre* (1930), and *Arizona Lady* (1954) suggest. His most popular works, *Die Csárdásfürstin*, AKA *A csárdáskirálynő* [in English, *The Csárdás Princess*, *The Gypsy Princess*, or *The Riviera Girl*] (1915) and *Gräfin Mariza* (1924), are marked by an almost jazzy use of the Hungarian-Gypsy style alongside tuneful waltzes and cakewalks.

Meanwhile, international performances of Huszka's *Bob herceg* did not translate into an international career for its composer. One reason may be simply that he did not want one. After a spell making a living as a violinist in France, Huszka's main occupation at the turn of the 20th century was as an advisor in the Vallás- és Közoktatásügyi Minisztérium (Ministry of Religion and Public Education); his compositional activities took second place to that. He was also a leader in the struggle for composers' intellectual property rights in Hungary, in his service as president both of the Magyar Zeneszerzők, Szövegírók és Zeneműkiadók Szövetkezete (Association of Hungarian Composers, Lyricists, and Music Publishers) and Szerzők Mechanikai Jogait Védő Rt. (Protector of Authors' Mechanical Rights Inc.) (Gál, 2010, 74). He did not move to Vienna as Kálmán did but instead continued to live in Budapest; he did not even attend the German-language premiere of *Bob*, even though the producer at Theater an der Wien, Vilmos/Wilhelm Karczag, sent him a train ticket and reserved him an "outstanding" hotel room (Gál, 2010, 92). Huszka's snub of one of the most prominent theater producers in Vienna, and a fellow Hungarian at that, could not have helped his prospects beyond Hungary.

Huszka's choice of plots also appeared to be difficult to translate for non-Hungarian audiences. *Gül baba* is a good example: I have located no published translation of the show, even into German. The greatest barrier, I believe, is not the language but the plot, as this operetta depends on at least a cursory knowledge of Hungary's Ottoman period to be fully appreciated. *Mária főhadnagy* similarly relies at least in part on both the historical knowledge and the patriotic sentiment that a Hungarian audience brings to the story of the 1848 Revolution. A non-Hungarian audience could be entertained by these shows' tunefulness and emotional and musical catholicity, but understanding the specific contexts of shows like these may require too much "work" for light entertainment. Where Kálmán managed to appeal to his non-Hungarian audience with a deft combination of exotic stereotype and genuine-feeling and contemporary characters (for the frivolous and not-very-realistic world of operetta, anyway), Huszka, from the evidence available at this time, did not try to do so. He chose rather to compose national entertainment music almost exclusively in Hungarian for a Hungarian audience. Further research will surely reveal more.

Exoticism, and auto-exoticism, continued to act as stock-in-trade for popular musical theater not only in Central Europe but in the United States, from the first flowering of Broadway to the present day. In his *The Fortune Teller* (1898),

Irish-American composer Victor Herbert transferred the Hungarian-Gypsy style to Broadway in such unsubtle “Gypsy-Hungarian” numbers as a hussar chorus, and “Gypsy Love Song” (“Slumber On, My Little Gypsy Sweetheart”), and “Romany Life” (Traubner, 2003, 369). Herbert took the confusion between Hungarian and Gypsy to absurd lengths, as this excerpt from the text of “Romany Life” illustrates:

Dance, ye Magyars, dance away!
Sing, Zigeuner, while ye may!
Through the forests wild and free
Sounds our Magyar melody. [...]
None so gay as we! Éljen!
(Herbert, 2011, CD booklet, 11)

Herbert’s work illustrates how “the once-powerful Gypsy stereotype [had been] sanitized [into] a bland and largely unthreatening Other, a thoroughly prescribed kind of freedom, to produce a wholly prescribed and inoffensive exoticism” (Bellman, 1993, 217). Not only had this type been overused and sanitized, it also referred to a people who were largely unknown to the New World audience. After the turn of the century, Broadway composers largely turned elsewhere for their exoticisms. To mention just a few examples, Hungarian-Jewish-American Sigmund Romberg placed his 1926 *The Desert Song* in French-colonial Algeria, drawing not only on the news from that region but also the craze for Rudolph Valentino’s film *The Sheik* (1921) and its sequel; this setting allowed for an exploitation of the sexual allure of the harem that Huszka had also used in *Gül baba*. Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *South Pacific* (1949) combined the allure of exotic Polynesian décor and women with a mild exploration of the racial problems that romancing such women might create. African-American vernacular music had the greatest impact in 20th-century American popular music and culture, from ragtime and blues through rock and roll to hip-hop. Nowhere near all of that impact has been due to the Otherness of that music—in fact, many Americans, both with and without African ancestry, think of the legacy of these genres simply as American. Yet historically the reception of these genres is frequently colored by racial difference.

Conclusions

The word “kitsch” sums up much of the sentiment that has allowed for the dismissal of operetta as a genre. In fact Central Europe’s Silver Age operetta is an ideal exemplar of that almost-indefinable term: we might see it as

a decadent form of romantic music [...] musical kitsch has pretensions to big emotions, to “significance” [...] [there is a] sense that

[works labeled as kitsch] are somehow mechanical, calculated, “manufactured”. (Dahlhaus, 1980, 12)

On the one hand, operetta is “trivial music”, a “mass product”, and “in order not to disturb comfortable pleasure, it must not transcend the limits of the familiar. Yet at the same time it needs to be conspicuous in order to stand out and stick in memory” (Dahlhaus, 2004, 355). The growth of ambition among the Silver Age’s formally trained composers, like Huszka and Kálmán, were key to the revival of the genre of operetta, which had found itself in a lull after the passing of Strauss and Offenbach; yet their works were often subjected to intense criticism as they searched for both hit songs and a “rousing and high-flown” (Dahlhaus, 1980, 12) profundity that might compete with the works of some of their conservatory classmates. In its own time, influential Viennese critic Karl Kraus derided the first great success of Silver Age operetta, Franz/Ferenc Lehár’s *Die lustige Witwe* (1905), for “open[ing] the floodgates for a succession of sentimental, materialist works that neglected the social satire he considered the essential function of true operetta” (Baranello, n. d., 37). Twentieth-century musicology followed Kraus’ critique and generally dismissed the genre as mass-produced kitsch.

Such preconceptions, held by many music scholars and critics, are hard to refute entirely given the heavy use of convention in operetta, from the recurrence of dance genres like the waltz to formulaic plots to the reliance on exotic settings and musical styles. Yet when we look at these works and their reception in detail, it is clear that they are more than mere commodities, and they are a particularly rich field for the Hungarianist. The fissures between the Viennese and the Budapest versions of operettas, and operetta industries offer a fascinating look at Hungarian composers considering what it means to be Hungarian, and for whom.

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STATE AND GOVERNANCE IN THE PRINCIPALITY OF TRANSYLVANIA

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This study offers a brief survey of the Transylvanian state and the administrative structure of the Principality of Transylvania. First, it reveals the changes taking place in the operation of the Transylvanian diet after the fall of Buda (1541) – this authority developed from a partial diet into a general assembly. The formula used until 1690 by the assembly of the Transylvanian estates for naming itself had settled by the mid-16th century: states and orders of the three nations of Transylvania and of the Joined Parts of Hungary (status et ordines trium nationum regni Transylvaniae Partiumque Hungariae eidem annexarum). The author describes the unique legal status of the new state, the Principality of Transylvania as a “dual dependence”. On the one hand, as a vassal state, the Transylvanian state depended upon the Ottoman Empire, and on the other, in theory, it remained part of the Kingdom of Hungary – as was proclaimed in several public or secret agreements between the princes and the kings. The study shows how the estates could practice their right of free election of the prince and the difficulties of the method, it also discusses the peculiarities of the division of power between the estates and the prince, and it considers the union (treaty of alliance) of the Transylvanian estates as the constitution of the new state.

Keywords: Principality of Transylvania, state and governance, general assembly, estates of Transylvania, unions, legal status

The split of the middle power, the five-hundred-year-old Kingdom of Hungary after the battle of Mohács was a process with many internal conflicts. The dual royal election of 1526 had always implied the possibility of the some-day division of the country if none of the kings would be able to remove the other from power.

The Treaty of Várad signed by the Hungarian kings Ferdinand I (of Habsburg) and John I Szapolyai in 1538 was considered a temporary solution by the contemporaries as it offered a good chance of the unification of the country under Ferdinand I after John I's death. However, the unpublished treaty could not come into force as following the death of John I, the struggle for the Hungarian throne and for the whole Kingdom of Hungary went on. Only the persons of the competitors changed: the elected Hungarian King John Sigismund had to face first

Ferdinand and then from 1564 his son, the Hungarian King Maximilian I. The eastern Hungarian territories under John Sigismund's control, which could indisputably be considered as being an Ottoman sphere of influence, opposed the western kingdom ruled by the Habsburgs (Makkai, 1944; Barta, 1979). The separation of the two territories became final in the Treaty of Speyer. It declared that the name of the territory having seceded from the Kingdom of Hungary was the Principality of Transylvania.

A New Country in Making? A Parliament to Be Set Up

The formation of the new state in the eastern territory can be easily traced with the help of the local history of the parliament. When Transylvania was a province of the Kingdom of Hungary only partial diets (*congregatio particularis*) had been convoked whose functions and jurisdiction had been more limited than those of general assemblies (*congregation generalis*).

The diet in the seceded Transylvanian part transformed in function relatively early, in the first half of the 1540s. The estates quickly and smoothly claimed the spheres of authority formerly having been exercised exclusively by the assemblies held in the motherland. Tracing this internal development, one can see how a new constitutional order, a new country was born under the adverse external circumstances (Oborni, 2004).

Imre Mikó termed the diet of Torda (Turda) started on March 29th 1542 a constituent and state organising assembly in 1859, and considered it as a historical moment "that can be regarded as the starting point of the national era of the principality" (Mikó, 1860, 78). And indeed, the acts pointing to a new statehood were first introduced at that meeting.

The Transylvanian estates started to form their own country from the inside at the assemblies held between 1542 and 1544 within the framework determined by the external pressure. These assemblies levied taxes, passed laws and established the governmental bases for not only Transylvania but also for all the territories controlled by Isabella and John Sigismund. The estates did not carry out their elective function in the proper sense of the word, but they recognised the ruler appointed by the Porte and they swore allegiance to him several times. They did it first at the diet held in December 1542 as the queen's secretary, Antal Verancsics noted: "we have decided to make the late king's son prince, to pay tax to the Porte and to ask Ferdinand not to put us in danger if he cannot help us and let us look after ourselves" (Szilágyi, 1875, 172).

The parliamentary and feudal structure of Transylvania developed fully at the diet of Torda (Turda) opened on August 1st 1544 when the nobles from the coun-

ties east of the River Tisza (Arad, Békés, Bihar, Csanád, Csongrád, Külső-Szolnok, Temes and Zaránd) (Lukinich, 1918, 53–4) who had participated in the Transylvanian assemblies several times, declared that they would accept Isabella's reign, want to belong to this part of the country and take part in the Transylvanian assemblies (Szilágyi, 1875, 190; Benkő, 1791, 49).

The formula used until 1690 by the assembly of the Transylvanian estates for naming itself had settled by the mid-16th century: states and orders of the three nations of Transylvania and of the Joined Parts of Hungary (*status et ordines trium nationum regni Transylvaniae Partiumque Hungariae eidem annexarum*) (Szilágyi, 1875, 189).

The next step of the development of the new state was the organisation of the government in 1556–57 after Isabella and John Sigismund's return from Poland. The estates of Transylvania and Queen Isabella controlling the reorganisation drew on the traditional Hungarian institutional structure and organised her country on the model of it. The Treaty of Speyer signed in 1570–71, on the one hand, crowned the several-decade-long development of the state, and on the other, it cemented the relationship with the Kingdom of Hungary. When the border warfare came to an end in the 1560s, John Sigismund and the Hungarian king Maximilian I entered into discussions about the constitutional legal status of Transylvania. The Treaty signed in December 1570 was the first one to recognise the birth of a new state having been formed from the eastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary that was independent from the Kingdom but still belonged to it.

The treaty declared that John Sigismund renounced the title “elected king” (*electus rex*) and used the following title instead: His majesty, Prince John, son of the late King John, king of Hungary, Dalmatia, Croatia, etc., Prince John, by the Grace of God, of Transylvania and Parts of Hungary (*Princeps Transylvaniae et Partium regni Hungariae*). However, he had the right to use the royal title in his letters addressed to the Porte. It was also stated that the prince and his descendants could peacefully possess Transylvania and the Partium as free princes (*tamquam liberi principes*) with all the rights free princes had (passing judgements, executing laws and granting estates), nevertheless, they did not have the right to alienate (only to put in pledge) the properties belonging to the Holy Crown by law of succession because only the king could dispose over them henceforth (Makkai, 1991).

If the prince died without offspring, Transylvania would lapse to the king of Hungary as a true and inseparable part (*tamquam verum et inseparabile membrum*) of the empire. His majesty, the prince and his descendants had to recognise the emperor and the king as head of the whole Christendom, the king of Hungary and a person superior to them, and had to declare Transylvania and the Partium members of the Kingdom of Hungary (*pro membro Regni Hungariae*). If

the prince or his descendants lost Transylvania in any way, the Hungarian king would compensate them with the Silesian principalities of Oppeln and Ratibor for their losses (Gooss, 1911, 189–199).

Transylvania between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans

Although the principality was a state depending on the Ottoman Empire, in the 16th–17th centuries it also fostered some relations (regulated by secret or less secret agreements) with the Kingdom of Hungary ruled by the Habsburgs. These treaties declared that the princes of Transylvania regarded their country as a member of the Holy Crown. The governmental and political structures of the principality were determined by its wedged position between the two great powers (Oborni, 2007; Oborni, 2013).

István Báthory clearly perceived the vulnerable position of Transylvania which is illustrated by his opinion from 1575: “considering the fact that this province is located between the two most powerful rulers of the world [...] we cannot retain it otherwise than to curry favour with both emperors...” (Bethlen, 2004, 61) It was Báthory himself who wrote to Maximilian that he could acknowledge the latter’s suzerainty only in strictest confidence and he had to appear as an independent prince in Transylvania or the Ottomans would attack his country without any delay (Oborni, 2002).

István Bocskai’s will from 1606 determined the course of 17th-century political thought on the independence of Transylvania. It clearly stated that the other (that is the western) part of the country could benefit from the maintenance of the principality. Bocskai perceived with his excellent political bent that an independent Transylvania (and the Ottoman help attainable through the country) could help the estates of Royal Hungary to achieve a suitable bargaining position against Vienna if necessary. Following the uprising led by Bocskai, the Transylvanian state was reformed. It retained its dependence upon the Porte with the conditions having been laid down in the middle of the 16th century. Although the Hungarian kings were not able to annex Transylvania to the Kingdom of Hungary, they did not acquiesce in it and continued their political manoeuvres in order to achieve their aims. During their discussions with the princes in the first two decades of the 17th century, the Hungarian government still regarded Transylvania as a member of the Holy Crown and thus, part of the Kingdom of Hungary. The relation between the two states was last regulated by the Treaty of Nagyszombat (Trnava) signed by Prince Gábor Bethlen and King Matthias II in 1615 (Oborni, 2011).

Territorial Changes

After the battle of Mohács, Szapolyai managed to secure the eastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary with Transylvania as its centre, and these areas became the core territories of the later principality. Following the occupation of Buda in 1541, Suleyman I expelled the widowed Queen Isabella from Buda and donated the sancak of Transylvania to her and her son to live in and govern it. At the same time the sultan rewarded Péter Perényi with the Temesköz under the same conditions. The counties east of the River Tisza (Arad, Békés, Bihar, Csanád, Csongrád, Külső-Szolnok, Temes and Zaránd), wedged between the Ottoman Hungary and Transylvania and cut from the western part of the kingdom, joined the state forming in the east very early, in 1544. After a long warfare for the Upper Hungarian territories fought between Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1560s, the Treaty of Speyer recorded first the borders of the Principality of Transylvania. It declared that beside Transylvania and the Temesköz, the counties comprising the so-called Parts (Partium) belonged to the Principality (Lukinich, 1918).

The areas getting under the jurisdiction of Transylvania instead of the Kingdom of Hungary changed several times during the 17th century. Due to the Treaty of Bécs (Vienna) in 1606 the counties of Szabolcs, Szatmár, Bereg and Ugocsa came under Transylvanian authority for only half a year. As a result of the Treaty of Nikolsburg in 1622, Prince Gábor Bethlen had the right to annex the counties Szabolcs, Szatmár, Bereg, Ugocsa, Borsod, Abaúj and Zemplén to Transylvania for his life (until 1629). Although these territories paid tax to the prince, their estates participated in the diets of the Kingdom of Hungary and therefore the constitutional union was only partial. The counties were reannexed to the Kingdom of Hungary in 1630.

György Rákóczi I regained these seven counties in the Treaty of Linz in 1645 under similar conditions with the addition that after his death his son would be able to retain Szabolcs and Szatmár. Thus, after the prince's death only five counties were reannexed to Hungary and the other two enriched the principality until 1660. The year 1660 brought heavy losses because the Ottomans captured Oradea, the strongest castle of the principality, and almost the whole Partium. It was to be feared that the principality would be an Ottoman eyelet. Fortunately, the Porte appointed Mihály Apafi as a prince, instead, and he became the last effective ruler of the principality.

Succession to the Throne and the Power of the Prince

The estates of Transylvania enacted their right of electing the prince (*libera electio*) in 1567, which the Ottoman Empire permitted them. (The parliamentary resolution was passed on September 8th 1567 at the Diet of Gyulafehérvár (Alba Julia): “in case His Majesty departed, in order that we would not discord and bring ruin upon us, we would elect a prince by common consent, a person His Majesty, the powerful Ottoman Sultan would agree upon and make inquiries about the election at his great expenses” (Szilágyi, 1876, 335).

They first exercised this right in 1571 when they elected István Báthory their prince (Oborni, 2002; Roşu, 2009). The Transylvanian princes insisted upon the right of free election all the time despite the fact that the Porte always required pre-election negotiations regarding the person of the future prince, or sometimes directly the Porte assigned him to the throne. Gábor Bethlen’s election in 1613 caused the great outcry because a considerable Ottoman army was garrisoned outside the walls of Kolozsvár (Cluj Napoca) to support Bethlen with their presence (Papp, 2011).

The princes were usually elected at a diet where the estates took an oath of allegiance to them. After the election, the estates always made the new ruler accept and sign the election terms which contained their rights limiting the prince’s authority. These included the maintenance of the estates’ electoral rights, free practice of the four accepted religions, the preservation of the laws of the country as well as of the liberties of the nobility and, furthermore, the right of free speech at the diets. The number of the election terms gradually increased during the 17th century as the estates felt the need to set up their expectations about the composition and competence of the Princely Council. The prince was inaugurated at a gala ceremony when he swore an oath on the election terms. The inauguration was usually a religious ceremony.

The princes’ enormous private possessions formed the basis of the princely power. The Báthory and Rákóczi families’ large estates lay largely outside Transylvania, in the Partium or in the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary. This private fortune together with the estates possessed by the treasury guaranteed the rulers’ overwhelming power advantage. The prince of such a background commanded the army, decided in matters of war and peace and the diplomacy as well as matters concerning the treasury and the finances. The prince nominated the magistrates leading the government who were responsible to him, moreover, the superior level of jurisdiction also concentrated in his hand. Thus, princely authority spread over all the aspects of the Transylvanian state, the prince established supremacy over legislation, execution and jurisdiction. He was the one who summoned the diet and its composition largely depended upon him (Bíró, 1917).

The choice of the Transylvanian estates had to be confirmed by an *ahdname* of the Sultan in all cases. The prince needed this document to occupy his position permanently and legally (Szilágyi and Szilády, 1868–74; Papp, 2003). The Porte often did not confine itself to confirm the elected prince but required a previous notice about the person of the future Transylvanian ruler. The inauguration ceremony and its symbols were to represent the Sultan's authority over Transylvania. Together with the *ahdname*, the prince also received an adorned horse, a royal staff, a high cap, a sword, a standard and a *kaftan*. The latter two symbolised the prince's loyalty to the Ottoman ruler (B. Szabó, 1996; B. Szabó and Erdősi, 2003).

Although the princes of Transylvania did everything they could to make their family inherit their title, historical circumstances or their personal fate did not allow them to establish dynasties. The Báthory family managed to retain the throne for the longest time, for four decades. Although it was not exclusively due to their loyalty to the family, they attempted to put aside their conflicts and disputes in order to retain the princely title. György Rákóczi and Mihály Apafi took it for granted that their sons would follow them on the throne, and even the Porte accepted this legal custom.

The Estates and the Diet: the Division of Power

The Transylvanian estates gathered in a unicameral diet which could only be summoned by the prince or – in his absence – the governor or the regent. The diet did not have an upper house and the number of the participants was in no way limited. The prince's power and influence was strongly felt in the composition of the diet. The prince chose the so-called *regalists* from the richest Transylvanian lords. They received a personal letter of invitation, a *regalis*. In the first half of the 17th century about 26–30 *regalists* participated in the diets from 21 families, whereas in 1687 81 *regalists* from 56 families were invited. Apart from them, the members of the Princely Council and the High Court, the highest officials of the government, the Saxon and Székely delegates, the delegates of the cities determined by law and, from time to time, the leaders of the Transylvanian churches (vicars and bishops) could take part in the diets (Trócsányi, 1976; Péter 1987).

Diets were convoked when a new prince was elected and inaugurated, when the annual taxes were levied or because of some foreign political affairs, like the arrival or the sending of envoys or raising armies. Diets were held 4 or 5 times in “rough times” whereas in “peaceful periods” only 1 or 2 of them were convoked, usually around the days of Saint George and Saint Michael. As a result of Gábor Bethlen's politics, which aimed at pushing the estates into the background, only

one diet was held annually from 1622 to 1658 as the Rákóczi princes also followed this custom.

Apart from the composition of the diet, the prince's influence prevailed over the issues put forward, too. The prince did not take part in the meetings but stayed in the particular town. Diets were usually led by the president, nominated by the prince, who was also the head of the High Court. First, the prince's pleadings were read out and discussed, then came the complaints of the estates. The diet formally had the right to make laws in the field of internal politics and in some foreign political issues. Moreover, it administered justice when accusations of disloyalty or high treason arose. As it was the prince's right to assign the discussed issues, Gábor Bethlen entrusted the diet only with minor issues and ousted it from power. Although Transylvanian administration showed the characteristics of a certain kind of estate monarchy, the estates' influence was limited. Thus, the balanced political dualism of the Kingdom of Hungary did not exist here, which was also supported by the peculiarities of the Transylvanian princely government.

Unions and Laws

The Transylvanian estates (Hungarians, Székelys and Saxons) were determined to protect their former law and order as well as their privileges. This attitude had its advantages and disadvantages, too. On the one hand, it guaranteed the maintenance of the administration and legislation having formed through the centuries, and on the other, the certain nations guaranteed that the others could protect their own feudal privileges.

The three nations renewed their alliances (unions) from time to time, usually when a new prince was elected, for instance in 1630 when György Rákóczi I, in 1649 when György Rákóczi II or in 1661 when Mihály Apafi ascended to the throne. The unions among the nations had been transformed by the 17th century. The acts regulating the alliance not only stated that they had to form unanimous opinions on public affairs and that the decision of two nations had to be binding on the third one, but also declared that they guaranteed the defence and the enforcement of each other's rights (Trócsányi, 2005).

The first significant summary of the Transylvanian acts, the *Approbatæ Constitutiones* (1653) defined in details what they mean by the union. The country includes three nations whose fundamental laws and privileges had to be preserved. If any nation was abused considering its laws or privileges, all the three nations had to apply to the prince and the Princely Council at the diet and help each other in any way (*Approbatæ*, 1815, 77).

Thus, the acts renewing the alliances had become fundamental statutes, the cornerstones of constitutionalism by the middle of the 17th century and the senior

officials, and sometimes the low-ranking ones as well, had to take an oath on them. Therefore, the person taking the so-called oath of union committed himself to guarantee the practice of the four accepted religions and to offer legal protection to the members of the estates. The essence of legal protection was that a member of a certain nation who suffered any insults relating to their person or property and the prince did not give them satisfaction, could go to the court of justice of the other two nations and thus, the courts of all the three nations could apply to the prince for enforcing the law. Of course, everybody got satisfaction on the basis of their own law and order. At that time Rumanians living in Transylvania in large numbers had no constitutional rights similar to the other three nations and thus, they could not participate in the diets and had no common privileges. However, they retained their customs and religion, and many of them emerged to the nobility, and as members of the Hungarian nation (*natio Hungarica*), they had political rights. (Jakó, 1943; Miskolczy, 2005).

Due to the estates' insisting on their privileges, the medieval structure of the principality survived. Since the prince needed the support of the estates if he wanted to preserve the unity of the state, he had to guarantee their privileges to some extent. These internal factors and the permanent external danger resulted in a threat that although united the state, at the same time made it a rigid formation impeding the internal development.

Administration

The Princely Council was a consultative body with limited influence whose members were appointed, relieved and summoned by the prince who also decided upon the matters put forth. Moreover, the prince had the right to take into consideration or ignore the councillors' opinion. The Council was not responsible to the diet and its jurisdiction was not specified, either. The first of the councillors, the chancellor was also the head of the government who most often participated in the meetings while the other members were invited on an *ad hoc* basis (Trócsányi, 1980; Mezey, 1980; Horn, 2011).

The single government office of the time was the Princely Chancellery set up in 1556–57. It was organised by Mihály Csáky, a Humanist scholar who had returned from Poland with Queen Isabella and her son. Mihály Csáky was the canon of Alba Iulia, the queen's secretary and the chancellor of Transylvania (1556–72). He used the Hungarian royal chancellery of the late- Middle Ages as a model (Jakó, 1997; Horn, 2005). The Chancellery comprised two bodies: the so-called High Chancellery took measures in the fields of internal and foreign politics on behalf of and on the orders of the prince; whereas the Minor Chancellery helped the princely High Court to pass judgement through the two prothonotaries. It also

issued documents related to the cases under dispute. The prothonotaries were trained lawyers supervising the legality of the judging practice of the High Court. The Princely Chancellery had become a Humanist citadel by the second half of the 16th century. The chancellors, who had attended foreign universities, primarily in Italy (mainly in Padova) and wrote literary and historical works, were employed by the government (Köpeczy, Makkai and Mócsy eds., 1986, 518–522).

Conclusion

Summarizing, it can be stated that the political structure and the administration of the Principality of Transylvania were determined by the highly concentrated authority of the prince whose person embodied the state itself. The administrative and governmental changes of the country were seriously limited by its wedged position between two great powers. Due to the permanent external threat, both the estates and the prince regarded the protection of the independent state as their primary task even in the rare favourable periods during the 17th century when the opportunity for establishing an Eastern European dynastic monarchy offered. These attempts failed one after another during Bethlen and the Rákóczi princes' reign and thus, the Roman Catholic union driving back the Ottomans in the late 17th century brought the 150-year-old Transylvanian state under Habsburg control.

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**Dictatorship, infantilisation, and the
 focalization of a child: Zsuzsa Rakovszky's
 A hullócsillag éve (The Year of the Falling
 Star) and Ferenc Barnás' *Kilencedik*
 (The Ninth)**

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In my paper, I call attention to a literary trend of contemporary Hungarian prose fiction, in which the communist past is narrated from a child's point of view. I will concentrate on the relation among the focalization of the narrative through the eyes of a child, the theme of dictatorship, and present-tense narration. I will relate my approach to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's ideas on the problem of representing disempowered people, in other words, representing the subaltern. I take the narration of a child situated in a fictional dictatorial time as a special case of giving voice to the subaltern. In the first part of my paper I will address the theoretical and narratological problem of giving voice and understanding the subordinated figures. The second part consists of the analysis of the novels by Zsuzsa Rakovszky and Ferenc Barnás. I will argue that the communist past is a counterfeit referent since it is narrated by an unreliable child narrator. The object of representation is not the historical past but it is itself the perspective of the child through which we come to understand a hidden pattern of dictatorship: infantilization.

Keywords: focalization of a child, subaltern studies, unreliable narration, dictatorship, communism

Fictional narratives of the last decade have often emphasized that history is (pre)written in our body and our mind. Unlike politics, contemporary literature helps us to work through – and thus move beyond – our communist past. It may also reveal the hidden mechanisms of power that are still with us; that we unwittingly and automatically produce and reproduce as inherited cultural patterns. In my paper, I would like to call attention to the active role that contemporary Hungarian literature plays in working through the country's communist past – a role that is of special importance in constructing our cultural identity today. It is fascinating to see a recent literary trend of contemporary Hungarian prose fiction, in which the communist past is narrated from a child's point of view. I speak specifically of those cases in which the events are focalised by a child (for example: György Dragomán's *A fehér király* (White King) (2005); Ferenc Barnás'

Kilencedik (The Ninth) (2006); Zsuzsa Rakovszky's *A hullócsillag éve* (The Year of the Falling Star) (2005); Gábor Németh's *Zsidó vagy?* (Are you Jewish?) (2004); Attila Bartis' *A nyugalom* (The Tranquility) (2001); Endre Kukorelly's *Tündérvölgy* (The Fairy Valley) (2003) and László Garaczi's *Pompásan buszozunk* (We Bus in Splendor) (2001).¹ What could be the reason for the appearance of such a great number of books written in the horizon of a child? What can we learn from these "children" about our past and present? Whose voice are they articulating? I wish to illustrate that putting aside fictionality and approaching these novels with questions such as "what was communism like as a child?" proves inappropriate since information offered by the infant narrators unavoidably carries ambiguities. Instead of giving an answer to this question, the novels initiate an interactive relationship with the reader: we should participate in the fictional circumstances of the novel and experience the subordinated position of the child narrator in dictatorship. In this way we can understand and feel a characteristic cultural pattern of Eastern European inheritance.

I will put the recent political interest in Hungarian literature into the framework of the literary theoretical interest towards political issues of human rights, justice and equality in which poststructuralist ideas are redeployed in ways that emphasize socially and politically important issues, and I will relate my approach to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's ideas on the problem of representing disempowered people, in other words, representing the subaltern. When studying Hungarian novels, I will concentrate on the relation among the focalization of the narrative through the eyes of a child, the theme of dictatorship, and present-tense narration. I take the narration of a child situated in a fictional dictatorial time as a special case of narrating, thus giving voice to the subaltern. To be able to understand the special importance of the point of view of the child, I will also rely upon the narratological scholarship on the unreliable narration since the child narrator does not have complete knowledge about his or her circumstances and the reader's active role as possible correction is built into the interpretative functions of the novel. In the first part of my paper I will address the theoretical and narratological problem of giving voice and understanding the subordinated figures. The second part consists of the analysis of the novels by Zsuzsa Rakovszky and Ferenc Barnás.

I

It seems characteristic of contemporary Hungarian literature to express new solidarity with the people and provide help for their problem-solving strategies. Many of today's writers continue the long Hungarian tradition of addressing social issues. One of the key characteristics of postmodern Hungarian fiction is that it combines interest in ethical-political issues with typical postmodernist views and

techniques such as intertextuality, meta-fiction, the combination of different voices, and challenges to the self-centered notion of the subject. This tendency could be seen as an East-European version of postmodernism, or might well be considered to belong to the recent post-postmodernist ethical turn.

In the last decade a number of theoretical publications appeared that stressed the importance of politics, ethical, social and racial issues, gender and sexuality when arguing for the new roles that Humanities can play in the globalized world. Poststructuralist theories have been appropriated and redeployed in politically invested fields, such as race, colonialism, sexuality and gender. According to the introduction of the volume *What's Left of Theory? New Work on the Politics of Literary Theory (Essays from the English Institute)*, "the value of post-structuralism no longer forms the pivot of contemporary debate, but rather, its place in new forms of cultural and political analysis is both inchoate and central" (Butler, Guillory, Thomas, 2000, xi). When interpreting the Hungarian novels, I also wish to situate my reading into a "redeployed" poststructuralist perspective that is engaged with social and ethical issues.

This article may offer a narrative way to give voice to the unvoiced subalterns in culture. Lack of self-reflection is a key element of subaltern existence. I examine the problem of reflecting upon non-reflected human existence in highly repressed social positions, as subaltern experience. In these novels children as subaltern characters accept their lives under communist dictatorship as normal. They were born into this system, they consider it as natural cultural environment since they have no chance to compare it with another. When they come across with strange states of affairs or find themselves in a discriminating situation they try to understand them with the help of their fantasies. All works foreground the lack of reflection of their infant characters. In other words, they reflect upon non-reflected existence and they relate this entire dependant position to a special kind of experience of dictatorship.

After two decades of discussions of the problem of representing the subaltern, there is still a huge distance between the theoretical discourse on the subaltern and the practical programs of solidarity to help the subalterns (Chakrabarty, 2000; Cherniavsky, 2011). In her provocative and inspiring arguments Gayatri C. Spivak claims that the subaltern cannot speak the language of the dominant discourse. She convincingly claims that benevolent western intellectuals and politicians paradoxically assimilate and appropriate, thus silence the disempowered people by speaking on behalf of them. Political representation cannot guarantee that subordinate groups will be recognized or that their voices will be heard since it cannot avoid objectifying and simplifying the complex position of the excluded "other" (Spivak, 1988; 1999).

I wish to develop the argumentation precisely at this point and will illustrate that the subaltern *can* speak in a rhetorical narrative language. The examined nov-

els do not speak on behalf of the unrecognized groups of children and they do not objectify them. They do not simply talk *about* disempowered people, but give voice to disempowered positions. The participation of the reader is also encoded into the textual world because the limited knowledge of the infant narrator needs constant correction throughout the entire reading process. I wish to demonstrate that it is possible to translate the complex problem of giving voice to the subalterns into the complex narrative discourse of reflecting upon the (non-reflected) perspective of the child.

In some works by contemporary Hungarian female writers, similar ways of narration foregrounding the problem of non-reflection can be observed in which female figures accept their hopeless way of life as normal and given. In the fictional world, they are not given any chance for improving their life or develop further their talents. They accept it as an unchangeable world order which assigned subordinated position, surrender and suffering for women. For instance in the poem *Portré* (Portrait) by Virág Erdős the speaker uses a registrative tone, listing the atrocities against women one after each other without creating logical order among them and without making any comments on them. In the poem *Porhó* by Kriszta Tóth, the fast switch between the position of the speaking subject and the represented female figure as object creates a special in-between discursive position for the suppressed female figure, in which her subordinated situation can be represented in a complex rhetorical structure. These poetical strategies successfully avoid the objectification and appropriation of the excluded other, which is criticized by Spivak. These works do not speak on behalf of them and do not objectify and simplify the subaltern figures while they do represent their interests.

The novels by Ferenc Barnás and György Dragomán are entirely written from the point of view of a child. All developments are narrated and focalized by the child. The words of the child are sometimes interwoven by characteristic images and discursive elements of the adult world. Zsuzsa Rakovszky's *A hullócsillag éve* (The Year of the Falling Star) consists of chapters that are focalized by a child and other chapters which are narrated and focalized by adult narrators. One chapter consequently keeps one dominant viewpoint. The construction of different chapters representing different viewpoints creates a complex multi-perspective structure and provides characteristic fictional personal histories taking place in the 50s in Hungary. The novels by Gábor Németh and Endre Kukorelly present a further complicated combination of perspectives. Often within the same paragraph, they frequently rotate the reflective and remembering focalization of an adult with the unreflective and contemporaneous focalization of a child.

The *Sorstalanság* (Fateless) by Imre Kertész, an account of the comprehensive dictatorship of a German concentration camp, is also narrated from the perspective of a child. Published in 1970, it clearly criticized the communist regime of the time. The story – of how an adolescent boy experiences the German concentration

camps – is written from the point of view of a child who does not initially realise what is happening to him. The discrepancy between the reader's knowledge and that of the boy creates a special atmosphere of the novel. This discrepancy evolves throughout the narrative as the child acclimates to the world of the concentration camps and in the end becomes much wiser than any reader. The book gave important information about the mechanism of dictatorship at the time of its publication. Péter Szirák claims this was part of the reason that it was not popular during the Kádár-regime (Szirák, 2003, 16). The above-mentioned novels, written from the focalization of a child, can also be seen as following the example set by Imre Kertész's *Sorstalanság*; and further exploring totalitarianism from a child's point of view.

The narrator's lack of knowledge, a sort of unreliability, is usually mentioned in narratological scholarship when discussing narratives written in the focalization of a child. According to Wayne C. Booth's classical, oft-quoted definition, the narrator is reliable "when he speaks for or acts in accord with the norms of the work (which is to say the implied author's norms), unreliable when he does not" (Booth, 1983, 158–9). In investigating Stevens's narration in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, Phelan and Martin further develop Booth's notion of the unreliable narrator into different axes. To summarize, they claim that narrators may deviate from the implied author's views in their roles as reporters, as evaluators, and as readers or interpreters. Unreliable reporting occurs along the axis of facts/events; unreliable evaluating occurs along the axis of ethics/evaluation; and unreliable reading occurs along the axis of knowledge/perception. Audiences perform two different actions once they determine that a narrator's words can't be taken at face value: they reject those words and try to reconstruct a more satisfactory account, or they accept what the narrator says but then supplement the account. Combining the activities of narrator and audience, they identify six kinds of unreliability: misreporting, misreading, misevaluating, underreporting, underreading, and underregarding (Phelan and Martin, 1999, 93–5).

Gerald Prince refers to the figure of the narrator as a "limited point of view or focalization that is subject to conceptual or perceptual constraints as opposed to omniscient point of view" (Prince, 1987, 48). William Riggan examines four distinct types of unreliable first-person narrators: the pícaro, the clown, the madman and the naïf. The last seems to most closely fit the narratives written from a child's point of view I explore here. Analyzing the narration of two adolescent figures, Huck in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Holden Caulfield in J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, he comes to the conclusion that these works present social critique through the eyes of one who has not yet entered the social world and who is largely unfamiliar with it on any direct, experiential level. The madman's unreliability as a narrator is different from the unreliability of a

naïve narrator with respect of their involvement in the society they inherently criticize.

And unlike the madman's narrative, where the narrator's derangement not only indicts but also often reflects the social, political, and/or spiritual malaise of the society and era which spawn him, the naïve narrator embodies in his actions, words, and characters a positive opposing spirit to the malaise, though he may demonstrate some of its superficial symptoms. [...] His critique, whether consciously uttered or whether conveyed over his head from implied author to reader, thus does not work to his discredit but rather the opposite, despite his frequent confusion and error as he attempts to describe and come to terms with a world still beyond his ken. Though incapable of fully reliable articulation, he nonetheless reveals himself through his narrative as positive figure (Riggan, 1981, 169–70).

I have found this argument especially relevant for my work because it emphasizes the outsider status of the narrator in relation to his social environment. My emphasis is not on the positive feature of the naïve narrator but rather on the fact that by not fully comprehending the symbolic order around him or her, he or she is not fully absorbed by the system. Instead the narrator remains a lonely outsider, an observer who accepts the circumstances of his life as a given and unchangeable order.

Ansgar Nünning argues for a synthesis of cognitive and rhetorical approaches in understanding the concept of the unreliable narration. He convincingly claims that the problem of unreliable narration cannot be resolved on the basis of textual data. It is a pragmatic phenomenon that cannot be fully grasped without taking into account the conceptual premises that readers and critics bring to texts (Nünning, 2008, 45). He mentions two referential frameworks: the first refers to the reader's empirical experience such as the general world-knowledge, the historical world-model or cultural codes, explicit theories of personality or implicit models of psychological coherence and human behavior of the reader or the critic. The second framework involves a number of specifically literary frames of references. These include, for example, conventions and models of literary genres, intertextual frames of reference, stereotyped models of characters such as the *pícaro*, the *miles gloriosus*, the *trikster*, and the structure and norms established by the respective work itself (47–8).

II

In this section I will illustrate how the works of Zsuzsa Rakovszky and Ferenc Barnás unite the narration of history in the present tense with the focalization of a child.

The novel *A hullócsillag éve* (The Year of the Falling Star)² by Zsuzsa Rakovszky takes place in a small town close to the western border of Hungary in the years 1955–56. The main part of the novel is a collection of lyrical scenes, impressions of a 5 year-old child named Piroska. This is a crucial time for the young girl because she has to leave the relatively safe environment of her home and enter society, first in kindergarten and then primary school. Her impressions are interwoven with some sentences that she overhears from the adults around her – family members and friends of her mother. Through these “adult sentences”, presented as quotations in the child’s interior monologues, the adult reader tries to reconstruct the historical background. The novel also contains letters and diaries of the other characters. Considering these pieces together with the child’s narrative, we can construct a developing story line, in which we see the evolution of the characters, even if we are not presented with an entire life-story.

We learn that Piroska’s mother, Flóra, is in love with a man who is sensitive, ironic, and not very honest. He is emotionally terrorized by a woman who is a member of the AVH, the Hungarian Secret Service. We also get to read the letters of the tenant of Flóra, who falls in love with her. He has come back from the Gulag, and approaches her with an increasingly aggressive, male chauvinist attitude. We are also party to all the love stories around the family during the rigid dictatorship and deep poverty of the 50s. We read a kind of fictional micro-history, seeking the answer to the question of how history looked in everyday life. The fragmented structure also reminds us that history is not available to us as a single, comprehensible story.

Learning the past from the perspective of a child is very problematic since he or she is a sort of unreliable narrator. Even if the audience accepts what the narrator says, the account needs constant supplementation, as the reader strives to correct the story all the time as was suggested by Phelan and Martin. In this case, we have to activate our historical knowledge about the everyday terror of the fifties in Hungary. But the problem is that this is exactly what we may want to know: that side of the story which is not readable in history books and cannot be seen in documentaries. These novels, because they are narrated by unreliable young storytellers with limited knowledge of their own circumstances, will never give an acceptable answer to our curious question: what was dictatorship like in these years as a child? In other words, a child, by definition, cannot narrate on history. He or she is not able to tell his or her own story. These narratives are always misleading, both offering an insight into marginal perspectives on history and confounding this perspective at the same time. The child’s version of history must always be supplemented by an imagined history that we try to construct on the basis of the child’s views in order to understand what the child’s specific view is. We are invited to read the novel as if it were the story of the child in the fifties, and in the end we must face the fact that it gives us only very vague references to the facts of his-

tory. It cannot be a coincidence that, in approaching history, all of the mentioned novels are unsuitable for referential reading. They emphasize textuality and fictionality in several ways, thus challenge the illusion of arriving at the actual (historical) reference. And yet, we do learn a lot about the nature of despotism and we learn it from children.

We learn that dictatorship produces differences in terms of age and gender. For instance, in this novel all the male figures, though they themselves may suffer severely from dictatorship, assume a dictatorial manner toward the female figures without any hesitation. This is displayed either through tyrannical behavior or incorrect treatment such as cheating and lying, which were the basic principles of the authoritarian system. In the novel by Zsuzsa Rakovszky, using a child's point of view may call attention to the fact that in many cases children suffer from a double suppression. On the other hand, a counter-story can also be read in the same novel: the adults try to shield the children from the effects of the system; they try to raise them according to bourgeois principles in a non-bourgeois political system. The fictional world suggests both meta-narratives of a child's life-story as they are inscribed into the development of the storyline. Let us turn to a case for the double suppression viewpoint, in *The Year of the Falling Star*. The little girl and her mother visit an elderly lady from a former bourgeois family, whose son or close relative could be the victim of the communist regime. It is clear for the child that it is her lost son whose portrait is hanging on the wall. The lady once goes up to this portrait and lights a candle under it. Whether it is an act of reverence or simply saving money by not using electricity, is not obvious. We follow stage by stage this kind of partial understanding of the girl throughout the entire book. The following passage consists of two paragraphs: one is the storytelling of the elderly lady; the other is the reaction of the little girl.

Ott találták meg a fák között, alig pár száz méterre a házuktól... – Szörnyülködő, diadalmas suttogás a vaniliás kifli porcukor-csillámporos maradéka fölött. – A biciklire figyeltek föl, ott hevert az árokparton, gazdátlanul... Süket volt szegény, mint az ágyú, azért nem hallotta meg, amikor a határőrök utánakiabáltak, hogy hová megy... Azok is rájöhetek, hogy bakot lőttek, hogy úgy mondjam... Bevonszolták a szerencsétlent a fák közé, egy kis avart kapartak rá... Most gondold el: az is lehet, hogy akkor még élt!

Piroska fejét az anyja válla gödrébe fúrja, de hiába, nem bírja elhessegetni a képet, a holttestet a fák között, a száraz levelek alatt. Gyanútlanul átlépett egy határt, azért hitték róla, hogy egy másikat is át akar lépni, egy még tilosabbat. Lehet, hogy a vércseppek mutatták az utat a falubelieknek, mint a Jancsi és Juliskában a fehér kavicsok? Lehet, hogy másutt is halottak vannak eldugva az avarban, a Papréten vagy az udvarukban? Segélykérően körülnéz. Az özvegy két tenyerét az asztallapnak vetve föltápszkodik, a varróasztalkához

döcög, és ünnepélyes mozdulattal meggyújtja a gyertyát. A hátrafésült hajú fiatal halott szomorúan és igyekvően néz vissza Piroskára. (Rakovszky, 2005, 38)

They found him a few hundred meters away from his house. – Lamenting, triumphant whisper above the leftovers of the vanilla croissant glittering with powdered sugar. – The bike has been seen upended, lying in the ditch, unattended... The poor man was deaf, that is why he did not hear when the border guards shouted at him asking where he was going. Later on they realized that they made a blunder. They dragged the poor man into the trees and scraped some litter over him. Imagine! He might have been alive!

Piroska snuggles into her mother's shoulder in vain, she cannot help thinking of the scene, the dead body among the trees, under the dry leaves. He crossed a border unsuspecting, and they thought he wanted to cross another border, a more forbidden one. It might be that it was the drops of blood that showed the villagers the way, like the white stones in Hansel and Gretel. It might be that there were other dead bodies lying under the litter, in Paprét, or in their backyard. She looks around helplessly. With the help of her hands, the widow struggles to her feet, shuffles to the sewing table and with solemn motions lights the candle. The young dead man from the picture on the wall looks back at Piroska with a sorrowful and responsive look. (My translation – E. Zs.)

We see the events from the focalization of a child, thus we need to supplement the information. We can activate our knowledge about the closed borders in the fifties in Hungary and may better understand the story of the woman than the child does. Yet it remains unclear whose story it is and when exactly this took place. Is it the story of her son or that of somebody else? We do not know for certain, and the text does not give any clues. As an adult reader, we have a partial understanding about the referent of the story. Using historical references we might get a better picture, but it always remains ambiguous.

What is unambiguous is that the girl is struggling to understand the world around her. What we clearly see – and here a shift in the referent of the story occurs – is the child's view. We learn that a threatening political power which uses unclear information as means of intimidation is even more threatening for a child. She confuses the elements of the political terror with the brutal elements of the tale. She has to cope with an extra fear that might be well beyond the anxieties of a typical child of the same age.

In the story we follow how her mother tries to defend her from the effects of the political system as much as possible, for instance by postponing her enrolment into kindergarten. And we also quickly realise that it is an impossible goal. She cannot protect her from the entire (textual) environment. The effects of the social system touch her through the fragments of stories and unfinished sentences. She

supplements information from her own stock of knowledge, in this case fairy tales. The result of this combination is even more brutal than the fictionalized political reality of the time. In this case, Piroska has created a universe with dead bodies lying all around. The reader cannot help but recognize that children sometimes suffer more from dictatorship than the adults.

Her view, like a reading glass, reveals how the system works. We read the events through her reading glass. What we clearly see is *her* way of observing the world. The perspective of the reading glass becomes the real referent. Not only do we see through the child's eyes, but experience her view of reality. This view is a constant element throughout the reading process alongside the communist regime that regulates and poisons the people's lives. It is not difficult to come to the conclusion the novel suggests and repeats several times that this outlook somehow belongs to the system. Not completely understanding what is going on yet being completely controlled by it, this is the child's experience of dictatorship. Instead of the actual historical referent, the childish view is the referent; this is what we are invited to discover: the focalization of the child is one of the key peculiarities of despotism. This kind of knowledge about political terror can be represented by complex artistic narration like this but is difficult to express on the pages of history books.

Narrative cognition on totalitarianism may be further developed when studying more examples from the work. So far, I have concentrated on the viewpoints of the child; let us make the picture more complicated by taking into consideration the speaking positions and the time of the narration.

– Hanem – mondja a nagymama, és az anyja karjára teszi a kezét, előre is bocsánatot kérve azért, amit mondani fog –, múlt vasárnap nem jöttetek. Persze, tudom, hogy rengeteg dolgod van – vág közbe sietősen, amikor Piroska anyja mentegetőzni kezdene –, még mindig jársz arra a tanfolyamra? Szegénykém... Még szerencse, hogy engem már nem gyötörnek ilyesmivel... Engem szerencsére már senki nem akar átnevelni arra a kis időre... Az én öreg csontjaimra már nem érdemes annyi energiát pazarolni...

– Te nem is vagy még öreg! – támad rá Piroska zsarnokian és szemrehányóan. (Rakovszky, 2005, 45)

– But, says her grandmother, putting her hand on her mother's arm, apologizing in advance for what she is about to say – you did not come last Sunday. Of course, I know, you are very busy – she quickly interrupts Piroska's mother when she starts to apologize. – Are you still attending that course? Poor thing... Luckily they don't want me to do such things. Luckily nobody wants to re-educate me for that little time left... It is not worth wasting energy on my old bones...

– You are not at all old – Piroska attacks her tyrannically and reproachfully. (My translation – E. Zs.)

– Hanem Flórikám... – Megint a szégyenkező, puha nevetés. – Nem tudsz véletlenül egy kis varrónőt, aki olcsón dolgozik, de tényleg olcsón? Tudod, a kosztüm... És Flórikám... – Újabb nevetés, ezúttal zavart és kínos. – Lenne még az a korall nyaklánc, tudod melyik, talán érdekelné valamelyik kis kolléganődet... Esetleg azt, amelyik a pillangós brosst megvette a múltkor...? (Rakovszky, 2005, 47)

– Well, dear Flori – again the shameful, soft laugh. – Do you happen to know a dressmaker who works for a low price, really low? You know my outfit. And dear Flori... – Another laugh, this time confused and embarrassed. – Here is my coral necklace, you know which one, one of your kind colleagues might be interested... Maybe the one who bought the brooch with butterfly last time. (My translation, my emphasis – E. Zs.)

Apart from the point of view of the child, the most striking feature of Piroška's sections is that, throughout the entire book, they are written in the present tense. In the beginning, this is clearly a disturbing element that might confuse the reader. The story obviously takes place in the past; the crucial historical period is 1955–56. The present tense can be interpreted as bringing this story into the reader's own present with constant disturbing effects.

What does the present tense tell us together with the limited focalization? Considering focalization, the story is told from the point of view of the child. Grammatically speaking, it is told by a neutral, rather impersonal voice, a third person narrator saying "anyja" (her mother). Rhetorically speaking, an adult view providing subjective evaluation breaks into the focalization of the child with such expressions as: *szégyenkező, puha nevetés; Újabb nevetés, ezúttal zavart és kínos*. ("the shameful, soft laugh"; "Another laugh, this time confused and embarrassed"). It is of course possible that the child senses the embarrassment of her grandmother, yet in the mood as a narrative account of speech, an adult commentator's perspective is present. In this combination of voices the reader may again experience constant disturbing effects just as with the present tense narration.

As fictional micro-history is brought close to us, we are faced with a historical experience and also the fact that, in one way or another, this history is still with us. We can compare the above text with our historical knowledge. People were forced to participate in different re-education programs and there was poverty all over the country, especially in the circle of the former bourgeois class. There is no sign that the child understands the cultural and political background. This atmosphere of not understanding what is happening around us but being subjected to the circumstances characterizes the dominant perspective of the work.

When reading the novel from the child's view we realize more and more that this infantile outlook imposed upon the reader characterizes the mechanism of the political regime. It is not only that we have a different perspective providing addi-

tional information. Infantilisation, forcing the people into an infantile position, lies at the heart of the repressive mechanism. Nünning claims that the reader tries to account for textual inconsistencies by reading the text of an unreliable narrator. In this process accepted cultural models of deviant (in our case limited knowledge of the infant) but plausible human attitude or behavior are made use of, and the text begins to become naturalized. This process can be understood as “mechanism of integration” (Nünning refers to Yacobi, 1981, 119) in that it resolves whatever contradictions or discrepancies between the textual data and the reader’s world knowledge there may have been and leads to a synthesis at a higher level (Nünning, 2008, 48). When the reader in this novel identifies the inconsistencies in the narration of the child and realizes that it is not possible to see beyond her perspective, he or she can resolve this problem that leads to a synthesis at a higher level, namely, recognizing that infantilisation is a recurring epistemological problem of the text, as well as a hidden dictatorial way of manipulating and subordinating the people. If we want to understand what dictatorship is we should understand that we are forced into the position of a child which equates to dependency and partial understanding of what is happening around us, with others arranging outcomes above our head.

The present tense alone creates tension in the interpretation. Combining the narrative present with third person (adult) narration and the internal viewpoint of a child when dealing with the historical situation of the fifties, seems a bizarre and unusual narrative approach. Monika Fludernik lists a few typical examples of the present tense narration, among them Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow*, J. M. Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*, and the nouveau roman literature. However, none of them presents a narration based upon the above combination.

Even so, Fludernik’s conclusions about present tense narration are of importance in my case. “The loss of the deictic distinction between present tense nouns and past-tense thens is therefore implicated in the loss of even more crucial narratological distinctions: that of story and discourse.” (Fludernik, 1996, 254) “Most present-tense narratives, however illogical, are easily recuperable as a story of events or as the representation of a mind reliving past experience as present. Hence the paradoxical situation is that the narrative present is both a rather unknown oddity and a technique of unremarked-upon familiarity.” (Fludernik, 1996, 256) The present tense makes it difficult to keep distance from the story, so we easily experience it as our own. It might remind us that these power mechanisms are still with us, we carry their effects and resulting behavioral patterns.

We see for ourselves how mother and daughter try to resist their circumstances throughout the novel. Piroška has difficulties with eating; her body protests against the social sphere which surrounds her. Her mother tries to follow an authentic life and is looking for someone she can really love. The novel ends with her complete surrender. Flora marries “the good man”, her tenant who returned

from Gulag and is ready to give her the recipe for the “right” way of living. Even he wants to re-educate her. In this way, in the personal sphere, like all the other male figures in the novel, he repeats the government’s despotism towards the woman.

Piroska’s bodily fight against (eating in) the kindergarten also ends in absolute surrender.

– Megtömlök én, édes fiam, mint a libát, ha neked ez kell...

Fuldokolva nyel: a következő kanál elől megpróbálja összeszorítani a fogát, de az óriáskéz kétfelől erősen, fájdalmasan megnyomja az arcsontját, a szája akarata ellenére kinyílik. Igyekszik rágás nélkül lenyelni, amit a szájába tömtek, hogy ne érezze a húscsafatok ízét. [...]

Egy húsdarab megakad a torkán: vajon most meg fog halni, mint Hófehérke a mérgezett almától. [...]

– Ugye mondtam, hogy meg fogod enni?

Az óriásnő barátságosan gúnyos, csillogó szemmel, majdhogynem cinkosan néz le rá, őt pedig alázatos hála önti el, amiért már nem haragszik rá. Nyekeregve együtt nevetgél vele, hogy mutassa, ő is pontosan ugyanúgy vélekedik arról a nevetséges lényről, aki ő még öt perccel ezelőtt is volt, mint az óriásnő. A gyomrára szorítja a kezét: egész engedelmes testében már csak az lázadozik háborogva.

– Te, ha nekem most hányni mersz...! (Rakovszky, 2005, 390–1)

– I feed you up, my dear child, as you do with the goose, if you want this...

She swallows and suffocates: she tries to close her teeth before the next spoon, but the big hand heavily and painfully presses her cheekbone from both sides, her mouth involuntarily opens. She tries to swallow without chewing the meat, which is stuffed in her mouth, so as not to feel the taste of the bits of meat.

A piece of meat stuck in her throat: Is she going to die, like Snow White from the poisoned apple? [...]

– I told you that you would eat, didn’t I?

The Giantess with friendly, sarcastic and bright eyes, is looking down at her almost with complicity. She feels a humble gratitude towards her because she is no longer angry with her. She laughs creakingly together with the Giantess to show that she thinks exactly the same way about the ridiculous creature she was just five minutes ago. She pushes her hands against her stomach: only this part revolts in all her obedient body.

– You, if you dare to throw up now...! (My translation – E. Zs.)

After this aggression, Piroska is defeated and finally falls asleep as she never did beforehand in the kindergarten. This can be seen as abandoning resistance, something that happened frequently in the history of Hungary after direct aggression,

as in 1956. And yet, it cannot be a coincidence that the following chapter tells the story of how Piroska flees from Hungary with her mother and grandmother and reaches the border at night. Is it a dream of Piroska's? Or is it a "pseudo-ending" as Györgyi Horváth saw it (Horváth, 2006)? It is hard to decide.

Since the novel was published in 2005, and is narrated in the present tense, one cannot help but see the main features of intimidation, lack of prospect, making the people infantile, forced surrender and radical refusal as recurring patterns in our past and present. We are growing accustomed to a strange narrative manner. This reading strategy of "growing accustomed" brings us face to face with a "cultural trope", a *modus vivendi* too well known in the East-European region: growing accustomed to and learning to live together with the unacceptable.

Ferenc Barnás's novel, *The Ninth* (2006) is the story of a nine-year-old boy in communist Hungary. He is the ninth child of a Catholic family who live in deep poverty on the margin of society. Because they openly keep their religion, their life is even more miserable than the average Hungarian's at the time. They do not have enough basic furniture such as beds, chairs and a table. There is never enough food and clothes and they always run out of firewood. Most of the children suffer from speech and behavioral disabilities. The father practices several forms of dictatorial behavior within the family despite the fact that he himself lives under the pressure of the communist political system. He uses his children's labor for his enterprises to make money. He prevents them from any form of enjoyment and punishes them physically on a regular basis.

The young child simply registers the events around him. He is an observer, as a critic reading the English translation comments:

The picture we gain from our young narrator is uncomplicated by subtlety, politics, morality, and without the self-conscious morbidity and sexuality found in so many adult narrators. He's an observer.[...] Our pathetic unnamed protagonist observes the realities of his own family's survival, of his father's obsessive small-time industry, his mother's fervent religiosity, the difficulties of his siblings, and the cruelties and indignities of life in poverty (Waxman, 2009).

Poverty and lack of personal freedom are deeply interrelated. Poverty is itself dictatorial because of the limitations it places on life chances. In such a situation – in which children suffer from several levels of oppression: the father, the cruel realities of poverty and the political system – there is not much space for more psychologically complex dimensions such as dreams, fantasy, or creativity. When the basic needs such as for warmth, food, safety and privacy, are unmet – summarizes Mátyás Dunajcsik – there is no chance for the development of a sophisticated personality since all the individual's energy is needed for surviving one day after the

other. The symbolic sign of this underdeveloped mental state is the speech defect of the children, and as a result, they hardly speak at all, even to each other (Dunajcsik, 2006).

Let us look more closely at an example from the beginning of the work in which the child-narrator tells the daily routine of the family.

Fél öt körül, amikor Ésapá munkába indul, felébredek. Ésapá továbbra is a MÁV-nál dolgozik, de most a rákoskeresztúri Állomásfőnökségen, ahol nemrég pluszban elvállalta az ellenőrséget. Kénytelen hamar megtanulni az új szakmákat, mert amíg építjük a Nagyházat, igazából nem kegytárgyazhatunk. Észanya öt felé kell fel. Ezt onnan tudom, hogy utána mindjárt kimegy az utcára, ahol valakitől megkérdezi a pontos időt. Ha délelőttös, mindig ezt csinálja. Az első gyűjtésen nem kaptunk órát, neki viszont nem szabad elkésnie a szentendrei Tollgyárból. Nemrég vették fel ide, két műszakba. Észanyának a szülések miatt nincs szakmája, ezért golyóstollakat kell összecsavaroznia. Amíg készülődik, úgy teszek, mintha aludnék, akár a többiek. Fejem a takaró alatt, Tentés lába az arcomnál; eltolom magamtól, mint máskor is. Aztán megpróbálok visszaaludni, de nem sikerül. (Barnás 2006, 8)

At four-thirty, when Papa leaves for work, I wake up. Papa still works for the state railway, but now he's at station headquarters in Rákoskeresztúr, where not long ago he accepted the post of watchman alongside his regular job. He's got to learn new trades, because once we're busy building the Big House, we really can't be spending all our time at home making devotional objects to sell to churches. Mama wakes up around five. I know this because she then goes right out to the street and asks someone for the exact time. She always does this when she's on morning shift. The first time the church up in Budapest organized a benefit drive for our family we didn't get a clock, and she can't be late for work at the pen factory in Szentendre. She was hired there not long ago for two shifts. With her having kids all the time, Mama never got a trade, which is why she's got to screw ballpoint pens together all day long. While she's getting ready I pretend to be asleep like the others. My head is under the pillow and my brother Teeter's foot is right by my face; I push it away, as at other times. Then I try getting back to sleep, but it doesn't work. (Translated by Paul Olchváry)

The narrative point of view recalls and rewrites at the same time the modernist manner of subjective storytelling. It maintains the illusion of a coherent personality, but since it is a limited perspective, it always requires constant correction from the reader. When we consider the act of challenging the idea of a cohesive personality for the narrator to be a characteristic poetical-philosophical view of postmodernist narration, then this could be seen as a reinterpretation of the modernist narrative tradition.

The Ninth is a narrow-minded, closed narration, but since the adult reader's presence is always presupposed as an inbuilt narrative perspective, another view is added as a supplement. This one-way viewpoint is seen here as merciless, and thus dictatorial. The reader is also enclosed in this world dictated by the body and can feel for himself the merciless, dictatorial, one-perspective and one-storyline narration of the single-party system. This "traditional" narration gains additional significance when considered in the context of contemporary post-modernist Hungarian fiction. One of the characteristic postmodernist narrative strategies of Hungarian novels nowadays is to present several voices instead of one. Moreover, in many cases these voices are not necessarily attached to a person, rather we hear several disembodied voices, such as common sense slogans, clichés, political speeches, slang and advertisements.

In this narrative-cultural environment, the narrow perspective of a personal narrator could be seen as an old-fashioned manner of speech as well as a post-postmodern view putting ethical issues of social solidarity into the foreground. This narrative view emphasizes the loneliness and inaccessible position of people in deep poverty, who are just talking to themselves (like homeless people on the streets), and highlights the danger of lack of communication between welfare and poverty. It calls attention to a dangerous phenomenon in our contemporary culture – that in losing contact with the mainstream structure, one can easily get trapped in a marginal and hopeless situation. This book is also a sort of lonely piece in the literary environment as it does not participate in the dialogue with the strategies of typical contemporary Hungarian novels. Thomas Cooper also considers this work as a non-canonical Hungarian novel and hopes that the English translation by Paul Olchvary creates a wider interest in the English speaking audience, among those who are still interested in the communist times in Hungary (Cooper, 2009). In sum, the novel conveys the problem of lack of communication in several different ways. Where is the hope in this chronicle of hopeless poverty? Perhaps it is to be found in the narration of the habitual present, which puts emphasis on the position of the reader. Telling stories in the habitual present tense implies that there must be a listener who is interested in this daily routine of suppression. The hope lies in the presupposed figure of the reader.

What have we learnt, then, from these children telling the past in the present tense? First of all it has become clear that the communist past is a counterfeit referent and the object of representation is not the historical past but it is itself the perspective of the child. Paradoxically enough, the narratives denying dictatorship as referent, do provide important information about its nature. This narrative perspective makes the special historical situation accessible to a certain extent for those who did not experience it personally, since it invites the reader to experience the fears and anxiety of the child. The inherent contradiction in the limited perspective of the child challenges the (child-like) desire to have direct access and

understanding to our past. The “what was it like?” question seems to be inappropriate, and we will never get an answer with the help of such young narrators. Barnás’ novel reminds us of the dangerous historical – and present-day – phenomenon of a lack of communication between the mainstream and marginal segments of Hungarian society. This can be read as a warning sign for our future: we are losing communication; deep poverty traps people in an isolated world. Present tense narration supports the idea that what is at stake here is not the past event but rather its legacy – what we have been carrying with us ever since. Instead of the historical referent, we can learn through the present tense and the infantile horizon that patterns of infantilisation are still with us. Infantilisation, on the other hand, will always give rise to resistance just like the infantile perspective has been challenged by several textual devices.

In their complex narrative modality, the examined novels avoid the oversimplification and objectification of the subaltern challenged by Gayatri C. Spivak, while they clearly give narrative voice to the double-suppressed infant positions. Besides the textual devices of limited focalization and present tense narration, these novels invite the reader to actively participate in the dictatorial world instead of talking *about* the object of disempowered human situations.

These novels can make the reader feel and understand a special Eastern-European subaltern experience: growing accustomed to the unacceptable, to the dictatorial circumstances. Studying further the cultural trope of “growing accustomed” as a typical East-European cultural inheritance, a way of living and surviving seems a promising perspective that can make a valuable contribution to the theoretical discussions on the subaltern.

The present tense may also suggest an alternative relation to our regretful past that is neither denial nor feigned ignorance about it. We can have both an intimate and critical relationship with our dictatorial past at the same time. Even if a critical approach is usually associated with scholarly neutrality and not intimacy, with the help of these works of art we can initiate a new relationship and a new dialogue with our past. Whether we like it or not, we who were born and will be born in the Eastern part of Europe are the children of the communist system. And as such, we will always carry an inconvenient intimacy with our own stories which can never be satisfactorily and reliably told.

Notes

- ¹ I am not talking about those novels in which an adult narrator recalls memories from his childhood during the communist era.
- ² Not yet translated into English. The English quotations from this novel are my own translations, strictly for the purpose of this paper.

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