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# Explosion in the History of the Nobility in French Historiography

## Recent Approaches and Methods

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**Abstract.** For the past thirty years, the history of the nobility has been one of the fields of social history that have mobilized most researchers. This trend is largely due to the interest shown in new family collections, in correspondence and in private writings. We see this abundant mass of publications as being the reflection of the diversity of the nobility. A first block of authors have isolated noble categories: parliamentary nobility, “second” order nobility, poor nobility, etc. A second type of research has focused on personages emblematic of their milieus, and finally, some historians have been interested in comparisons with other European aristocracies. The second section of the article will show how the transformations of the monarchical state engendered mutations in the second order. Finally, it will be shown how scholarship on social changes has more particularly studied differences between town and country, material culture and mobility and noble culture.

**Keywords:** nobility, monarchy, Enlightenment, material culture, nobility mobilities, Parliament

Over the last thirty years the nobility has attracted the ceaseless interest of historians in varied contexts as well as in regional and family monographs, biographies and comparative studies of European countries, which now necessitates a historiographical survey. Responding to this growing interest, two reviews, quite different in their targeted readerships, opened their pages to the subject as the 2000s approached. In December 1995, *L'Histoire* featured a series of articles in which the editorial board flagged up a warning against received ideas:

“The nobility is not a matter of heredity alone: it could be acquired in many ways, military prowess being just one among them. The grand personages of the realm, far from identifying with the monarchy took up arms against it in the uprisings of the Holy League and the Fronde, and

even opposed its absolutist principles. Also, there were many aristocrats among the theorists and activists in the Revolution.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus, some of the paradoxes of a complex social category found confirmation in this. Four years later, the *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* devoted its January–March 1999 special issue to the “nobility in the modern era”, emphasizing the diverse character of a multi-faceted group.<sup>2</sup> In his introductory article, Robert Descimon stressed the importance of historiographical issues and commended a comparatist approach, leading to “the conviction that starting out from similar social materials and mental tools, particular arrangements could, according to place and function, result in dissimilar structures, but ones whose continual changes, nevertheless, remain an exciting subject for investigation.”<sup>3</sup> These two publications in fact convey a new interest in the second rank, or order, which has several inter-linked causes. Doctoral theses produced in the 1990s gave some young scholars access to university posts,<sup>4</sup> where they guided their students’ attention to this milieu. Moreover, new practices in career evaluation also helped to increase the numbers of such academics. This attraction to the nobility was matched by an interest in certain types of sources that enabled its study in a novel way.

Despite losses during the Revolution, families very often preserved fine archival material that invites exploration and research, all the more so as, with the passage of generations, reluctance to open these archives has become less frequent. Today we understand the importance attached to private writings and correspondence, especially for the history of sense and sensibility. Now, such documents are often too numerous for preservation in family archives, as is demonstrated in the collaborative construction of a fine work on Cardinal de Bernis.<sup>5</sup> There may be hundreds of documents involved, as Elie Haddad notes in connection with an undertaking similar to the present project. He stresses that it was impossible for him to list everything and that, accordingly, he was forced to be selective.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, his work is different from but completely complementary to the present undertaking, and it is advised that they should be consulted in parallel. This paper will assess the contribution of this abundant mass of publications before showing how they have made it possible to obtain a fresh view of relations between the monarchy and the nobility. Thus, far from reiterating the

1 “Grandeur et décadence,” 22–3. (All translations from French are by Professor Emeritus Moya Jones at the University of Bordeaux-Montaigne.)

2 “Les noblesses à l’époque moderne.”

3 Descimon, “Chercher de nouvelles voies,” 7.

4 In particular, we can cite, in alphabetical order, the works of Bourquin, *Noblesse seconde et pouvoir*; Chaline, *Godart de Belbeuf*; Figeac, *Destins de la noblesse*; Nassiet, *Noblesse et pauvreté*.

5 Montègre, ed., *Le cardinal de Bernis*.

6 Haddad, “L’histoire de la noblesse,” 65.

traditional presentation of the nobility with fossilized attitudes, it will be demonstrated that in some of its features, there were certain innovative elements—measurable in economic activities, material culture, and even in mobility.

### A wealth of studies for a kaleidoscopic nobility

The wealth of the historiography of the French nobility comes, above, all from regional monographs, which we tend to neglect today because of changing trends. In the wake of Jean Meyer's fine pioneering thesis,<sup>7</sup> it has been possible to cast light on and compare the diversity of situations. Examined in *Destins de la noblesse bordelaise: 1770–1830* from the highest state offices down to the king's scribes,<sup>8</sup> in some respects, the nobility in Bordeaux mirrors that in Nantes, for example, in the turnover of personnel and in the interest in trade and the West Indies, while differing from it in that the Breton city was not the seat of a Parliament. Other studies have focused their analyses on specific groups, particularly parliamentarians, who in Aix-en-Provence<sup>9</sup> and Besançon<sup>10</sup> were predominant in the local nobility, justifying their epithet of “blue-blood cities”. More recently, the works of Clarisse Coulomb<sup>11</sup> on the Dauphiné parliament and on Caroline Le Mao in Bordeaux<sup>12</sup> have ensured that the high offices of state are among the best-known categories.<sup>13</sup> Jean-François Solnon has done a model study of the mechanisms of social ascent based on the example of Besançon, which enabled him to reconstitute the careers of 215 king's scribes.<sup>14</sup> Laurent Bourquin has established in the case of Champagne, and more recently in the Loire area, the validity of the concept of a “secondary nobility”, an intermediary nobility in royal service in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>15</sup> Michel Nassiet has rescued from universal oblivion the world of country squires, whose importance has been recognized since Jean Meyer's pioneering article, though researchers have been discouraged by the difficulty in accessing sources.<sup>16</sup>

7 Meyer, *La noblesse bretonne*.

8 Figeac, *Destins de la noblesse*.

9 Cubells, *La Provence des Lumières*.

10 Gresset, *Gens de justice*.

11 Coulomb, *Les Pères de la patrie*.

12 Le Mao, *Parlement et parlementaires*; Le Mao, *Les fortunes de Thémis*.

13 A multitude of conferences followed, among which we must mention: Aubert and Chaline, eds, *Les parlements de Louis XIV*; Chaline, ed., *Les parlements et les Lumières*; Le Mao, *Hommes et gens du roi*.

14 Solnon, *215 bourgeois gentilshommes*.

15 Bourquin, *Noblesse seconde et pouvoir*. For the second rank nobility in the Loire region, see Bourquin, “Les mutations du peuplement nobiliaire,” 241–59.

16 Meyer, “Un problème mal posé,” 161–88, and following him, Nassiet, *Noblesse et pauvreté*.

Another type of work is approaching the topic through a particular individual. This is not a result of the return to favour of biography as a genre, but rather of using an especially rich trove of archives to reconstruct a social environment, to see how one family might mirror a category of the nobility. This approach to the grander nobility has been adopted by Jean Duma in respect of the Bourbon-Penthièvre family,<sup>17</sup> by Jean-François Labourdette in his study of the wealth of the La Trémoille family<sup>18</sup>, and by Jean-François Solnon, who studied the Ormesson family, a dynasty of great state servants.<sup>19</sup> In the parliamentary context, Olivier Chaline has taken us into the world of Rouen parliamentarians by way of Attorney-General Godart de Belbeuf,<sup>20</sup> who was in fact at the heart of judicial, administrative and political affairs in the province, and his notes give us his thoughts about the state, religion, the Enlightenment, and modernisation in Normandy. As for Brittany, in President de Robien, pioneer of the study of megaliths, we have a fine portrait of an Enlightenment judge masterly presented by Gauthier Aubert.<sup>21</sup> In their dissertations on two great families of the nobility of the sword, the Bonneval family in central France and the Lur Saluces in the south-west, Roger Baury and Marguerite Figeac-Monthus have demonstrated the idea of a nobility relaying the court to the provinces.<sup>22</sup> Thanks to their systematic exploitation of two particularly rich family archives, they have analyzed strategies in marriage, succession, and education, studied the patterns of patrimonial transformation, taken a close look at lifestyles and habits of thought, and assessed the effects of political change. Even so, the historian's gaze is readily drawn to successes and spectacular ascents, without always carefully looking at social decline and regression. It is in this area that Elie Haddad's investigation of the trajectory of the Belin family is particularly valuable to us.<sup>23</sup> This book opens up questions about the social characteristics of the middle nobility, its development, relations with royal authority, and mechanisms which made the ruination of a noble "house" possible in the seventeenth century. Lastly, in contrast with the great families who opted to serve the king, Pierre Serna has recently devoted a biography to Pierre-Antoine Antonelle, a dissenting noble from Provence, who is a perfect illustration of the diversity of the noble order, since he gave in to the attractions of revolution to the extent of joining Gracchus Babeuf and his conspiracy of Equals.<sup>24</sup>

17 Duma, *Les Bourbon-Penthièvre*.

18 Labourdette, *La maison de la Trémoille*.

19 Solnon, *Les Ormesson*.

20 Chaline, ed., *Les parlements et les Lumières*.

21 Aubert, *Le président de Robien*.

22 Baury, *La maison de Bonneval*; Figeac-Monthus, *Les Lur Saluces d'Yquem*.

23 Haddad, *Fondation et ruine d'une «maison»*.

24 Serna, *Antonelle aristocrate révolutionnaire*.

His story is not so rare as might be supposed, and Serna's fine book makes for a better understanding of the courses taken by Condorcet, Le Peletier de Saint-Fargeau, Héraut de Séchelles, along with about a dozen well-known figures.<sup>25</sup>

Besides studies organized around a category of the nobility, a personality or a family, François-Joseph Ruggiu has opened up another approach, a comparative history seeking a better understanding of European aristocracies. Among all the current studies, his method of comparing the noble milieus of two French towns (Abbeville and Alençon) with two English towns of comparable status (Chester and Canterbury) has certainly been the most novel and productive of insights.<sup>26</sup> The most recent studies by Eric Hassler,<sup>27</sup> Mathieu Magne,<sup>28</sup> and Bertrand Goujon<sup>29</sup> are by contrast focused on the highest strata of the European aristocracy and on Central Europe. This sudden abundance of high-quality studies requires an attempt at synthesis, and accordingly, in 2013, I also carried out one, focusing on the multiplicity of nobilities.<sup>30</sup> Among major developments, the reinterpretation of the positioning of the nobility in respect of royal power was a great advance, as also revealed by Elie Haddad.<sup>31</sup>

### Changes in the nobility's relations with the Monarchy

Central to the history of the nobility between the beginning and the end of the modern period there was a great change in the manner of serving the crown, in accordance with essential ideological changes. Nicolas Le Roux's very fine work on *Le crépuscule de la chevalerie* (The Twilight of Chivalry) is a remarkable account of the ideology of the nobility at the time of the Italian wars.<sup>32</sup> The author is interested in the military experience of the upper-class men who followed Charles VIII, Louis XII and then François I into the Italian adventure, at a time when warfare was undergoing an unprecedented development in which the art of war was changing and the individual disappeared behind ever larger armies. The transition of Europe from being a society of warriors to a military society is at the heart of this study. The author emphasizes the continuing significance of the chivalric ideal, despite the reduction in the proportion of heavy cavalry in European armies, the reorganization of the military apparatus and the violence of military operations. The book

25 For the nobility and revolution, see the conference *Les noblesses françaises* directed by Bourdin.

26 Ruggiu, *Les élites et les villes moyennes*.

27 Hassler, *La cour de Vienne*.

28 Magne, *Princes de Bohême*.

29 Goujon, *Les Arenberg*.

30 Figeac, *Les noblesses en France*. 25–57.

31 Haddad, "L'histoire de la noblesse," 65.

32 Le Roux, *Le crépuscule de la chevalerie*.

shows how important this ideology was for understanding the relationship between the nobility and martial violence which was more than ever thought of as a way of perpetuating a name, of confirming one's place in the nobility, and securing access to it. This ideal continued to be expressed in jousts and tournaments, in princely festivities, in some kinds of duel, and also in conventions of ransoms and prisoners of war. In this context, "Honour was the noise that virtue made, the amplifier that carried the merits of generals to the ears of the king and other great ones, and unleashed their generosity", was Arlette Jouanna's conclusion in an excellent article on the nobility and martial values in the sixteenth century.<sup>33</sup>

Jouanna is probably the historian who has best described the change in the second order and the development towards curialization following the Wars of Religion.<sup>34</sup> This transformation came to a head in the "Fronde des Princes", which was the last effort of the high nobility to threaten royal authority; Xavier Le Person's recent *habilitation* dossier should make for its deeper understanding. Apart from aspects related to the life of the Prince de Condé and his political and military career, this work is concerned with the political conduct of the nobility during the Fronde and under Mazarin's administration.<sup>35</sup> Nothing could better embody this type of conversion than La Rochefoucauld, author of the famous *Maximes*: the man who participated in the Fronde through simple family vanity, and in the fine eyes of the Duchess of Longueville, Condé's sister, emerged disillusioned, bitter and almost ruined and ended up as a man of the salon. He was to substitute the moderate ideal of the *Maximes*, the "honest man", for racial pride and the quest for glorious actions. The notions of nobility, virtue and glory gained new meanings. Since the values they had represented were now placed at the service of the prince, we should perhaps speak of a metamorphosis rather than an obliteration. Heroic conduct remained a very important ideal, but it was profoundly transformed, refined, and adapted to the new political conditions.

The sociologist Norbert Elias showed how a "court system" appeared under Henri III, who sought to impose an initial regularization of the court that only attained perfect operation in Louis XIV's Versailles.<sup>36</sup> In respect of ceremonial jurisprudence, the king operated a ritual centered on his person and ordered in accordance with the times of the day, from his rise in the morning to his retiring at night. This ritual was to make manifest, in symbolic acts, positions of prestige or submission. Thus, instead of just being a playground of aimlessness and vanity, the court

33 Jouanna, "La noblesse française," 210.

34 For more details, see Jouanna, *Le devoir de révolte*; Jouanna, *Le pouvoir absolu*.

35 Le Person, *Le Grand Condé*. Our thanks to Xavier Le Person for having shared his first conclusions.

36 Elias, *La société de Cour*.

became a vital instrument for transmitting the king's orders and distributing the expected graces and favors. Should we however speak of it as a mechanism for "taming" the nobility? As Olivier Chaline has clearly shown, serving the sovereign was an honor, and more of a recompense than a constraint, as it afforded incomes and a stability that had been lost in the immersion into violence.<sup>37</sup> Was not the great Condé the first to accept this after 1659, while forgetting his own past in the Fronde? Revolts by the great ones soon disappeared from the crown's preoccupations. How does one account for this "contagion" of obedience? It was because Louis XIV reigned. He did not have favorites; he imposed on the great ones his own firm, coherent and impartial arbitration, which is what they needed. It is not correct to use the metaphor of "taming" as it is better to speak of a collaboration inaugurated by Henri II of Condé and made possible by the firmness of royal power. The king had managed to conquer the nobles by bringing together three elements whose conjunction had scarcely been tried: a feudal court—with the great nobles surrounding the king and his family, living according to the rhythms of hunting and battle; a salon—inspired by the best people in Paris, especially at *Hôtel de Rambouillet*, and a romantic dream expressed in such wonders as sumptuous festivities, and by the taste of the king and his heirs for the theatrical and operatic stage. The whole court was expected to become a society that was both real and extraordinary.<sup>38</sup>

It was here that provincial noblemen in service of the crown, and ministerial and aristocratic families were fused together in the same crucible. The unity of the realm was thus forged by way of its elites. In *Lettres persanes* (letter XCIX), Montesquieu had already accurately sensed that "the Prince impresses the character of his spirit on the court, the court on the town, and the town on the princelings. The sovereign's soul is a mould that shapes all others".<sup>39</sup> There may have been a great distance between Versailles aristocrats and country squires, but if conduct became more civilized and new fashions were disseminated, it is because court society was the crucible for the making of modern man.

This evolution can also be explained by the changes in the composition of the nobility, accompanying the development of the monarchical bureaucracy, as it was now possible to serve the king with the pen rather than with the sword. For the Renaissance, it is undeniable that our knowledge of the king's advisors has advanced considerably with the work of Cédric Michon.<sup>40</sup> The choice of the reign of François I is relevant because this ruler is supposed to have laid the foundations for a new style

37 Among the many readings of the reign of Louis XIV, Olivier Chaline is the one who gives the best understanding of the nobility's behaviour: Chaline, *Le règne de Louis XIV*, 288–94.

38 Chaline, *Le règne de Louis XIV*, 294.

39 Montesquieu, *Lettres persanes*, 202–4.

40 Michon, ed., *Les conseillers de François I<sup>er</sup>*.

of government. The King's Council as described by François I is a summary of the very essence of the French monarchy of the Renaissance, which is fundamentally a *monarchy of balance*. No attempt has been made to study the prosopography of the Louis XIV era, but a series of monographs on several ministers have created an awareness of a turning point with the development of the Versailles offices. Let us take the case of Minister and Controller General of Finances Claude Le Peletier under Louis XIV, who has been studied by Mathieu Stoll.<sup>41</sup> The author uses the Rosanbo *chartrier* (archives), the microfilms of which are kept in the National Archives<sup>42</sup>, which is the basis of any biography of Le Peletier. The reconstruction of the Controller General's life led the author to examine the clerks of the Department of Finance, which did not yet possess all the characteristics of a Weberian-style bureaucracy. It lacked specific premises, while the multiple residences of the King and the Council obliged the staff of the control office to move between Paris, where most of the *intendants* (supervisors) of finances and the higher clerks worked, Versailles, the residence of the Controller General and of the services of the first clerk who kept the King's records, and Fontainebleau. Unquestionably, the reign of Louis XIV marked an acceleration in the process, as confirmed at the level of the War Department.<sup>43</sup>

The Louis XIV style monarchy finally attempted to take account of its nobility with the campaign of proofs of nobility and to redefine the criteria, in particular by standardizing the notion of merit. As Jay M. Smith's excellent book has shown, the 1675 creation of the Order of the Roll in the army was symbolic of a new scale of reference.<sup>44</sup> Individual value was thereafter replaced by an automatic mechanism linked to service or age. The new values of merit were accuracy, precision, value, work, and application, in other words, the values of an administrative monarchy, which aroused the wrath of Saint-Simon, for it was indeed an administrative vision that triumphed at the expense of the innate qualities of the individual. The military were in a way instrumentalized by their function, becoming the product of an impossible synthesis between the construction of a cold and rational state and the essentially personal relations between the king and his nobility. The Enlightenment only exacerbated this development, as the king was practically no longer present on the battlefields, and military promotion became mechanical. The sovereign now projected his presence through the kingdom in an abstract way: through the mediation of *Te Deum* hymns, statues, medals, calendar images.

The Enlightenment was marked by this unresolved contradiction: routinization and professionalization of the army, and individual merit recognized by the

41 Stoll, *Servir le Roi-Soleil*.

42 Archive Nationale, Private Archives (AP), 259.

43 See for example: Gibiat, *Hierarchies sociales et ennoblement*.

44 Smith, *The Culture of Merit*.

king's gaze. But this view was increasingly absent: it was now the army's administrative machine that functioned and rewarded a bureaucratized merit. Moreover, in the eighteenth century, the words 'king', 'council', 'government', and 'administration' tended to be interchangeable. And this is how the absolutist culture of royal service contributed to the destruction of the nobility's identity. Since Michel Nassiet's work on the evolution of the number of nobles in the eighteenth century, we know that it was in free fall throughout the Enlightenment.<sup>45</sup> A figure of 234,000 individuals would characterize the situation at the beginning of the Enlightenment, whereas by the 1780s, the number of nobles had fallen to 140,000, which implies an enormous erosion of 41 percent! There are demographic reasons for this fast decreased: as Stéphane Minvielle has shown, the second order had embarked on "the contraceptive slide".<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, this was far from being the only reason. By returning several usurpers to the ranks of the commoners, the famous campaigns of proof largely contributed to the numerical weakening of the order, which seriously affected the social framework of the countryside. Strangely, could absolutism therefore be regarded as one of the creators of its own weakening and one of the remote causes of the outbreak of violence in the summer of 1789?

### Social changes in the nobility

Recent developments in historiography have led to a rethinking of the relationships of the nobility between town and country. As Arlette Jouanna wrote on the subject:

"Country life and urban life are two arts of living, inspired by specific ideals and fuelled by sometimes different forms of wealth. In the sixteenth century, competition between the two ways of life was still open and it would have an ambiguous outcome, with the triumph of the land as an economic value and that of the city as a cultural value."<sup>47</sup>

The creation of Versailles had attracted part of the curial nobility, but it should not be forgotten that, as Mathieu Marraud has shown,<sup>48</sup> Paris remained the capital of the nobility, as many courtiers lived there and most of the ministerial departments were also located there. Fifteen to twenty thousand nobles resided in Paris permanently, only leaving the city during the summer. Close to the Court, this Parisian nobility was, by virtue of its aspirations and origins, a nobility of function which found in the princes and in the service of the king something to feed its appetite

45 Nassiet, "Le problème des effectifs de la noblesse," 100.

46 Minvielle, *Dans l'intimité des familles*.

47 Jouanna, *Histoire des élites*, 85–6.

48 Marraud, *La noblesse de Paris*.

for profits and honours. The combination of the concentration of the state and the capital city had led to the emergence of an elite drawn from the Parisian pool of administrative officers, tax gatherers, aldermen and merchants, all of which allowed one to pass from the state of commoner to the state of nobility. In addition, the capital attracted the provincial nobility. Nobles came to settle in the big city often at the risk of their finances, and operated in networks structured by their geographical origin. In the provinces, the place of the second order was far from always identical and in fact varied according to the functions and the economic dynamism of the city. The cities with the richest and most numerous nobility were undoubtedly the seats of sovereign courts. Adopting a highly original comparative approach between France and England, François-Joseph Ruggiu has studied two cities that were however not part of the major lines of developments in France, since Abbeville went from 15,000 inhabitants in around 1750 to just over 19,000 around 1780, and the population of Alençon grew from 12,000 to 14,000. Nevertheless, the nobility of Abbeville constituted two thirds of the nobility of the Ponthieu, and in the election of Alençon, a third of the families lived in the town, but with the episcopal town of Sées twenty kilometers away, half of the noble families of the election lived in urban areas. In the much more rural region of Périgord Noir, the nobility of the Sarlat area was polarized by the towns very early on, though not abandoning their castles and seigneuries.<sup>49</sup> Conversely, there is a specificity in Brittany because in that province, the feeling about nobility remained very much associated with rurality and only a minority of the families of parliamentarians came from the urban patriciates.<sup>50</sup> The behavior of the nobles around the important and medium-sized towns confirms that it would be wrong to make a firm opposition between town and country, because several members of the second order divided their year, as that excellent observer of Norman reality, Lepecq de la Clôture, points out:

“This class alternately follows and varies its habits and occupations with those of statesmen and people of the world. They have the leisure to indulge, for a few moments, in the torrent of society and to move in those circles. But the course of their lives is divided between the city and the country, where useful holidays, when their occupations are suspended, allow them to taste the delights of country life.”<sup>51</sup>

In the eighteenth century, the lifestyle of the nobility was thus completely transformed by the city and its customs. In the capital and in the largest cities of the kingdom, new forms of consumption and a taste for luxury and comfort had taken hold,

49 Royon, *La petite noblesse*.

50 Aubert, “La noblesse et la ville,” 127–49.

51 Lepecq de la Clôture, *Collection d’observations*, vol. I, 267.

and the nobleman himself had become the promoter of progress, seeking to embellish the city and to improve its viability. At the same time, the cultural values of urban life, conveyed through education and practices such as reading, continued to gain ground.

All these elements lend themselves particularly well to an approach based on material culture, which has developed in recent years. In the wake of Daniel Roche's general work, *La douceur des Lumières* seeks to highlight cultural differences according to the nobility's milieu.<sup>52</sup> By taking five examples from the Parisian high nobility, the house of La Tremoille, the Fitz-Jameses, the Fleurys, the Coignys, and Princess Kinsky, Natacha Coquery has highlighted this permanent quest for whatever conveys distinction, this taste for comfort, for luxurious furniture and for fashions, from Orientalism to Anglomania, via a return to Antiquity.<sup>53</sup> The material environment worthy of great aristocrats was a construction caught in a network of economic, practical and social constraints. The aristocratic mentality favored spending over income, which meant that the demand for pomp weighed heavily on the finances of a household that had to support the monarchy with its fortune and engage in the conflicts of its time. As Marjorie Meiss-Even has shown in her first-rate monograph on the Guise family, as early as the sixteenth century, their material culture therefore had to be placed in the overall economic logic of the House of Lorraine.<sup>54</sup> In the same way, the entirety of all the objects necessary for an aristocrat's representation cannot be removed from the context of craft production and the commercial exchanges of the Renaissance. Where did the Guises obtain their supplies so as to project the image of grandeur expected of them? How did they choose the craftsmen with whom they placed their orders matching by their rank? Was it so simple at a time when traffic was slow and often dangerous to fill the Château de Joinville or the town house in the Rue du Chaume with the "empire of things" characteristic of the Renaissance? Relaying a very strong revaluation of noblewomen, Aurélie Châtenet-Calyste has managed to trace back "an aristocratic and feminine consumption at the end of the eighteenth century, that of Marie-Fortunée d'Este, Princess de Conti (1731–1803)".<sup>55</sup> This thesis, based on the analysis of the princely lifestyle and extant accounts, therefore reveals how the study of Princess de Conti's consumption demonstrates all or part of her individuality. All expenses are examined, including the costs of food, decoration, clothing, and health, as well as book purchases and religious expenses, with the idea that behind the dry accounts there is a personality, an identity. The aim of this study is to shed light on the princes of the blood. We still know little of this third circle around the king, particularly at the end

52 Figeac, *La douceur des Lumières*.

53 Coquery, *L'hôtel aristocratique*.

54 Meiss-Even, *Les Guise*.

55 Châtenet-Calyste, *Une consommation aristocratique*.

of the eighteenth century, which reinforces our metaphoric image of the *millefeuille nobiliaire* or “noble layer cake”.

Finally, many works on the Age of Enlightenment highlight the noble milieu’s capacity for innovation and mobility. The noble authors acted as patrons who protected the humbler literati and allowed them to benefit from their networks of relationships. Indeed, the enlightened nobility was the only population group capable of understanding and sponsoring the Enlightenment. All studies about the Academies, salons, masonic lodges, and cultural societies confirm that the nobility were at the heart of the intellectual establishment of the time. In his thesis on the provincial academies, Daniel Roche shows how they played a leading role in the urban concert of learned societies where they rubbed shoulders with jurists, doctors, artists, and businessmen.<sup>56</sup> In her study of Madame du Deffand’s salon, Benedetta Craveri emphasises that “in a country where the press is supervised, but where freedom of speech is almost absolute, intellectuals need socialites to spread their ideas, to support their writings, to intercede with the authorities, to direct opinion, which, as has been repeated too often, plays the leading role in this century”.<sup>57</sup> Scientists learned to adapt their science to facilitate their approach, philosophers to clarify their concepts, while the people of the world stimulated thinkers with their ever-increasing curiosity, as can be seen very clearly in Antoine Lilti’s thesis on Parisian salons.<sup>58</sup>

Gauthier Aubert’s major biographical study of President de Robien, a pioneer in making sense of the megaliths in Brittany, allows us to measure a great parliamentarian’s extent of knowledge in all its breadth and limits. Coming from an old lineage of the provincial aristocracy, Robien was a collector, antiquarian and naturalist, and his fame went beyond the borders of Brittany. Through the study of character, the author identifies the ways in which the Enlightenment penetrated the dominant Breton milieus, by confronting the Robien case with its environment, in particular, thanks to the after-death inventories of the elites of his time.<sup>59</sup> This enlightened action can be observed in all fields, whether it be naturalism (Buffon, Lamarck, and Lacépède), philosophy (Montesquieu, Condorcet, and Condillac), or the great voyages of exploration (Lapérouse, and Kerguelen) among many others.<sup>60</sup> Numerous nobles were actors of the Enlightenment, as reflected by the sociological studies of the authors of the *Encyclopédie*. They were involved in the enterprise, not by virtue of their titles, but as specialists in a particular subject.

56 Roche, *Le siècle des Lumières*.

57 Craveri, *Madame du Deffand*.

58 Lilti, *Le monde des salons*.

59 Aubert, *Le président de Robien*.

60 Even though it is not directly about the nobility, Bruno Belhoste’s book gives an excellent idea of this: Belhoste, *Paris savant*.

The most famous case is that of the Chevalier de Jaucourt, who spent his life producing articles for the *Encyclopédie*. Having studied theology in Geneva, mathematics for three years at Cambridge, and medicine in Leiden, he was truly a member of the nobility, fully integrated into the networks of the European Enlightenment. The Marquis de Saint-Lambert (who in 1762 published a highly acclaimed article on luxury), Bouchard and the Count of Tressan, among others, contributed to the encyclopedic work. This attraction to intellectual activities and curiosity has led researchers to highlight the role of the second order in the acceleration of international circulation and intellectual exchange in the eighteenth century. Naturally, one must be wary of the influence of sources here and, in particular, of the fact that memorialists and epistolary writers are over-represented. International movement typical of the aristocracy is mainly in line with its demographic weight: they were involved mostly in pilgrimages, military campaigns, and labor migration.

The surprising category of migration mainly applies to the aristocrats with careers in the service of a foreign state, sometimes in civil administration, but more often in the army. In France, apart from the well-known case of the great captains—the marshals of Berwick, Saxony or Lowendal—there are many non-French born aristocrats in the so-called foreign regiments. Many had the position of lieutenant-colonel, which meant that they exercised effective command of the regiment on behalf of the titular colonel, who was a reigning prince: for example, the Baron de Clozen, a Bavarian by birth, for the Duke of Deux-Ponts (Royal-Deux-Ponts Regiment in the 1760s), or the Prince de Salm-Salm, himself the sovereign of a principality, for the Prince of Anhalt (Anhalt Regiment in the 1780s). Others had their own regiment, such as the Baron de Sparre, Swedish by birth (Sparre-Infanterie Regiment in 1690–1710, the predecessor of the Royal Swedish Regiment), which did not prevent him from returning to the service of his homeland as Swedish ambassador to France. Many of these moves could be multiform. Thus, in the midst of his German campaign of 1757, which took him from the battle of Hastenbeck to the submission of Hanover, the Marquis de Valfons took a day to visit the neutral city of Bremen with the Duke of Richelieu. Similarly, Prince Galitzine's stays as Russian ambassador in Paris and subsequently in The Hague in the 1760s and 1770s cannot be reduced to his diplomatic activities alone, although his time was largely devoted to the Republic of Letters and Sciences, as Diderot's writings show. This itinerary and frequentation aristocratic sociability in Europe has been more particularly scrutinized by Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire in the context of Freemasonry networks, based on the correspondence of the Chevalier de Corberon.<sup>61</sup>

Jonathan Dewald seems to be largely on the wrong track when he argues in his synthesis of the nobility of modern Europe that European nobles were increasingly similar

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61 Beaurepaire, *L'autre et le frère* and Beaurepaire and Taurisson, *Les ego-documents*.

to each other as the modern period progressed.<sup>62</sup> In support of his argument, he points out that there were many poor nobles in the late Middle Ages, but in the modern period money was increasingly more and more necessary to lead an existence that conformed to the ideal of noble life, and to have access to the knowledge and entertainment that it required. In reality, as we have seen, economic hierarchies remained as heterogeneous as ever. Many families disappeared, but at least as much for biological as for political reasons, and the simplification of the second order is absolutely not evident. On the contrary. Faced with the evolution of the Enlightenment, this polymorphism continued to increase, particularly, as we have seen, under the influence of cultural factors. At the end of the *Ancien Régime*, we should no longer be surprised to witness the divisions and fractures in the nobility in the face of the Revolution.<sup>63</sup>

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62 Dewald, *The European Nobility*.

63 On this topic, see the excellent conference organized and headed by Bourdin, ed., *Les noblesses françaises*.

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# The Finances of the Hungarian Aristocracy in Boom and Recession

## The Credit Transactions of the Prince Esterházy, Batthyány and Festetics Families at the Turn of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

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**Abstract.** Based on primary sources, the present study is intended to reconstruct and analyze the process and levels of indebtedness of some of the outstanding Hungarian aristocratic families possessing large landed properties in the western region of Hungary, mainly in the Transdanubian counties. The author provides exact numerical data on the changes of the registered amounts of credit transactions, the stocks of assets and liabilities of the princely line of the Esterházy, Batthyány and the Keszthely branch of the Festetics families at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. He explores the various documents kept by the financial administrations of the families, including contemporary county mortgage records, which testify to an extremely lively lending and borrowing environment during the French Wars. The study concludes that devaluations and the financial crises of the Austrian Empire in the 1810s exerted an adverse effect on the finances of both the above families and contemporary 'small investors.'

**Keywords:** Esterházy, Batthyány, Festetics, debt service, devaluation, financial administration, French Wars, county mortgage records

### Introduction

From the late eighteenth century onward, the administrations of large Hungarian estates—in particular those owned by members of Western Hungarian (Transdanubian) upper aristocratic families that had for generations occupied the highest government and military positions in the Kingdom of Hungary—were operated in terms of function, hierarchy, and sphere of authority according to increasingly rational business and administrative methods. Unsurprisingly, previous research in this regard has evaluated the effectiveness of such enterprises, or even the outstanding

performance of particular sectors, in relation to income realized in cash, i.e., based on numbers.<sup>1</sup>

In the age concerned, the volume of administration relevant to the flow of cash into and out of individual estate coffers was continuously expanding and, more conspicuously than previously, extended beyond the mere registration in tabular ledgers of factors such as the income from each sector; the cash value associated with asset investments; other ‘operating costs’ such as minor cash payments to employees and officers; and the cash values of accompanying benefits in kind.<sup>2</sup> Administration of finances, originally limited to production and sales only, was expanded—not surprisingly, starting precisely from the mid-eighteenth century—to include a range of administrative tasks associated with the keeping of credit ledgers, a then-growing field. Thus, to the usual ledger tables and summaries consisting of juxtaposed income (*perceptio*) and expenditure (*erogatio*), columns were added for new books carrying assets (*status activus*) and liabilities (*status passivus*), which today provide important information on contemporary lending and borrowing practices, including the amounts conferred, terms to maturity, debt service schedules, and—by no means unimportantly—the social positions of the various persons and entities involved (prebendaries, urban communities, orphanage funds, etc.).<sup>3</sup>

What gives this type of source its particular value is that, though not every creditor took the trouble to entabulate (enter into official records) the amounts they disbursed, the county mortgage records mandated by Article 107 of 1723 contain important information on the amounts and persons involved.<sup>4</sup> It is striking, however, that beginning in the 1810s, the number of the propertied and unpropertied alike requesting county record keeping on their transactions grew noticeably, even where the claims in question totalled merely tens or a few hundreds

1 For a comprehensive evaluation of the modernisation of estate management practices, see: Vári, “A nagybirtok.” For an examination of social historical aspects of the issue, see: Kaposi, *Uradalmi gazdaság*.

2 For more on various aspects of contemporary European administrative practice, see: Becker, and Clark, “Introduction”; Hilgers, and Khaled, “Formation in Zeilen”; Becker, “Formulare.” For an example of the tabular record keeping used in contemporary Hungarian government administrative practice, see: Krász, “Az adatuktól az információig.”

3 An example of this is the financial administrative orders of large western Hungarian estate holder Count György Festetics (1755–1819) relevant to the record keeping practices of both individual estate cashiers, and the *Crediti Cassa*, the central credit cashier in Keszthely. Kurucz, “Adósság,” 542–45.

4 For a critique of credit record keeping practices in the Hungary’s central county, see: Somorjai, “Pest-Pilis-Solt vármegye.”

of forints.<sup>5</sup> The explanation for this can be found in the fact that the period of boosted agricultural sales beginning with the advent of the French Wars in 1791 was followed by a serious recession, in which accurate recording by the county of loans and debts served to ensure that later claims and court procedures against upper aristocratic and landed borrowers unable to repay the principal, or even the interest on their loans, could be legally enforced. It should also be noted that credit transactions implemented through bills of exchange referring to loans taken from or provided by aristocratic partners did not contain any kind of stipulation regarding the recovery of the amount concerned by claiming certain lands from the debtor. Yet it was not unusual to include in the contracts specific mortgage claims for certain properties if the debtor failed 'to satisfy' the lender according to the set terms of the contract.<sup>6</sup>

The primary reason for the increase in the number of claims and unpaid instalments, however, can be traced back to the financial crisis in which the Habsburg Empire—and hence Hungary—had found itself. Because of the concurrent growth in state debt, the sales opportunities that presented themselves as a result of the French wars came with accelerating inflation, meaning that between 1804 and 1808, the quantity of paper money in circulation—in theory exchangeable for its nominal equivalent in silver—doubled. Though the bank notes (*Bancozettel*) broadly used in place of the sixty-kreuzer silver forint (*Conventionsmünze*) were of the same nominal value, the actual exchange rate for 1811—i.e. for the period of Austrian state bankruptcy—signified a loss to the value of 500 percent. Its no coincidence, therefore, that it was at this time that cash and credit transactions in paper currency (*bankó czédula*) and silver (*pengő*) in the contemporary upper aristocratic financial administration came to be registered separately, and losses in value—i.e., real values—were indicated according to the exchange rates 'converted to the Vienna scale' as regularly published in newspapers.<sup>7</sup>

Equally importantly, the financial letters patent issued in the wake of the Austrian state bankruptcy of 1811 declared that the 'Viennese scale' had to be applied to all

5 See the mortgage record entries for Tolna County: MNL TML IV.1. O.1. *Protocollum intabulationis obligatorialium*. An extremely superficial study examining the accumulation of debt by the Hungarian nobility based on the mortgage data for three Transdanubian counties: Ungár, "A magyar nemesi birtok." Ungár's figures should be taken with utmost care and reservation. He does not give the proper sources of his analyses of county debt and mortgage records before the 1840s. Also, he disregards the fact that, as a result of Joseph II's administrative reforms, between 1787 and 1790, Baranya and Tolna Counties were under joint administration. Neither did he do any research into the relevant classes of papers in the aristocratic family archives.

6 For more on litigation related to the contemporary enforcement of claims, see the relevant portions of: Grünwald, Széchenyi.

7 Handler, "Two Centuries of Currency Policy," 543–44.

loans disbursed subsequent to January 1799, meaning that the amounts appearing on various loans in circulation were to be correlated to the monthly exchange rate between paper currency and silver, and were (or could be) repaid according to the nominal value of *Einlösungsscheine*, that is, ‘redemption notes’ introduced to replace the bank notes previously in circulation.<sup>8</sup> This measure was clearly disadvantageous for lenders—and in particular for ‘small investors’—but advantageous for borrowers, since according to the edict, exceptions could only be made where the original loan agreement stipulated the currency in which the amount was to be repaid, i.e., in gold, silver, or *bankó czédula* (bank notes). Because when loan agreements had been signed, lenders—with very few exceptions—had only taken the trouble to record the principal, interest rate, and terms of cancellation, while the terms of repayment regarding the original principal, too, would be adjusted to adhere to the new regimen.<sup>9</sup> A second letters patent issued on 1 June 1816, intending to promote the consolidation of internal cash flow, lay the foundations for an Austrian central bank, and strengthen ‘public trust’ in the new bank notes, resolved the issue of how the

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8 Varga, *Magyarország pénzintézetei*, 10. Despite rising prices in the age, a contemporary flyer—obviously at the suggestion of the government—welcomes the introduction of redemption notes: “The *Cursus* gives the value of the *pengő* in bank notes, or the value of the bank note as estimated abroad... But in and of itself, as far as the taxpaying public is concerned, the fate of the taxpayer this year is harder than it was last year, though this tax was already levied upon the public when the currency was good; if, therefore, the taxpayer pays the tax with good currency, his fate is not harder than it was in the time of the *pengő*. Indeed, it is lighter, as then he received 3 or 4 forints for a unit of wheat, while now he receives 6 forints for the same.” Farkasfalvi Ferencz Prókátor, *Azon Pátens felől*, 27, 33. Newspapers published the latest *cursus* (i. e., exchange rates) once a week. According to the 6 July 1813 issue of *Magyar Kurír*, “100 Forint Conventiós money amounts to 155 and 5/8ths in Redemption Notes.” According to the issue of 7 August 1813, the exchange rate had shifted to 174 and 5/6ths. For a comprehensive analysis of the activities of Finance Minister and Chancellor Count Johann Philip Stadion (1763–1824), a prominent figure of the central policymaking on the affairs of finance and credit within the Austrian Empire and, accordingly, the Kingdom of Hungary, see: Rössler, *Graf Johann Philip Stadion*.

9 The Imperial Decree was enacted on 1 September 1812, following the dissolution of the Diet. For further details on the Austrian state bankruptcy, including the texts of the relevant patents and exchange rate tables, see: Stiassny, *Der Österreichische Staatsbankrott*; Kraft, *Die Finanzreform des Grafen Wallis*. An example both for the use of the exchange rate tables in everyday finance, and in general for the above phenomena is to be found in a procedure associated with the financial administration of the Festetics family, according to which the wife of a creditor, a Calvinist preacher from Hajmáskér by the name of József Sziksza, verified the receipt in full of “such interest as applies to the period in question on my above-indicated capital investments” in a *quietantia* worded as follows: “1500 f[orints]. B[ank]. N[otes]. i.e., the 5 p[er]cent interest for the full year, meaning the period extending from 24 July 1818 unto 24 July 1819, on my capital investments in r[edemption] notes converted to the Vienna Scale using *Cursus* 197, 761ft 25 2/5ths – 38ft 4xr.” MNL OL Festetics Lt, Statements 1820/21, P 276 Box 760 XII-9/b/20-No.40, (no foliation).

notes were to be traded and redeemed by giving out new *pengő*-backed bank notes (*Wiener Währung*, in theory redeemable for silver) for two-sevenths of the nominal value of the previous notes and state bonds at 1 percent interest for the remaining five-sevenths.<sup>10</sup>

This paper seeks to provide an overview of the lending and borrowing practices of several major Hungarian land-owning families, with primary reference to the three great Western Hungarian dynasties: the princely branch of the Esterházy family, the Batthyány family, and the Keszthely branch of the Festetics family. The time under examination follows the period covered by István Bakács's epochal work on the credit transactions of the eighteenth-century Hungarian aristocracy, extending the analysis from the 1770s, where Bakács's work concludes, to the turn of the nineteenth century, with particular attention to the period of the French Wars and the subsequent recession.<sup>11</sup> The analysis will strive to compare the amounts appearing in various types of documents pertaining to the credit transactions and financial administrations of the families in question and to identify fundamental trends. In order to give some sense of the volume of credit in circulation among aristocratic families, it will also attempt to provide information on regional credit turnover during this period by highlighting the figures for the claims, principal amounts, and instalments appearing in individual Transdanubian county mortgage records.

To analyze the above problems and reconstruct the processes in question, this paper takes as its fundamental source the financial and estate administration documentation of former aristocratic family archives now held in the Hungarian National Archives, including bills of exchange, receipts, debt registries, and accounting documents, with the additional use of specific numeric data from the mortgage records of Tolna, Somogy, Baranya, Zala, and Vas Counties in which various credit transactions were entered.

10 Probszt, *Österreichische Münz- und Geldgeschichte*, Band 1, 527; Jirkovsky, *Az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchia*, 8.

11 Bakács, *A magyar nagybirtokos családok hitelügyletei*. For analyses providing further data on Hungarian aristocratic credit transactions, see: Szabad, *A tatai és gesztesi Eszterházy-uradalom*, 62–117; Varga, “A bihari nemesség hitelviszonyai.” For more on the financial and credit landscape in Transdanubia, see: Glósz, *Tolna megye*; Tilcsik, “Egy parciális obligáció”; Kurucz, “Adósság, hitel, törlesztés”; Kurucz, “Adminisztráció, gazdálkodás, adósságkezelés.” For an overview of credit transactions as reflected by one particular Transdanubian county's mortgage records see: Tóth, *Hitelezők és adósok*. For more on the credit crisis after the Napoleonic Wars in Hungary, see: Somorjai, “Credit Crises in Hungary.” For a case study in relation to credit transactions and conversions of mortgage debts in the mid-nineteenth century, see: Kövér, “Hitelkonverziók.”

## Records and financial administrative practices

The patrimonial estates of the princely branch of the Esterházy family amounting to approximately one million *hold* (1 Hungarian *hold* = 1.42 English acres) consisted of 31 domains, which were managed as local administrative units.<sup>12</sup> Responsible for the operation as a whole was an all-powerful regent (*Regent*), under whom an executive cashier (*Hauptexactor*) operated on the premise of full financial accountability. Individual estate cashiers (*Rent-Ämter*), along with a construction cashier, all of who were also subordinate to the regent, were required to submit executive reports to the General Cashier (*General Cassa*) in Eisenstadt (Kismarton) on a monthly or yearly basis. In turn, the General Cashier kept precise records of the circulation of money through the various units, naturally, along with debts owed and claimed, and prepared regular financial statements.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, it is important to note that the General Cashier would decide to revise financial statements or sums administered by the cashiers of the domains with the aim of making adjustments not merely upon the death of a princely head of family, but also periodically, e.g., every ten years.<sup>14</sup>

Serving as an instructive example of administrative practice by a General Cashier is the statement which breaks down the principal repayments, currently repaid interest, and, in a separate section, the expenditures of the central princely court in Eisenstadt for the period extending from the indicated month of the calendar year to the year's end (Fig. 1).<sup>15</sup>

The administered amounts suffice for giving a sense of the regular record-keeping practices of the Esterházy central estate administration during the period in question, while also revealing that interest payments were 11.4 percent higher than were principal repayments, i.e., 291,322 forints as compared to 258,031 forints, and that these two sums were both significantly higher than the 56,843-forint house-keeping expenditure for the princely residence in Eisenstadt.

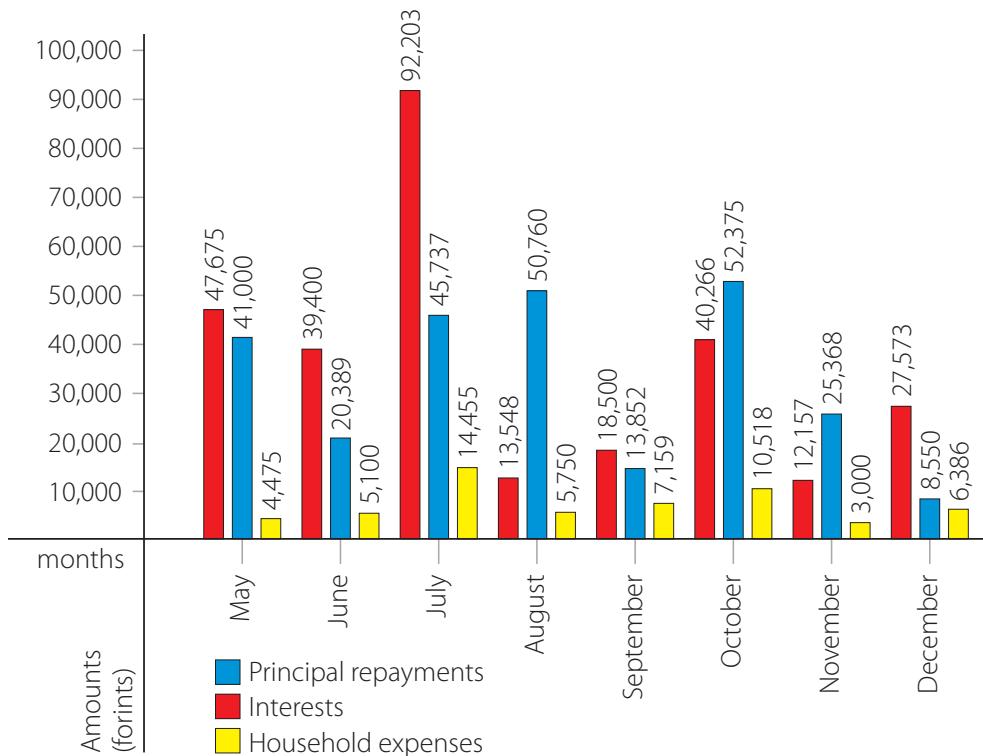
With the exception of loan agreements, most commonly called *carta bianca*, which should be deemed as bills of exchange that may be traded or ceded to various other parties, hence the reference to their nullification in contemporary records, and receipts, which might be written in German, Latin, or Hungarian, the documents of the central financial administration of the princely branch of the Esterházy family

12 Kállay, *A magyarországi nagybirtok*, 18. Details regarding the founding of an entail, i.e., the prevention of arbitrary asset alienation on the part of the nobility, were governed by Act 9 of 1687. For more on the flow of cash among the estates in question between 1762 and 1777, see MNL OL Esterházy Lt, Statements, P 132 Box 2 item c. No. 8 (no foliation).

13 MNL OL Esterházy Lt, Statements, P 182 III. item 1. No. 56 (no foliation).

14 MNL OL Esterházy Lt, Statements, P 182 III. item 1. No. 42 (no foliation).

15 *Auszug der monatlichen Ausweisen der General Cassa pro 1798*. MNL OL Esterházy Lt, Statements, P 182 Box 64 No. 183 fol. 4, 7–8.



**Figure 1** Principal repayments, interests, household expenses of Prince Miklós Esterházy II, 1798

were consistently written in German. This is noteworthy because although the correspondence and social contact between the Hungarian upper aristocracy and the court in Vienna was fundamentally conducted in French or German, proper use of the country's unofficial language did not in any way cause difficulty to members of the family. Written confirmation of this observation can be found in the *carta bianca* signed by Prince Pál (Antal) Esterházy II (1711–1762) in Hungarian, according to which on 9 July 1741, the prince received the sum of 10,000 forints from Terézia Berényi, widow of Count József Erdődy (?–1723), at 6 percent interest, a rate which was incidentally later reduced to 5 percent.<sup>16</sup> Similarly, numerous examples can be cited in relation to other branches of the family: letters from stewards written in Hungarian, even to the members of the family who were not actually Hungarian by birth, as evinced by the documents of Countess Amalie von Lymburg-Styrum (1723–1799), widow of Count János Károly Esterházy (1723–1758) of the Zólyom branch of the family.<sup>17</sup>

16 MNL OL Esterházy Lt, P 110 Box 1 Fasc. B. No. 28. *Obligationes*, (H-L 1674–1804) (no foliation).

17 MNL OL Esterházy zólyomi Lt, Family Members, P 1290-II-24. Box 6 (no foliation).

The Batthyány family administered a similarly prodigious estate of approximately 400,000 *holds* in Western Hungary by a general cashier in Körmend, Vas County, using methods much the same as those favoured by the Esterházys. The Batthyány *Cassa Universalia* recorded payments from its various units in what were known as *Menstrualis Extracti*, that is, in ledgers corresponding to a single financial year, but broken down by month. In addition, considerable information not included in the records of the Esterházy financial administration—items such as its petty cash, monetary denominations, domestic vs. foreign currency, and even exchange rates (!)—were precisely registered in Körmend. Although the documents here, too, were written largely in German and, to a much lesser extent, Latin all through the eighteenth century, all employees of the administration were required to have some command of Hungarian, as from time to time, they were certain to encounter instructions and other papers in the domestic tongue, as well. As an example for how language was used among the Batthyánys, one might examine an order issued by Count Lajos Batthyány, palatine of Hungary (1696–1765), in Vienna on 8 October 1744: "...whereas having raised and educated our current housekeeper at Körmend, Máttyás Hofman, at our own expense, which position he has held at our residence there for six years, and given that, after his worthy comportment, we shall be applying him elsewhere, we have assigned him to assist our *Exactor* at the *Rationaria* in the capacity of clerk."<sup>18</sup> Another instruction in Hungarian, in this case dated 30 September 1758 and dispatched from his landholdings near the capital in Bicske, makes reference to his assumption of debt on behalf of Count György Szluha (1716–1774), demonstrating once again that the palatine communicated in the nation's as-of-yet unofficial language as easily as in German, Latin, or French.<sup>19</sup>

On the basis of assessments conducted in advance of the urbarial decree of 1767 targeting centralized regulation of the relationships between peasants and landowners, in the mid-eighteenth century, the Keszhely branch of the Festetics family estates encompassed a total of some 111,000 *holds* of land.<sup>20</sup> Starting in 1782, when following his father's death and Count György Festetics (1755–1819) took up his inheritance, as a former clerk of the Hungarian Royal Chamber of Finances, re-organized the systems by which the individual domains were administrated. Deemed as individual administrative units, they were supposed to finalize their

18 The language falls within the domain of standard, but archaic Hungarian. "...miszerint mostani Körmendi Kulcsárunkat, Hofman Máttyást magunk költsigin fölneveáltuk s tanittatuk, és már Körmendi várunknal hat esztendőtől fogva kulcsárokodott, míg maga jo viselése után más-huva fogjuk applicalnyi, Rendeltük Rationariánkban Exactorunk mellé író deáknak." MNL OL Batthyány Lt, *Rationaria*, P 1322 No. 5 fol. 11.

19 MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents, P 1313-II-7. No. 625 (no foliation).

20 Kállay, *A magyarországi nagybirtok*, 18. Kállay's source: Felhő, *Az úrbéres birtokviszonyok*.

monthly and yearly accounts in a manner similar to that favored by the Esterházy and Batthyány families. While estate cashiers at the lower levels kept records of crop sales, rents, payments in kind, loans disbursed, etc. in diarial form, the *Crediti Cassa* in Keszthely, i.e., the central 'credit cashier' registered revenues and expenditures related exclusively to cash and credit transactions. By comparison to the Batthyány and Esterházy administrations, in the matter of credit, the bookkeeping system employed by Festetics diverged from the norm in that accountants (*exactors*) registered the amounts of interest and principal repaid and times of repayment, as well as their returns on loans using separate tabular *Status Passivus* (Liabilities) and *Status Activus* (Assets) ledgers. In recording liabilities, entries were grouped according to cashier, with indication first of the name of the given creditor, followed by the date of loan disbursement and the interest rate (4–6 percent). Following the devaluation of 1811, the valorized amounts for the principal, the deadlines for payment of instalments, and, finally, the sums of interest and principal paid were added. Summaries for each year also included the balances for individual cashiers. The assets ledger, on the other hand, broke down information by cashier. The first column featured the name of the debtor, followed by the debtor's place of residence, the date the loan was received, the amount borrowed, and the contracted interest rate (4–6 percent). The next column revealed the *cursus*, the exchange rate otherwise known as the 'Vienna scale,' and the last one the deadline for interest payments. A typical example would be the credit transaction of Moravian-born veterinarian Gyula Liebbald (1780–1846), who loaned Festetics 100 forints at 5 percent interest on 8 December 1806. According to *cursus* 184 for paper currency to silver, that is, on the basis of the 'Vienna scale,' the original principal amount had depreciated considerably in value to a total of just 54 forints 20 kreuzers.<sup>21</sup>

It is interesting from the point of methodology that beginning in the 1810s, the *exactors* in charge of maintaining these records compiled their assets and liabilities ledgers neither according to amount, nor in alphabetical order, but by transaction date. 'Bad' and uncollectable debts were indicated separately in the given column, as demonstrated by a ledger from 1814–1815, in which the interest on a loan disbursed on 14 September 1768 had gone unpaid for years, while the principal corresponded to the amount originally provided.<sup>22</sup>

The act of law mentioned in the introduction to this paper, which among other things, served to make public, via county administration the credit transactions of the age, along with any debt recovery achieved through legal action, did not regulate the manner in which figures were recorded, though for obvious reasons, the methodologies in question extended at least to the copy book registration of individual

21 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Statements., P 236 Box 24 fol. 57v.

22 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Statements., P 236 Box 24 fol. 57v–58.

loan agreements and bills of exchange, and in some cases, also an indication of full repayment of the principal.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, from the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century onward, indices (*elenchus*) were produced in various levels of detail to facilitate the retrieval of information on the parties involved. Information was generally recorded in alphabetic order, and in some cases, tables headed in Latin displayed not only the names of the parties to a given credit transaction, i.e., the names of the debtor and lender (*cognomen debitoris et creditoris*), but also the principal, interest rate, and—naturally—the case number, with a separate column made available for the registration of the date of *extabulatio*, that is, of full repayment of the principal. The early nineteenth century marks the time when credit accounting indices underwent a measure of simplification, a development attributable to the growing number of transactions to be handled. This period witnessed the advent of the alphanumeric index: for a given year, the names of parties were listed in alphabetic order, obviously together with the figure for the loan principal, but without indication of the interest rate. The date and magnitude of repayment of the principal was entered as an *ex post facto* marginal note, or simply by crossing out the figures in the given line.

In short, it may be established that available sources from the age—that is, the financial administrative documents of the Esterházy, Batthyány, and Festetics families, together with the relevant county records—offer an excellent starting point for the examination of contemporary credit transactions. There are periods, however, for which certain document types either have survived only in fragments or are missing from family and county archives—clearly, as a result of the destruction wreaked during the Second World War.

## Credit transactions and liquidity

On 18 March 1762, on the occasion of the death of the aforementioned Prince Pál Antal Esterházy, head of the Esterházy household, his younger brother Prince Miklós Esterházy (1714–1790) issued a circular ordering that all Roman Catholic parishes should say a mass for the soul of the deceased. Just days later, on 25 March—in the interest of securing imperial confirmation of the prince's inheritance by the male line—a letter to Queen Maria Theresa (1740–1780) was also sent from Vienna.<sup>24</sup> According to a comprehensive report issued by the *General Cassa* in Eisenstadt fourteen years later, the heir, who with the elder brother's death, had inherited a debt

<sup>23</sup> See the administrative practices of south Transdanubian Baranya County or of Borsod County in north-eastern Hungary: MNL BML IV.1. O.1. *Protocollum Intabulationis*; MNL BAZML *Series in- et extabulationis*, IV. A-501 vol. 1.

<sup>24</sup> MNL OL Esterházy Lt, Prince Miklós Esterházy, P 132 Box 2 f. No. 5, 9 (no foliation).

of exactly 2,258,374 forints, by 1776 had already amassed a debt of 3,617,974 forints. Though the growth of 1,359,600 forints was, without a doubt, truly significant, it is worth noting that relatively speaking, in terms of expenditures, the prince—a resplendent figure in the eyes of his contemporaries and builder of the sumptuous Eszterháza (Fertőd) residence known as 'Little Versailles,' where even the Imperial family is known to have stayed—had spent a total of 542,540 forints on the purchase of additional lands, and 313,462 forints on new construction projects.<sup>25</sup>

A review of the various classes of archive papers containing loan agreements (*obligationes*) assumed by Esterházy family members reveals that prior to the final decades of the eighteenth century, the largest sums had come from the coffers of the Batthyány family. According to a debt summary issued on 18 September 1772 by the administration in Eisenstadt, the Esterházys owed an aggregate amount of 474,000 forints to the Transdanubian aristocratic family.<sup>26</sup> Of this, Baroness Terézia Kinsky (?–1775), widow of the late Palatine Lajos Batthyány, alone had provided a total of 210,000 forints. It should be noted, however, that on 28 February and 31 March 1773, the couple's son, Count József Batthyány (1727–1799), then archbishop of Kalocsa, issued receipts (*quietantia*) to the Esterházy administration for 80,000 and 130 000 forints, respectively, certifying that the principal had been repaid in full.<sup>27</sup> This particular transaction is noteworthy in that the original bills of exchange (*carta bianca*) were lost by the *General Cassa* of Eisenstadt, causing the cashier to have to nullify them on behalf of Prince Miklós Esterházy via the press, i.e., by an announcement published in the 20 March 1773 issue of the *Pressburger Zeitung*.<sup>28</sup>

As has already been noted, within fifteen years of the estate's having passed from Pál Antal to Miklós Esterházy, the encumbrance on the princely cashier grew by a full 37.5 percent. Yet, during the period following the end of the reign of Holy Roman King Joseph II (1780–1790)—i.e., the period beginning with the realm's alliance with Empress Catherine II of Russia (1762–1796) and the launch of the Austro–Turkish War in 1788 and enduring through the long decades that followed the outbreak of the French Revolution, the process by which the indebtedness of the

25 MNL OL Esterházy Lt, Prince Miklós Esterházy, P 132 Box 2. c. No. 1 (no foliation).

26 See: "Extract aller bey dem Hochfürstlichen Majorat anliegenden Battyánischen Capitalien, was bey jeder vermög obligation vor ein Aufkündung Termin vorgeschehen." MNL OL Esterházy Lt, *Obligationes*, P 110 Box 1. Fasc. B. No. 19 (no foliation).

27 MNL MNL OL Esterházy Lt, *Obligationes*, P 110 Box 1. Fasc. B. No. 24 (no foliation).

28 "verloren gegangen, dieselbe aber bereits von Sr. Fürstlichen Gnaden dergestalten ausgeglichen worden. daß alle diese vorbemelte Schuldbriefe jetzt, und auf alle Künftige Zeiten Cassirt, mortificiert, und annulirt sind, also daß auch zu keiner Zeit, von wem es immer seye ein gültiger Gebrauch derenselben gemacht werden könne." MNL OL Esterházy Lt, *Obligationes*, P 110 Box 1 Fasc. B. No. 26 (no foliation).

Esterházy princes grew accelerated even faster. This state of affairs was in part an out-growth of the credit practices of contemporary ‘small investors’: given that the age offered no savings bank network, creditors deposited their excess funds with aristocratic cashiers, whose estates and revenues served as a guarantee of repayment. In a manner unsurprising in the age, the financial administration at Eisenstadt handled all loans taken out after 1790 as ‘new liabilities’ (*Neue Obligationen*) as opposed to liabilities inherited from Prince Miklós Esterházy I.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, it should be taken into consideration that the issue was truly one of new debt service and interest payment obligations, as it frequently occurred that a purchase and sale agreement involved no transfer of actual cash. An example of this is the purchase and sale agreement between Somogy County Deputy Lord Lieutenant Károly Inkey (?–1809), scion of a wealthy Transdanubian gentry family,<sup>30</sup> and Prince Miklós Esterházy II (1765–1833), by which Esterházy acquired lands and properties in Sopron County from Inkey at the purchase price of 71,000 forints. As Esterházy already owed the nobleman the sum of 15,000 forints, the Eisenstadt cashier entered the 71,000-forint purchase price into the books as a liability, thereafter paying a rate of 6 percent interest on the aggregate principal debt of 86,000 forints.<sup>31</sup>

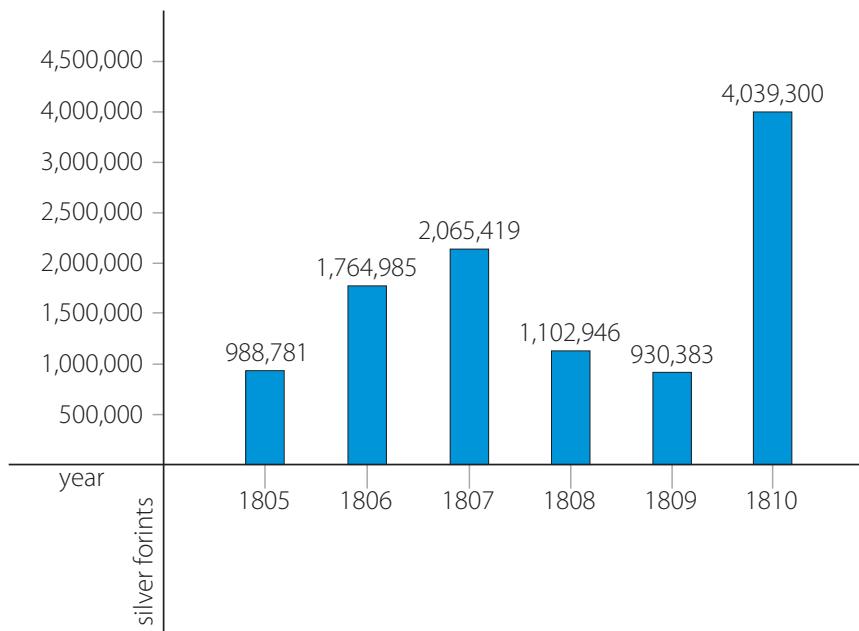
In comparison to previous decades, the period encompassing the turn of the nineteenth century witnessed a big hike both in the number of loans taken out, and in actual loan sizes, though the creditors placing larger sums with the Esterházy cashiers now belonged to the upper aristocracy and even the ruling dynasty. In 1801, for example, Prince Albert of Saxony-Teschen (1738–1822) and son-in-law of Queen Maria Theresa, issued Prince Miklós Esterházy a loan to the considerable

29 MNL OL Esterházy Lt, *Listae novarum obligationum 1793–1822*, P 110 Box 4 (no foliation).

30 According to the debt registries and mortgage records of Somogy County, certain members of the Inkey family provided substantial loans to other families up to the value of around 900,000 forints. Boldizsár Inkey (1726–1792) alone lent 320,000 forints in 1766, see: Tóth, *Hitelezők és adósok*, 72–73. At the same time, according to the debt registries and mortgage records of Vas County, Western Transdanubia, Boldizsár Inkey borrowed 376,000 forints in the second half of the eighteenth century. MNL VAML, *Protocollum intabulationis 1729–1784*, IV.1. mm. (no foliation). The complete reconstruction of the Inkey family’s wealth and financial transactions is impossible because the family archives were destroyed in the twentieth century. For the inheritance of Boldizsár Inkey bequeathed to his children in 1792, see: Kurucz, “Köznemesi vagyoni állapot.”

31 “daß ich nicht allein die ersten Fünfzehn Tausend Gulden von obberührten 6ten Juny l[etztes]. J[ahres]. an, die Ein und Siebzig Tausend Gulden hingegen von sammt untgesetzten dato an als dem Tag der Übernahme des erkauften Guts mit jährlichen Sechs pctigen von halb zu halb Jahr anführenden Intee verziechen, sondern auch das gesamte Capital deren Sechs und Achtzig Tausend Gulden ... von titulirten Herrn Creditor, oder dieses Schuldbriefes getreuen Inhabern in guten gangbaren Münz ohne allen Abgang zurückzahlen werde (...)" MNL OL Esterházy Lt, *Listae novarum obligationum 1801*, P 110 Box 4 No. 47 (no foliation).

sum of 100,000 forints.<sup>32</sup> While that same year, the Esterházy administration registered a total of 659,224 forints in loans assumed, a year later the sum taken out was as much as 944,921 forints. Among the latter set of creditors was Countess Antónia Batthyány, who provided the family a loan of 43,500 forints at 6 percent interest in 1802.<sup>33</sup> Other major creditors included Krisztina Festetics (1780–1835), wife of Count Anton Franz Wratislaw von Mitrowicz und Schönfeld (1777–?), who provided a sum of 40,000 forints, and also—with a conspicuously large total—wholesaler Johann Baptist Barkenstein, who disbursed loans of 50,000 forints each on 1 and 15 November 1803 at 6 percent interest, subject to cancellation deadlines of three and six months, respectively (Fig. 2).<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 2** Loans taken by Prince Miklós Esterházy II, 1805–1810

On the one hand, the above figures highlight the continuous nature of credit transactions during the period, which is a positive economic effect of the French Wars. The gross sums of ‘new obligations’ continued to grow so that by comparison to figures at the start of the period, loan amounts in the tenth year were four times larger. Similarly important is the observation that compared to the roughly 3.6-million-forint debt twenty years earlier, i.e., in 1776, for the period under examination, the administration in Eisenstadt recorded a total in loans amounting to as much as 14.5 million forints.

32 MNL BML *Protocollum Intabulationis*, IV.1. O.1 (no foliation).

33 MNL OL Esterházy Lt, *Listae novarum obligationum 1802*, P 110 Box 4 No. 84 (no foliation).

34 MNL OL Esterházy Lt, *Listae novarum obligationum 1803*, P 110 Box 4 No. 130/149 (no foliation).

The finances of the Batthyány family seem to be different to those of the Esterházys. Handling 223,153 forints in debt, Countess Eleonore von Strattman (1677–1741), widow of Lord Chief Justice and Transdanubian Captain-in-Chief Count Ádám Batthyány II (1662–1703), was responsible for an appreciable share of eighteenth-century credit transactions.<sup>35</sup> The widow's efforts at the consolidation of her estates were in every way admirable, as it happened that—in consequence of her efforts toward repopulating the deserted lands acquired by the family in southern Transdanubia (the domains of Kanizsa and Bóly), promoting and organising production and sales, ensuring the continuity of principal and interest payments, etc.—her sons, the Counts Lajos and Károly Batthyány (1696–1765, and 1698–1772, respectively), inherited not only an entire series of profitably operating estates, but also outstanding claims of 728,000 forints *vis-a-vis* various private parties and 298,700 forints *vis-a-vis* Wiener Stadt Banco, the institution acting as the Habsburgs' bank issuing banknotes during the period.<sup>36</sup> In the years immediately following the assumption of his inheritance in 1745, the net income on the estates managed by Count Lajos Batthyány—i.e., the earnings deposited with the central cashier in Körmend, once all expenses had been deducted, came to a total of 43,298 forints.<sup>37</sup> If, on the other hand, we examine the figures pertaining to the estates passed down after Lajos's death,<sup>38</sup> that is, the figures for the 1794/95 financial year relevant to the inheritance of the widow's grandson, Prince Lajos Batthyány II (1753–1806), we find that net profits had grown as high as 192,668 forints, a circumstance attributable to both increasingly effective management, and the boom created by the French Wars.<sup>39</sup>

It may be established, therefore, that in theory, the family possessed the material means to support a lifestyle commensurate with its status, and in fact,

35 Bakács, *A magyar nagybirtokos családok hitelügyletei*, 84. The entail was founded by way of a royal rescript issued on 24 April 1693 as a result of which debts inherited from one's father were divided, see: MNL OL Batthyány Lt, *Divisionalia*, P 1313 65. d. Lad. 31. I-2-31/3 No. 15. fol. 3.

36 Bakács, *A magyar nagybirtokos családok hitelügyletei*, 84. The testament of Batthyány's widow, Countess Eleonóra Batthyány-Strattmann, to her son Lajos, was dated 29 May 1738. That addressed to her second-born son, Károly, was dated 18 July 1738. MNL OL Batthyány Lt, *Testamentaria*, P 1313 I-2-Lad. 31/1 No. 17. fol. 168–173v, 174–178. For the specifics of the division, i.e. the *Theilungspunkten*, see: MNL OL Batthyány Lt, *Divisionalia*, P 1313 65. d. Lad. 31. I-2-31/3 No. 15 fol. 16–17v.

37 See the document entitled *Anno 1745 Ad Cassam universalem Excell[entissi]mi, ac Ill[ustrissi]mi D[omi]ni Comitis Ludovici de Batthyán sunt administrati*. MNL OL Batthyány Lt, *Rationaria*, P 1322 No. 5 fol. 12.

38 The entail of Count Lajos Batthyány's heirs was issued in Németújvár on 27 January 1779. MNL OL Batthyány Lt, *Majoratus*, P 1313 I-2-Lad. 33/2 No. 8 (no foliation).

39 MNL OL Batthyány Lt, *Miscellaneous Statements*, P 1334 Fasc. 2 Box 1 fol. 55–57v.

as was noted earlier, the Batthyánys were even able to extend sizeable loans to the princely branch of the Esterházy family. Further, interest payments on the Batthyánys' loan placements represented a remarkable source of income in themselves. According to a summary statement for the period between 1778 and 1787, the Batthyánys' princely cashier recorded an income of 67,010 forints in interest payments during those years, and total expenditures related to debt service of only 16,784 forints. It is noteworthy that the same document offers precise information as to the interest rates applicable to the consolidated principal. In the assets column, entries show a rate of 4 percent interest earned on 125,550 forints in principal, a rate of 5 percent interest on 100,440 forints in principal, a rate of 6 percent interest on 83,700 forints in principal, and a rate of 7 percent interest on 71,743 forints in principal—a striking figure at the time.<sup>40</sup>

If the above-listed assets of great magnitude are put under the microscope, it is seen that not only the countess (i.e., Eleonore von Strattmann, wife of Count Ádám Batthyány) lent out considerable sums, but so did her second-born son, Károly Batthyány. According to a list of assets drafted in 1770, the younger son had claims of 462,000 forints against the Kingdom of Hungary, 100,000 forints against Silesia, 30,000 forints against the Wiener Stadt Banco, 6,000 forints with the Royal Chamber, and 23,100 forints with various other private parties.<sup>41</sup> Among the more important people to take out loans with him were Prince Miklós Esterházy, who received a total of 75,000 forints disbursed in three separate amounts in 1740, 1746, and 1764, and Count Mihály János Althan (1710–1778), who received 126,000 forints in several instalments.<sup>42</sup>

As regards total loans received, the sources reveal that during the period between 1755 and 1770, liabilities amounted to 124,159 forints. Given that the items were coming to just a few thousand forints, this may be viewed as a favourable credit extended by a savings bank, in particular in relation to the 1,000 forints lent by the prince's butler, Paul François.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, it bears noting that under credit extended, the loans disbursed by Countess Antónia Batthyány (1720–1797), the would-be third wife of Prince Károly Batthyány—such as the 67,500 forints provided to the then Lord Chief Justice, Count István Zichy (1715–1769), in 1742 and 1764—occupied a column of their own.<sup>44</sup>

In the handling of credit, the Batthyány family had more than their fair share of difficulties with borrowers that today would be labelled 'bad debtors'. Worthier

40 MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents, P 1313 II. 7. No. 695/3 (no foliation).

41 MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents P 1313 Box 258 (no number or foliation).

42 MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents, P 1313 II. 7. No. 615 (no foliation).

43 MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents, P 1313 II. 7. No. 616 (no foliation).

44 MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents, P 1313 II. 7. No. 491 (no foliation).

of mention than the Hungarian non-payers was the Czech-Moravian Count Johann Adam Proskan, who according to a statement issued on 26 April 1772, signed his first 50,000-forint loan contract stipulating an interest rate of 6 percent on 31 December 1737, receiving the amount the same day. Also that day, according to a separate column, Count Proskan took out a loan of 50,000 forints at 5 percent interest. Other new borrowings and unpaid interest debts led to a sizeable swell in total outstanding claims on the Batthyánys' books, the exact sum of which came to 254,000 forints. Although the count did, in fact, repay 40,522 forints of his debt between 3 February 1769 and 9 April 1772, the Batthyány administration still registered an outstanding debt of as much as 213,477 forints.<sup>45</sup> Period data also furnish examples of mutual non-payment. However, while the reason for this may be lost to posterity, the fact itself is indisputable, as evinced, for example, in the case of Count Ádám Batthyány III (1722–1787). According to the state of affairs recorded for January 1772, Batthyány, who would later inherit the title of prince from his uncle, Károly Batthyány, owed Baron Zedlitz the sum of 13,860 forints, including overdue interests. At the same time, according to a note left by his financial administration, the Hungarian aristocrat was actually owed 14,022 forints by the same person.<sup>46</sup>

This paper has already referred to both the favourable period following the French Wars at the end of the eighteenth century, and the growing rate of income on aristocratic estates as compared to figures from half a century earlier. In comparison to the sums recorded for 1794/95, a decade and a half later, incomes from the domains owned by Prince Fülöp Batthyány (1781–1870) were even greater, as shown in Table 1.<sup>47</sup>

It should again be emphasized with regard to the above lines of data that the net income recorded for individual estates included capital deposited with estate cashiers, as it was this practice that guaranteed savings generated as a result of the boom—i.e., the funds of 'small investors'—would incur a yield in interest.<sup>48</sup> Thus, while accounts payable on the part of the Batthyánys did continue to grow relative to the family's actual need for capital, a statement on the division of these

45 The note is titled "*Berechnung über die Gräflich Johann Adam Proskanische Capitals und Interesseforderung*". The column within the document is labelled "*Zu folge anderweiten, Johann Adam Proskanischen Schuld Obligation*". MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents, P 1313 II. 7. No. 625 (no foliation).

46 The note is labelled "*Dahingegen haben gedacht S[leine]r. Excellenz an dem Herrn B[a]r[on]. v[on]. Zedlitz gegenforderung*". MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents 1764–1792, P 1313 Box 258 (no number or foliation).

47 MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Miscellaneous Statements, P 1334 Fasc. 2 Box 1 fol. 178.

48 In one example, a certain Josef Lindl, according to a loan agreement signed on 6 March 1809, placed 10,000 forints with Prince Fülöp Batthyány at 6 percent interest. MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents, P 1313 II. 7. No. 856 (no foliation).

liabilities drafted a few years prior to Prince Fülöp's assumption of his inheritance lends important nuance to the overall picture. According to this document, Prince Lajos Batthyány had assumed a debt load of 87,951 forints at 5 percent interest and 49,250 forints at 6 percent interest. According to the same document, Count Tivadar Batthyány (1729–1812) had committed himself to principal debts of 89,200 and 48,055 forints, the former at 5 percent, and the latter at 6 percent interest.<sup>49</sup> It may be established, therefore, that the debt load inherited by Prince Fülöp Batthyány was by no means unmanageable.

**Table 1** Incomes from the Prince Fülöp Batthyány estates in silver forints, 1809–1811

Estate	1809	1810	1811
Enying	159,403	210,620	471,048
Kanizsa	79,450	112,900	117,000
Güssing (Németújvár)	88,000	100,000	82,174
Körmend	16,300	19,300	40,000
Ludbreg	21,012	36,200	32,460
Inta	17,600	25,100	31,260
<b>Total</b>	<b>381,765</b>	<b>504,120</b>	<b>773,968</b>

An examination of the financial position of the Festetics family, the third most important large land-owning dynasty in Western Hungary, shows that upon the death of the Vice-President of the Royal Hungarian Chamber, Count Pál Festetics (1722–1782), his first-born son assumed under the prevailing system of primogeniture the family's entire outstanding debt of 595,100 forints, while also committing himself to pay his brothers and sisters sums amounting to 504,440 forints, for a total debt of 1,099,540 forints. During the period between 1783 and 1787, his income varied between 90,000 and 123,000 forints annually, such that, instalments made up 66 percent of his overall expenditure. Thus, in comparison to a total interest and principal repayment of 345,426 forints, new loans assumed came to just 153,188 forints.<sup>50</sup> In the period after 1790, the circle of aristocratic creditors involved was expanded, so that of a total of 2.2 million forints in liabilities, 510,000 forints, or 23 percent, was owed to new members of this group. The largest sums were those provided by various members of the Batthyány family, 210,000 forints in total.<sup>51</sup>

Over the course of the next decade, though the net earnings of Count György Festetics varied from 50,000 to 76,000 forints a year, the count's debts grew consid-

49 The inheritance was divided in 1801. MNL OL Batthyány Lt, Financial Documents, P 1313 II. 7. No. 791 (no foliation).

50 Kurucz, "Adósság, hitel, törlesztés," 549–51.

51 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Statements, P 276 Box 778 fol. 447v–448v.

erably. This had nothing to do, however, with a wasteful lifestyle or propensity for luxury building projects. In 1799, for example, although the count was liable for 2.6 million forints in registered debt, a significant share of this had arisen as a result not of actual borrowing, but of obligations to various family members and the purchase of estates for investment purposes. At the beginning of the decade, for example, the count purchased the Čakovec (Csáktoronya) estate along the River Mura (Mur) on the south-western borders of Hungary and Croatia for the exact sum of 1,609,671 forints. It is important to note that in this instance, Festetics did not pay in cash, nor did his administration enter the outstanding sum on the purchase price, plus interest, into the books, but rather, as purchaser, assumed the debts encumbering the previous owners, the family of Count Mihály János Althan (1757–1815).<sup>52</sup> If the 2.6-million-forint debt recorded in 1770 is compared to accounts payable during the times of the count's father, then the debts of Count György Festetics had risen to more than twice the magnitude, that is, by 126 percent. Notably, however, later the level of indebtedness did not rise considerably; rather, as Table 2 reveals, Festetics did everything in his power to reduce it.<sup>53</sup>

**Table 2** Outstanding Debts of Count György Festetics, 1799–1804

Date	1799	1800	1801	1802	1803	1804
Total debt recorded (forints)	2,600,040	2,488,923	2,444,562	2,362,270	2,240,880	1,970,747
Principal repayment (forints)	–	111,117	44,361	82,292	121,390	270,133
Interest repayment (forints)	142,311	137,511	130,858	125,961	119,695	105,850

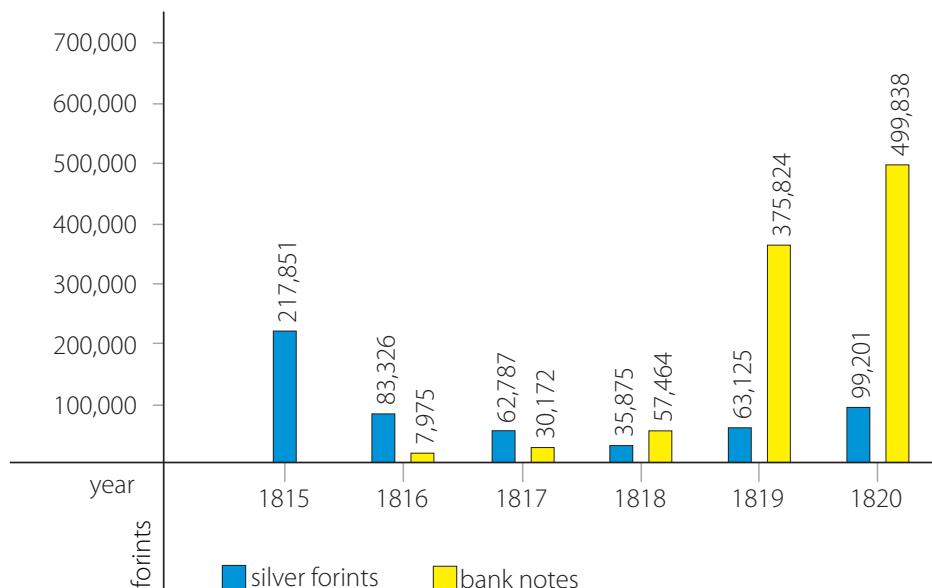
According to the figures presented in Table 2, by 1804, György Festetics had reduced his debt by 629,293 forints, though even this figure cannot be said to tell the whole story, as data for the year 1799 are still missing. Nonetheless, it is a significant figure. The interest payments were certainly not negligible, given that over the years, they had risen to heights that far surpassed payments on the principal. In just six years, Festetics paid more than 762,186 forints in interest, a mean value of 127,000 forints a year. Payments on the principal and interest together came to 1,391,479 forints, though it should be noted that the sum would be larger if the missing year's data were taken into account.

As noted earlier, the 1810s were characterised by a steep currency devaluation born of the central financial policy associated with Austrian state bankruptcy. Based

52 MNL OL Festetics Lt, *Crediti Cassa*, P 235 Box 141 fol. 443.

53 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Debts, P 246 Box 4 No. 5–6 fol. 221–301, 305–348, 448–494, 504–599.

on the books of both these Hungarian aristocratic families, and the central financial administration, one result was that lending and borrowing activity declined significantly. On the part of 'small investors,' given the devaluations and, from 1816 onward, the gradually falling crop prices, this meant far less money placed with aristocratic cashiers than in the early 1800s, especially by comparison to noble families with large land holdings, who in terms of sales, enjoyed an infrastructural advantage. The new credit case files (*Listae novarum obligationum*) of the princely Esterházy cashier, with specific reference to the relative figures for the first two decades of the nineteenth century, make this abundantly clear (Fig. 3).<sup>54</sup>



**Figure 3** Loans taken by Prince Miklós Esterházy II, 1815–1820

The above financial data offer compelling evidence of the drastic fall in credit provision. While during the early 1800s, nearly 1.5 million forints had been deposited with the Esterházy cashiers *per annum*, by the late 1810s, the yearly average was less than 100,000 silver forints. A similar trend is observed in the accounts of Count György Festetics's central cashier (*Crediti Cassa*) in Keszthely, which show that between 1813 and 1818, i.e., up to and including the financial year in which the head of the family passed away, an annual average of 38,605 forints in paper currency and 811 silver forints in new loans were entered into the accounts. At the same time, Festetics was making a decisive effort to increase principal repayments, as during the six-year period in question, the count's liabilities fell by a yearly average of 207,532 paper forints. It should also be added that repayment cannot have

54 MNL OL Esterházy Lt, *Listae novarum obligationum* 1815–1820, P 110 Box 4 (no foliation).

represented a huge problem for Festetics, as the Keszthely cashier, like the administrations of the Batthyány and Esterházy princely estates, at the time recorded spectacular sums in income from the sale of agricultural products—as much as an annual average of 1,167,000 paper and 46,000 silver forints.<sup>55</sup>

A final source on the credit environment of the age comes in the form of county debt registries and mortgage records, where it is worth examining the ratio between pledges entered and removed, the sizes of individual recorded claims, and still more specifically, the proportion of these relevant to the upper aristocracy. Possibly of equal importance is an analysis of the impact of the wartime years and currency devaluation on registered credit transactions, in particular as they pertain to delayed payment. This final question is significant because it appears that county administrations had recorded appreciably fewer loans and obligations assumed during the period prior to the French Wars. Between 1732 and 1787, the administration of Baranya County in southern Transdanubia—home to large estates owned by the Batthyány and Esterházy families—entered a total of 329 items (credit transactions, debts, loans for merchandise, and claims outstanding on the purchase of real estate) into its mortgage records.<sup>56</sup> This was followed by a period of steady growth, such that the mere twelve years between 1788 and 1800 witnessed the entry of as many as 262 items.<sup>57</sup> It should be added, however, that the administrative reform of Joseph II had, in 1785, divided the country into ten districts, at which time not only did Pécs, the largest town in Baranya County, become the center of the district, but before the decree was withdrawn, it had conducted administration for the entire Tolna County.<sup>58</sup> Despite this, the increase is palpable: between 1801 and 1810, 316 items were registered, followed by 743 between 1811 and 1820. This final figure is remarkable in that following the previously mentioned devaluation in 1811, more than twice as many claims were entered into county records than had been added during the previous ten-year period.<sup>59</sup> The administration on lending and borrowing in neighboring Tolna County goes even further toward demonstrating this change in scale: there, between 1800 and 1810, a total of 982 transactions were logged, and between 1811 and 1820, an impressive 1619.<sup>60</sup>

55 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Statements, P 276 Box 778 fol. 56–70, 121–134, 299–313v, 318–324v, 326–334v, 447–465.

56 MNL BML *Elenchus Chronologicus In- et Extabulationum 1732–1787*, IV. 1. q.

57 MNL BML *Protocollum Intabulationis*, IV.1. O.1 (no foliation).

58 See the relevant section of MNL BML, *Protocollum Intabulationis*, IV.1. O.1: “*Protocollum In- et Extabulationum [Incliti]. Subalterni Iudicii Tolnensis cum Branyiensis Uniti a 1a 7br 1787 usque 24o Febr 1790*”.

59 MNL BML *Protocollum Intabulationis*, IV. 1. O. 1 (no foliation); MNL BML, *Elenchus Intabulationis 1790–1823*, IV.1. O. 9 (no foliation).

60 MNL TML *Elenchus In- et Extabulationis*, IV.A. 1.f (no foliation).

When principal sums reconstructed from county administrative sources are examined, it emerges that in Baranya County, during some fifty years between 1732 and 1787, a total of 1,434,000 forints (rounded to the nearest thousand) in claims were registered, nearly half of which, 706,000 forints to be exact, was loans taken out or obligations undertaken by the upper aristocracy.<sup>61</sup> Of this, a hefty sum of 173,500 forints was borne by the aforementioned Count Ádám Batthyány, who had just inherited his princely title. It should be noted that the transaction may be considered to have been largely a family affair, as the prince's uncle, Field Marshal Lieutenant Prince Károly Batthyány, had provided nearly 80,000 forints of this amount. Ádám's brother, Count Tivadar Batthyány, was named as the debtor for 331,500 forints in registered claims, of which the largest sum, i.e., 86,000 forints, was provided by the Chapter of Pécs.<sup>62</sup> Though Tivadar received only 11,000 forints during the 1790s, a significantly smaller amount, his son, Count Antal József Batthyány (1762–1828) is recorded as having assumed a sizeable rounded total of 342,000 forints in credit over the course of the decade.<sup>63</sup> During the same period, the Baranya County administration entered 628,500 forints in claims against the princely branch of the Esterházy family, the largest share of which, a total of 500,000 forints, was borrowed in several instalments from Prince Albert of Saxony-Teschen.<sup>64</sup>

The next two decades were characterised first by a growing trend toward capital investment because of the French Wars, then following the currency devaluations, an increase in both the number of credit transactions and the scale of indebtedness. County records for the first decade of the nineteenth century show that in Baranya County, a rounded total of 902,000 forints was entered into mortgage records, of which 374,000 forints were tied to names from the upper aristocracy. Of this latter amount, 46.5 percent encumbered members of the Batthyány family.<sup>65</sup>

61 Figures provided by Ungár's study of 1935 differ substantially from our figures. As mentioned above, he fails to give the actual source of his analysis, i.e., whether he relies on the figures of the *Elenchus Chronologicus In- et Extabulationum 1732–1787* or on the *Protocollum Intabulationis*. It should be noted, for example, that, according to the *Protocollum Intabulationis*, the index contains a major clerical error, namely, a loan of 27,500 forints taken by János Szily (1735–1799) from a certain Carlo Brentano-Cimaroli on 14 January 1768 and registered by Baranya County on 17 January 1776 was subsequently recorded in the index with the whopping sum of 275,000!

62 MNL BML *Elenchus Chronologicus In- et Extabulationum 1732–1787*, IV.1. q (no foliation).

63 MNL BML *Protocollum Intabulationis*, IV.1. O.1 (no foliation).

64 According to information in these records, Albert loaned out 100,000 forints on 14 February 1791, 200,000 forints on 26 April 1792, and twice 100,000 forints on 7 March 1796. These amounts were registered with the county on 16 September 1799, except for one of the final 100,000-forint items, registered on 17 January 1801. MNL BML *Protocollum Intabulationis*, IV.1. O.1 (no foliation).

65 MNL BML IV.1. O.9. *Elenchus Intabulationis 1790–1823* (no foliation).

In neighboring Tolna County, the same decade saw a much larger total of 1,914,000 forints (rounded to the nearest thousand) in claims registered by the county administration, of which 725,000 constituted loans assumed by, or debts owed by upper aristocratic families. Of the latter figure, the largest loan belonged to Count Károly Esterházy (1756–1828), against whose name the county recorded claims totalling 350,000 forints in 1807 and 1809, and to whom Prince Albert of Saxony-Teschen loaned the truly prodigious amount of 300,000 forints. The other standout item in this context is the 152,900 forint-loan to Count János Festetics (1763–1844), Count György Festetics's youngest brother.<sup>66</sup>

For the 1810s, the decade when the devaluation patents were issued, Baranya County mortgage records show entries totalling 1,913,000 silver forints, of which 510,000 forints encumbered members of the upper aristocracy. In Tolna County, the recorded claims figure amounted to 2,249,000 forints, and the largest sum had been borrowed by Countess Júlia Festetics (1753–1824), wife of Count Ferenc Széchényi (1754–1820) and older sister of Count György Festetics, who received 73,500 silver forints from the Chapter of Veszprém in 1805. The latter transaction was registered in 1813, two years after the devaluation patent of 1811.<sup>67</sup> During this period, a total of 100,500 paper forints was recorded as owed by Prince Miklós Esterházy II and 12,000 silver and 80,000 paper forints by Count Károly Esterházy. All in all, however, both the sums taken out and the share in total loans represented by the upper aristocracy visibly decreased during this period, with an aggregate amount of 180,000 silver and 180,500 paper forints registered across upper aristocratic families in Tolna County.<sup>68</sup>

Examination of data on principal repayment—i.e., the removal of a given entry from county mortgage records—reveals that in the years between 1790 and the first devaluation patent in 1811, it was primarily the members of the upper aristocracy who paid off their debts, often in very high amounts, which is evidence of a high degree of solvency. This paper has already noted the sizeable debt encumbering Count György Festetics, yet the count paid off his liabilities in instalments of serious magnitude—indeed, of up to several hundred thousand forints a year. A parallel—if not identical—process can be observed within the records of the county administration. According to the mortgage documentation kept by Zala County, on 6 June 1796, the count's debts were reduced by 169,346 forints. Five years later, on 10 December 1801, the count made payments to twenty-five different creditors, totalling an even larger sum, thus reducing by 253,050 forints the principal on

66 MNL TML *Elenchus In- et Extabulationis*, IV.A. 1. f (no foliation).

67 MNL BML *Elenchus Intabulationis 1790–1823*, IV.1. O. 9; MNL TML *Elenchus In- et Extabulationis*, IV.A. 1. f (no foliation).

68 MNL TML *Elenchus In- et Extabulationis*, IV.A. 1.f (no foliation).

loans taken out against his aristocratic landholdings and other debts.<sup>69</sup> In Baranya County, primarily claims stemming from loans to Prince Miklós Esterházy were repaid in significant amounts. In one example, a loan of 64,000 forints taken out on 22 June 1799 and registered on 16 September of the same year was repaid and removed from the books quite quickly, on 23 April 1800. In a similar instance, the prince fully repaid in a matter of a few years the previously discussed loan from Prince Albert of Saxony-Teschen received in 1801.<sup>70</sup>

It may be clearly established, therefore, that it was following the devaluation of 1811 that a relatively large proportion of principal debt—in terms of both the number and magnitude of the items in question—was repaid and removed from county records. While in neighboring Tolna County, the repayment figure for the first decade of the nineteenth century amounted to 459,000 forints, by the following decade, i.e., between 1811 and 1820, it had nearly doubled, amounting to a rounded total of 909,000 silver forints. The figures for Baranya County are somewhat more modest for this period: debtors paid off a rounded total of 741,000 silver forints, of which 582,000 forints pertained to names belonging to the upper aristocracy. It is certainly worth noting that during the period under scrutiny, members of the Batthyány family reduced the scale of the outstanding principal debt they owed by the substantial amount of 525,000 silver forints. The greatest sum repaid and removed from county mortgage records came from Count János Batthyány (1747–1831), thereby reducing his principal debt by 301,000 forints, while Count Antal József Batthyány also returned a sizeable sum to the tune of 170,000 silver forints.<sup>71</sup>

## Conclusions

The present examination has sought to reconstruct and illustrate with concrete data the processes that characterised the lending and borrowing practices of the three wealthiest western Hungarian upper aristocratic families during the second half of the eighteenth century and the turn of the nineteenth century, based on both sources associated with the families' own administrative offices, and the records kept by individual Transdanubian counties. It can be fundamentally concluded that during the eighteenth century, members of the Batthyány family did not incur debt to anywhere near the extent or at anywhere near the rate that we see with the princely Esterházys, the most affluent of the three families. In his analysis, István Bakács pinpointed

69 MNL ZML *Elenchus In- et Extabulationis*, No. 1 fol. 9v–10v, 25v–26v.

70 MNL BML *Elenchus Intabulationis 1790–1823*, IV.1. O.9 (no foliation).

71 MNL BML *Elenchus Intabulationis 1790–1823*, IV.1. O. 9 (no foliation).

the aggregate registered debt of Prince Ádám Batthyány from the 1770s forward at 494,390 forints, though this figure of less than half a million is an order of magnitude smaller than the 3.6 million forints in liabilities recorded in association with Prince Miklós Esterházy in 1776, or the 1.1 million forints owed by Count György Festetics following his father's death.

An examination of various documents kept by the financial administrations of the families demonstrates a lively lending and borrowing environment during the French Wars. It has also been established that, though the 1811 letters patent permitted prodigious principal repayments, at the same time, accounts payable by these families continued to grow steeply until the 1820s. This, however, was in no way because of liquidity problems, as expenditures were not covered by new borrowings. The paper supports this conclusion by providing numerical data on increasing revenues over various periods, while also taking stock of the large sums that members of the Batthyány and Festetics families applied to principal repayment. It appears, however, that the process by which upper aristocratic families in Hungary amassed significant debts cannot be separated from the economic upturn that marked the outset of the wartime period, given that seeing aristocratic families' lands and income as a guarantee of investment security, contemporary 'small investors' deposited various sums in savings with the cashiers of large estate holders.

An unambiguous example for this process was presented in terms of the changing scale of loan assumption as reconstructed from the figures of 'new obligations' recorded by the financial administration of the princely Esterházys. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, new loans exceeded an annual average of 1.45 million forints; by contrast, following the financial patent of 1811, this figure fell dramatically, as the numbers presented above evinced. The paper has additionally discussed the scale of credit transactions—backed by the requisite promissory notes—entered into county mortgage records, which permitted conclusions regarding periods of economic boom and bust affecting the credit environment. Specifically, the paper has shown how these processes were reflected in both the number of items entered into county mortgage records, and various changes in the sums represented by claims entered and removed from these records.

In a manner indicative of creditor confidence, it appears that during the period leading up to the first decade of the nineteenth century, the counties registered far fewer obligations than they did during the period after 1811. It is also important to note that while in certain counties, the proportion of credit associated with upper aristocratic families prior to the 1810s exceeded 50 percent of all loans registered, following the currency devaluation, the share in credit represented by these same families fell to just 20–30 percent.

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P 110 Box 1 *Obligationes*

P 110 Box 4 *Listae novarum obligationum* 1793–1822

P 132 Esterházy Miklós herceg tábornagy (Esterházy Miklós hg) [Field Marshal Prince Miklós Esterházy]

P 182 Számadások [Statements]

Esterházy család zólyomi ágának levéltára (Esterházy zólyomi Lt) [Archives of the Zólyom branch of the Esterházy family]

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P 1313 Ladula 31 *Divisionalia*

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P 246 Box 4 Adósságok (Debts)

P 276 Számadások [Statements]

Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Tolna Megyei Levéltára (MNL TML) [Hungarian National Archives, Tolna County Archives], Szekszárd

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IV.1. mm *Protocollum intabulationis ab Anno 1729–1784*  
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*Elenchus In- et Extabulationis*  
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# The Beginnings of the Cooperation of Free Royal Towns in the Kingdom of Hungary in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

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**Abstract.** The study presents the possibilities and framework for cooperation between towns in Hungary through the operation of the Town League of Upper Hungary. The cooperation of towns in the Kingdom of Hungary happened primarily through regional relations. At first, the basis for cooperation was provided by common economic interests, but this area broadened considerably in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. After the battle of Mohács (1526), the towns of Hungary became full members of the Hungarian Estates. The Kingdom of Hungary, which was part of the Habsburg Monarchy, gained considerable autonomy in internal politics. This was based on a compromise with the Habsburg rulers to ensure protection against the Ottoman Empire. The free royal towns were the least influential members of this country that had strong Estates. Nevertheless, cooperation between the towns became nationwide. The diets provided the forum for all free royal towns in the country to represent their common interests in a coordinated way. There are traces of this nationwide cooperation as early as the mid-sixteenth century, but it was from the early seventeenth century that it was the strongest. The reason was that in those decades state taxes were becoming heavier and more burdensome for towns. This nationwide cooperation was not only manifested in the field of taxation, but from the first quarter of the seventeenth century onwards, it increasingly extended to religious matters. In the background, there was the increasing recatholization of the Habsburg Monarchy. In this special matter, close links were forged also with the otherwise strongly anti-urban lower nobility.

Cooperation between towns worked well, despite the fact that the dominance of Košice (Kassa, Kaschau) clearly influenced the issues that the League members jointly raised. Indeed, the presence of the army, military burdens and denominational issues were most prominent in Košice, the center of the region. The guild association, which determined the internal trade and industrial policy of cities, contributed most to the dominance of Košice craftsmen and merchants in the regional economy. There were significant economic conflicts between Košice and other towns, such as Levoča (Lőcse), Bardejov (Bártfa), Prešov (Eperjes), Sabinov (Kisszeben, Zeben), and Kežmarok (Késmárk). However, the union of towns was also beneficial for the smaller towns, as on their own they would have been unable to represent their interests so effectively.

**Keywords:** Habsburg Monarchy, estates, urban policy, urban advocacy, confessionalism, taxation, internal trade

The historiography of Hungarian towns has mostly presented the elements of urban policy based on the laws passed by parliaments. However, this approach is rather one-sided because it reports mainly the demands strongly defined by the counties, in other words, by the nobility's regional organisations. Laws passed, however, were very often not implemented, therefore were not necessarily a veritable reflection of the economic, social, and political realities of towns. According to the image we have been presented with, towns in Hungary were politically rather weak, with the enforcement of their interests hardly tangible. It is a fact that because of the excessive political weight of counties controlled by the nobility, nobles living in towns were not under the authority of the local burghers' municipality, nor were several areas of regulating the economy. These facts led earlier scholarship to the conclusion that in parallel with the strengthening of the state in the seventeenth century, towns in Hungary were growing weaker, and their development was stalled by these processes.<sup>1</sup> Recent research, however, has challenged this interpretation. Using the Town League of Upper Hungary as a case study, the present paper introduces the fundamental elements of Hungarian urban policy and the main features of cooperation between towns. Through the examples of towns located in other parts of the country, I will place the towns' association into a wider perspective, arguing that issues of urban policy are not characteristic of Upper Hungary only, but may be representative of the country's entire network of towns. In addition to outlining the areas of cooperation, my main goal is to demonstrate the political framework and the role of the estates within which towns enforced their interests, as well as the methods they applied.

As far as the cities of the early modern period are concerned, their social structure and class system were considerably more open than in the Middle Ages. The municipalities were gradually more integrated into the centralizing state administration. This was caused by changes in public administration, on the one hand, and by the ever more interwoven relationships of burghers and the nobility, on the other. The latter phenomenon led to the Estates of the realm blending with one another, being the most important feature of the early modern period. Additionally, it was one of the basic phenomena of early modern times that the state increased its power: the state administration's scope of authority expanded. Initially, the state infiltrated cities primarily in fields related to the development of the armed forces and public administration. Starting from the sixteenth century, military centers of the cities, fortified towns, official seats and residences were the first to see these factors change in the legal, social and public administration fields.<sup>2</sup>

In the next period, i.e., from the seventeenth century onwards, the state apparatus tried to get an insight into the everyday life of a growing section of society

1 Szűcs, "Das Städtewesen in Ungarn."

2 Asch and Duchhardt, *Der Absolutismus – ein Mythos?*; Asch, "Kriegsfinanzierung, Staatsbildung."

and subsequently, also to intervene into it. This effort went hand in hand with the centralized—and later the absolutist—state introducing centralized rules in matters previously managed exclusively by the estates of the realm and their representatives. These were mostly concerned with the relations of peasants and landlords directed by the state in the eighteenth century, or matters of religion, pastoral care, health-care, dealing with poverty, etc. Matters of war and military financing—which were state competences at the time—developed under the control of the absolute monarch; in accordance with the novel way of exercising power, centralization occurred also in other fields of the state (i.e., tax administration, jurisdiction, tasks related to certain units of public administration, etc.) and became tasks of the state administration, backed by the monarch's legitimization.<sup>3</sup> In economic history, this transformation is described as the birth of the fiscal state, which is an exact reflection of the purely economic and financial relationship between causes and solutions. These phenomena also impacted the cities that were under the control of the monarch. The income from the activities of the bourgeoisie (the ever-increasing taxes, trade income, etc.) formed an increasing part of state proceeds, therefore the state and wealthy commoners shared more and more common interests.<sup>4</sup> Some call this the 'advent of state bureaucracy' in towns and cities, the integration of cities into the state administration, or, with some exaggeration: the 'nationalization' of municipalities. As a consequence of the changes in state administration and in municipal politics, by the eighteenth century the previously isolated municipal life had come to an end and was replaced by municipalities integrated into modern states, developing at an unprecedented pace.<sup>5</sup>

The pace of urban development in Hungary is not comparable to that in Western Europe. The cities were formed rather late, their economic strength was much weaker than that of the prominent European cities, and the economic influence of their citizenry was more limited. It was only in the first decade of the fifteenth century that the settlements, later called 'free royal towns', with estate privileges, were established thanks to the urban policy of the Angevins and Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387–1437). In the Late Middle Ages, these towns were not certain

3 Duchhardt, "Absolutismus – Abschied von einem Epochenbegriff?"; Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism: Change and Continuity*; Heinrich, "Staatsaufsicht und Stadtfreiheit"; Vierhaus, *Deutschland im Zeitalter des Absolutismus*.

4 Bonney, ed., *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe*; Hart, *The Making of a Bourgeois State*; Brien and Hunt, "The Rise of a Fiscal State"; Cavaciocchi, ed., *La fiscalità nell'economia Europea*.

5 About the 'nationalization' of cities, see Gerteis, *Die deutschen Städte in der frühen Neuzeit*, 73–80. See also: Rügge, *Im Dienst von Stadt und Staat*; Tilly and Blockmans, eds, *Cities and the Rise of States*; Cowan, *Urban Europe*; Riis and Strømstad, eds, *Le pouvoir central et les villes*; Marraud, *De la ville à l'état*; Chittolini, "Städte und Regionalstaaten"; Brady, *Turning Swiss*; Schlägl and Sawilla, eds, *Urban Elections and Decision-Making*.

to have the right to participate in the diets as members of the estates. Towards the end of Sigismund of Luxembourg's reign, there were attempts to include the cities in the assemblies of the estates, but only from the mid-fifteenth century were they regularly and frequently invited to participate in the assemblies, and this practice ceased at the beginning of the sixteenth century.<sup>6</sup> This coincided with the increase of the nobility's political influence to the extent that they no longer needed the resolution of the Estates. By the sixteenth century, however, the sovereignty of the free royal towns was complete. Following the battle of Mohács (1526), they were always invited to attend the part-assemblies and the diets.<sup>7</sup>

Following the struggle for the throne between János Szapolyai and (Habsburg) Ferdinand I, it became clear in the eyes of the leading politicians in the Kingdom of Hungary defeated by the Ottoman Empire that the country's defence could be guaranteed only by a state united under the Austrian archduke. Integrated into the complex state of the Habsburg Monarchy, the internal political life of the Kingdom of Hungary was determined by the Hungarian estates. Thus, in the province of the Monarchy with the strongest nobility, the counties and free royal towns were able to manage their affairs almost independently, with little state influence.<sup>8</sup> The completion of the estate privileges of free royal towns granted them a permanent forum to represent their interests at the national level. After the battle of Mohács, the towns' estate rights could be considered stable, as they were invited to all diets, except for the one in 1542. Being invited to the diet was the only sure sign of a settlement being acknowledged as a free royal town, because this issue was unregulated up until 1608. The 1608 diet stated that the status of a free royal town was explicitly linked to the acceptance of its envoys by the other estates' envoys. This was an indication of the recognition of the given town as a real member of the estate society, its envoys' rights being considered the same as those of other estates attending the diets. The towns' uncertain status among the other estates is also clear from the importance they attached to their parliamentary presence. In the early period of the estate system, we learn mainly of the ways the towns tried to evade their obligation to send out envoys. In contrast, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this kind of abstention by the towns happened only in the years immediately following the battle of Mohács. But from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, no town council would have its envoy stay away from the diet, as they considered their parliamentary presence important, and would have seen it as a violation of their rights as an estate if they had not been invited.<sup>9</sup>

6 Kubinyi, *König und Volk*.

7 Friedrichs, *Urban Politics in Early Modern Europe*; Pils and Niederkorn, eds, *Ein zweigeteilter Ort?*

8 Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 177–91.

9 H. Németh, “Representatives in a Changing World,” 4–5.

In the diet, the towns were among the smallest and least influential estates, and this was reflected not only in their ranking (they formed the fourth estate). The urban envoys were quite passive in most affairs, indicating their political weakness among the estates. The nobility regarded urban delegates as inferior. This is illustrated by several atrocities in which the county delegates publicly shamed the town envoys in the diets.<sup>10</sup> According to the seventeenth century order of affairs, only after the counties were the towns allowed to register their grievances. The towns were thus relegated to the background in the assemblies' general debates, and were not expected to speak unless they had to defend their own affairs. In negotiations, they could receive support from other estates only in religious matters. From the first quarter of the seventeenth century onwards, counties and towns in the Kingdom of Hungary with the Protestant (Lutheran and Calvinist) denominational majorities sought to cooperate on religious issues. The recatolization, which was a source of heated debate primarily during the reigns of Ferdinand III (1637–1657) and Leopold I (1657–1705), brought together towns and the county nobility with otherwise conflicting political and economic interests. In religious matters, it sometimes happened that county envoys, who were otherwise traditionally anti-urban, sided with the denominational grievances of the towns. Moreover, in these cases, certain prominent personalities among qualified urban delegates could become an important political factor. On special occasions representing the estates, town envoys were also able to play their rightful, but not truly prominent role.<sup>11</sup> Representatives of the fourth estate were delegated to the committee receiving the monarch on his arrival in the country in the same number as the counties, and at coronation ceremonies the towns' representatives played a similar, but smaller role.<sup>12</sup> The same was true of the delegations sent by the lower chamber to the prelates and the monarch: in addition to the county delegates, they always included one or two town envoys. In other areas of urban lobbying and advocacy, however, the towns were quite effective at conducting their affairs. During the diets, or through their envoys specially delegated to the central bodies in Vienna or to the Hungarian offices in Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg, Prešporok), their lobbying capacity was much stronger than in the open negotiations of the diets. The towns' interests were also supported by the dignitaries in contact with them, or by the clients' network that had already been established on a permanent basis. The latter were the secretaries or clerks of the Hungarian Court Chancellery and the Court Chamber, to whom the towns regularly paid money or various gifts.<sup>13</sup>

10 SAP MMB Acta diaetalia Nr. 690. fol. 255. 28–29. 05. 1655.

11 H. Németh, "Agenten, Ratgeber, Lobbyisten," 231–32.

12 Lackner, *Lackner Kristófnak*, 134–37; Pálffy, "Krönungsmähler in Ungarn, Teil 1"; Pálffy, "Krönungsmähler in Ungarn, Teil 2."

13 H. Németh, "Agenten, Ratgeber, Lobbyisten," 230–31.

## The Town League of Upper Hungary

Thus, it was during the reign of Sigismund that free royal towns emerged in the Upper-Hungarian (now Eastern Slovakian) region: namely, the settlements of Košice (Kassa, Kaschau), Levoča (Lőcse, Leutschau), Bardejov (Bártfa, Bartfeld), Prešov (Eperjes, Eperies), and finally Sabinov (Kisszeben, Zeben) became free royal towns. The same legal status, with roughly the same estate privileges, laid the foundations for the formation of the Town League of Upper Hungary (*Oberungarische Städtebund*) in the same period. The nature of the alliance is reflected by the fact that at their first known meeting they took joint decisions on economic matters, which in the first decades of the alliance was based purely on the protection of economic interests. In this period, political advocacy was not a feature of the League yet, mainly because the towns had not yet formed an independent estate, and no national forum had been created to defend their common political interests. From the early sixteenth century onwards, this trend changed and the League's activities were extended, partly because of the strengthening of the towns' municipal status, and partly because of the new domestic political situation created by the Ottoman conquest with a profound impact on both the economy and society.

After its formation in the fifteenth century, the League represented the interests of the free royal towns of the region. The alliance was expanded in the mid-seventeenth century (1655), with the free royal town of Kežmarok (Késmárk, Käsmark). Internal tensions are illustrated by the fact that Kežmarok applied for admission to the League within the year that the diet recognized it as a free royal town, but due to economic differences with Levoča, Kežmarok had to wait a few more years to become a permanent member of the alliance. The first time we see Kežmarok, it is together with the other towns in the discussion of the jointly equipped army, a state duty of the towns. Then, from 1658 onwards the alliance was increasingly more involved in other matters, mainly in fending off the growing pressure imposed by the county nobility. At this time, the Kežmarok envoys already attended meetings to discuss national urban policy problems. What is more, in 1659 the associated towns called a meeting because of an economic conflict between Kežmarok craftsmen and the 13 towns of Szepes (Spiš, Zips) County. By the early 1660s, Kežmarok had become a full member of the League. It was a permanent participant in the alliance's meetings, taking an interest in all matters the other towns were involved in.

The wars of reconquest against Ottoman rule (1686–1699) also affected the urban network, notably the number of free royal towns. In the liberated territories, one after another, the former free royal towns regained their letters of privilege from the Royal Hungarian Court Chancellery. Debrecen was granted the status of a free royal town in 1693<sup>14</sup> and Baia Mare (Nagybánya, Frauenbach) at the end of the

14 Papp, "A szabad királyi oklevélről."

seventeenth century. As soon as Debrecen obtained the privileges of the monarch, it inquired through its envoys about the rights and practices that came with the status of a free royal town. At this time, the League changed its policy and intensified its efforts to maintain good relations with the new free royal towns at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mainly because the new practice was that the towns should pay their taxes, provide soldiers and pay for the services required by the army, in part jointly. Despite their common affairs, however, it was only in these matters that the League of Towns negotiated with the new towns. In other areas of the League's interests, there was no joint action. The composition of the League therefore did not change, only the towns' political strategy differed from previous strategies. The governmental urban policy of the period (strong control, chamberlain's measures against the towns, etc.) demanded stronger links between free royal towns, but the League's framework was no longer suitable for effective political representation. After the 1711 Treaty of Szatmár, cooperation between free royal towns started to be even tighter in defence of their common interests, but the new state-led urban policy meant that the League's activities were negligible in the eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

The cooperation of the towns in the League was ensured by regular meetings or meetings called for specific agendas (an order from the ruler or the Chamber of Spiš). These meetings were mainly initiated by Košice, Prešov and Levoča, and reflect the balance of power within the association. The absolute superiority of Košice is shown by the fact that, when other towns proposed a town meeting, the opinion of the Košice Council was always sought: the place, time and necessity of the meeting were almost always decided by Košice Council. The usual practice was for the Prešov residents to summarise the news received and then send it on to the Košice Council. The Košice Council decided on the place and time of meetings, and if the assembly decided that they had to act jointly on a matter, the Košice delegate was certainly among them. The frequency of meetings varied greatly, with the cities holding an average of two or three meetings in politically quiet years. If there was an urgent matter to discuss, city delegates would meet more than once. Prior to the meetings, the towns would regularly communicate, and the documents related to the matter and each other's proposals would be exchanged by letter. It was also frequent that the members of the League would send joint embassies to a higher government body, and their instructions were coordinated in advance.<sup>16</sup>

The functioning of the alliance shows that among the towns of Upper Hungary, Košice clearly played a dominant role. Košice was counterbalanced mainly by Prešov, which had been rising in the sixteenth century, and by Levoča, an old economic rival. Even though the members of the League always emphasised in their statutes that

15 H. Németh, *Várospolitika és gazdaságpolitika*, vol. 1, 72–161.

16 H. Németh, "Agenten, Ratgeber, Lobbyisten," 222–23.

they would act together, there were several occasions when meetings were held to the exclusion of some towns. There may have been several reasons for this related to internal tensions within the alliance. On the one hand, due to the overwhelming economic superiority of Košice, other cities joined forces without Košice in order to formulate their own policies.<sup>17</sup> In some cases, the free royal towns of Sáros County (Bardejov, Prešov, and Sabinov) also engaged in separate politics, mainly to protect their domestic trade interests; in most cases, however, the importance of the issues involved led the alliance to intervene later, and problems that could be considered local became common affairs of the League. In this spirit, each town's complaints about its own affairs were also discussed in joint meetings, mainly in order not to harm each other's interests. Nevertheless, the towns' interests were often at odds with those of other towns in the federation, especially when they were linked to the region's economic and commercial relations. Thus, these matters were sometimes concealed from the others. For example, in 1608 the envoys from Levoča travelled to the Diet in separate carriages, which suggested that during the journey they were probably discussing their own interests to the exclusion of the others.<sup>18</sup>

Despite internal conflicts, the League proved to be effective in external advocacy. Through the jointly operated information network, even a small town like Sabinov could be informed of all the important developments in the region. The League of Towns maintained close links with the permanent local organs of the central authorities that had been established from the mid-sixteenth century onwards: the Chamber of Spiš, set up in 1567, and that of the Upper Hungarian Captain Generalcy, organised in the same period. The Chamber acted as an advisory and executive body for the most important economic policies affecting the free royal towns. Its importance for the interests of the towns is therefore indisputable. It was in the best interests of the towns to maintain good relations with the captain generals in charge of the military forces stationed in the region, since the military burden was the heaviest obligation for burghers, whose support was outstanding in protecting the region on the border between the Principality of Transylvania and the Kingdom of Hungary. These institutions were much faster and more effective sources of information than others. As the headquarters of the Chamber and of

<sup>17</sup> According to the second point of the Covenant of Cities of 1588: "Zum Andern. Wöllen Wir benanten Fünff Frey Städt das alte VerPündnüß mit einander eintrechting, streiff unndt Vest halten unndt zue fürfallenden nöthen einander auff allerley Weis unndt weg, redlich unndt treglich beystehen, unndt zue hülff Khomen, so viell Imer möglich." The third point is: "... vonn Einer oder mehrern auß benannten Fünff Städten das Ihr oder Ihnen beschwerlich sein möcht, etwas begeren, oder aufferlegen würde, alß dann khaine Freystadt [oder] ohne der andern Vorwissen unndt Willen nichts bewilligen oder dargeben solle." SAP MML XIII/83. Kassa, 17. 07. 1588.

<sup>18</sup> H. Németh, "Agenten, Ratgeber, Lobbyisten," 223; H. Németh, *Várospolitika és gazdaságpolitika*, vol. 1; AMK H I. 5263/38. Lőcse, 20. 03. 1608.

the Captain Generalcy, Košice's role in this respect is outstanding. It was not by chance that members of the League of Towns so often turned to the Košice Council to obtain information on various matters related to the Chamber or the captain general. In more than one case, important information came directly from the chief captain, who informed the towns mainly about the military situation, but was also available to their envoys whenever they needed help.<sup>19</sup>

The administrative reforms introduced by Leopold I weakened this relatively smoothly functioning network. From the 1670s onwards, the management of local bodies was increasingly under the indirect control of the Viennese government, and the completely different situation created by the wars of reconquest provided a unique political opportunity for the appointed imperial generals to assume even greater powers than previous governors-general. These changes caused enormous disruption to the politics and information networks of the Town League of Upper Hungary. Its members were unable or unwilling to move in new directions (the system that had been set up did not offer much opportunity to do so). The information networks that had been built over the previous century and a half were no longer available to towns. In contrast to the methods of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the central government in Vienna completely excluded the lower bodies from (economic) political decision-making. Unlike before, local bodies did not function as bureaucracies familiar with the issues at stake and, therefore, having an advisory role in the problems and requests they were confronted with, but were only and exclusively bodies implementing the measures of the Viennese Court. Well-established channels of communication had thus disappeared, and the disintegrating League of Towns could no longer find new channels of information that were as effective as before.<sup>20</sup>

Before the changes of the 1670s described above, the federal framework granted by the League was also much cheaper in terms of advocacy costs than if a town had tried to play politics on its own. Advocacy consumed a considerable amount of money. In the seventeenth century, an envoy would cost between 600 and 700 florins, in addition to the amount that towns paid in advance for the needs of their delegates, meaning that the total cost could be more than a thousand florins. In addition to payment in cash, the expenditure was further increased by the many barrels of wine delivered to Vienna as a gift. For instance, at the end of the sixteenth century, the envoys of the League gave 20–25 barrels of wine to the military commander-in-chief of Upper Hungary. Although the costs were indeed high, it was more advantageous for the towns to send joint embassies, even if a longer embassy

19 H. Németh, "Agenten, Ratgeber, Lobbyisten," 228.

20 H. Németh, "Agenten, Ratgeber, Lobbyisten," 231–32; H. Németh, *Várospolitika és gazdaságpolitika*, vol. 1, 193–207.

was very rare, while the meetings of the towns were all the more frequent. At the end of the seventeenth century, the cost of an embassy to Prešov or Levoča was less than 100 florins, while an embassy to Vienna would rarely cost less than 1,000 florins—and this figure did not include gifts for officials. It is clear from all this that individual towns had a vested interest in participating in the League, even if its policy was sometimes heavily influenced by the interests of the Council of Košice.<sup>21</sup>

### Urban cooperation in the diets

The most important forum for urban lobbying was undoubtedly the diet, where urban envoys could express their views either within the framework of the League or in cooperation with other free royal towns. The towns could only rely on themselves, i.e., on the fourth estate, or on negotiations outside the diet. Here, too, the framework granted by the League was of great importance, since at the alliance's meetings preceding the diets the members formulated their positions jointly and prepared their joint petitions, which were submitted either in the imperial audiences or in the form of the estate's grievances. Even the discussion of common grievances was usually preceded by lengthy correspondence, so that on the day of the meeting they endeavoured to put the main grievances in writing. The consultation was not limited to joint requests and complaints, but each town presented its instructions given to its parliamentary envoys in order to coordinate their tasks. The same kind of cooperation can be observed in the mining towns of Lower Hungary (now Western Slovakia), where this was also a compulsory point in the envoys' instructions.<sup>22</sup> From the beginning of the seventeenth century onwards, joint politicking was more widespread, and the towns were urged to cooperate with the envoys of all the free royal towns.

Cooperation between the towns grew even closer during parliamentary negotiations. With regard to grievances and bills against the towns, or issues relating to military tribute and recatolization, this parliamentary cooperation was characteristic not only of the seventeenth century, but dates back to the sixteenth. Traditionally, the towns' delegates met in the mayor's house or in the town hall of Bratislava, which due to the Ottoman wars, from the 1520s was the seat of diets. It would even occur in the sixteenth century that the envoys of Upper Hungarian towns entrusted the envoys of Bratislava with representing their interests in the diet. In the course of parliamentary negotiations, it was common for urban envoys to meet in each other's

21 H. Németh, "Agenten, Ratgeber, Lobbyisten," 230–31.

22 The only difference between mining towns and other towns was the mining activity conducted in their area under state supervision. However, the state supervised only the mines and their output, not the towns. Their political role was the same as that of free royal towns.

residence to coordinate their strategy concerning grievances and petitions against towns in general, or against individual towns, but impacting all the towns. In the 1655 diet, for example, they met altogether eight times to discuss the issues raised and draft petitions and grievances together.<sup>23</sup>

After an overview of the towns' means of common defence of interests, the next section discusses the main issues of early modern Hungarian urban politics, i.e., the areas in which the towns acted together to defend their interests. Of the numerous topics, the issue of military and state taxes imposed on the towns stands out, closely linked to the political situation that had a decisive influence on the Kingdom of Hungary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

### **The first signs of urban policy: military burdens and state taxation**

The early modern history of the Kingdom of Hungary was shaped by the conquest of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman challenge and the new political formation that emerged in the first half of the sixteenth century. The southern and central parts of the country, together with the medieval capital of Hungary, Buda, came under Ottoman rule. The Transylvanian Principality, which had broken away from the Kingdom, was a separate state as a vassal of the Ottoman Empire until 1690. The territory of the Kingdom of Hungary was limited to the western and northern parts of the former country, along which a defence system against the Ottomans had to be established. The Kingdom of Hungary could only ensure its defence as part of the Habsburg Empire. Its state revenues were insufficient to build up and maintain the defence system and to feed the 16,000 to 17,000 soldiers. The state revenues other provinces of the Habsburg Monarchy provided for the common defence were vital. It was also necessary to exploit the country's own resources.<sup>24</sup> The history of the Kingdom of Hungary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and thus urban policy, was fundamentally determined by the war-economy and the relationship between the army and society. Consequently, fortress towns (*Festungstadt*) similar to those in Western Europe were developed. Győr, Komárom and Nové Zámky (Érsekújvár, Neuhäusl), typical representatives of this type, always remained market towns under seigneurial control.<sup>25</sup> In addition, some free royal towns were transformed into captains' headquarters (Košice, Varaždin [Varasd, Warasd]), where the settling military was no longer under the jurisdiction of the municipal government, but under the captains.

23 H. Németh, "Agenten, Ratgeber, Lobbyisten," 224–27.

24 Kenyeres, "Die Kosten der Türkenabwehr."

25 Gecsényi, "Ungarische Städte im Vorfeld der Türkenabwehr Österreichs"; Pálffy, "The Border Defense System."

In these cities, the powerful captains-general intervened in several areas of the town's life, thereby fundamentally violating urban rights. Judicial power over the military was vested in the chief captain or his war council. The municipal council's jurisdiction over the so-called 'mixed' cases between the military and the burghers was also impaired since the municipal council had to share jurisdiction with the captain and his magistrate when their fellow citizens were in conflict with the military. In worse cases, the royal captains sometimes violated this right, although it was guaranteed and prescribed by the monarch. The town's revenue was also greatly reduced by the taverns and slaughterhouses set up for the military because along with the soldiers came craftsmen who, under the powerful protection of the captain-general, were able to ply their trade independently of the guilds of the towns. The soldiers were housed in the burghers' houses, and the difference in mentality and lifestyle between citizens and soldiers led to numerous clashes. The military in the cities did, however, provide some economic advantages for the bourgeoisie. Merchants were active in supplying the army, meeting the higher demands of the garrison and the military. The civilian officials of the general headquarters also provided a significant market for urban vendors. The powers of the captains-general, however, overturned the medieval urban autonomy. The penetration within their walls of a powerful force that the ruler endowed with wide-ranging rights, that was alien to the citizens.<sup>26</sup>

Due to the constant state of war in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the towns' taxes and military burdens increased steadily.<sup>27</sup> By the second half of the seventeenth century, from an initial 30–40,000 florins, town taxes went up to 170–180,000 florins. Although this represented a small proportion (2–4 percent) of the country's total disposable income, according to the reports of the Hungarian Chamber, up to the mid-seventeenth century, these sums could be counted on more than, for example, the taxes paid by the counties. This is evidenced by the fact that by the end of the sixteenth century, towns had not accumulated significant arrears. This factor was particularly important during the years of the Fifteen Years' War, when military expenditure was several times higher than before, and parliaments met annually to vote with the estates on the taxes needed for the campaigns against the Ottomans. Obviously, this factor greatly increased the ability of the cities to assert their interests, since the ruler could always rely on their taxes (even if they were not enormous sums), and arrears did not accumulate. As early as the sixteenth century, the free royal towns had already cooperated in diets, and the need for cooperation, especially in matters of state and war taxes, became more pronounced in the seventeenth century. The reasons for this date back to the so-called Long Turkish

26 H. Németh, "Befestigte Städte und Festungsstädte."

27 For the period of the Thirty Years' War, see: Kaiser, *Waffen, Geld, Soldaten*; Limberger and Ucendo, *Taxation and Debt in the Early Modern City*.

or Fifteen Years' War, when the growing burden of warfare forced towns to forge closer links at the assemblies held almost annually. At the diet of 1599, the towns' envoys were united in their opposition to hand over the management of their taxes to the estates, but they were also united in their opposition to the demand that towns should provide transport capacity. However, it was the post-war tax hike that eventually aligned the policies of all the towns. In this period, the free royal towns' taxes were increased, and on several occasions, were levied without parliamentary authorisation. That is why, in early 1613, the town of Bratislava proposed a meeting at which all the royal towns would be represented, so that they could formulate a common position before the diet and take concerted action in all forums against the increase and perpetuation of their taxes. Their proposal is unique in the history of urban politics in Hungary. From the 1630s and 1640s onwards, it was customary to collect the same taxes voted in parliament for two or three years. This heightened pressure, together with the economic downturn caused by the Thirty Years' War, led to the inability of towns to pay their taxes regularly, and by the last third of the century, they had accumulated substantial arrears. The amount was so large that the monarch was forced to waive some of it. The towns were under enormous pressure, as on several occasions the ruler threatened to take their demesnes from the town councils in exchange for unpaid taxes. Accordingly, the practice of towns taking joint action continued, but only minor results, such as the remittance of some of the tax arrears, were achieved.<sup>28</sup>

### **Burghers and monarchic interests: the importance of military transport in urban politics**

Since everything during this period was subordinated to the defence against the Ottomans and the Transylvanian princes, it strengthened the towns' influence that they reinforced the garrison of the surrounding fortresses with permanent soldiers they paid for. The number of troops thus available varied. Up to the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the towns of Upper Hungary paid for nearly 300–500 soldiers, and from the 1560s to the second half of the seventeenth century, for 200. The costs were considerable, as they almost equalled the amount of the municipal tax and represented a constant burden.<sup>29</sup> In Western European countries, the urban bourgeoisie's influence was greatly enhanced by the substantial loans that urban citizens supported the ruler with. The bourgeoisie of the Kingdom of Hungary did not have such significant capital power, but as early as the sixteenth century, trends

28 H. Németh, "Die finanziellen Auswirkungen."

29 H. Németh, "Die finanziellen Auswirkungen," 776.

similar to those in the West can be observed, albeit to a smaller extent.<sup>30</sup> Towns and their citizens played a significant role in the supply of arms and food to the still nascent defence system. In these years, due to the disorganised nature of the army supply, the central chambers relied heavily on the towns for subsistence and loans, which they generally provided on a regular basis. In addition to financial loans, the transport of munitions, clothing and food to the field armies was also a significant service, as it was provided by the towns that had a more developed industrial background. The value of the goods supplied by the towns and the size of their serial loans, however, did not reach the level of the Chamber's supply from the country's large landowning families. This fact had a significant impact on the Viennese Court's urban policy in Hungary, which after the 'long war' tended to turn towards the western theatres of war, and increased the role of the large landowning nobility, which took a larger share of the defence burden than the towns. In addition to the towns' obligatory military supplies, the role of merchants, who were the economic elite of towns, should be emphasised. Their monthly loans, which were made because of the difficulties of the money transfer system, ensured the stable supply of fortresses. Because of the presence of a large military, merchants had a steady market for the wine that they were unable to sell at a high profit abroad.<sup>31</sup>

Even though the Hungarian bourgeoisie's economic potential was far weaker than that of their Western European counterparts, the constant and substantial military supplies and large loans offered by the towns and their citizens were certainly a positive factor.<sup>32</sup> The towns and their special functions guaranteed a secure background for the military leadership: their supplies were always delivered punctually, quickly, and to the best of their possibilities. Taking advantage of the manufacturing base available to them through their guild-based crafts, towns played a vital role in the transport of industrial products, military goods, clothing, and processed foodstuffs, such as bread. In this respect, they even enjoyed a monopoly over the surrounding landlords. The involvement of towns and their citizens in army transportation points to the presence of potential economic resources. This is an indication that the sixteenth century Hungarian towns must have been better off than previously thought. Since the loans granted by the towns and the fees of their transport services were repaid late by the chamber, they exerted a negative rather than a positive effect. Nevertheless, they certainly contributed to the towns' and their citizens' increasing influence. In almost each case, in the sixteenth century the

30 Zunckel, *Rüstungsgeschäfte im Dreissigjährigen Krieg*.

31 H. Németh, *Várospolitika és gazdaságpolitika*, vol. 1, 370–438.

32 Tallett, *War and Society*; Marraud, *De la ville à l'état, la bourgeoisie parisienne*, 108–71; Meyzie, *Crédit public, crédit privé et institutions intermédiaires*; Sánchez, *Military Entrepreneurs and the Spanish Contractor State*; Felix and Dubet, *The War Within*.

towns were able to have their requests accepted by the ruler, thus gaining various economic advantages. The citizens taking part in the army provision were granted nobility, and occasionally even courtly status. In the sixteenth century, they still played an important additional role in the local supply of the army. However, the towns' political influence was limited by the bourgeoisie's capital poverty. Their role could have been strengthened by being in charge of army transports and disbursing loans, but compared to large landowners, their importance was insignificant. From the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries onwards, the large landowning nobility was more active than before in maintaining the defence system, and by raising their own military, they compensated for the shortfall of the royal military. Since the Court was much more dependent on the nobility, their political interests determined the political relations of the diets even more. This phenomenon is evidenced by the anti-urban bills the assemblies passed in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>33</sup>

### Among the Estate categories: towns and county nobility

The interests of the cities also prevailed in the extension of their jurisdiction to the nobility moving to the cities and the citizens who were granted nobility. The counties were increasingly trying to remove the urban nobility and noble citizens from the authority of the city council.<sup>34</sup> The roots of the problem go back to the sixteenth century. At the same time as the military, another problematic element arrived in the free royal towns. The noble settlers driven by the Ottomans northwards from the south, some of whom arrived with the military, jeopardized the powers of urban authorities, just like the soldiers. Although sixteenth century laws regulated their situation in favour of the towns, the statutes of the mid-seventeenth century removed the nobles almost entirely from the jurisdiction of the town and placed them under the jurisdiction of the counties. This applied as much to urban nobles as to noble burghers who had led a bourgeois life but had been granted a charter of arms. Most of the nobles who fled to the towns, however, paid annual taxes for their town houses in accordance with the urban regulations, complied with the provisions laid down by the towns for importing wine, and accepted the authority of the town council. Such trends were even more noticeable among the noble burghers. In their case, the counties also sought judgement by the administrative leader of the county (*supremus comes*) rather than by the town council. They were expected to share in the taxes levied on the counties, and to contribute to the payment of soldiers to be raised. In terms of their way of life, the urban nobility, however, were not part of the

33 H. Németh, "Die finanziellen Auswirkungen," 776–77.

34 Endres, "Adel und Patriziat in Oberdeutschland"; Andermann and Johanek, eds, *Zwischen Nicht-Adel und Adel; Driel, Pohl, and Walter, eds, Adel verbindet – Adel verbindet*.

county nobility but rather of the urban bourgeoisie. When granted nobility, typically, they did not even give up their former occupations. Until the mid-seventeenth century, there is no indication of a general tendency for them to come under the county rather than the town jurisdiction.<sup>35</sup>

From the middle of the seventeenth century onwards, we find only isolated cases where the county provided a way out for a noble burgher condemned by the town. By the 1660s, the political situation had changed to the extent that the towns were usually forced to settle with the noble burgher who was suing, with the counties united behind them, in some cases even taking the case to the diet. The strong anti-town sentiment in the mid-seventeenth century and the gradual eclipse of the free royal towns made it necessary for the towns to cooperate ever more closely. Their joint (more vehement than before) politicking, or rather the towns' self-defence, was understandable, since the nobility's attacks were not in fact directed against individual towns but against the whole of the Fourth Estate. A good example of this is the meeting held in 1644 in the town of Trnava, (Nagyszombat, Tyrnau), where, after the successful campaign of the Transylvanian Prince György II Rákóczi, the prince, the Hungarian Estates and the commissioners of King Ferdinand III gathered to draw up another compromise. Here, the representatives of the royal towns acted in unison and tried to convince the ruler of their own rights against the county nobility interfering in urban affairs, and in this case, they were mostly successful. We can cite another example of the growing cooperation between towns. At the diets of 1646/47 and 1649, the noble estates' complaints against the burghers of Košice and the majority of the resulting laws infringed the privileges of all other towns as well by allowing nobles to import wine into the towns tax free, or recognising the jurisdiction of the counties over the town nobility. As a common reaction, the free royal towns' delegates marched together before the Chapter of Bratislava to stage a solemn protest against the insults they had suffered.<sup>36</sup>

Due to the unity of the towns and the local political power relations, most noble burghers refused to be under the jurisdiction of the counties, and paid their taxes to the town treasury, rather than to the county. Even at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the idea of county taxation was rejected on the grounds that they were sworn to the town and not to the county, and were primarily town citizens. Thus, thanks to the towns' united political action and in accordance with everyday practice, the county could not bring these citizens and their urban proprieties entirely under its jurisdiction. Nevertheless, the rights of urban self-government were curtailed in several areas. This is clearly visible in the multi-storey houses built

35 Pils and Niederkorn, eds, *Ein zweigeteilter Ort?*; Federmayer, "Šlachta uhorskej metropoly."

36 Bessenyei, "A szabad királyi városok"; H. Németh, *Várospolitikai és gazdaságpolitika*, vol. 1, 500–14; H. Németh, "Städtepolitik und Wirtschaftspolitik," 346–49.

by the nobility and the aristocracy in the towns and in the fact that, from the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the county's offices were moved into the towns. In the case of noble burghers, the county repeatedly obliged them to pay taxes just like the low nobility, and in the event of a noble uprising, to serve in the armed forces.

In addition to taxes and military burdens, the closest cooperation between towns was on matters concerning the privileges of the free royal towns, especially the admission of new ones. In the early seventeenth century, they were still successfully resisting interference from the monarchs and counties. The individual towns enjoyed the support of the entire Fourth Estate in the face of interference from the monarch and the duchies. This was also the case when the monarch tried to force the city of Bratislava to include Catholics among its leaders. The growing recatholization further mobilised the towns. Thus, in the negotiations on the house taken from the Calvinists by the Catholics in Trnava at the 1609/1610 Diet, there was as much common defence of their interests as there was ten years later over the issue of the authority over the great church in Bratislava. At the diet of 1637/38, a common platform of Protestant estates (both Lutherans and Calvinists) was established, and the urban envoys participated very strongly in this community until the diet of 1687, even though this cooperation was strictly forbidden above the estates. Throughout the century, the towns assisted each other in religious matters, and were supported by the counties in this matter. The Protestant Estates in the towns and counties supported the towns against the Jesuit Order in the towns, just as they supported them in the matter of the seizure of town churches. The cause brought the towns to a common platform, with the majority of the counties against state confessionalism, and on this issue they were able to gain considerable political support from their former opponents. On several occasions, skilled urban delegates emerged as spokesmen for the Protestant estates in domestic political debates.<sup>37</sup>

### **Individual interests over collective economic interests**

For towns, the most important issues—beyond the defence of their own privileges and jurisdiction—were related to the economic interests of their burghers. As we have seen, the creation of the Town League of Upper Hungary was also necessitated by a common economic interest, i.e., the regulation of loans. However, the economic policies of the cities in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were exposed to the ravages of incessant war. It is not primarily the unstable trade routes that are to be considered here, since (strange as it may seem) this was not the case for the

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37 H. Németh, "Representatives in a Changing World," 5–9.

entire period. The problem was much more the ban on exporting certain products, such as wine, copper, nitrate, or horses, which were important export items and necessary for military purposes, especially for the supply of border forts. Such regulations were mainly imposed during campaigns or when poor harvests meant that less food was available to the army.<sup>38</sup> In this situation, with all matters being subject to warfare, towns were only able to ensure that their merchants could continue their activities unhindered, especially in the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century, the Viennese court's wars in Western Europe significantly increased the role of Hungarian revenues, and the amount of taxes levied also increased. The largest and most reliable of the Chamber's revenues was the customs duty collected on foreign trade (the so-called "*harmincad*" or "*tricesima*"). In order to raise it, by the first half of the seventeenth century, almost all towns had lost their exemption from customs duties, which they had retained for most of the sixteenth century. In addition, in order to maintain the defence system neglected by the wars in Western Europe, from 1635 an additional customs duty was introduced, added to the traditional tax, from which almost no one was granted an exemption.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, regulations were introduced in the wine trade, raising further the revenue from customs duties, but minimizing the role of Hungarian merchants. Under the Chamber's measures, domestic merchants were forbidden to export wine, while Polish merchants were allowed to trade freely (on payment of customs duties). This made the towns' trading privileges almost pointless, as Polish merchants were able to trade with Chamber licences. Because of the overwhelming financial problems, momentarily the treasury considered the towns' loss of revenue less important than to increase the volume of its secure customs revenue, and the towns were unable to do much in this area.<sup>40</sup>

This monetary policy coincided with the large landowners' increasing involvement in foreign trade. Landowners with large estates had a much more favourable market position than urban merchants. Their business activity was boosted by the fact that the nobility increasingly demanded that their serfs pay their taxes in the form of produce. The fact that the period was one of monetary decline obviously played a role in this, but the acquisition of marketable foodstuffs was also very attractive to the nobility.<sup>41</sup> The towns' political activity in relation to foreign trade, though far from being free from internal contradictions, can be considered uniform. The towns acted in concert to maintain their foreign trade privileges, their exemption from customs duties, and their market position, and as a result were still

38 Kaiser, *Waffen, Geld, Soldaten*.

39 Kenyeres, "Die Kosten der Türkenabwehr."

40 H. Németh, "Städtepolitik und Wirtschaftspolitik," 349–51; H. Németh, *Várospolitika és gazdaságpolitika*, vol. 2, 28–43, 71–91, 95–113.

41 Winner, "Adeliger Stand und bürgerliche Hantierung."

achieving considerable success in the sixteenth century. The towns' defence of their interests in monetary policy, which became critical during the monetary crisis of the seventeenth century, may also be regarded as united. They were able to obtain fairly advantageous decisions in the diets and from local state officials, while town merchants' role in foreign trade continued to be significant. The only exceptions were the measures taken in the seventeenth century to increase customs duties on foreign trade, an area in which the towns were only partially successful.<sup>42</sup>

The towns' cooperation extended further than these areas. They also strongly represented their interests in the regulation of internal trade and the production and sale of agricultural and industrial products, which were of great importance to burghers. The towns of Upper Hungary created separate regulations to protect their guilds, and also acted within the framework of the League to protect their domestic trade. It was here that the interests of Košice, the leader of the alliance, were clearest represented. On the one hand, the defence of internal trade was carried out against the nobility, who refused to accept the privileges of urban merchants in their own customs posts. It was only at the end of the seventeenth century that the towns became disadvantaged in this respect. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the towns in Upper Hungary gradually set up a common guild alliance to promote their economic interests and protect their guilds. The essence of this alliance was that the guilds of the same industry of each town were grouped into a common "mother guild". The members of the alliance adopted each other's guild rules and the alliance was the higher authority in matters between the member guilds. The League's economic policy was dominated by the interests of the burghers of Košice, thus the guild policy was also controlled by this town. This was also reflected in the fact that by the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the guilds of the members of the League, as well as those of Szepes County—which were formerly affiliated to the town of Levoča—joined the main guilds of Košice out of economic necessity.

However, as a result of an agreement between the members of the League, the practice developed that guilds in the region's market towns did not have to join the main guild of Košice, but the League's guild alliance.<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the superiority of the guilds in Košice was not evident, and the League's other members also benefited from the advantages of the mother guild. Nevertheless, in this field as well, Košice's domination was clear. From the first quarter of the seventeenth century onwards, there are growing numbers of signs that with the help of the guild alliance, the League was trying to tighten its control over the market towns in its market area. The free royal towns of the League forced the seigneurial market towns in Upper

42 H. Németh, "Städtepolitik und Wirtschaftspolitik," 349–51.

43 Market towns were settlements owned by landlords which had their own smaller municipality. They could enforce their interests mostly against their landlords or with their assistance.

Hungary to join their guild alliance. This was the case despite the considerable help that market towns received from their landlords. There were many ways of putting pressure on them. For example, they allowed market town masters to enter their own urban markets only if the given market town acknowledged the supremacy of the guild alliance over him. Recognition of the training of apprentices in market towns was subject to the same condition. For the League's towns, this had several advantages: the masters of the urban guild in the market towns had access to favourable market opportunities, and the masters of the market towns were under strong control.<sup>44</sup> In the famous wine region of Tokaj-Hegyalja, which was of great importance to the League's towns and the basis of their wine trade, they jointly influenced the regulation vineyard workers' wages.<sup>45</sup> The regional policy of the Town League is well reflected in the spread of the common code of urban law. The collection of laws compiled by the members of the League in 1649 was successively taken over by the region's market towns over the next decade and was consistently applied in their own legal systems.<sup>46</sup>

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that urban policy in Hungary in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was based on cooperation, first at regional level, subsequently, on an increasingly broader scale. In addition to the better-known Town League of Upper Hungary, the mining towns of Lower Hungary and the free royal towns of Western Hungary formed similar but as yet undiscovered alliances of towns, or, even if in a non-institutionalized framework, they certainly harmonized their interests. In Bratislava, the location of powerful central administration, signs of state control are tangible from the first quarter of the seventeenth century onwards, but its trends are similar to those of other towns. In the sixteenth century, this harmonization of interests happened on a smaller scale, while from the seventeenth century onwards it was gradually intensified. It was at this time that due to the increasing levels of state taxation, the towns joined forces and coordinated their actions. They formed a united front in the diet as the fourth estate, and the town envoys pursued a consultative policy of coordinating interests with the other towns. The intensity of the coordination of interests was strengthened by the state's attempts to impose ever higher taxes on the towns and by interfering more into the towns' denominational

44 H. Németh, "A szabad királyi városok mezővárosi politikája."

45 This was the main wine-growing region of vital importance for Upper Hungarian towns' wine trade. The towns and their citizens possessed considerable vineyards there whose output was marketed mainly in Kraków in Poland.

46 H. Németh, "Städtepolitik und Wirtschaftspolitik," 351–52.

composition. At the same time, the counties were increasingly seeking to intervene in the affairs of the nobles living in the towns, which also justified the towns' unified political action. Each of these town groups was headed by a major commercial center, such as Košice, Bratislava, Sopron (Ödenburg), Banska Štiavnica (Selmecbánya, Schemnitz) and Banská Bystrica (Besztercebánya, Neusohl). The individual interests of these towns also played a decisive role in determining the policies of the regional urban cooperation. The cooperation may have been weakened by the fact that on several occasions these leading towns carried out their political activities to the detriment of the interests of smaller towns. Nevertheless, the unity of urban alliances, and even more of the towns as a whole, had a positive effect, and the towns represented their interests effectively and successfully in national forums up to the end of the seventeenth century. Indeed, the economic potential of the larger towns had an impact on the overall political representation of interests, so that the influence of larger towns on political decision-making could benefit smaller ones, while the interests of the larger towns were effectively supported by the presence of smaller ones. Cooperation was most effective at the regional level, with cooperating towns maintaining a very tight grip on local internal trade and industrial policy.

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## Tax Policy of the Fourth Estate?

### On the Perspectives and Limits of the Political Cooperation of the Moravian Territorial Lord's Towns before the Battle at White Mountain

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**Abstract.** The study deals with questions of the political cooperation of Moravian territorial lord's towns (the Moravian Fourth Estate) in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. This issue is viewed through the prism of political negotiations about the very high tax burden on the towns. After an outline of the structure of the estate-organized society of the Moravian Margraviate and the role of territorial lord's—royal and chamber—towns in it, the article introduces the natural and fiscal burdens weighing down the urban organisms and escalating in line with the wars of the Habsburg Monarchy against the expansive Ottoman Empire. The burden on Moravian towns was much heavier than on other segments of the estate-structured society. This was the basis for the towns' concerted efforts to find relief, which manifested itself during the Fifteen Years' War with the High Porte in 1593–1606. Surviving sources offer detailed documentation of the 1604 negotiations, when at the initiative of Brno, an attempt was made to counter the pressure of the higher estates that intended to further increase the tax burden on territorial lord's towns. However, these negotiations illustrate that effective joint action of the town representations was hindered by individual municipalities' particular interests. Individualism generally exacerbated the towns' weak position in the political system of the time. In the broader coordinates of early modern Europe, in the Bohemian lands, urban space was less developed and the bourgeoisie was significantly weaker than in their Western and Southern European counterparts. Therefore, the limited coordination of the territorial lord's towns in the fight against the higher estates did not lead to the desired results.

**Keywords:** Early modern period, Ottoman wars, Moravia, politics, estatism, towns, taxes

The different segments of the estate-based society had a diverse character in different parts of early modern Europe. Territorial specifics were reflected, among other things, in the varying social roles of towns. Towns were important not only as economic units, but in a more advanced form they embodied an unmistakable political force with the potential to dynamically influence the organisation of society. The position

of towns in the political system of particular states, countries, or otherwise defined territories can be measured by their ability to promote or defend their interests.<sup>1</sup>

The immense importance of large urban production and market centres was reflected in their multifaceted economic potential, which benefited not only people directly linked to the urban space. By its very nature, the urban economy was a permanent object of interest for power structures, which exerted economic pressures on it for a long time, although the nature and intensity of their demands varied with the geopolitical specifics of particular areas. Levying taxes found universal application in the European early modern period. Its extraordinary impact on the urban environment was due, among other things, to the fact that the intensification of monetary relations was intrinsically linked to the management of urban communities and their inhabitants. Towns were the centres of money trade, where in addition to the increasing role of money in everyday transactions, certain forms of prospective credit transactions were applied.<sup>2</sup>

Early modern systems of taxation were formed in parallel with the transformation of medieval into modern states. Depending on the specific conditions, they fulfilled a number of functions in addition to their “state-forming” role.<sup>3</sup> In the Central European context, the Ottoman wars and financing defence against the Ottoman expansion were decisive factors in the development of taxation. The Ottoman threat represented one of the main arguments for the promotion of new types of taxes, which added to the financial burdens on Central European towns. This was far from being the case only in the towns of Hungary, or (from the perspective of the Christian side of the struggle) in the part of the Kingdom of Hungary that remained under the Habsburg dynasty’s rule.<sup>4</sup>

The tax system was also relevant for towns in areas further away from the “front line”. In the broader context of Central Europe, especially in the Habsburg Monarchy, urban centres (especially those that were considered large and economically developed in the local context) were seen as an irreplaceable source of taxes, the system of which was organised differently in the various countries under the House of Austria, and changed over time.<sup>5</sup> Towns generally faced increasing fiscal

1 Among attempts at a synthetic view of the phenomenon of the early modern town, in which the relationship between the town and the early modern state is emphasized from various angles, see Gerteis, *Die deutschen Städte*; Schilling, *Die Stadt in der Frühen Neuzeit*; Knittler, *Die europäische Stadt*; Rosseaux, *Städte in der Frühen Neuzeit*.

2 Boone, Davids and Janssens, eds, *Urban Public Debts*; Slavíčková, *A History of the Credit Market*; by case Schieber, *Pfänder, Zinsen, Inflation*.

3 From the rich literature, see Stolleis, *Pecunia nervus rerum*, 63–72; Buchholz, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Finanzen*, 22–38, 47–58; on the theoretical and legal foundations of tax collection, see at least Schwennicke, *Ohne Steuer kein Staat*.

4 H. Németh, “Vplyv osmanskej vojny”; H. Németh, “Stadtpolitik und Wirtschaftspolitik.”

5 In a broader context, see at least Buchholz, *Geschichte der öffentlichen Finanzen*, 26–30, 47–54;

pressure, and their ability to resist these pressures reflected their political strength in any given country. This article focuses on the Margraviate of Moravia, one of the lands of the Bohemian Crown, that was incorporated into the Habsburg Monarchy from 1526. The territorial lord's towns in Moravia, where the relationship between tax burdens and urban politics is examined, provide a case study to show the real power of towns around 1600 in an area framed by the German territories of the Holy Roman Empire, Poland, Hungary, and the Austrian lands.

## Territorial lord's towns and the Fourth Estate in Moravia

In the political sense, the town estate of the Margraviate of Moravia—after the Bohemian Kingdom the second main component of the constitutional whole of the lands of the Bohemian Crown—in the century before the Battle at White Mountain (1620) was comprised of six royal (free) towns: Brno and Olomouc as the pair of towns competing for the status of the land's capital, Jihlava, plus Znojmo, Uherské Hradiště and Uničov (see Fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> These localities avoided the fate of a number of other urban communities degraded at the end of the fourteenth century and during the fifteenth century due to the disintegration of the sovereign's property in the land into a part of the domains of powerful Moravian feudal lords.<sup>7</sup>

The efforts of some Moravian subject towns whose representatives in the mid-sixteenth century made efforts to gain the status of free royal towns were not crowned with the desired success. Although Kyjov (1548), Nový Jičín (1558) and Šumperk (1562) managed to redeem themselves from serfdom, thus to rid themselves of the tie that had bound them to their aristocratic lords, these municipalities were still not included in the town estate. They became only so-called 'chamber towns', namely towns directly subordinated to the royal chamber (see Fig. 1). As such, they did not have the right to participate in the proceedings of the land diets, the highest estate political forums in the land. They therefore remained outside the Moravian "political nation".<sup>8</sup>

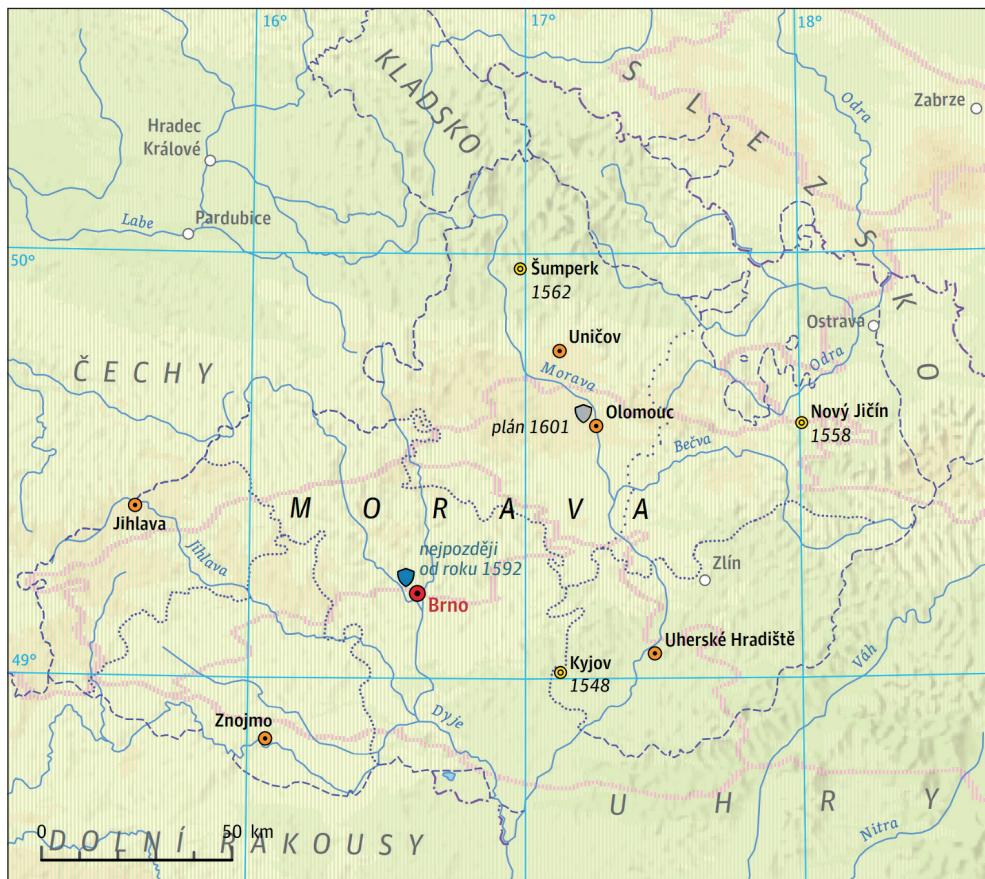
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Bonney, ed., *Economic Systems and State Finance*; Bonney, ed., *The Rise of the Fiscal State*; more recently Schaik, ed., *Economies, Public Finances*. A recent overview for the Habsburg Monarchy is provided by Edelmayer, Lanzinner, and Rauscher, eds, *Finanzen und Herrschaft*. Older material works are summarized by Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 162–64.

<sup>6</sup> Although Moravia was a margraviate, these (free) towns were referred to as royal, not margraviate. In the Middle Ages, their institutional establishment was guaranteed by the authority of the Bohemian kings (who usually ruled as Moravian margraves at the same time).

<sup>7</sup> Macek, *Jagellonský věk*, vol. III, 23; Mezník, *Lucemburská Morava*, 292–93, 357–59; Vorel, *Rezidenční vrchnostenská města*, 130–35; Hoffmann, *Středověké město*, 438.

<sup>8</sup> Kameníček, *Zemské sněmy a sjezdy*, vol. III, 102–3.



**Figure 1** Moravian territorial lord's towns, the usual gathering places of anti-Ottoman troops in the Margraviate, in the pre-White Mountain period

Legend: ● Royal (free) town—the most important Moravian gathering place of troops;  
 ● Royal (free) town; ● Chamber town.

Concentration of the estate arsenal in Moravia: ● Functioning Moravian land armoury;  
 ● Planned Moravian land armoury

In comparison with Bohemia, where there were nearly forty territorial lord's towns (including the dowry towns), the town estate in Moravia—a land almost half the size of Bohemia—had disproportionately fewer towns in the sixteenth and at the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. Moreover, the politically understood estate system of the Margraviate of Moravia differed in structure from its Bohemian counterpart. Due to the upheavals suffered by the power of the Church in the Hussite era, the prelate (religious) estate did not have representation at the land diet, while members of the lordship (the higher nobility), knighthood (the lower nobility) and town estates took part in the top estate political forums in the Bohemian Kingdom.

In contrast, the representatives of the church retained the position of a political estate in Moravia, therefore in the period discussed the estates community had four segments here rather than three. Ranging from the most important one to the one that enjoyed the least prestige, the Four Estates were: lord, prelate (the most significant Moravian prelate, the bishop of Olomouc, was, nevertheless, not included in the prelate but at the head of the lord estate), knightly, and town.<sup>9</sup>

The voting of the estates in the land diet took place separately within the individual curiae, within which the votes were not simply counted, but “weighted” according to the prestige of specific persons or institutions. At the same time, the consent of all the curiae was usually required for a regular parliamentary resolution. Although there were four political estates in Moravia, there were only three parliamentary curiae. The royal (free) towns shared a common, third curia with the prelate’s estate at the land diet. This, along with the fact that in most questions the interests of the church representatives were related to those of both aristocratic estates rather than to the interests of the towns, fundamentally weakened the political significance of the Moravian Fourth Estate.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Moravian society and the Ottoman threat**

Not only political representation, but the entire organized society of estates in the Bohemian lands included in the constitution represented by the Habsburg dynasty faced endless armed conflict with the expansive Ottoman Empire for most of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The struggles against the Turks, whose main stage remained Hungary torn into two spheres of power, provided space for the military involvement of some of the population of Bohemia and Moravia.<sup>11</sup>

However, the fact that huge sums of money were lost on the hot soil of the Hungarian battlefields immediately impacted the lives of the broadest classes of the population in the Bohemian lands. The Habsburg rulers’ escalating fiscal pressure on the political representations of their countries was based on emphasising, sometimes even purposefully exaggerating the Ottoman danger at a time when the formation of modern states required fundamental changes in the structure of public finances practically throughout Europe.<sup>12</sup>

9 The structure of the Moravian estates community is summarised by Válka, *Přehled dějin Moravy*, vol. II, 27–32; Válka, *Dějiny Moravy*, vol. II, 41–48.

10 Pánek, “Proměny stavovství”; Pánek, “Stavovství v předbělohorské době”; Pánek, “Politický systém”; Bůžek, ed., *Společnost českých zemí*, 643–56.

11 Mainly Pánek, “Podíl předbělohorského českého státu, I”; Pánek, “Podíl předbělohorského českého státu II” (with a summary of Pánek’s earlier studies on this issue).

12 Synoptically in the work by Sterneck, “Raně novověké bernictví.” For the perspective of the

Although the defence of estate politicians against the maximalist fiscal demands of the rulers was tenacious, it was always limited by the terrifying spectre of “the greatest enemy of all Christianity” deeply rooted in the mentality of Central Europeans and amplified by the echoes of specific battles.<sup>13</sup> For the lands ruled by the Central European Habsburgs, the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century marked a period of intense militarization. After a temporary relative calm, which was occasionally disturbed by minor skirmishes, the so-called ‘Long Turkish War’, sometimes referred to as the Thirteen, Fourteen or Fifteen Years’ War, broke out in Hungary in 1593, and ended with the Peace of Zsitvatorok on 11th November 1606.<sup>14</sup> In this phase of the fight between the two hostile worlds, the Bohemian lands played an important role in organizing the defence of the Central European space. However, the effects of the war were different in each territory.

In comparison with inhabitants of the Bohemian Kingdom, due to the geographical location of the Margraviate, Moravians undoubtedly experienced the Ottoman threat more intensely. Moreover, their fear of the Islamic crescent was permanently exacerbated by the presence of domestic and foreign troops in the land, which was used as a platform for Christian fighters preparing to move to the Hungarian border fortresses. Although most Moravians who did not take a personal part in fighting the Turks were spared the long-term direct experience of the war, no one doubted the reality of the danger (which, after all, manifested itself several times during the raids of enemy units into Moravia). Therefore, in addition to constant bargaining with the monarch or his deputies about the amount of the Moravian contribution to the maintenance of the crews of the Hungarian border fortresses, the Moravian Land Diets had to deal with issues related to the immediate defence of the Margraviate.<sup>15</sup>

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Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, see Schulze, *Reich und Türkengefahr*, 223–363. With an obvious tendency to highlight the importance of the Bohemian lands, they tried to summarize the effects of the Ottoman wars in our area Krofta, “My a Maďaři”; Urbánek, “Češi a války turecké.” On the geographical aspects of the threat to the Bohemian lands by Ottoman expansion, cp. Sterneck, “Turecké nebezpečí v českém kontextu.”

13 Kurz et al. eds, *Das Osmanische Reich*; Pálffy, *The Kingdom of Hungary*, 23–52, 89–118; Kónya, ed., *Dejiny Uhorska*, 182–251.

14 Huber, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. IV, 366–475; Janáček, *Rudolf II*, 311–28, 366–87; Niederkorn, *Die europäischen Mächte*. On the reflection on the Long Turkish War in the milieu of the Bohemian lands, see at least Hrubeš and Polišenský, “Bocskaiovy vpády”; Rataj, *Česke země*; Žitný, “Keresztes 1596.”

15 Válka, “Morava v habsburské monarchii a turecká hrozba”; Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 48–51.

## The role of Moravian towns in the defence against the Ottoman expansion

Territorial lord's towns, especially royal (free) towns, in pre-White Mountain Moravia had an irreplaceable role in the organization of anti-Ottoman battles (see Fig. 1). The economic capacity of these production and market centres and their direct subordination to the territorial lord, on whose favour and support they depended in their conflicts with higher estates, made them ideal bases for the armaments, temporary accommodation, and feeding of imperial troops. However, they were also used in the same way by the land in fulfilling its military obligations arising from its position within the union of states represented by the Habsburg dynasty, as well as in ensuring its own security.<sup>16</sup>

Not only the troops sent to the Hungarian battlefields from the Margraviate, but also various foreign armies, which were involved in the defence of the Central European area against the Ottoman expansion, were placed in the Moravian territorial lord's towns. These military units usually stayed in the Moravian territorial lord's towns preceding the transfer of the soldiers to Hungary: very often they were directly related to the performance of a mandatory military parade associated with the control of the number of soldiers and the revision of their equipment. The wait for the parade sometimes lasted for weeks, and the soldiers often stayed outside the town for some time after the event. However, soldiers also found refuge at the royal towns, and after returning from Hungary, were waiting for the final settlement of their pay, the reimbursement of which was delayed on the battlefield with almost iron regularity. Due to permanent problems with financing the armies, it took a long time for the soldiers deployed near the towns to be paid and disbanded. It was then the civilians' obligation to provide shelter and food for officers and ordinary soldiers.<sup>17</sup>

For each town as a whole, as well as for its individual households, the presence of bands of soldiers always posed a considerable economic burden and caused problems of an organizational character. The capacity of traditional urban food production could not cover the huge onslaught of demand caused by the sudden increase in the numbers of people, as well as of draft and equestrian animals in and around towns. It was therefore necessary to take various emergency measures, of which one random example is the establishment of temporary mills powered by horses, or oxen—i.e., a facility which enabled to temporarily increase flour production. The forced cohabitation of urban populations, their suburbs and rural hinterland with bands of soldiers recruited in various parts of Europe naturally provoked

16 Sterneck, "Soumrak »zlaté doby« moravských měst."

17 Numerous documents for the turn of the seventeenth century are collected in the regest edition Líva, ed., *Regesta fondu Militare II*; for the earlier period Roubík, ed., *Regesta fondu Militare I*.

innumerable conflict situations. The soldiers, who were to act as defenders of the Christian faith, committed criminal excesses, which contributed to escalating tensions between civilians and anti-Ottoman troops. Their insulting or violent outbursts, showing their contempt of the town authorities, contributed to the growing hostility towards the soldiers.<sup>18</sup>

The Moravian royal (free) towns were not, however, only rear areas of the armies sent to Hungary. They also actively participated in the battles against the Turks. Like other members of the estate community, they sent cavalry and infantry soldiers to the provincial troops in accordance with parliamentary resolutions or patents of the provincial governor. The number of cavalries was based on the relative valuation of property on the so-called 'arms horses' (*zbrojné koně*), while the number of infantries was based on the number of serfs (serf farmsteads). According to the actual needs of the Margraviate, every *thirtieth person* was to be removed from the rural estates, but at a moment of extreme danger the proportion could go up to every *fifth man*. In addition, during the Long Turkish War, the townspeople equipped the troops to fight against the Turks and their allies with war supplies, including predominantly cannons, ammunition and other necessities for the artillery. These duties were not new for the municipalities belonging to the estate of the towns, as this had a long tradition in the Moravian military establishment. However, the provision of transport and the qualified service of cannons (at the expense of individual municipalities), as well as the provision of gunpowder, which was permanently in short supply, potassium nitrate, and lead rounds (supplies that were to be reimbursed to the towns) caused major problems to the townspeople.<sup>19</sup>

The strategic importance of individual Moravian royal (free) towns was determined, on the one hand, by their economic and population potential and the position they occupied in the political system, and on the other hand, by their geographical location. An important stronghold of the anti-Ottoman fighting was the smaller Uherské Hradiště, located in close proximity to the border with the rest of Habsburg-controlled Hungary.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, it was the town of Jihlava, located relatively distant from the front line, a royal town on the Bohemian–Moravian border, which did not escape the attention of military structures. To a large extent, this interest was due to Jihlava's "economic miracle" that unfolded in the sixteenth century thanks to its magnificent boom in cloth production.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, from the military point of view, Brno and Olomouc, the political centres of the Margraviate, occupied a key position among the territorial lord's towns. In addition, Olomouc

18 Sterneck, "Mnohem hůře nežli nepřítel."

19 Kameníček, *Zemské sněmy a sjezdy*, vol. II, 170–400; Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 67–85.

20 Verbík and Zemek, eds, *Uherské Hradiště*, 156–64.

21 Pisková, ed., *Jihlava*, 265–85.

was also the centre of the Moravian ecclesiastical administration. Participants in the proceedings of the provincial courts used to come to these municipalities on a regular basis, but above all, it was here that the land diets most often met to discuss, among other things, the defence of the land. Many participants in the parliamentary meetings, numerous officials, but also officers bought houses or, in other ways, found temporary residence in the town.<sup>22</sup>

The production of armour, weapons, ammunition, and other war supplies was concentrated in the two leading Moravian towns, both of which were involved in the plan to build a land (estate) arsenal before the outbreak of the Long Turkish War. The geographical factor highlighted the importance of Brno, where the land arsenal began to operate from the late 1580s or early 1590s: material was concentrated in it, which, if necessary, supplemented the land army's equipment. Brno and its surroundings provided suitable conditions and environments for gathering the Christian troops before they moved to the southeast. The Hungarian battlefields were not far from here, but in the long-term perspective the town managed to stay out of the immediate danger posed by the hordes of non-believers.<sup>23</sup>

### **Fiscal pressure on Moravian territorial lord's towns in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries**

Due to their geographical location and other factors, individual territorial lord's (royal and chamber) towns in the Margraviate were burdened very differently by the parades, dissolution, and marches of troops. Unlike the burdens listed, the fiscal pressure was directed at these municipalities as an imaginary whole—as part of the monarch's chamber. Even in this respect, however, we find clear differences. The chamber towns of Kyjov, Nový Jičín and Šumperk found themselves in an unfavourable position. The fact that they had freed themselves from aristocratic domination was expensively redeemed by the fact that the bottomless chamber of the monarch did not hesitate to make maximum use of them as a welcome source of money. In comparison with the old territorial lord's towns, chamber towns did not have large numbers of privileges built up over centuries and carefully guarded that could at least partially face the escalating fiscal pressure. However, in the pre-White Mountain period the increasing draining of funds from municipal treasuries could not be avoided even by royal (free) towns.<sup>24</sup>

22 On Brno in this relation, see further in this study. On the aristocratic purchases in Olomouc, see Müller and Vymětal. “Šlechta v předbělohorské Olomouci”; cp. also the synoptic work on the early modern history of the town: Schulz, ed., *Dějiny Olomouce*, vol. I, 278–79.

23 Sterneck, “Moravská zemská zbrojnica.”

24 Chocholáč and Sterneck, “Die landesfürstlichen Finanzen,” 128–29, 132–37.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the sovereign often turned to the Moravian royal and chamber towns for loans, which he needed to try and resolve his permanently unsatisfactory financial situation.<sup>25</sup> Requests for credit, mostly based on the specification of the purpose to use the borrowed money for, were usually conveyed to the towns by the Moravian vice-chamberlains (Latin *subcamerarius*).<sup>26</sup> However, the return of the sums lent to the monarch, who skilfully took advantage of the position of immediate lordship vis-à-vis his creditors, was highly problematic. The town councils themselves often had to borrow money to meet the court's requirements. This added to the burden of interest payments on municipal budgets.<sup>27</sup>

In 1593–1606 credits directed directly to the territorial lord receded somewhat into the background, while towns struggling with other burdens made a greater effort to have their old debts repaid.<sup>28</sup> However, repeated calls for the territorial lord's debts were generally ignored, and even the effort to obtain deductions from regular payments flowing to the territorial lord's treasury, especially from the special town tax and beer tax, so that money collected from the population by its own municipal collectors should remain in municipal budgets, did not enjoy more distinctive success.<sup>29</sup>

During the Long Turkish War, town representations were forced to provide money mainly to soldiers. These loans, whether officers took them to finance their current military needs as so-called *liefergelt* (maintenance) or were used for the settlement of wages before the dissolution of military units, generally took the form of tax advances. In this way, the settlement of often very large sums was, unlike older town receivables from the monarch, relatively reliably secured.<sup>30</sup>

25 Volf, "Královský důchod a úvěr," 160–65. The most recent fundamental works on the role of credit in various social milieus of the pre-White Mountain Bohemian lands are Ledvinka, Úvěr a zadlužení; Bůžek, Úvěrové podnikání; Vorel, "Úvěr, peníze a finanční transakce"; Slavíčková, *A History of the Credit Market*.

26 More on the Moravian under-chamberlain office Seichterová, "Dvě instrukce"; Seichterová, "Podkomoří, I"; Seichterová, "Podkomoří, II"; Seichterová, "Podkomoří, III."

27 Cp. an overview of the receivables of the Moravian royal (free) towns from the middle of the sixteenth century to 1588: NA České oddělení dvorské komory IV Sign. Morava Karton 160 Podkomořský úřad fol. 91r–104r.

28 With references to the sources and literature, see Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 123–25. In connection with the increase in other burdens that the towns had to face after the outbreak of the Long Turkish War, the forced town loan was also reduced in Bohemia. However, the pressure on the Bohemian towns to provide loans to the monarch intensified again during the war and reached its peak at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Cp. on that Picková, "Nucený úvěr českých měst," 978, 988–1004; Pánek, "Úloha předbělohorské Prahy," 151–53.

29 For illustration in the correspondence of Moravian towns with the under-chamberlain and in other documents from the end of the sixteenth century, see in NA České oddělení dvorské komory IV Sign. Morava Karton 160 Podkomořský úřad.

30 E.g., AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 85 fol. 5v, 30r.

In addition to having to lend cash, other burdens which weighed down the Moravian royal (free) and chamber towns as a consequence of the emperor's indebtedness, gained more importance in the period under review, because of the forced assumption of the role of guarantors for the sovereign's debts with wealthy members of the nobility and burgher credit entrepreneurs.<sup>31</sup> Depending on the amount, a specific territorial lord's debt could be secured by one or simultaneously by several municipalities.<sup>32</sup> The liability of one town could thus cover a very wide range of the monarch's financial obligations. The royal and chamber towns discussed the distribution of the surety burden among themselves through their representatives.<sup>33</sup>

The Moravian territorial lord's towns, including Brno, were in great difficulty at the beginning of the seventeenth century due to the unrefusable claims of the lords of Tiefenbach against the monarch. In addition to redirecting some tax payments from individual municipalities to the Tiefenbach coffers, the towns had to pass considerable sums of cash to members of this aristocratic family from the title of guarantors.<sup>34</sup> However, even these were not enough to fully cover the interest, let alone repay the debts. In revenge, the burghers responsible for the territorial lord's debt were seized by the Tiefenbachs' armed servants during trade missions to Austria or Hungary and robbed of the goods they were transporting, or even held for ransom.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to the imperial fiscal and military structures, the land or estate institutions tried to lighten the burghers' purses in various other ways. In addition to the proven mechanisms of the tax system, which we will discuss below, we should recall the role that towns already played in conveying information from the estate political elite to a wider range of addressees.<sup>36</sup> The councillors then—usually

31 Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 125–26. On the analogous situation of the Bohemian towns, see Picková, "Nucený úvěr českých měst," 977–78.

32 Cp. the bonds of Rudolf II in NA České oddělení dvorské komory: listiny Inventory No. 231, 237; further AMB A 1/1 Sbírka listin, mandátů a listů No. 2613 (29 September 1599).

33 E.g., AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 84 fol. 69v, 82v, 130r, 131v, 177r. On the imposition of surety on Moravian towns, see also NA Morava – moravské spisy české kanceláře a české komory No. 359, 1938, 2434, 2507, 2525, 2990, 3076, 3241, 3582, 3988, 5704, 5901.

34 See, e.g., AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 89 fol. 123r, 130v, 151v.

35 The problems of the towns with the Tiefenbachs and other creditors of the emperor fill innumerable letters within the surviving set of correspondence of the Brno Town Council, especially AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 85–92 (passim). See further NA Morava – moravské spisy české kanceláře a české komory No. 5885, 6037. Srov. též Harrer, *Geschichte der Stadt Mährisch-Schönberg*, 96; Stupková, "Smrt mu byla odměnou" (treatise devoted to Fridrich of Tiefenbach).

36 More recently on the town messengers in the milieu of the lands of the Bohemian Crown, see Vojtíšková, "Instituce městských poslů"; Čapský, "Poselské zřízení."

at longer intervals—reported to the land governor about the reimbursement of the costs of envoys, which the towns' representations had to send, especially in matters concerning the defence of Moravia. However, the repeated urgent calls for individual sums show that, due to the deepening deficit of the Moravian land budget, there were considerable difficulties in reimbursing messengers for their expenses.<sup>37</sup>

## Towns and the Moravian tax system

A very significant phenomenon of the period, namely the tax system, played the decisive role in the depletion of the financial reserves of the Moravian royal (free) and chamber towns. In addition to the old, originally medieval *special town tax*, which affected only the territorial lord's towns and whose income was primarily directed to the monarch (in practice, however, a large part of it was taken by various persons and institutions as rent), the town administration in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century found it increasingly difficult to cope with the burden of *land taxes*. These were direct and indirect taxes of various kinds, the collection of which, as a rule, whether for the benefit of the monarch (such as the well-known tax on beer, calculated based on the barrels tapped or barrels sold) or for the benefit of the land, was subject to approval by the land diets.<sup>38</sup>

As for the special town tax, at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was levied in nine municipalities in Moravia. In comparison with other Moravian territorial lord's towns, Brno spent the highest percentage of its budget on this payment, amounting to over a quarter of its total revenue from the Margravate. The analysis of the economic, social, and demographic conditions in individual Moravian towns shows that Brno stagnated at the time—and as an economic unit lagged behind not only Olomouc, but also Jihlava, which was experiencing a boom in the cloth business.<sup>39</sup> Around 1600, Brno's special town tax was thus at a disproportionately high level. The rate was based on a fixed assessment from the distant past, when the town benefited from unprecedented development, and did not consider the actual economic and population potential of Moravian towns (see Table 1).<sup>40</sup>

37 E.g. AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 81 fol. 72r–72v; Ms. 82 fol. 40v–41r; Ms. 83 fol. 33v, 46r, 63r; Ms. 86 fol. 293v; Ms. 87 fol. 21v, 281r.

38 Chocholáč and Sterneck, "Die landesfürstlichen Finanzen," 127–37.

39 Marek, *Společenská struktura*. In a monograph on the economic and social relations in Brno, see Jordánková and Sulitková, *Předbělohorské Brno*.

40 Sterneck, "Ke zvláštní městské berni."

**Table 1** Percentage of individual territorial lord's towns in the total payments of the special town tax in Moravia in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century

Royal (free) towns						Chamber towns			
Brno	Jihlava	Znojmo	Olomouc	Uherské Hradiště	Uničov	Kyjov	Nový Jičín	Šumperk	
26.83	8.01	8.01	24.98	–	4.13	8.01	12.02	8.01	
71.96						28.04			

Note: Uherské Hradiště was exempted from the payment of cash on the basis of the privilege of 29 May 1472. However, the town's representation had to hand over a sword worth 30 Hungarian ducats to the ruler every year. Although in the period under review, Uherské Hradiště failed to hand over the swords at the appropriate intervals, it kept the relevant proceeds of the municipal collection for its own needs.

If we turn our attention to the land taxes, they initially affected the taxpayers of all estates based on a single key. However, from the very beginning, the taxation of a wide range of consumer goods primarily affected large production and market centres, i.e., royal (free) towns, as that is where crafts and trade were primarily concentrated. The year 1570 brought a fundamental change to the detriment of towns, when a similar intervention was made in the land tax system, which in 1567 placed a large part of the tax burden of the higher estates on the shoulders of towns in Bohemia. Three years after its introduction in Bohemia, in Moravia as well the so-called *tax of tenth groschen* was introduced, within which inner town houses, as key tax units, were charged four and a half times more than rural farmsteads.<sup>41</sup>

During the fights in 1593–1606 the tax burden increased dramatically; the system of land taxes underwent stormy changes, with ever new types of taxes rapidly created, while some others disappearing unexpectedly. The vast majority of their proceeds flowed to the Hungarian battlefields or dissipated in various investments related to the defence against the Ottoman expansion. However, awareness of the need to face the common danger did not prevent many Moravian taxpayers from looking for ways to evade, or at least to partly avoid, their tax obligations.<sup>42</sup>

41 Gindely, *Geschichte der böhmischen Finanzen*, 7–9, 25, 57; Kameníček, *Zemské sněmy a sjezdy*, vol. I, 238–39; Placht, *České daně*, 30–47, 92–120; Volf, ed., *Sněmy české*, 78–111; Kollmann, “Berní rejstříky a berné”; Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 165–71. On the burden of the Moravian towns by the land tax, see Sterneck, “K počtu daňových poplatníků.”

42 The Moravian tax system then is fully presented by Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 162–200. On the technical side of the transfer of money to Hungary, see Sterneck, “S daněmi proti Turkům.” More recently on the transformations of the tax system in the later period with a focus on Moravia, see David, *Nechtěné budování státu*.

**Table 2** Percentage of individual territorial lord's towns in the total payments of the "town estate" to the land taxes in Moravia at the end of the sixteenth century

Tax term		Royal (free) towns						Chamber towns			Other taxpayers
		Brno	Jihlava	Znojmo	Olomouc	Uherské Hradiště	Uničov	Kyjov	Nový Jičín	Šumperk	
Christmas 1587	Tax on consumer goods	12.75	17.88	17.64	30.22	3.64	2.35	2.17	3.71	2.14	7.51
		48.27			36.21			8.02			
St. Nicholas 1589	Tax of tenth groschen	13.12	18.48	12.54	22.08	5.62	6.55	2.36	6.42	4.42	8.42
		44.14			34.25			13.20			
St. Bartholomew 1592	Tax of tenth groschen	13.42	18.63	12.99	22.73	6.06	6.42	2.24	6.77	4.62	6.13
		45.04			35.21			13.63			
Monday after Exaudi 1596	Ottoman tax	12.89	13.16	8.74	26.43	5.99	6.63	2.38	8.38	4.91	10.50
		34.79			39.05			15.67			

Note: The so-called "town estate" in the Moravian land tax registers was a broader group of taxpayers than the politically defined fourth estate. Apart from the royal towns, it included the chamber towns, but—inconsistently and variably—also some other taxpayers (especially freemen and burghers with extraordinary property). In the period under review, the Margravate was divided into two tax regions, with Brno, Jihlava and Znojmo belonging to the Brno tax region, while Olomouc, Uherské Hradiště, and Uničov and all the chamber towns belonged to the Olomouc tax region. Pairwise preserved registers, i.e., tax registers that have been preserved for one tax date for the whole of Moravia from the last four decades of the pre-White Mountain period, have survived only for the above four tax terms.

The absence of effective control mechanisms was reflected in cases of illegal tampering with the number of units reported for taxation. In the last quarter of the sixteenth century, the people of Brno, who took advantage of their townspeople's participation in tax administration and for a long time concealed a large part (up to 30 percent!) of inner-city houses in the town tax returns, committed such machinations in large numbers.<sup>43</sup> Their actions apparently stemmed from a sense of grievance over the burden-sharing of the special town tax. As Table 2 shows, compared

43 Sterneck, "Měšťanské elity v berních úřadech"; Sterneck, "Několik poznámek"; Sterneck, "K objektivitě berních přiznání."

to other towns, Brno's contribution to land taxes was surprisingly low. This seems to have been due to the machinations of the Brno representation. Dissatisfaction with the outdated—and at the same time unchangeable—assessment of this payment obligation was exacerbated by a rapid increase in aristocratic purchases in the local built-up area (at the end of the sixteenth century the nobility owned about 15 percent of burgher houses in Brno).<sup>44</sup> The traditional provocatively elevated approach of lords and knights to paying fees on their real estate became a serious problem, with growing pressure on noble defaulters on the part of the town representatives having only partial success.<sup>45</sup>

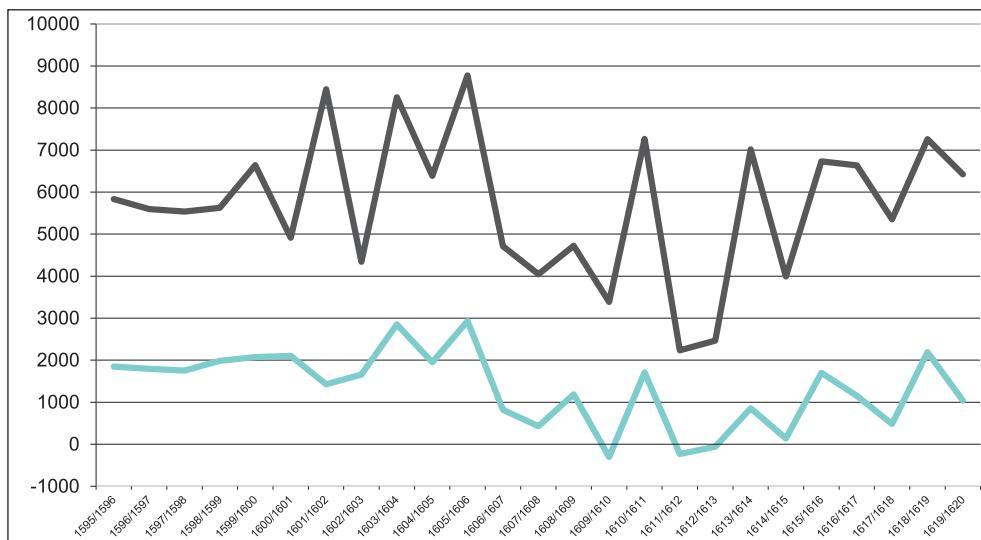
Through the example of the royal town of Brno, whose sources have been so favourably preserved, we can clearly see how the Long Turkish War was reflected in the local economy. An in-depth analysis of the relevant financial flows shows that a key factor, namely the increase in the tax burden, affected primarily the municipal (collective) management in the territorial lord's towns, while the immediate tax burden on individual inhabitants under urban jurisdiction was relatively stable in the long run (see Fig. 2).

Although in the last decade of the sixteenth century there was an alarming increase in fiscal and other pressures on the Brno municipal budget, the real balance of the town's financial management remained relatively favourable from the outbreak of the Long Turkish War to the 1602–1603 financial year. The budget was usually balanced; moreover, in individual accounting years the records actually show a slight surplus. But at that point, there was a dramatic change in the situation. Initially, this was reflected in the fact that the town did not immediately invest in loans the principal that the debtors had repaid, but instead used those sums as assets in the budget. In the 1604–1605 accounting year, however, the carousel of the town's large indebtedness started spinning. In just two crisis years of this type, 1606–1607 and 1607–1608, the people of Brno borrowed more than 50,000 gulden. And in the following period their indebtedness continued, although at a slower pace. The municipal budget had collapsed, and failed to recover by the Thirty Years' War, which was to complete its ruin.

The fundamental turn from relative prosperity to pure deficit management thus occurred in Brno in the final phase of the 1593–1606 war. It was certainly not merely an immediate consequence of the intensive campaigns for the defence of the Moravian territory against enemy incursions in 1605–1606, but was the outcome of a longer-term trend, which could not be slowed down by the town representatives' shady practices

<sup>44</sup> On the aristocratic holdings in Brno, see mainly Jordánková and Sulitková, "Domy pánů z Pernštejna"; Jordánková and Sulitková, "Šlechta v královském městě Brně"; Jordánková and Sulitková, "Domy Valdštejnů v Brně."

<sup>45</sup> Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 316–329.



**Figure 2** The development of the tax burden on Brno and its inhabitants in the pre-White Mountain quarter of a century

Note: The chart shows the variation of the total tax burden (land taxes and the special town tax combined) in individual accounting years. The upper curve plots the development of the annual tax levies of Brno in gulden, while the lower curve shows the changes in the tax burden on the municipal (collective) budget. The difference between the two lines roughly corresponds to the tax burden placed directly on the people living in the inner city, in suburbs, and on Brno serf estates. The immediate tax burden on the inhabitants falling under Brno's jurisdiction was stable for a long time in the pre-White Mountain quarter century. Thus, the upward or downward trend in the sums paid by the town representation in taxes was primarily reflected in the municipal budget (which could occasionally even profit from collections from the inhabitants). The chart reflects that the Brno municipal economy faced the greatest tax pressure at the end of the Long Turkish War.

with tax records. The municipal economy could not cope with the endless accumulation of various direct war-related expenditures, even though combat clashes with the enemy had not yet taken place in the proximity of the town walls.<sup>46</sup>

The atmosphere around 1600 was far from an urban idyll in the Moravian territorial lord's towns. The sounds of warfare on the Hungarian front were constantly echoed in the urban environment. Municipal budgets were shaking and began to crumble under the unbearable weight of growing taxes and other accumulating financial and material demands from the monarch and land institutions. While the higher estates traditionally looked down on the burghers and did not hesitate to selfishly shake off much of the burden that fell on the Margraviate as part of the Monarchy facing the onslaught of the warriors of the Ottoman Empire, the monarch

46 Analytically Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 275–97.

was completely insensitive to the towns' interests. In fact, the old estate freedoms of royal towns only stood in the way of the eternally hungry imperial treasury eager to make maximum economic use of these communities.<sup>47</sup>

### **The towns' joint action against the tax burden in 1604 and the limits of their cooperation**

In relation to the very risky surety for the monarch's debts, in addition to individual attempts to divert him from certain municipalities, long-term closer cooperation developed between the Moravian territorial lord's towns. Their goal was to coordinate political manoeuvring to prevent the emperor from shifting responsibility for another of his unstoppably massive debts. From the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, innumerable documents have been preserved in the files of urban correspondence. These are, on the one hand, letters exchanged between the territorial lord's towns in which they sought to coordinate the process leading to the desired goals, and, on the other hand, letters addressed to the highest land authorities and the monarch himself.<sup>48</sup> However, the above-mentioned problems, which arose in relation to the surety of the town at the beginning of the seventeenth century, reflect that these initiatives did not reach their desired goal.

At the time of the Habsburg Monarchy's intense warfare with the Ottoman Empire, the territorial lord's towns had to reckon with the fact that they would not avoid the accumulation of natural and financial burdens. However, it was logical for the towns to resist economic pressures and to try to cope with the associated financial outflow. We have seen that taxes played a crucial role in the growing fiscal pressure that the estate of the towns, accompanied by politically incompetent chamber towns, faced. In any case, the feeling of the long-term overload of tax obligations, which the members of the nobility and the clergy were either completely spared or suffered only to a limited extent, created the preconditions for joint action by the royal (free) and chamber towns in an effort to obtain at least partial relief. However, were these preconditions fulfilled with real initiatives?

We have scant evidence of this from the period. Nevertheless, it is clear that at the beginning of the seventeenth century there was an attempt to organize what we might call the 'corporate tax policy' of the estate of the towns of the Margraviate of Moravia—which, however, went beyond the narrow definition of the Fourth Estate and took into account the interests of the other territorial lord's towns. The initiator

47 Sterneck, "Soumrak »zlaté doby« moravských měst."

48 Cp. fortunately preserved register of Brno town correspondence: AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 84–92 (passim).

of decisive steps in this direction concerning the approval of taxes by the land diets, was the assembly of the councillors of the royal town of Brno.

On 8th March 1604, another of the land diets was commenced in Brno, which among other questions, had to deal primarily with the monarch's growing financial demands and the related problem of the threatening indebtedness of the land.<sup>49</sup> The representatives of the Fourth Estate present certainly did not have any illusions about the three higher estates' solidarity with the territorial lord's towns. However, the burghers participating in the opening of the Brno land diet had little idea that at this dramatic time of the approaching culmination of the Long Turkish War, another attempt by lords, knights and also the representatives of the church was being prepared (remember that the prelates shared a common estate curia with the estate of the towns), namely a plan to increase the territorial lord's towns' share in the tax burden encumbering the entire Margraviate.

However, the minutes of the relevant parliamentary meeting only report that on St. George's feast day the estates' community approved, among other taxes, a special new tax owed by the settled "to pay off the land's debts", consisting in the taxation of serf farmsteads, houses in the inner town of royal (free) and chamber towns, and property expressed as the number of so-called arms horses. In addition to five gulden from each arms horse, feudal landowners were to divert five white groschen from all serf farmsteads from their own resources. This also applied to the territorial lord's towns, which, in addition, were obliged to hand over ten groschen from burgher houses inside the walls, while the new tax did not apply to the local aristocratic and ecclesiastical houses at all.<sup>50</sup>

We learn what lay behind this parliamentary resolution from a letter sent by the people of Brno to Olomouc following the land diet. During the negotiations on introducing the new tax, the three higher estates jointly advocated that burgher houses should be charged fifteen groschen. The harsh reaction by the representatives of the Fourth Estate forced them to agree to reducing the tax by five groschen. Thus, instead of fifteen, ten white groschen were to be paid by each burgher's house. But the burghers were certainly not satisfied. They considered any further taxation of their houses totally unacceptable in view of the other burdens on the territorial lord's towns. After all, when they gave in to the pressure of the higher estates, they agreed to only five groschen from each house, with the proviso that a higher tax was by no means possible. However, the nobility and prelates disregarded their

49 Protocol minutes from this diet in MZA A 3 Stavovské rukopisy No. 5 Památky sněmovní V fol. 166r–201v.

50 MZA A 3 Stavovské rukopisy No. 5 Památky sněmovní V fol. 185v–186r, 188r–188v. On the special tax from the settled, cp. Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 177–80.

opinion and used their dominance in the land diet. The burghers were ordered to pay ten groschen per house, which was entered in the parliamentary resolutions.<sup>51</sup>

A relatively detailed reproduction of the events preceding the final text of the Diet Protocol, later, as usual, also published in the press, shows that the initial impetus for the following activities of the Fourth Estate was given by a purposeful anti-town “coalition” of the lords, prelates and the lower nobility.<sup>52</sup> After the land diet, Brno took the initiative for the towns’ joint appearance. On 24th April 1604, the councillors of this leading royal town addressed the representation of “rival” Olomouc, whose representatives had naturally been also present at the discussions of the last land diet. The Brno letter was not a mere reminder of the incorrect behaviour of higher estates, but above all, was urging the towns to take further action against their arbitrariness.

The people of Brno proposed to their estate colleagues and eternal rivals to respect the tax which had been approved by the burghers at the diet. According to the ideas of the representation of the royal town, in which the interests of the Fourth Estate were trampled on at the land diet, all of the territorial lord’s towns in the Margraviate—i.e., in addition to six free municipalities, three chamber towns, which were also affected by the relevant diet resolution—were to file a complaint to the Moravian Land Governor against the higher estates’ approach. This struggle was not directed against the monarch’s interests, but exclusively against the (larger) part of the Moravian estate community. Brno councillors supported their argument with the many kinds of burdens (taxes, forced loans, and guarantees for the monarch’s debts) that were placed on the shoulders of the towns, which could not contribute to the repayment of land debts more than the other estates. The writers called on the Olomouc representatives to take a stand on the Brno initiative and to declare whether they agreed that the representatives of the towns concerned should meet “in a certain place”<sup>53</sup>

The representatives of Olomouc responded in a brief letter dated 29th April 1604, in which they agreed that the towns needed to hold a congress and discuss the matter accordingly (“aby města sjedúc se o to dostatečně rozmluvili”). Subsequently, they proposed the date of the meeting as 5th May, adding that it would be advisable to approach other territorial lord’s towns to have their envoys come to Brno on the

51 AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 87 fol. 199v–200r. The Brno correspondence books (registers) represent an initial source of relevant sources, which, however, could be partially supplemented with complementary materials from archives in other towns.

52 Cp. MZA A 6 Sněmovní tisky Karton 12 Bound Volume 1603–1606 fol. 25r–58v (relevant resolution on the special tax from the settled on fol. 42r–42v); cf. the separate but damaged copy of this diet print in the same collection, Karton 1 1604 Monday after the First Sunday of Lent (Brno).

53 AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 87 fol. 199v–200r.

eve of that date.<sup>54</sup> Thanks to the support of Olomouc, which was united with the initiators of the struggle for the assessment of the new tax on each burgher's house, the congress of the representatives of the Moravian royal (free) and chamber towns took place in Brno at the beginning of May 1604. On 5th May, on behalf of all the territorial lord's towns, the host municipality sent a complaint to the land governor declaring that the text of the article on the new tax did not reflect their position, and that they would be unable to pay more than five white groschen. The writers were requesting that the land governor should instruct the collectors to receive payments from the towns based on the tax approved by the burghers at the diet.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the Brno councillors' proclamations, however, not all territorial lord's towns shared an entirely uniform attitude on this issue. Two royal towns, namely Jihlava and Znojmo, did not send representatives to the congress in Brno. Nevertheless, while the people of Znojmo showed interest in the outcomes of the negotiations at least afterwards, and later agreed to their goals, the way Jihlava representation appears in the documents seems to be in strong conflict with the Brno initiative. The opportunism of the town, which had earlier been the only one in Moravia to join the estates' resistance in 1547, was such that the people of Jihlava promptly paid the amount of the tax specified in the diet protocol, moreover, it did not go to tax collectors, but directly to the then Moravian Rentmaster and Deputy Director of Land Money Ondřej Seydl of Pramsov.<sup>56</sup>

We do not know the reason for the Jihlava representatives' attitude. In their letter to Brno dated 4th May 1604, they limited themselves to the alibi claim that due to time pressure they would be unable to send their envoys to Brno. They claimed that only the evening before had they received the information from Znojmo about the towns' congress regarding the increased tax. They added a terse statement that the relevant tax had already been transferred from Jihlava to Ondřej Seydl of Pramsov at his request ("dem herrn Seidl die gedachte contribution auff sein begeren albereit abgefertigt"). This implies that they offered no convincing argument to support their positions.<sup>57</sup> However, it is possible that the representation of Jihlava did not in principle identify with the legal interpretation that served as the basis of the Brno initiative,

<sup>54</sup> SOkA Olomouc Archiv města Olomouce Úřední knihy 1343–1945 Inventory No. 536 Sign. 199 fol. 244v–245r.

<sup>55</sup> Copy of the letter to the provincial governor in AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 87 fol. 202v (on the circumstances of its origin there, fol. 204r–204v).

<sup>56</sup> Letter from Brno to Znojmo dated 12th May 1604 – AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 87 fol. 204r–204v. (Unfortunately, no complementary Znojmo sources have been preserved for the period under study.)

<sup>57</sup> SOkA Jihlava Archiv města Jihlavy do roku 1848 Úřední knihy a rukopisy Inventory No. 346 fol. 187r–188r.

namely, with the view that town estate's consent was required for the validity of the parliamentary resolution. By its very nature, the curial system applied in the deliberations at the land diet favoured purposeful (especially economically motivated) coalitions of the higher estates against the royal towns. The Jihlava representatives may therefore have believed that resisting the tax levy thus enforced would make no sense and that the expected defeat of the Fourth Estate might weaken its political position.

Undoubtedly, it was this step taken by the Jihlava councillors that contributed to the fact that, when they did not find understanding with the provincial governor for their resistance, the rebellious towns eventually submitted to the codification of taxes in the diet protocol. In their tax return dated 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1604, the people of Brno also accepted and returned the prescribed form with a tax of ten groschen for a burgher's house.<sup>58</sup> The corresponding amount was handed over to Toman Šram, a man from their ranks, who was working as a land tax collector.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, the joint tax policy of the territorial lord's towns subsequently enjoyed at least partial success. It led the higher estates to taking the interests of the bourgeoisie more into account later, seeking mutually acceptable compromises. When a special tax was allowed for the settled in 1605, again on the day of St. George, and within its framework there was an increase in the tax per serf farmstead in the sense that in addition to five groschen from the lordship annuities, rural farmers were directly to pay the same amount once again, a burgher house was not to pay more than 7.5 white groschen.<sup>60</sup> The same tax was levied on the townspeople in 1606, after which the Moravian taxpayers did not have to pay the special tax for the settled for a longer time.<sup>61</sup>

## Conclusion

The capitulation of Jihlava, which its partners from the ranks of the Moravian territorial lord's towns may have perceived as a betrayal of a unified approach, only confirmed the incoherence of the politically weak Fourth Estate. In the background of this incoherence, on the one hand, there were the very limited possibilities for the royal (free) towns to influence public affairs in the Margraviate within the political system, which clearly disadvantaged them when their interests conflicted with those

58 AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 104 fol. 62v.

59 AMB A 1/3 Sbírka rukopisů a úředních knih Ms. 479 fol. 75r (next to other items "von burgersleuten 394 heusern zue 10 gr. – 131 fl. 10 gr."). The payment dated already to 7 June 1604. On Toman Šram, cp. Sterneck, "Měšťanské elity v berních úřadech," 233–35, 237, 241; Sterneck, *Město, válka a daně*, 209, 223, 228, 301–7, 309, 312–14, 335, 360.

60 Kameníček, ed., *Prameny ke vpádům Bočkajovců*, 26–27, no. IV.

61 Kameníček, ed., *Prameny ke vpádům Bočkajovců*, 124–25, no. L.

of the higher estates. Another factor that fundamentally undermined the long-term and systematic coordination of corporate urban policy was the territorial lord's towns' individual interests. These often intersected with each other, which became especially problematic in connection with the increase in fiscal burdens against the background of intense warfare in Hungary.

The coordinated approach of the territorial lord's towns in their fight to reduce the tax burdens could be applied only in situations where the urban municipalities were exposed to similar pressure and decided to actively face it. However, as we have seen, the complex tax system in the pre-White Mountain period was very far from an even and fair distribution of payment obligations, which was the case even within the group of taxpayers represented by the territorial lord's towns. Among other things, it was the persistent disproportions in the (archaic) assessments of the special town tax that caused each town to defend its own economy. Developing a long-term common tax policy of the Fourth Estate (with the possible participation of chamber towns) thus had no chance under the given circumstances.

However, in the pre-White Mountain period, other layers of urban policy were also largely limited by the fundamental obstacles to a joint approach of the territorial lord's towns, which were manifest in their defence against economic pressures. The Moravian Fourth Estate was in all aspects a very weak player on the stage of regulating public life in the land, and there was no hope of its rapid rise in the given socio-political context. In addition, it consisted of disproportionately fewer municipalities than its counterpart in the Bohemian Kingdom (the Bohemian Third Estate). However, the sheer number of royal (free) towns was not a decisive criterion for their influence on contemporary politics. Even in Bohemia, the towns' estate represented a corporation occupying a position on the tail of the contemporary "political nation".<sup>62</sup>

In the broader coordinates of early modern Europe, the specifics of the social structures of the Central Eastern part of the old continent were evident in the Bohemian lands.<sup>63</sup> There was a less developed urban space and significantly weaker bourgeoisie than in their Western and Southern European counterparts. The burghers in Central Eastern Europe had to wait a long time for the fundamental changes associated with the breaking down of the limits of the estate-based society and its subsequent disintegration to eliminate the striking contrast between their irreplaceable economic importance, on the one hand, and their limited political influence, on the other. However, broad-based comparative research, mapping the specifics of the estate systems of individual countries between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, will be needed to refine the picture of the changing political role of the bourgeoisie.

62 Pánek, "Města v politickém systému."

63 Miller, *Uzavřená společnost*; Miller, *Urban societies*.

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# The Economic and Ecological Contexts of Urbanization in the Great Hungarian Plain during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries\*

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**Abstract.** There is abundant research on the history of urbanization in the Carpathian Basin with a special focus on the history of urbanization in the Great Hungarian Plain. Over the past years, there have been investigations concerning climate and historical ecology issues, as well as economic and social history, the results of which enable us to obtain an overview of the complex processes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

It has been confirmed that prior to the Industrial Age (1850), climate change had made a profound impact on the conversion of the settlement network in the terrain and on the expansion of livestock farming. The climate in the seventeenth century seems to have been cooler and more humid, thus in the Great Hungarian Plain there were large areas covered with water. This significantly restricted the possibilities of crop cultivation as well as population growth. The warming-up period in the eighteenth century resulted in the shrinking of areas covered in water, the transition to flood plain farming and the extension of plough land crop cultivation, ultimately leading to population growth. There is evidence that by the turn of the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries, grain trade in the Carpathian Basin had been integrated into the Central European continental crop trading system, however, livestock farming was unique to the Great Hungarian Plain. From the mid-nineteenth century, due to the construction of the railway system in the Great Hungarian Plain, which revolutionized cargo transport, plus due to river regulations and drainage works, the economic structure of the area saw profound changes. In the meanwhile, the population and labor force supply were also increasing at a rapid rate. Marshlands and meadows were replaced by arable land and an increasingly growing crop production, which provided the foundations for the grain trade. Thus, new market centers emerged in the Great Hungarian Plain. Between 1828 and 1925, the number of market centers went up by 293, which represents an elevenfold rise. The growing density of the market center system significantly defined not only various aspects of urbanization, but also the general modernization of the Great Hungarian Plain.

The purpose of my research is to analyze how changes in the climate influenced the settlement network, and the social and economic profile of the Great Hungarian Plain in the period concerned.

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\* The research was conducted within the MTA BTK Lendület Ten Generations Research Group. The scope indicated in the title is handled flexibly.

Why was the favorable picture of a dynamically improving and modernizing Great Hungarian Plain at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries conceptualized by the public as an underdeveloped area characterized by a series of economic and social tensions? How do all these factors contribute to the revision of the emerging historiographic picture of the economic and social consequences of the Trianon Peace Treaty?

**Keywords:** Great Hungarian Plain, climate change, water regulations, crop trade, urbanization, market centers, homesteads, Trianon (Peace Treaty)

## Introduction

The Great Hungarian Plain<sup>1</sup> is located in the central region of the Carpathian Basin, covering 100,000 square kilometers. As part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, prior to World War I, the Great Hungarian Plain belonged to the territory of historical Hungary. As a consequence of the Treaty of Trianon (1920),<sup>2</sup> which terminated the war, the new Hungarian country borders affected the area of the Great Hungarian Plain: the north-eastern part was proclaimed to belong to the Czechoslovak Republic, the eastern region was assigned to eastern Romania, and the southern section came under the control of the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs. A small area totaling half of the original Great Hungarian Plain remained within the borders of the newly drafted Hungarian territory, later referred to as the post-Trianon Great Hungarian Plain.

Due to the geographical features of the landscape, the region was formed by river erosion and accumulation processes over the last millennia. The Great Hungarian Plain is surrounded by an extended terrain of hills and mountains, the major part of which belong to the watershed of the Tisza, the main river of the area. Hence, the Tisza and its confluents find their running-down terrain mostly onto the Great Hungarian Plain. In the past, the lower lying, enclosed basins accumulated the river water, which enabled the formation of areas permanently or temporarily covered in water. Until the mid-nineteenth century, this water world with its very diverse flora and wild fauna had characterized not only the natural geographical identity of the terrain, but also defined its economic structure and settlement network as well as the daily lives of local residents.

Recent Hungarian research into climate history,<sup>3</sup> which complies with the relevant international research outcomes,<sup>4</sup> enables us to make deductions about

1 Beluszky, *A Nagyalföld történeti földrajza*.

2 Romsics, *A trianoni békeszerződés*.

3 Kern, "Éghajlati és környezeti változások"; Rácz, *Magyarország éghajlattörténete*; Rácz, "Mi a kis jégkorszak?"; Rácz, "Mezőgazdasági terméskatasztrófák"; Rácz, *A kis jégkorszak éghajlati változásainak hatása*.

4 Glaser and Riemann, "A Thousand-Year Record"; Dobrovolný et al., "Monthly, Seasonal and Annual Temperature Reconstructions"; Luterbacher et al., "European Summer Temperatures"; Ljungqvist et al., "European Warm-Season Temperature."

past climate change in the Carpathian Basin. Based on the details derived from the literature, the seventeenth century, especially its last third, was marked by a cool and humid climate phase within the Carpathian Basin. In contrast, the eighteenth century featured gradual warming-up.<sup>5</sup> Research by Lajos Rácz has found that the cooling down phases within the Carpathian Basin usually coincided with humidity, while the dry warming-up periods were characterized by the shrinking of areas permanently or temporarily under water. Accordingly, within the Carpathian Basin (and within the Great Hungarian Plain as well), the most important factors defining its climate were not primarily the alterations in temperatures, but rather the amounts and patterns of precipitation, particularly in view of agricultural economy.<sup>6</sup> The humidity reconstruction drawn up on the basis of Pfister's methods shows that the period between approximately 1650 and 1790 was generally more humid than the subsequent period between 1790 and 1860, although the 1680s and the 1690s and the years between 1740 and the 1760s appear to have been dry. The period between 1860 and 1940 saw more precipitation again.

Recent historiography has had a prominent focus on ecological approaches,<sup>7</sup> attaching particular importance to the "challenge and response" concept created by Arnold Toynbee,<sup>8</sup> a concept also applied in Vera Bácskai's volume, *Városok Magyarországon az iparosodás előtt* (Cities in Hungary Prior to Industrialization).<sup>9</sup> She demonstrates that urbanization within the Carpathian Basin was a unique process which may be compared to urbanization elsewhere in Europe, but in order to understand the essence of a capitalist structure and urbanization in the Great Hungarian Plain, we primarily need to interpret the shifts within the terrain, also taking into consideration internal differences within it.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the analysis requires not only an external examination but an internal context as well.<sup>11</sup> In other words, to understand the city, the basis of its context can be provided by the city itself (urban as a process),<sup>12</sup> an analogy that may lead to the deduction that the terrain (regions) may serve as the (internal) context of their own interpretation. Consequently, the landscape will be expounded as a process, since its continuous changes will serve as the foundation of the interpretation. To comprehend the ideas noted, we need to see

5 Rácz, *A kis jégkorszak éghajlati változásainak hatása*, 251, 255.

6 See Rácz, *Magyarország éghajlattörténete*; Rácz, "Mi a kis jégkorszak?"; Rácz, "Mezőgazdasági terméskatasztrófák"; Rácz, *A kis jégkorszak éghajlati változásainak hatása*.

7 E.g., R. Várkonyi and Kósa, eds, *Európa híres kertje*; R. Várkonyi, ed., *Táj és történelem*; Pinke, "Alkalmazkodás és felelőskodás."

8 Toynbee, "Tanulmány a történelemről"; see also Toynbee, "Tanulmány a történelemről (részlet)."

9 Bácskai, *Városok Magyarországon*.

10 Bácskai, *Városok Magyarországon*, 64.

11 E.g., Benda, *Zsellérből polgár*; Kövér, *A tisztaeszlári drama*.

12 Hershberg, "The New Urban History"; see Gyáni, *Az urbanizáció társadalomtörténete*, 5–15.

that, especially in the case of the Carpathian Basin as a basin, the relationship and its perception between humans and the landscape<sup>13</sup> went through major changes in time and space. It is vital to clarify the pace of these changes, their dynamics and the complex interaction of how various processes influenced each other.

### **The economic structure of the Great Hungarian Plain in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries**

There is a strong likelihood that seventeenth century geographical-environmental changes were induced by the cooling down period and its excess rainfall, which had significantly changed the practice of land use by the end of the century. On the one hand, as our focus is a basin, due to the flow of water from the surrounding mountains (watersheds), gradually more areas were covered in water within the Great Hungarian Plain, and for gradually longer periods of time, which must have been a remarkable experience for the entire community (a question for forthcoming examinations). Hence, the enlarged water surface was an even more determinant defining element of the landscape. On the other hand, due to these environmental transformations, livestock farming in the flood-plain areas was becoming more significant, which gave rising economic value and potential to the water-prone regions. There was a growth in the size of grass pastures and hayfields happening in parallel with the shrinking size of land used for crop farming. As a result, in order to satisfy the population's demand for grain from *local* resources, based on (formerly) arising supply and demand factors, presented further challenges for the communities in the Great Hungarian Plain, which had a pivotal impact on demographic changes within the region. Therefore, there are strong reasons to assume that besides the conditions stemming from the Turkish occupation and other circumstances, climate change made a considerably more substantial impact on demographic processes in the Carpathian Basin than has been presumed. This is especially true for the changing population numbers in the Great Hungarian Plain in the seventeenth century. The hypothesis is reinforced by the fact that in the seventeenth century, there was no significant population growth in the regions of Europe that, unlike the Great Hungarian Plain, were not occupied by the Ottomans (we should consider though that in 1618–1648 they suffered the Thirty Years' War); the growth was actually stalled or even decreased in certain places. The trends of population growth within the Carpathian Basin followed Central and Eastern European patterns and “did not differ from the main processes that were typical of the region.”<sup>14</sup>

As we have seen, climate change exerted a generally unfavorable impact on

13 See Mendöl, *Táj és ember*.

14 Ágoston and Oborni, *A tizenhetedik század története*, 98.

population growth in the Great Hungarian Plain, while the gradual extension of the temporarily water-covered areas (pastures and hayfields) boosted livestock farming at the expense of crop production. Besides the losses suffered due to the Ottoman occupation (1526–1699), the cooler and more humid climate was partly responsible for the further decrease in the population. However, lower population numbers resulted in more favorable conditions for smaller communities gaining personal wealth and for the urbanization of the Great Hungarian Plain. Therefore, from the perspective of later processes, on the one hand, this phase meant a major “leap” in the socio-economic transformation of the Great Hungarian Plain. On the other hand, it also refers to the idea that behind the previously well-famed and regularly cited “capital accumulation” within the Great Hungarian Plain, which we know from historical narratives and from the narratives of Hungarian literature,<sup>15</sup> in addition to the continental food demand and the price revolution that lasted until the first third or the middle of the seventeenth century,<sup>16</sup> there was also the strong influence of the effects of climate change.

During the fifteenth century, the Great Hungarian Plain started to be gradually desertified, and the process was accelerated by the Ottoman occupation in the sixteenth century. The rate of abandoning the settlements, in other words the internal (regional) migration, may have been partly due to military actions, but partly also to climate change. Due to the changes in the climate, the parcels of land kept out of cultivation were favorable for livestock farming. Taking advantage of the opportunities opening up, the inhabitants and authorities of market towns in the Great Hungarian Plain tried to lease plots of land and to extend their economic areas for the growing number of livestock. Hence, it was a priority for market towns to link the grasslands to the towns for a long time, which had fundamental consequences for the overall settlement network in the Great Hungarian Plain. More specifically, the areas surrounding the market towns could not be resettled by the residents of the former villages mainly due to economic reasons. In this sense, it was the market towns themselves that hindered the process of “re-villageing” within the Great Hungarian Plain.<sup>17</sup> Consequently, the population density of the Middle Ages could not be reached again, partly because growth was strongly limited by the expansion of water-prone areas. Overall, it appears that all these factors contributed cumulatively to the conservation of the Great Hungarian Plain’s settlement network of the seventeenth century.

The eighteenth century warming up with more moderate rainfall, which represented another climate change, played a vital role in the shrinking of the water-covered areas and in modifying the conditions of livestock farming. In turn, these factors

15 Rácz, *Városlakó nemesek*; Mikszáth, “Beszélő köntös.”

16 Orosz, “Árforradalom, konjunktúrák.”

17 Orosz, *Tanulmányok*, 15; Mendöl, *Táj és ember*, 67; Weis, *Mai magyar társadalom*, 15.

had an adverse effect on the previous practices of capital accumulation. Shifts in the economic structure became “unavoidable” due to the additional effect of the Great Hungarian Plain becoming part of the Habsburg Empire after the lengthy Ottoman rule. A new network of administrative services was established, new tenures were created, and novel economic opportunities arose within the region. In addition, partly due to the arrival of new settlers and partly to higher natural reproduction numbers, in the eighteenth century the population in the Great Hungarian Plain started to grow.<sup>18</sup> The water-prone areas previously used only for farming started to expand, providing favorable conditions for crop production and population growth. Rising population density (due to the traditional economic structure) implied a higher risk of overpopulation. Therefore, more farmland, as well as the introduction of local water management regulations and constructions were necessary. In the last third of the eighteenth century, water regulation was started by the demolition of watermills (also) within the marshlands of the Sárrétek (literally: Mudmeadows) in order to eliminate the harmful effects of emerging floods.<sup>19</sup> By the end of the century, more and more parcels of dry land were converted into arable agricultural territories. In turn, the mostly positive outcomes of these developments led to further water regulation work for serving local interests.<sup>20</sup>

However, the warming-up period launched another completely different process in the regions where sandy soils had developed over the last millennia. In the areas of the so-called Nyírség and the region between the Danube and the Tisza, there were uninterrupted stretches of sandy land.<sup>21</sup> However, during earlier centuries, but particularly by the end of the seventeenth century, extensive livestock farming resulted in overpasturing.<sup>22</sup> As a consequence, the formerly fixed sandy surfaces started to move. The threat of the “emergence of quicksand” was presumably strengthened by the warmer and drier climate, leading to the decrease of river runoff, the shrinking of flood-prone areas, coupled with lower levels of soil water. The local answer to the environmental challenge of quicksand was to harden the moving sand.<sup>23</sup> The solution was provided by the field gardens (*mezei kertek*) and the lodgings on the towns’ peripheries that had been established in the countryside

18 Wellmann, “Magyarország népességének fejlődése”; Kováts, “A népességfejlődés vázlata”; Kováts, “A Kárpát-medence népesedési viszonyainak alakulása”; Öri, “A természetes szaporodás alakulása”; Dövényi, “A migráció szerepe.”

19 Dóka, *A Körös és Berettyó vízrendszer szabályozása*.

20 Szilágyi, “Sárréthoz posztmodern perspektívában,” 121–22.

21 Pécsi, ed., *Magyarország nemzeti atlasza*, 78–79; Mezősi, *Magyarország természetföldrajza*, 214–7; see Pécsi, *Negyedkor és löszkutatás*.

22 Szilágyi, *Homokváros*, 30, 148–49.

23 Szilágyi, *Homokváros*, 30–34, 50–63.

in the earlier centuries.<sup>24</sup> Although, the continuity with the Middle Ages is not confirmed by extant resources,<sup>25</sup> it is still presumable that these field gardens and lodgings have their precedents in the Middle Ages.<sup>26</sup> Lodgings were special individual “settlements” suited for livestock farming.<sup>27</sup> Both forms of “settlements” outside towns underwent modifications in their functions due to climate change, increasing population growth, and various solutions for meeting the arising challenges. In the long run, the field garden combined with the lodging must have been the basis for the new settlement type, the homestead.

Due to the low settlement and population density in the Great Hungarian Plain, the agricultural cultivation of fields must have been a more complex task than in other regions. Due to the above reasons, in most cases re-inhabiting villages was out of the question in the eighteenth century. Therefore, the mushrooming of homesteads can be interpreted as a response that market town societies were giving to environmental changes and demographic expansion. István Orosz has recently pointed out that homesteads emerged in great numbers near those settlements (towns and villages) where waste-land cultivation was standard practice. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, over a hundred settlements of this type were recorded in the Great Hungarian Plain.<sup>28</sup> I would argue that in this phenomenon as well, climate change must have played a decisive role. This is especially valid for cases where the change in the amount of rainfall caused profound shifts in surface-water and flora coverage, and where due to overpasturing new terrains more sensitive to the hydrological impacts of climate change emerged: in other words, in places where flexible cultivation methods had to be employed, adapting to environmental and demographic modifications.

The warming-up period of the eighteenth century generally ensured favorable conditions for agriculture across Europe. In the first third of the century, because of the agricultural revolution, Europe’s population showed a rapid rise, going from 110 million to at least 180 million.<sup>29</sup> The larger demand for food fundamentally transformed grain trade on the continent.<sup>30</sup> We know from research done by Dezső Dányi that at the end of the eighteenth century, crop trade in the Carpathian Basin, particularly in the Great Hungarian Plain, started to be integrated into the European

24 Szilágyi, “Alkalmazkodó mezőváros.”

25 Solymosi, “A tanyarendszer,” 90–92.

26 See Szabó, *Kecskeméti tanyák*; Für, *Kertes tanyák*; Iványosi-Szabó, *Kecskemét gazdasági fejlődése*; Rácz, “A tanyarendszer kialakulása.”

27 Mendöl, *Általános településföldrajz*, 12, 236.

28 Orosz, *Tanulmányok*, 59.

29 Papp, “A népességvizsonyok,” 23.

30 Ljungqvist et al., “The Significance of Climate Variability.”

trading system.<sup>31</sup> It is clearly seen that the centers lying at the edge of the terrain were the predominant winners of this economic process, and only a few internal crop trading centers (e.g., Debrecen and Szeged) had a similarly advantageous location and market position.<sup>32</sup> In order to enjoy the economic benefits of joining the international trading network within the Great Hungarian Plain, the transportation system also had to be revolutionized.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, I would argue that it was this crop trading in the Carpathian Basin, integrated into the Central European system and emerging early (in terms of later modernization) at the turn of the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries, that established the most vital condition for the accelerated transformation of the economic and social systems of the Great Hungarian Plain. And in turn, this trading system had been strongly influenced by the effects of climate change up to the industrial age in the mid-nineteenth century (or at least up to the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries).

Research done by Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist and his colleagues has clearly demonstrated that in Europe in the Modern Era climate change and the prevailing price index rates for crops were always in close correlation. Lower summer average temperatures led to rising crop prices, while higher temperatures resulted in decreasing prices ( $r = -0.41$ ; in case of a moving average for a decade, the reverse relationship was even more marked,  $-0.63$ ).<sup>34</sup> Their research also reveals that the precipitation of rainfall was less likely to affect crop prices than temperature. Nevertheless, summers with more rainfall were usually followed by a rise in crop prices the following year (weak positive correlation). The analysis underlines that both extensive amounts of rainfall and summer droughts exerted a negative impact on crop prices. It is of particular significance for our study that they further highlight that the correlation is tighter between the amount of rainfall and crop prices at the level of meso and micro regions than at the level of macro regions. This idea actually implies that in the case of a region like the Great Hungarian Plain, a stronger positive correlation can be assumed between rainfall and crop prices typical of the preindustrial period than in the case of Western or Central Europe. This correlation holds even more strongly for the Great Hungarian Plain, where a half-a-meter difference in water level may have defined which parcels of land were flooded and which surfaces stayed dry. In addition, the Great Hungarian Plain was surrounded by mountains from where most rivers ran into this area. At the point where they reached the low-lying areas, they started winding, and a part of their water runoff accumulated in the enclosed flat low-lying terrains. As for local crop pricing, it is a well-established argument that

31 Dányi, *Az élet ára*.

32 Glósz, *Gabonakereskedeleml Magyarországon*, 241–52; see Pinke, “Alkalmazkodás és felemelkedés,” 165–75.

33 Katus, “A szállítás forradalma”; Katus, “Szállítási forradalom Magyarországon.”

34 Ljungqvist et al., “The Significance of Climate Variability.”

within the Carpathian Basin, especially in the Great Hungarian Plain, rainfall must have been a more determinant factor than temperature.<sup>35</sup>

The economic structure of the Great Hungarian Plain in the Modern Era could be maintained and the economic growth was sustainable up to the point when the terrain reached (under the given conditions) the limits of its sustainability. As long as the pasture and the hayfield areas could be further expanded, the economic structure ensured (both at the individual and the collective level) a diversity of accumulation frames, while also providing opportunities for the population's social differentiation in the market towns of the Great Hungarian Plain. When the environmental circumstances started to change, the elements of the economic structure (including people) also started to adjust to the newly emerging situation.

### **Nineteenth century changes: unsustainable economic development**

Besides climate change, we need to remember that it caused considerable modifications to the Great Hungarian Plain that during the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries most of the terrain was under Ottoman occupation. The settlement structure went through profound transformations. Population numbers dropped, slowing down various other economic processes. In some locations, the average population density fell to a handful of citizens per square kilometer, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century, this number went up to no more than approximately eight persons per square kilometer (while elsewhere, such as the Hungarian Uplands or Transylvania, this figure was doubled).<sup>36</sup> According to Gyula Benda, the population resettlement seems to have happened in two phases. Initially, in the early eighteenth century, immigration and the relocation of certain groups were more characteristic, and in the southern region of the Great Hungarian Plain (Banat [Bánát]) relocation continued to be typical in the forthcoming periods as well.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, in the second half of the century, besides immigration, natural reproduction was an increasingly more determinant factor in the population growth of the Great Hungarian Plain.<sup>38</sup> Between 1550 and 1780 the number of residents is estimated to have increased from 4 or 4.5 million to 6.5 million.<sup>39</sup> Most of this growth of 2 or 2.5 million people happened in the eighteenth century. Based on quantitative data, this development correlates with the rise in agricultural production.<sup>40</sup>

35 See Rácz, "Mezőgazdasági terméskatasztrófák"; Rácz, *A kis jégkorszak éghajlati változásainak hatása*.

36 Barta, *A tizennyolcadik század története*, 153.

37 Benda, *Társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, 205.

38 Benda, *Társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, 206.

39 Benda, *Társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, 205

40 Benda, *Társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, 207.

By the eighteenth century, crop cultivation had developed two main centers in the Carpathian Basin: the Little Hungarian Plain in the west, and the Great Hungarian Plain (in its Central and Southern Transtisza region and in the Bánát).<sup>41</sup> It is no coincidence that in the early phases of railway construction, these were the regions to be integrated into the railway circulation.<sup>42</sup> (the region between the Danube and the Tisza, and the north-eastern part of the Great Hungarian Plain had a different profile with growing fruit and vegetables or tobacco). Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, the amount of grain produced locally outweighed the demand imposed by increased population numbers only to a small extent, but later, grain production saw a phase of faster growth. Based on the details at hand, the earlier slight rate of growth could not result in more exports; instead, it contributed to the emergence of new consumption patterns, while there was a decreasing trend in livestock farming and breeding. The rapid growth of exporting grain started only in 1850–1870, which affected positively the grain production in the Great Hungarian Plain.<sup>43</sup>

Before 1850, plant cultivation in plough lands could only be started via breaking pastures and hay fields for arable land. However, following the “landmark date”, attributable to the launch of water regulation, it became possible to gain extensive farmland in the drained and flood protected terrains. This is the period of history marked by the migration of the workforce from the northern mountainous and overpopulated territories to the inner regions of the Great Hungarian Plain. The destination of migration was the newly broken lands taken into plough land cultivation.

Based on these developments, it may be concluded that the repeated boom in the demand for grain had a decisive influence on the economy, society, and urbanization of the Carpathian Basin. From the second half of the eighteenth century to the termination of the Napoleonic wars, there was a traceable rise in crop prices in the European market, which is proven to have been due to the effects of climate change<sup>44</sup> and was accompanied by a drawn out economic downturn. The following phase was a major or long-lasting grain boom in the second half of the nineteenth century (1852–1878).<sup>45</sup> Research makes it evident that a distinction needs to be made between industrial and preindustrial conditions. Following the 1850s, the impactful processes (economic, social, infrastructural, etc.) were completely different from those that defined prior periods. In addition, there is a strong likelihood that climate change played a lesser role in them. Economic modernization was laid upon new foundations (which is to be investigated by later studies).

41 Benda, *Társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, 201.

42 Benda, *Társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, 198, 202.

43 Benda, *Társadalomtörténeti tanulmányok*, 195.

44 Ljungqvist et al., “The Significance of Climate Variability.”

45 Kövér, “A piacgazdaság kiteljesedése,” 349–50.

The transformation of the Great Hungarian Plain's economy continued in the first half of the nineteenth century: livestock farming was gradually replaced by arable crop production. The major boost for the transformation, however, was given by the appearance of the railway and the launch of comprehensive water regulation. Prior to industrial modernization, the crops produced within the terrain were collected and forwarded towards the mountain regions by the towns located at the edges of the region along the market line, such as Košice (Kassa), Berehove (Beregszász), Oradea (Nagyvárad), Arad, or Timișoara (Temesvár). These centers were surrounded by a second and a third circle in a concentric circle of centers around the Great Hungarian Plain.<sup>46</sup> This system ensured the grain supply within the Carpathian Basin during the Modern Era and at the beginning of modern times. The system was strongly influenced by the size of the market center vicinities, which continued to be a major factor up to the beginning of the twentieth century,<sup>47</sup> particularly in terms of industrialization and locating new industrial plants.<sup>48</sup> The centers/towns with an extended vicinity were important hubs for the transit going through them, thus they managed to maintain their leading role in the region of the Great Hungarian Plain.

It is visible that the grain boom made a fundamental impact on the emergence of the urban system in the Great Hungarian Plain. The reason why grain boom seems to have been of such major significance for the various structures in it is because, already at the turn of the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries, trading in crops in the Carpathian Basin had been integrated into the continental system. The varied regional infrastructure of the grain trading network, accompanied by the town system stemming from this network, provided the frames for the huge grain boom in the nineteenth century. In this context, the role the market centers and the innumerable homesteads dotting the Great Hungarian Plain played in the transition of the economic structure should be viewed from a different perspective, and should be attributed more complex meanings.

### **The impact of changes in economic structure on the urbanization of the Great Hungarian Plain**

Livestock farming was characteristic of the Great Hungarian Plain up to the mid-nineteenth century,<sup>49</sup> while—due to the unfavorable transportation conditions—the region, whose population was growing, still had to produce the necessary amount of grain locally. From the 1790s, the process was helped by a permanent decrease in

46 Glósz, *Gabonakereskedelem Magyarországon*, 241–52.

47 Szilágyi, "Az alföldi piacközpont-állomány változása."

48 Katona, *Az Alföld gazdasági jövője*, 16–7.

49 Orosz, *Tanulmányok*, 15.

rainfall<sup>50</sup> and the related shrinking of water-prone areas, because this provided more crop ploughlands in the low-lying Central and Southern-Transtisza regions. At the same time, in the higher lying region between the Danube and the Tisza, further measures were taken to bind quicksand via planting vineyards and fruit trees. Thus, climate change resulted in diverse outcomes and environmental modifications in the different regions of the Great Hungarian Plain. Consequently, in the course of economic and social adaptation, the emergence and expansion of homesteads in the Great Hungarian Plain were also induced by various causes.

The expansion of homesteads contributed to a rise in the population of the external territories, while internal population numbers were starting a (temporary) decrease. It is estimated that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, tens of thousands of people were already living on homesteads in the Great Hungarian Plain.<sup>51</sup> By the 1870s the region was inhabited by 200,000 citizens, and by 1920 there were more than one million homestead dwellers.<sup>52</sup> The fact of large masses moving out of towns and villages had a partly favorable effect by mitigating internal social tensions. Via their workforce supply, these newly migrating people contributed to changing the factors and conditions of agricultural activity in the fields. (For a deeper understanding of changes in how the borderland was utilized in the nineteenth century, further study is needed.).<sup>53</sup>

After 1850, the railway revolutionized passenger and cargo transportation in the Carpathian Basin. With reference to Pál Beluszky's concept, it is obvious that there is a correlation between having the railway and economic prosperity, modernization, and urbanization.<sup>54</sup> Naturally, it was much easier to construct a railway network in a flat terrain with beneficial geographical conditions than in a mountainous terrain; thus the development of the railway system saw reasonable acceleration.<sup>55</sup> For the sake of protecting this linear infrastructure, speeding up water regulation was also necessary.<sup>56</sup> Although following the endeavors of István Széchenyi (1791–1860),<sup>57</sup> water regulation used to be regarded as an issue of social welfare,

50 Rácz, "A kis jégkorszak éghajlati változásainak hatása," Fig. 1.

51 See Beluszky, *Magyarország településföldrajza*, 99.

52 Faragó, *Bevezetés*, 274.

53 Balogh, "Határasználat Hajdúböszörményben, 1"; Balogh, "Határasználat Hajdúböször-ményben, 2"; Balogh, "Határasználat és gazdálkodás Nyíregyházán"; Molnár, "Határasználat"; Molnár, "Nagyrábé népének gazdálkodása"; Novák, *A Három város*, 181–285; Novák, *A Három Város néprajza*, 405–542; Papp, *Biharország jobbágynépe*, 45–96; Orosz, *Tanulmányok*, 55.

54 Beluszky and Györi, *Magyar városhálózat*, 57.

55 Katus, "A szállítás forradalma"; Katus, "Szállítási forradalom Magyarországon"; Majdán, "Magyarország közlekedése."

56 Lászlóffy-Böhm, "A Tiszavölgy"; Botár and Károlyi, *A Tisza szabályozása (1848–1879)*; Botár and Károlyi, *A Tisza szabályozása (1879–1944)*; Ihrig et al., *A magyar vízszabályozás története*.

57 Széchenyi, *Eszmetöredékek*, 13.

it has recently been established that water regulation was also in the interests of the Transtisza landowner nobility.<sup>58</sup> But the start of water regulation in the Great Hungarian Plain was not merely due to these causes, but also to the construction of the railway network, and after a while, its required maintenance further assisted the process. Meanwhile in the background, another issue was gradually transpiring, namely the risks of climate change that the population increasingly frequently faced, which the political elite was trying to abuse for their own purposes. Additionally, some had a vested interest in utilizing the advantageous effects of the grain boom due to the stepped up demand for food by Western Europe's growing population. As a result, the size of lands under cultivation saw a rapid growth during the second half of the nineteenth century, for which water regulation was a vital element.

Remote European markets came within easy access by rail, which accelerated further the ongoing economic structural switch. The joint effects of remarkable investments in the Great Hungarian Plain adjusted to the extended European grain boom, the construction of the railway network, and the population buildup in the region triggered a process of modernization and urbanization that differed from processes taking place elsewhere in the Carpathian Basin. These structures gave the background to various regionally differentiated transitions. Prior to the railway constructions and during the preindustrial period, they had been affected by climate change to a higher degree than during later times.

The Great Hungarian Plain's modernization, a notion which is hard to define, involved multiple developments at the same time. It meant the expansion of cargo and passenger transport, the economic boost given by investments in water regulation, and also implied the transformation of the settlement network related to climate change and water regulation. These were the network structures that became the spheres of modernization. These 'corridors' and 'junctions' enabled the masses to move, bringing about the 'critical population density'. Since modernization requires a level of population density, it is worth taking the different forms of concentration into consideration. In the nineteenth century, besides the Great Hungarian Plain's population density, its cargo and passenger transport network, as well as the settlements' (towns and homesteads) own density also saw a rise. In turn, the dynamic surge in the number of interactions in traffic and telecommunications at the end of the century induced further changes. Up to the turn of the century, the urbanization of the Great Hungarian Plain depended on, among other factors, these processes.

The population of the Great Hungarian Plain soared remarkably in the towns and the peripheries. Consequently, both towns and homesteads were scenes of modernization in the Great Hungarian Plain. As we have seen, grain trade seems to have

58 Pinke, *Alkalmazkodás és felemelkedés*, 260.

played the crucial role in the region's urbanization. The market centers provided the internal (regional) settlement network junctions. The emergence of the network presented a particular picture: in the first half of the nineteenth century the bigger trading centers on the edge of the region were the decisive elements of the settlement network. The formation of the network within the internal territories accelerated only in the second half of the century via the growing density of railway lines and via the establishment of civil local administration. This process was defined by the (new) market centers in the Great Hungarian Plain which, in most cases, were surrounded by narrowing catchment areas. The growing population density is reflected in the network buildup, as between 1828 and 1925, the number of these centers grew elevenfold (Tab. 1).<sup>59</sup> This process was not only linked to the surging population's growing food demand, but also correlates with the modified consumer habits of society in the Great Hungarian Plain (Tab. 2). This gradually evolving high density may be presumed to have been the basis of the dynamic development of the Great Hungarian Plain up to the turn of the nineteenth–twentieth centuries.<sup>60</sup> In addition to "market centralization", the region's urbanization was also determined by the fact that as early as the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries the population had already crowded into market towns.

**Table 1** Changes in the number of market centers in the Great Hungarian Plain in 1828–1925

	1828		1925		Rate of growth
Market center	11	40.7%	73	24.9%	6.6-fold
Market subcenter	15	55.6%	62	21.2%	4.1-fold
Self-sufficient market center	1	3.7%	158	53.9%	158.0-fold
Total	27	100.0%	293	100.0%	10.9-fold

Source: Bácskai and Nagy, *Piackörzetek*, 45–51; ATTA

**Table 2** Changes in the population of market centers in the Great Hungarian Plain in 1828–1920/1925

	1828		1920/1925		Rate of growth
Market center	247,941	72.4%	1,970,976	57.1%	7.9-fold
Market subcenter	89,240	26.1%	706,563	20.5%	7.9-fold
Self-sufficient market center	5,088	1.5%	773,215	22.4%	152.0-fold
Total	342,269	100.0%	3,450,754	100.0%	10.1-fold

Source: Bácskai and Nagy, *Piackörzetek*, 45–51; ATTA

59 Bácskai and Nagy, *Piackörzetek*; Szilágyi, "Az alföldi piakközpont-állomány változása."

60 See Demeter, "Perifériák"; Pénzes, "Fejlettségi különbségek"; Szilágyi, A Kárpát-medence fejlettségi membránja.

This dynamic development and the transformation of the society and its economy continued as long as the bases of the system of operation were stable. By the end of the nineteenth century, however, both the development of the continental economic background and the modernization (network) of the Great Hungarian Plain had slowed down. From the point of view of the region, this was because river regulation activities as well as the expansion of the railway network had been completed by the beginning of the twentieth century. The economic structure that switched from free-range livestock farming to grain production could ensure economic growth, as it had been the general practice earlier, only as long as additional pieces of land could always be brought in as ploughlands for cultivation. However, from the turn of the nineteenth–twentieth centuries, the sustainability of extensive economic growth was no longer a possibility, as no land of remarkable size had remained for this purpose. At this point, the growth ensured by the Great Hungarian Plain's economic structure reached its limits, thereby generating another structural crisis.

The signs of the crisis were not clearly apparent because the Great Hungarian Plain's economic structure operated on the basis of regional differences. In the homesteads around the market towns in the region between the Danube and the Tisza, a new economic symbiosis was taking shape.<sup>61</sup> The town – homestead relationship enabled a new trajectory of economic development, namely capital accumulation in peasant farmlands, creating thereby novel forms of rural urbanization and embourgeoisement. Although the process was triggered by the adaptation of settlements and their social and economic setups to the newly emerging environment due to climate change, the engine of the shift was the unprecedented population growth in the capital from the 1870s onwards. The new economic hinterland that was to meet the rocketing food demand of the population of Budapest was located mainly in the Great Hungarian Plain and in the region between the Danube and the Tisza. This in turn greatly contributed to the emergence of the terrain's internal differences in terms of their economy and development, as well as to its long-term conservation.

It was another significant contribution to the dynamic development of the Great Hungarian Plain that the terrain's economic structure required employing more living labor rather than mechanization.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, besides involving additional lands for ploughing, the dynamics of development remained sustainable as long as the terrain had a capacity for sustaining the incoming population. This concept also implies that the modernization of the Great Hungarian Plain and the engine of sustainable economic development was not only the new settlement network (transition to homesteads and market centers) but also the provision of workforce flow, and the maintenance of undisturbed cargo and passenger railway transport.

61 Szilágyi, Város–tanya kapcsolat.

62 Orosz, *Tanulmányok*, 18.

This sensitive balance was upset by several simultaneous processes in the last third of the nineteenth century. Beyond the changes described above, the transformation of the continental economic structure and the region's failure to be integrated into the global word economy all contributed greatly to the emergence of the problems. The economy of the Great Hungarian Plain produced goods that were becoming less and less, or not at all, competitive in the global market. This trend is well-demonstrated by the fact that the grain produced in the Great Hungarian Plain was uncompetitive with overseas produce as early as the 1870s. The Government of the Monarchy wished to mitigate this market effect by ensuring the undisturbed cargo transport and inland grain trade within the customs borders of the Monarchy. That way a specific, temporarily efficient internal market was established, which however had the serious consequence that this market gradually fell behind the global economy.<sup>63</sup> The economic structure of the Great Hungarian Plain became obsolete and unsustainable within the given frames. Due to the fact that no comprehensive developments affecting the entire terrain were happening and only private investments were made in certain localities, not only the competitiveness (diversity) of the terrain was endangered but also the process of pushing some sections to the peripheries of the terrain was intensified.<sup>64</sup> To make matters worse, by the turn of the century, mobility opportunities for the population linked to the modernization of the Great Hungarian Plain were tangibly more limited.

Because migration within the Carpathian Basin had new destinations (overseas emigration),<sup>65</sup> modernization slowed down, thus one of the main drivers of dynamic development (internal migration) lost its momentum. Despite the emigration rate and the intensifying migration away from the Great Hungarian Plain, at the beginning of the twentieth century it was still a destination for a major part of incoming migrants,<sup>66</sup> which concealed the majority of the problems originating from the looming crisis of the economic structure.

As opposed to the trends highlighted so far, during the industrial era, another climate change within the Carpathian Basin also greatly contributed to the economic structural crisis of the Great Hungarian Plain (after 1850). As during the earlier climate period the water protection infrastructure had been adjusted to lower levels of rainfall, the higher number of floods from the 1870s posed new challenges.<sup>67</sup> The costs of additional investments were not compensated by income from the sale of

63 Orosz, *Tanulmányok*.

64 Pénzes, "Fejlettségi különbségek."

65 Rácz, "A parasztok elvándorlása"; Puskás, "Kivándorlás Magyarországról"; Puskás, *Kivándorló magyarok*; Beluszky, "Az ország lakói," 211, 228–39; see Kovács, *A kivándorlás*.

66 Szilágyi, "Vándormozgalom."

67 Rácz, *A kis jégkorszak éghajlati változásainak hatása*, Fig. 1.

farmland produce (and the situation was aggravated by the lack of competitiveness explained above).<sup>68</sup> The fact that the period of grain production was more humid had a negative effect on average yields and the market price of crops. The situation was worsened by the failure to implement investments due to their high costs. Consequently, the inland water drainage system could not be constructed where the original aim was not to drain surface waters. Thus, in the riverside areas that were converted into ploughlands, where the inland water drainage system was missing, there was an increasing danger of inland inundation during rainy periods, and inland water caused more frequent damage. These factors cumulatively intensified the crisis of the economic structure in the region of the Tisza and its tributaries. The regionally emerging, mostly self-sufficient market centers without significant catchment areas (*önforgalmú piacközpontok*)<sup>69</sup> could no longer be the country “bridge-heads” of modernization. In their vicinity, embourgeoisement slowed down.

In parallel, the excess rainfall acted as a stimulus in the formerly quicksand surfaced areas, where owners of freshly planted vineyards and orchards, as well as traders benefitted from the change in the climate. The societies of these regions, however, embarked on a different route, offering different ways of rural embourgeoisement, capital accumulation and social mobility. In the region between the Danube and the Tisza, market towns with associated homesteads emerged as the new central areas in place of the previous market towns on the edges of the Great Hungarian Plain. These towns, besides the more significant Transtisza market towns, turned out to be the centers of modernization in the Great Hungarian Plain, whose transition was greatly shaped by the economic damage of the Phylloxera plague in the last third of the nineteenth century.

### **Diversification: the effect of the Phylloxera pest on the urbanization of the Great Hungarian Plain**

Based on earlier reports, the first European areas infected by the grapevine root Phylloxera were recorded in France in the second half of the 1860s. The infection spread towards Portugal, Austria, Germany, Switzerland and reached Hungary in 1875. In the Carpathian Basin, the first region to suffer from the presence of the pests was Pančevo (Pancsova). Before the end of the decade, the infection was observed only in a few dozen municipalities. After that point, however, the plague was spreading extremely rapidly. In 1890, nearly 2,000 settlements were affected,

68 Demeter, *A Balkán*, 83.

69 See Szilágyi, “Az alföldi piacközpont-állomány változása,” 206, 218–22; and Szilágyi, “Az 1925. évi közigazgatási tájékoztató lapok.” Self-sufficient market centres were settlements that identified themselves as market centres but other villages did not.

totaling 16 percent of the settlements in the Carpathian Basin. The infection first occurred in isolation, mainly in the vicinity of busy centers like on the peripheries of Košice, Berehove, and Satu Mare (Szatmárnémeti). In the 1880s, the vine root pests spread in all the vine growing regions of the Carpathian Basin, infecting vast uninterrupted areas. The infection also affected the entire Transdanubia and the Northern Hungarian Uplands from Nagykanizsa to Sátoraljaújhely, in addition to the entire Bihar and Békés Counties, the Sálaj (Szilágyság) and Banat.<sup>70</sup>

The transmission of pests was greatly enhanced by human presence. Unaware of the danger, people carried them on their clothes or often on the surface of agricultural tools from one spot to another. This explains in retrospect why the Great Hungarian Plain, mainly the Central and Southern-Transtiszaninan crop lands, where arable farming was typical, was affected similarly to mountainous terrains. In this case, the epicenter of the infection must have been the Nagykunság. The other focal points seem to have been located outside the region: in the late 1870s, the presumable centers were areas of Bihar County, the Szilágyság and Gemer (Gömör).<sup>71</sup>

Based on these records, the region of the Great Hungarian Plain split into two parts: a heavily uninfected one including the region between the Danube and the Tisza, and the Northern-Transtisza (Nyírség) areas; and the infected part including the Central and Southern-Transtisza regions. The uninfected areas were the sandy soils of the Great Hungarian Plain, where the sand proved to be immune to the vine root pest infection. Among the reasons why the Phylloxera could spread in the rest of the Great Hungarian Plain was that those territories were not covered by sand, and the farmlands there usually had vineyards with weak yields, producing wine for the peasants' own consumption. Another reason was that the seasonal workers who would come to plough the lands arrived from the already infected mountains nearby.

The Phylloxera infection temporarily divided the Great Hungarian Plain into two, which had remarkable economic and social consequences by the beginning of the twentieth century. In this temporary phase, the towns in the region between the Danube and the Tisza gained economic advantages over the TranszTisza centers. This short-lived beneficial period was enough for the region's economic structural transition to speed up. The process was enhanced by the capital's population boom: in 30 years the number of its inhabitants went up by 450,000.<sup>72</sup> At the same time, its food demand doubled or tripled, which had to be satisfied mainly by the (peasant) farms of the region between the Danube and the Tisza. It was at this time that the numerous homesteads surrounding the region's bigger towns switched to

70 Horváth, "Phylloxera," 194–6.

71 Horváth, "Phylloxera," 194–5.

72 *A magyar korona országaiban az 1870. év elején végrehajtott népszámlálás*, 69; *A magyar korona országainak 1900. évi népszámlálása*, 200.

intensive garden cultivation. In consequence, the majority of the medium and large owners and tenants of homesteads lying in the vicinity of towns ran up large debts. The economic structural transition was also accelerated in the region between the Danube and the Tisza by the natural landscape conversion induced by the moving sand and anthropogenic landscape modifications. Profound changes in land use (i.e., stopping livestock farming) meant further advantages in a situation where, due to the Phylloxera infection, the hub of vine production was relocated to the immune sandy areas. This opportunity may seem to have been open to the sandy Nyírség as well, but it was unfortunately missing some of the additionally required factors. On the one hand, the region was lacking in towns (i.e., in market centers),<sup>73</sup> having no dynamically growing city like Budapest nearby with an increasing population and a market to purchase their produce. On the other hand, the economy of the Nyírség was unable to grow dynamically because the human resources available in the region were less favorable than those of the region between the Danube and the Tisza.<sup>74</sup>

Between the Danube and the Tisza the slow process of planting vines and fruit trees, which had been going on for centuries, was accelerated from the 1880s, especially in the region of the three towns, namely Kecskemét, Nagykőrös, and Cegléd.<sup>75</sup> The city council of Kecskemét, for instance, added to the external areas of the settlement via land purchases. The sandy land ideal for vine plantation continued to be inexpensive even though the vine decay in the mountains led to certain price rises. It was a wise investment for the town to purchase these parcels, which it later portioned out to its residents. The lease generated further income for the town, while the community was given the possibility of accumulating wealth, thus the transition of peasant communities (embourgeoisement) also went into a higher gear. Vegetable and fruit production widespread on lands of lower quality contributed to the region's capacity to supply first the needs of nearby markets, and later, at the turn of the century, to cater for remote export markets. Trade with distant buyers profoundly transformed the economy and society of the three towns—representing a special path to urbanization in the Great Hungarian Plain. The centers of Cegléd and Nagykőrös and, in particular, the center of Kecskemét went through rapid urbanization. The stylistic features of Art Nouveau appearing in their built environment reflected the local elites' strong mental and economic link to the elites countrywide, especially the upper-class world of the capital.<sup>76</sup>

73 Szilágyi, "A térinformatika," 34–6.

74 Szilágyi, "A fejlettség területi különbségei"; Szilágyi, "A Kárpát-medence fejlettségi membránja"; Szilágyi, "Az életminőség területi egyenlőtlenségeinek változása"; Szilágyi, "Regional Differences."

75 See Novák, *A három város*; Novák, *A Hárrom Város néprajza*.

76 Szilágyi, *Föld és hatalom*, 104.

The basis of economic growth for the towns in the region between the Danube and the Tisza was the strong unity between homesteads and market town centers. In fact, in the last third of the nineteenth century, homesteads meant economic modernity in the Great Hungarian Plain. Due to changes in land use, the revolution of cargo transportation, and to the opening up of export markets, capital accumulation was (also) accelerated within the region. Naturally, these factors exerted their influence on wealth retention and consumer habits. In the emerging new social medium, diverse cultures and religions lived well side by side with each other, even in the interwar period. Undoubtedly, the region between the Danube and the Tisza was regarded as an economic hub for long decades. Accordingly, human resources available were also of remarkably high quality in the area, whose population was characterized by considerable mobility and migration. The Great Hungarian Plain was one of the main targets of migration in the first half of the twentieth century, and continued as such when, after 1920, the structure and directions of migration underwent fundamental changes.<sup>77</sup>

In contrast, starting from the 1880s and 1890s, the Transtisza town belt<sup>78</sup> was continuously losing its economic dynamism, and by the turn of the century, the speed had very considerably slowed down. This region followed a different trajectory to urbanization. The landscape went through significant transformations due to climate change and, even more explicitly, due to water regulation. The wetlands necessary for livestock farming were shrinking, and with the course of time, they completely disappeared. The former floodplains and marshlands were replaced by arable land. The traditional employment structure was disappearing. Several of the national writers clearly saw and described the process as rapid pauperization.<sup>79</sup> At the turn of the century, the Transtisza society faced severe financial difficulties. When river regulation was completed, the diggers were left without work. Some of the unemployed were trying to find jobs in nearby or remote towns, others decided to emigrate. Only from the Great Hungarian Plain, more than a quarter of a million citizens emigrated, trying their fortune mainly overseas, however, almost 60 thousand returned already before World War I.<sup>80</sup>

The situation for the Transtisza society was further worsened by the fact that the supplementary infrastructure to water regulation was not completed, for example the groundwater drainage system, although the period between 1880 and 1940 was

77 Szilágyi, "Vándormozgalom."

78 Szilágyi, "Alföldi vonzásokörzetek," 118.

79 Veres, *Az Alföld parasztsága*; Féja, *Viharsarok*; Nagy, *Tücsök a máglyán*; Papp, *A magyar népi mozgalom*, 91–124.

80 Szabó, *Két és fél évszázad*, 119.

definitely humid.<sup>81</sup> Later, these missing investments contributed to the emergence of the periphery in the Transtisza region. The reason why there was no financing for the investments was partly that by the time the new economic structure was established in the Great Hungarian Plain, and by the time the switch from livestock and flood-land farming to grain production via the expansion of arable land had been done, in Europe both the grain boom and the demographic transition had turned into a slow-down period. Moreover, a new situation emerged in the continental markets due to the appearance of cheap crops from overseas. As a consequence, more than three quarters of the crops mainly produced in the Great Hungarian Plain<sup>82</sup> was delivered to the internal market of the Monarchy already in the 1880s.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, production was via traditional methods, utilizing manual workforce at a high rate, and machinery at a low rate. Although grain and flour were continuously marketable (even to a growing extent!) in the internal markets, outside the country they were not competitive.

The economic structure of the Transtisza region—especially after the Phylloxera plague—continued to be a monoculture where the major role was attributed to arable grain production, thus these regions were exceptionally vulnerable to economic crises. Diversified production was missing in the Transtisza farm estates. This vulnerability was strengthened by the fact that due to the incomplete infrastructural investments, the growing rate of rainfall regularly caused inland water damage. Moreover, the region had to face a formerly unknown problem: secondary salinization.

### **Moving further: possible alternative interpretations of the socio-economic processes in the interwar years**

The homesteads in the Great Hungarian Plain, which in the nineteenth century had typically been hubs of advancement and symbols of modernization, by the beginning of the twentieth century had often turned into images of underdevelopment and numerous educational, health, and social problems.<sup>84</sup> How did this happen? The question highlights that the expansion of the homesteads in the Great Hungarian Plain gave a socio-economic answer to the challenges at a time when climate change provided new opportunities for terrains sensitive to rainfall distribution, which were typical not only of the Great Hungarian Plain but of the entire continent. It is obvious that one of the central elements of economic structural transition was the homesteads. From the end of the eighteenth century, the structural transition

81 Rácz, *A kis jégkorszak éghajlati változásainak hatása*, Fig. 1.

82 Fodor, *Magyarország gazdasági földrajza*, 87.

83 Katus, “A Monarchia közös piaca,” 126.

84 Czettler, *Tanyai település*.

(livestock farming replaced by arable production) was faster, which revealed structural imbalances prior to the completion of the transition. By the end of the nineteenth century, a more humid climate,<sup>85</sup> coupled with changing (global and continental) market conditions, placed the Great Hungarian Plain's economy, which was just undergoing its major structural formation, into a very different position. As homesteads were unable to adapt to these new changes, they became a visible site of the pauperization of the Great Hungarian Plain's society. The special structure and geographical position (located far from the centers) of homesteads were factors in themselves that made it difficult or almost impossible for homestead dwellers to join any of the networks.<sup>86</sup> In the 1920s, there were already more than one million people living in the Great Hungarian Plain's homesteads,<sup>87</sup> which did not receive any of the infrastructural developments. Consequently, their economic, social, and cultural "isolation" was gradually becoming an everyday experience. Mitigating this cultural isolation was a priority for the homestead school program initiated by the influential politician Kuno Klebelsberg, as well as of a number of other efforts at setting up homestead hubs in the interwar period. Despite the negative trends outlined above, we may state that in the nineteenth century, homestead farms meant one of the important pillars of modernization in the Great Hungarian Plain. In the locations where the homesteads were present, capital accumulation, population growth, and urbanization were accelerated in the nearby market centers, as opposed to regions dominated by very small villages inhabited by low numbers of people.<sup>88</sup>

During the Great Hungarian Plain's modernization, one of whose priorities was water regulation, such lands were made arable that typically had low agricultural-ecological potential. Sensitivity to drought accompanied by drying pastures were long-term consequences.<sup>89</sup> The elements that meant profits and the possibility for capital accumulation and citizenship transition in the short run, within the given frames, meant obstacles to "economic development" and to the sustainability of economic development in the long run. The anthropogenic environmental transition led not just to the deconstruction and transformation of the traditional ecosystem of the landscape within a couple of decades, but also profoundly decreased the diversity of species living in the water habitats of the Great Hungarian Plain. These developments happened simultaneously with the expansion of monocultural plant production mainly in the Tisza-valley and TranTisza area, also resulting in the shrinking of the unspoilt "wild

85 Rácz, *A kis jégkorszak éghajlati változásainak hatása*, Fig. 1.

86 See Barabási, *Behálózva*.

87 Faragó, *Bevezetés*, 248; Thirring, "A tanyák," 1050; see Weis, *Mai magyar társadalom*, 12.

88 Szilágyi, "A fejlettség területi különbségei," 90.

89 Pinke, *Alkalmazkodás és felelőkodás*, 136.

nature".<sup>90</sup> The Great Hungarian Plain, including its economy and society, had become more sensitive to catastrophes, which had its consequences felt in sustainable development and urbanization within the region. (This is despite the fact that undoubtedly this extensive formation/conversion of the terrain and the homogenized landscape use made modernization and its acceleration in the Great Hungarian Plain possible under the conditions ensured by the era.) Based on this, the Great Hungarian Plain around the turn of the nineteenth–twentieth centuries seems to reflect a slowing down of economic momentum and signs of another looming economic structural crisis. The homesteads located near the formerly often flooded self-sufficient market centers with limited economic-trading contacts,<sup>91</sup> and the ones near former floodplain zones ensured less and less favorable living conditions for their residents. In contrast, the homesteads situated near centers where trade was expanding, differentiated trading roles were forming, and where they also produced goods for international markets, were characterized by favorable conditions. These homesteads showed a new type of adaptation: a diversified production structure and intensive garden cultivation. After 1920, many authors considered these features to be the pillars of a future agricultural economy, the concept of "gardened Hungary".<sup>92</sup> It was a specific constellation of circumstances that enabled the emergence of these "gardened homesteads". A major role may be attributed to the advantageous features of sandy soils (e.g., immunity towards Phylloxera, or the region's higher albedo rate, which resulted in tastier and more saleable fruits produced in the region and delivered to other markets).<sup>93</sup> I would argue that it was the economic symbiosis between the homestead and the town that made the delayed blooming between the two world wars possible for market towns in the Great Hungarian Plain, especially for those in the plain between the Duna and the Tisza.

However, the problems of the Great Hungarian Plain's economic structure formed by the end of the nineteenth century, as well as the grave consequences of anthropogenic landscape conversion were concealed by the warfare boom in the 1910s. It follows that Trianon was not the single cause of the economic recession after the loss of the war.<sup>94</sup> After 1920, certain problems came to the surface that had already been present at the turn of the century in the Great Hungarian Plain, but then few people had noticed them.<sup>95</sup> Under the given conditions, the economic growth of the terrain became unsustainable. What is more, it is probable that there

90 See Attenborough and Hughes, *Egy élet a bolygónkon*, 202–20.

91 See Szilágyi, "Az alföldi piacközpont-állomány változása," 206, Fig. 3; Szilágyi, "Az életminőség," 301, Fig. 23; Szilágyi, "Regional Differences," 133, Fig. 4.

92 Móricz, "A magyar gyümölcs," 244; Németh, *Kisebbségen*, 90; Somogyi, *Kertmagyarország felé*.

93 Szilágyi, *Homokváros*, 63.

94 Szilágyi, "Alternatív Trianon."

95 Czettler, *Tanyai település; Katona, Az Alföld gazdasági jövője*.

was some relative overpopulation as well in certain regions of the Great Hungarian Plain, which is indirectly reflected in the start of inland migration within the country. Three quarters of the settlements in the Great Hungarian Plain produced population growth directly prior to the World War I; one third, however, suffered such a high rate of population loss that they lost at least a tenth of their residents or, in certain cases, up to half of the their population.<sup>96</sup> There is no doubt that this process fundamentally influenced urbanization in the Great Hungarian Plain.<sup>97</sup>

Finally, I wish to emphasize that the concentration of the human resource capital in the Great Hungarian Plain (significantly more advantageous than in the whole of the Carpathian Basin) and its multi-centered development structure—which had come about by the turn of the century—made a fundamental contribution to the surprisingly rapid “economic reconstruction” of Hungary following the 1920 Trianon Treaty.<sup>98</sup> Despite the slowing down of modernization and urbanization in the Great Hungarian Plain, the accumulated economic momentum gained during the former decades could still ensure a for a shorter period of time a “balanced” background for the economic, social, and political transition in the 1920s. The higher level of development of the Great Hungarian Plain compared to conditions within the Carpathian Basin that emerged by the beginning of the twentieth century was undoubtedly utilized by the society of post-Trianon Hungary, including the political elite. Nevertheless, no extensive economic investments were made to support the structural transition in the Great Hungarian Plain. One of the reasons was the lack of capital, accompanied by some other hurdles. It cannot be denied that the situation was not improved by contemporary political and other propaganda focusing on the losses of Trianon and revision.<sup>99</sup> The “narrative of losses” concealed most of the similarly real economic and social problems of the time.

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<sup>96</sup> Szilágyi, “Vándormozgalom,” 97.

<sup>97</sup> See Beluszky and Györi, *Magyar városhálózat*; Bán, “A magyar városhálózat hierarchiája.”

<sup>98</sup> Szilágyi, “A Kárpát-medence fejlettségi membránja,” 79–80; see Tomka, *Gazdasági növekedés*, 86.

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# Weber's 'Ackerbürgerstadt' in the Nineteenth Century

## Zwettl as a Rural Case Study of Small-Town Economics in the Habsburg Empire

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**Abstract.** In his treatise "The City", Max Weber introduced the concept of the *Ackerbürgerstadt* (agrarian city), a type of city whose economic system is primarily rooted in agricultural production. Since then, Weber's concept has been frequently applied to historical studies on urban economies, especially in the Middle Ages and early modern history. However, by taking a closer look at the socioeconomic fabric of small towns in the prelude to industrialization, many characteristics of Weber's *Ackerbürgerstadt* still seem to be applicable. The paper investigates the development of the economic system of the rural small town of Zwettl, situated in the northwestern part of Lower Austria. Zwettl and its surrounding region were left mostly untouched by economic progress. The city had one of the lowest growth rates in Lower Austria and was excluded from the infrastructural expansions of the industrial period. However, Zwettl did not dwindle into a remnant of pre-industrial times. Changes in the social and economic fabric happened on a more subtle level. Structural changes, for example in the agricultural sector, impacted long-term business opportunities, household management, and market development in Zwettl—for better or worse.

The paper offers a case study-based examination of Weber's *Ackerbürgerstadt*. It questions the rigid separation between urban and household economy, as well as the functional distinction between the city and its hinterland. Thus, the paper provides a contribution to the historical exploration of the socioeconomic development of small towns in the rural periphery.

**Keywords:** Ackerbürgerstadt, Max Weber, rural small towns, economic periphery, agricultural history

At the beginning of the twentieth century, German economists and sociologists were very active in the field of urban history. They developed typologies and classifications of settlements based on their political, social, and economic functions and stages of development. One of these scholars engaged in urban history was Max Weber. Even though Weber was not an urban historian, and never developed a comprehensive typology of cities, his ideas are still the matter of academic discussions. Essentially,

Weber's accomplishments in the field are limited to his posthumously published treatise "The City".<sup>1</sup> In it, he concentrates on economic and political aspects of the city, drawing inspiration from contemporary colleagues in economic research like Werner Sombart and Karl Bücher. Weber's "The City" was first published in 1921 in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaften und Sozialpolitik* journal, which he edited for many years alongside Werner Sombart. Only later was the treatise integrated into his seminal *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Economy and Society).<sup>2</sup>

In "The City", Weber introduced the concept of the *Ackerbürgerstadt* (agrarian city), a type of city whose economic system is primarily rooted in agricultural production. The term *Ackerbürgerstadt* is ubiquitous in economic studies on the urban history of the Middle Ages and early modern times.<sup>3</sup> However, it rarely occurs in studies on nineteenth century Europe. Why is that? Is the *Ackerbürgerstadt* a pre-modern type of settlement that simply vanished in the fairway of industrialization?

Historical research into the economic development of small towns in the period of industrialization and urbanization is surprisingly sparse, especially if we look beyond studies that portray the spectacular transformations of small towns into sprawling, smoke-spitting industrial powerhouses. For a better understanding of the diversity of economic as well as social shifts, we also have to pay attention to rural towns, which were left behind and became part of the so-called periphery. As a matter of fact, these rural small towns did not remain untouched by socioeconomic change: they often represent fascinating showcases of compromise between tradition and modernity.<sup>4</sup> The *Ackerbürgerstadt* is an interesting concept because it conveys a sense of backwardness while also implying a high degree of economic coordination and integration. It also negates the rigid separation between urban and household economy.<sup>5</sup>

The paper seeks to revisit and reevaluate Weber's *Ackerbürgerstadt* by examining a case study from the rural periphery of the nineteenth century Habsburg Empire: the small town of Zwettl.

1 Bruhns, "Stadt," 170; Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1217.

2 Weber, "Die Stadt".

3 Jäschke and Schrenk, *Ackerbürgertum und Stadtwirtschaft*.

4 Zimmermann, ed., *Kleinstadt in der Moderne*; Steinführer, Vaishar, and Zapletalová, "The Small Town in Rural Areas," 322; Graef, "Small Towns, Large Implications?," 155; Hannemann, "Die Herausbildung räumlicher Differenzierungen," 265; Clark, *Small Towns in Early Modern Europe*.

5 It also reflects the strong link between urban farming and rural farming, which was often underestimated by urban historians regarding the nineteenth century. Recent studies convincingly combine approaches from urban and agricultural histories to question this hypothesis. See for example: Graef and Ronsijn, "From Home Food Production to Professional Farming," 3.

The case study is divided into two parts. The first focuses on matters of land use and agricultural subsistence, which are both central aspects of Weber's *Ackerbürgerstadt*. The second part will touch on shifts in occupational structure and their ties to the development of the urban commercial sector and overall economic system. Before examining the case study, I will briefly discuss the main points of Weber's concept of the city and its applicability.

## Max Weber and the city

Weber's typology rests on a set of economic and political characteristics. Cities fundamentally differentiate themselves from villages in ways of economic organization, diversity, representation, and governance. Initially, Weber presents a rather indistinct definition of the city, following merely economic parameters: "If we were to attempt a definition in purely economic terms, the city would be a settlement whose inhabitants live primarily from commerce and the trades rather than from agriculture."<sup>6</sup> In a later paragraph, he specifies that the market plays a central role in the life of cities. The majority of the population satisfy their daily needs through the market, which is supplied by local traders, craftsmen, and farmers, who produce goods for sale. A "city is always a market center", in Weber's summary.<sup>7</sup>

For Weber, the scale and scope of commercial activity separate the urban from the rural economy. In his typology, there are three main types of cities: the "consumer city", the "merchant city", and the "producer city". In addition, there is a fourth type, basically a hybrid of the village and the city: the *Ackerbürgerstadt* (agrarian city). In the entire treatise, Weber provides only one brief paragraph that outlines the *Ackerbürgerstadt*:

"Historically, the relation of the city to agriculture has in no way been unambiguous and simple. There were and are 'agrarian cities' (*Ackerbürgerstädte*), which as market centers and seats of the typically urban trades are sharply differentiated from the average village, but in which a broad spectrum of the burghers produces food for their own consumption and even for the market."<sup>8</sup>

Weber's concept of the agrarian city is often interpreted as an early stage of urban settlement. In many ways, it resembles a village with a certain degree of market integration, crafts, and trade. Regarding agriculture, the city is still self-sufficient like a village. This position is very much in line with the popular narrative of urban evolution,

<sup>6</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1213.

<sup>7</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1213.

<sup>8</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, 2017.

supported by other influential German scholars interested in urban history like Karl Bücher and Gustav Schmoller. The evolutionary model of urban development and the comparison of cities in Antiquity and the Middle Ages was well suited to convey the genesis of modern capitalism, central for Weber's academic work, from consumer city, through merchant city, to producer city.<sup>9</sup> For Weber, the consumer city and the producer city represent "ideal types" (*Idealtypen*) of settlements, whereas the historical reality offers a myriad of mixed forms.<sup>10</sup> In this sense, the *Ackerbürgerstadt* appears to represent one of the mixed forms: a type of city that in a way eludes the distinct characteristics of ideal types, yet exists side by side with them.

Economically, the *Ackerbürgerstadt* had an underdeveloped commercial sector and a low level of market integration. Weber emphasizes subsistence as a main characteristic of the agrarian city whose primary economic outputs were agricultural products, and most of whose inhabitants were in some form engaged in agriculture. Self-sufficiency was more important than surplus production. Historians are still discussing whether the low level of commercial specialization and market reach completely qualify these settlements as cities. Added to this discussion is the fact that most cities historically referred to as *Ackerbürgerstädte* had a population of less than five thousand inhabitants.<sup>11</sup>

It is noteworthy that the English translation "agrarian city" neglects the political connotation of the German term; it merely stresses the importance of agricultural activity. However, the combination of the German words *Acker* (field) and *Bürger* (burgher) emphasizes both the role of the agricultural sector and the political status of urban citizens. The inhabitants of the *Ackerbürgerstadt* were farmers and burghers at the same time. This is important because the legal status of urban citizenship and governance constitutes the pivotal distinctions between the *Ackerbürgerstadt* and the village.

The "politico-administrative" concept of the city, as Weber calls it in his treatise, entails the administration of a defined urban territory and the implementation of specific policies. The city constituted a demarcated political and administrative entity, which imposed its own economic policy and set of regulations. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, this territorial border was still visibly marked by the city's fortifications. Whereas the household economy was fundamentally structured by the coordination of actors and resources, the urban economy was governed by legal regulations. The urban administration imposed laws to organize economic production and exchange, levied taxes as a source of municipal income, and policed

9 Lenger, "Der Begriff der Stadt und das Wesen der Städtebildung," 33.

10 Lenger, "Der Begriff der Stadt und das Wesen der Städtebildung," 35.

11 Landsteiner, "Urban Viticulture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Central Europe," 169.

market and commercial activities to ensure compliance with urban policies. The territorial and political integrity of the urban administration was a key element of the pre-industrial city.<sup>12</sup>

However, there are some reasons why the concept of *Ackerbürgerstadt* is rarely adopted for studies in modern urban history. For a start, urban citizenship mostly lost its sociopolitical status in the nineteenth century. The communal reforms implemented in the Habsburg lands after the 1848 Revolution brought about the legal approximation of rural and urban populations. Town dwellers no longer occupied a privileged position over their suburban and rural counterparts in terms of political representation, taxation, and economic privileges. The communal reforms established the municipality as the lowest form of territorial administration. Only a small number of *Statutarstädte* (chartered towns) retained their rights of self-administration. The concept of urban citizenship consequently gave way to the concept of state citizenship.<sup>13</sup>

A second important development was the abolition of the manorial system in 1850–1853, which put an end to obligatory contributions to the seignior in labor, in coin, or in kind. The abolition of the manorial system caused a restructuring of labor relations, since landowners could no longer rely on unpaid labor for field work. Furthermore, the peasant population was no longer subjected to the rulings of their seignior, turning serfs into citizens.

The separation between different levels of economic activities and the demarcation of urban territory became less and less distinct in the course of the nineteenth century. This was associated with the change in legal status, as well as the close connection between household economy and urban economy regarding rural small towns. Most agricultural and economic systems in rural small towns such as Zwettl and their respective hinterland were aligned with local demand. Because there was no efficient infrastructure, possibilities to compete with other suppliers of agricultural products on larger regional and trans-regional markets were limited. In addition, as in the case of Zwettl, unfavorable climate conditions and low soil fertility impaired the cultivation of high-yield food crops and cash crops.

## Rural small towns in the Habsburg Monarchy

As a case study, the city of Zwettl represents a single example of the diverse types of settlements commonly classified as small towns. In statistical terms, a small town

12 Weber, *Economy and Society*, 1220.

13 Eigner and Martsch, “Ungleiche Geschwister,” 430; Deák, “Die städtische Entwicklung in der franzisko-josephinischen Epoche,” 85; Ganzenmüller and Tönsmeyer, “Einleitung: Vom Vorrücken des Staates in die Fläche,” 14.

is often simply defined by size and population, disregarding special types of urban functionality and specialization. Yet, small towns can hardly be subsumed under one uniform typology. Christine Hannemann rightly emphasizes the manifold appearances of small towns: "They [small towns] differ in size, population, economic basis, landscape, history, structural development, architecture as well as in their location, be it in a rural area or industrial agglomeration."<sup>14</sup> More contextual approaches to urban development can accommodate case-specific peculiarities and facilitate the study of small towns focused on functionality.<sup>15</sup> The uneven progress of industrialization in the nineteenth century caused divergent paths of urban development, which ultimately led to a structural overhaul of the urban system. The small town, however, remained the everyday environment and living space for a large portion of the population, even though the degree of urbanization was sharply increasing over the century.

**Table 1** Population by settlement size 1910 (in percent)

Crownland	under 500 inhabitants	500–2,000 inhabitants	2,001–5,000 inhabitants	5,001–10,000 inhabitants	10,001–20,000 inhabitants	over 20,000 inhabitants
Lower Austria (excl. Vienna)	35.6	33.2	16.4	4.8	6.3	3.6
Upper Austria	61.4	18.7	5.3	1.5	5.1	8.0
Styria	50.4	26.2	5.0	4.3	1.6	12.4
Bohemia	29.8	29.1	14.0	7.7	6.7	12.7
Moravia	19.5	39.9	17.4	5.9	6.4	10.9
Galicia	8.0	50.8	23.6	5.3	3.2	9.2
Tyrol	33.4	37.5	9.7	5.6	2.4	11.3
Dalmatia	17.9	56.8	14.6	3.2	4.1	3.3

Source: K.k. Statistische Zentralkommission, *Berufsstatistik nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31. December 1910 im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreichen und Ländern*.

The 1910 population census supports this assessment. Most of the population in the Cisleithanian part of the Habsburg Empire lived in cities of less than five thousand inhabitants. Even in a relatively urbanized crownland such as Bohemia, at the end of the century around 74 percent of the population were still living in small towns and rural settlements. The figures in the Habsburg lands were considerably higher than in other, more industrialized countries: in 1900, only nine percent of Britain's population and 20 percent of France's population were living in

14 Hannemann, "Die Herausbildung räumlicher Differenzierungen," 270.

15 Stekl and Heiss, "Klein- und mittelstädtische Lebenswelten," 561.

small towns.<sup>16</sup> In Germany, the share of people living in cities with more than five thousand inhabitants increased from 23.7 percent in 1871 to 48.8 percent in 1910.<sup>17</sup>

Most rural small towns featured a broad spectrum of urban functions and a low degree of specialization. They combined administration, commercial production, trades, and services without losing their agrarian structure.<sup>18</sup> In this respect, Zwettl can be compared to other small towns in the Habsburg lands or in Europe that experienced a similar phase of demographic stagnation and economic peripherization in the nineteenth century. Indeed, the *Ackerbürgerstadt* is closely related to the typology of rural market towns and *Marktflecken*. Many of them had a long history as regional market outlets, but were set back by the decline of traditional crafts and the lack of industrial infrastructure.<sup>19</sup>

The 1910 census data noted above do not account for the territories of the Hungarian crown—the breadbasket of the dual Monarchy. Hungary had a highly commercialized agrarian sector, and the economic systems of many cities were closely connected to agricultural production. The market town (*mezőváros*) was a common settlement type similar to the *Ackerbürgerstadt*. It was especially prevalent in the distinct urban landscape of the Great Hungarian Plain, characterized by numerous widely spread out villages and rural market towns. Even around 1900, citizens working in agriculture exceeded 70 percent of the total population in a number of rural market towns in the Great Hungarian Plain, such as Mezőkövesd, Kunhegyes, and Jászapáti.<sup>20</sup> Even the more densely populated market towns like Békés and Csongrád (both with around 25,000 inhabitants) did not lose their agrarian character.<sup>21</sup> These rural cities had no large hinterland, and mostly produced goods to meet the local demand. Their administrative functions and diversity of institutions were relatively limited; even though their population might classify them as medium size towns, their urban functions resembled those of a larger village.<sup>22</sup> Other market towns retained their agricultural character but developed a more integrated urban economy. In Kecskemét, for example, in 1900, 58 percent of the 58,000 inhabitants were still employed in agriculture. However, the city had a diverse commercial sector and sold agricultural goods to distant markets via the railway.<sup>23</sup>

16 Clark, *European Cities and Towns*, 244.

17 Boelcke, “Städtewachstum und Eisenbahnentwicklung in deutschen Bundesstaaten,” 25.

18 Eigner and Martsch, “Ungleiche Geschwister,” 435.

19 For early nineteenth-century Germany, Brakensiek and Keller offer some insightful case studies: Brakensiek, “Stagnation?”; Keller, *Kleinstädte in Kursachsen*.

20 Beluszky and Győri, *The Hungarian Urban Network*, 124.

21 Beluszky and Győri, *The Hungarian Urban Network*, 49.

22 Beluszky and Győri, *The Hungarian Urban Network*, 72, 76.

23 Beluszky, *The Spatial Differences of Modernisation in Hungary*, 23; Sárosi, *Kecskemét*, 59.

Although the socioeconomic structure and development of these cities bear resemblance to the city of Zwettl, each of them displays a specific set of geographic, political, and historical features. More in-depth case studies of rural small towns are needed in order to deliver a comprehensive comparison of settlement types sensitive to the plurality of urban functions and to different chronologies and effects of the urbanization process.

### The city of Zwettl

The city of Zwettl is situated in the *Waldviertel* region in the northwestern part of the district of Lower Austria, roughly 130 kilometers west of the capital Vienna. During the period of industrialization, Zwettl and its surrounding region were left mostly untouched by economic progress. Even though the city was a regional center for centuries and the municipal reforms after 1848 strengthened its administrative position, development throughout the nineteenth century was slow. The city's population increased marginally from two thousand inhabitants at the beginning of the century to no more than 2,500 at the end of the century. Zwettl's population growth was considerably lower than that of most cities in Lower Austria, whose urban landscape was drastically reshaped by industrialization and urbanization.<sup>24</sup> Lower Austria had one of the highest levels of urbanization, but it also exhibited a growing divergence between regions benefitting from economic growth and those that did not. Especially the small towns located in the Vienna Basin experienced an impressive population growth due to the establishment of numerous factories. In contrast, the *Waldviertel* did not profit from the economic boom; instead it recorded a growing population outflux. The region thus turned into an economic periphery, specializing in the production and export of agricultural raw materials.<sup>25</sup>

Urban commercial activity in Zwettl remained largely concentrated on regional demand and everyday consumables. Sanitation projects, such as the construction of modern fresh water and sewer systems, were not implemented before the last decades of the century.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the city was connected to major railway lines as late as 1896.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Eigner and Martsch, "Ungleiche Geschwister," 431.

<sup>25</sup> Komlosy, "Vom Kleinraum zur Peripherie," 237.

<sup>26</sup> Moll and Fröhlich, *Zwettler Stadtgeschichte(n)*, 62.

<sup>27</sup> The city of Zwettl even commissioned a commemorative publication in celebration of the opening of the regional railway line: *Stadt Zwettl, Zwettl 1896*.

## Land use and agriculture

The historical literature considers Zwettl a prime example of an *Ackerbürgerstadt*. Regional historian Hans Hakala picks up the concept, although without reference to Max Weber: “Nearly every household in the city was not only engaged in commerce, trade or craft, but also in agriculture on a small or large scale.”<sup>28</sup> Walter Pongratz argues more clearly: “From the foundation in the second half of the twelfth century to our times, the city of Zwettl can be called a real *Ackerbürgerstadt*. This means that besides engagement in common crafts, agriculture played a substantial role.”<sup>29</sup>

Many of Zwettl’s inhabitants were farmers and smallholders. The occupational statistics of 1890 reveal that, at the end of the century, 79 percent of the district’s population were working in agriculture—at least seasonally. However, only about a third were independent farmers, making a living by selling crops and cattle on regional markets.<sup>30</sup> Commercial agriculture was underdeveloped, and for the most part, leasehold properties and gardens were used to grow food for local households. Only a limited amount of food, i.e., items that could not be produced in their fields, was purchased on the market. Typically, these were processed and perishable goods, such as flour, meat, and dairy products.

Self-sufficiency was facilitated through the lease of fields, pastures, and wood-lots. The city of Zwettl had considerable landholdings in the three primordial plots (*Urfelder*) “Galgenfled/Rudmannser Feld”, “Weissenberger Feld”, and “Oberes Feld”. These plots were listed by name in the city’s urbarium (*Urbar*) from as early as 1561.<sup>31</sup> The city also owned holdings in smaller plots, such as the “Hammerfeld” and “Oberfeld”, as well as an additional 40 acres on the northern slope of the Moidramser Hill, the so-called “Brühläcker”.<sup>32</sup> These land plots were ceded to citizens for low rents as hereditary leases. Rents were contractually fixed and not adjusted for centuries. As a result of the gradual devaluation of money in the early modern period, these land rents slowly but surely dwindled to a rather symbolic value.<sup>33</sup> For example, city records from the 1860s listed a pasture located just below the “Brühl” on the banks of the River Zwettl that was leased in alternating years to ten citizens ever since 1560.<sup>34</sup>

28 Pongratz and Hakala, *Die Kuenringerstadt*, 89.

29 Pongratz and Hakala, *Die Kuenringerstadt*, 355.

30 K.k. Statistische Zentralkommission, *Berufsstatistik nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31. December 1890*, 5.

31 StAZ K 13, Sign. 6/2.

32 Pongratz and Hakala, *Die Kuenringerstadt*, 356.

33 Löffler, “Grundherrschaft, Gerichtsbarkeit.”

34 Pongratz and Hakala, *Die Kuenringerstadt*, 357.

Not all land leases were heritable. At the end of the eighteenth century, the city switched to leasing single plots for six years, and the neighboring Stift Zwettl Abbey for twenty years. On expiry, the lease was reevaluated and adjusted to current market prices and wage levels.<sup>35</sup> Whether cultivated for self-reliance or wage labor, landholdings primarily served civil self-sufficiency, and surpluses would be sold on the city's market.

In the manorial system, seigniorial land was divided into the demesne and peasant holdings. The demesne was directly controlled and managed by the seigniorial lord. Peasants were obliged to provide a certain amount of fieldwork on the demesne, commonly referred to in the Habsburg lands as *Robot*. Several edicts passed under the reign of Maria Theresia modified the *Robot*. According to the Lower Austrian *Robotpatent* (edict) of 1772, the amount of obligatory labor varied between 12 and 104 days a year.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, there were considerable differences between seignories in the extent of labor. The seignory of Rosenau, located a few kilometers west of Zwettl, demanded from its peasant no more than a few days of obligatory services, while the rest of the fieldwork was done by servants. In the neighboring seignory of Engelstein, on the other hand, the *Robot* was paid entirely in kind.<sup>37</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century, many seignories had started to replace labor obligations with payments in coin or in kind.<sup>38</sup> The extent of this obligation varied from region to region. Some seignories, such as Rosenau, continued to demand compulsory labor for a few days a year. The work was conducted partly without payment, and partly for a low wage.<sup>39</sup>

The abolition of the manorial system, the so-called *Grundentlastung* between 1850 and 1853 set a final end to the *Robot* and also released peasants from the authority of the seignior. They became subjects of the new municipal administration, which acted as the regional authority of the imperial government, thus legally transforming serfs into citizens.

In addition to the differentiation between demesne and enfeoffed peasant land, there was a difference between *Hausgründe* (house plots) and *Überlandgründe* (land plots). House plots had fields, pastures or woodlots tied to the property. These landholdings could not be sold separately detached from the real estate. Land plots, on the other hand, could be purchased, sold, and leased with the approval of the seignior or municipality. The right of use (*dominium utile*) belonged to the tenant,

35 K.k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, *Verhandlungen der kaiserlich-königlichen*, 99.

36 Löffler, "Grundherrschaft, Gerichtsbarkeit".

37 K.k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, *Verhandlungen der kaiserlich-königlichen*, 94.

38 Löffler, "Grundherrschaft, Gerichtsbarkeit".

39 K.k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, *Verhandlungen der kaiserlich-königlichen*, 98.

whereas property rights (*dominum directum*) to the rightful owner or authority. The owner of the property had the right to seize the land and lease it to another person in the event of failed payment of rents (in coin, in kind, or in labor) or unauthorized alterations of the land.

In contrast to the Stift Zwettl Abbey, the territorial city had no self-managed farm estates. In 1814, the territorial holdings accounted for a total of 482 acres of fields and 39 acres of pastures, including house plots as well as land plots. In comparison, the Stift Zwettl Abbey managed nine manorial estates at the time, of which six were administered as hereditary lease. The total of the abbey's landed property came to 7,390 acres of fields and 3,162 acres of pastures.<sup>40</sup> The seignory of Rosenau also controlled a considerable area of land. The area of Rosenau's landed property was significantly larger than that belonging to the city of Zwettl.

The abolition of the manorial system resulted in a change of lease modalities and a decrease of land ownership of the municipal treasury. The records of the most comprehensive map series of nineteenth century Austria, the *Franziseischer Kataster*, show that at the beginning of the century Zwettl's treasury managed a property of 166 land plots. According to the auction listings of the mayor's office between 1879 and 1885, no more than 46 land plots were offered for lease by the municipal treasury.<sup>41</sup> It can be assumed that in the course of the abolition of the manorial system some land plots changed hands and that the municipality acquired funds by selling land plots in times of financial stress. Furthermore, the manorial estates now had to be maintained by wage laborers, which put pressure on large landowners to either modernize their holdings in order to produce a surplus and cover increased wages, or to sell a part of their property. The municipality and the church also released new building land through the sale of land plots to citizens and investors. In 1882, the priory sold their landholdings of 740 hectares, of which a considerable part was forest area, to the city of Zwettl's savings bank.<sup>42</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the municipality still leased farmland from the *Brühläcker* to citizens. However, after the abolition of the manorial system, the duration of the lease was limited to six years. After this period, the landholdings were re-allotted by auction. In this way, the municipality could potentially obtain a higher rent after the expiry of the lease and exert some control over field management. The city records provide an example from May 1867: the mayor's office requested the ropemaker and citizen Leopold Ruthner to restore the *Brühlacker* he had been

40 K.k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, *Verhandlungen der kaiserlich-königlichen*, 94.

41 StAZ K 183.

42 Pongratz and Hakala, *Die Kuenringerstadt*, 358.

leasing to its original state, so that it could be auctioned off to the next tenant.<sup>43</sup> The same year, the council minutes record the request of house owner and shoemaker Peter Wrba, who wanted to lease one of the city's *Brühläcker*.<sup>44</sup> The contract meticulously describes the location and size of the land plot as well as the rent. The kind of usage, however, was completely left to the tenant. The *Bürgerspital* (public hospital), the second biggest landowner after the urban treasury, also leased part of its holdings, applying the same principle. These cases exemplify that the lease of landholdings was a crucial source of income for large landowners like the urban treasury, the church, and public institutions such as the *Bürgerspital*.

For most of nineteenth century, agricultural productivity increased through the employment of more labor. The enhancement of the established three-field system by incorporating fallow fields in the crop rotation improved yields but was also more labor-intensive. In many rural regions in the *Waldviertel*, the amount of labor required was simply not available. Shortage of rural laborers was a prevailing phenomenon that obstructed agricultural commercialization.<sup>45</sup> One reason for the scarcity of manpower was seasonal labor migration to Vienna, which had started already at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Most notably in the summer months, rural laborers would seek temporary employment in the numerous gardens and brickyards of the capital. During the *Vormärz* period, signs of agricultural commercialization were relatively weak in the Zwettl district. Two general indicators of agricultural intensification, stable feeding and clover cultivation, which both required the year-round employment of labor, were hardly adopted in the district.<sup>46</sup>

The records of the *Franziszeische Steuerfassion*, a comprehensive tax survey accompanying the eponymous map series, support the thesis of the *Ackerbürgerstadt* Zwettl. They show that at the beginning of the nineteenth century, 73 of 174 the houses listed in the city center had attached farm buildings, and 42 of them had a barn in the outskirts. Fifty-three houses came with landed property, most commonly in the size of two or three plots of fields or pastures. A small number of wealthy citizens possessed substantial landholdings of over 30 plots.<sup>47</sup> The arable land of these citizens was more

43 StAZ K 68, Reg. 204. Auftrag des Bürgermeisteramtes an den Bürger und Seilermeister Leopold Ruthner, den von ihm gepachteten Brühlacker wieder in den ursprünglichen Zustand zu versetzen, 11.5.1867.

44 StAZ K 68, Reg. 290. Ansuchen des Hausbesitzers Peter Wrba, Stadt Nr. 126 (Florianigasse 4) um Pachtung eines Brühlackers, 1.7.1867.

45 Bruckmüller, *Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, 209; Blumenbach, *Neueste Landeskunde von Österreich*, 19.

46 K.k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, *Verhandlungen der kaiserlich-königlichen*, 96; Komlosy, "Vom Kleinraum zur Peripherie," 295.

47 Pongratz and Hakala, *Die Kuenringerstadt*, 357.

than sufficient to meet the demand for foodstuffs consumed by homes. Accruing surpluses could be sold at the weekly market or at other regional outlets. Not all of these large urban landowners were farmers as their main profession. Many were engaged in commerce, outsourcing the maintenance of their landed property to family members, domestic workers, and day laborers. Some integrated farming and processing, like the prosperous miller Joseph Weghuber, who was running a river mill in the *Syrnau* suburb. Weghuber cultivated grain on his fields, which he then processed into flour. Similarly, some urban butchers used their landholdings to raise cattle.

The records of the city archives provide ample examples of typical agrarian burghers in the nineteenth century. One of them was the carriage driver Sylvester Zellhofer. He was the owner of a 250 square meter property with a house and a yard in the city, a garden, and slightly over an acre of arable land in the primordial field *Hammerleithen*.<sup>48</sup> In the electoral register of 1867, Zellhofer is listed as paying annual taxes of eleven gulden and 77 kreutzer—a significant but not excessive amount.<sup>49</sup> Another example of an *Ackerbürger* was the miller Anton Fürst, resident of the *Syrnau* suburb. Fürst had a property of 26 land plots according to the 1820 tax survey. Home ownership records from the year 1850 reveal that he passed on his property to his relative Theresia Fürst, who shared the living space with other family members, two domestic servants, a groom, and a journeyman. Additionally, the Fürst family rented a small, less than one-acre field plot, for which in 1855 they extended the lease with the municipal treasury. These two examples represent the numerous cases to be found in the documents of the city archives. These documents illustrate that a great number of Zwettl citizens owed or at least rented plots of land in the vicinity of the city. Many of these plots were too small to enable commercial farming; they merely helped self-sufficiency.

Urban commerce in Zwettl was deeply connected to agriculture. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, 290 citizens possessed landholdings, accounting for around ten percent of the total urban population including the suburbs.<sup>50</sup> Not included in this number are small tenants with temporary lease contracts. Adding the residents who were at least seasonally or part-time employed in agriculture, the resulting number represents the majority of the population of the city and the surrounding region.

48 Franziszeischer Kataster, Plot Records, Zwettl City (1823).

49 StAZ K 68, Reg. 8. Gedruckte Kundmachung der Statthalterei betreffend Pferdezucht-Prämien und -Medaillen, 11.12.1866. StAZ K 68, Reg. 9. Landtagswahl 1867, darinnen Liste der Wahlberechtigen (Wahlkörper) in der Gemeinde.

50 Franziszeischer Kataster, Plot Records, Zwettl City (1823).

## Economic organization and occupational composition

Contemporary historical and topographic surveys are valuable sources to reconstruct the occupational composition of the district and city of Zwettl in the first half of the nineteenth century. More reliable quantitative data only become available for the second half of the century due to the increasing relevance of national statistics.

The transition from the manufacturing system to the factory system caused a decline in agricultural employment opportunities in some rural regions.<sup>51</sup> From the late eighteenth century to far into the first half of the nineteenth, the decentral organization of proto-industrial manufacturing work allowed for a close relationship between agrarian and commercial activities.

This interconnection was typical of the occupational patterns in the *Waldviertel* region. The large number of smallholders and farmers working for the textile industry as a supplementary activity was reflected in the common occupational category of the "weaver-farmer".<sup>52</sup>

Low wages and the endless source unskilled labor to draw on attracted proto-industrial enterprises to the countryside. By the end of the eighteenth century, several textile manufactures had settled in the *Waldviertel*, offering numerous peasant households an additional source of income.<sup>53</sup> Around 1800, nearly a hundred thousand people—predominantly women and children—were working in their own homes as subcontractors for the textile industry. The introduction of machine-based spinning shifted production sites and thereby demand for labor to the factories in developing industrial agglomerations. Consequently, by 1807, the number of employees in the domestic system in Lower Austria declined to no more than 8,000, and 7,350 of those were based in the *Waldviertel*.<sup>54</sup> The disappearance of home spinning as a source of additional income resulted in the "agrarianization" of the rural population. Peasant and smallholder families, who had formerly been engaged in domestic work for additional income, became specialized farmers.<sup>55</sup>

In the Zwettl region, sturdy flax fibers were most commonly handled in domestic spinning. Flax fibers were tough to process in comparison to softer cotton fibers, hence effective machine spinning did not supersede domestic processing before the end of the *Vormärz* period. A contemporary account of a clergyman from the village of Friendesbach near Zwettl in the year 1846 highlights the regional importance of flax:

51 Bruckmüller, *Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, 201.

52 Komlosy, "Vom Kleinraum zur Peripherie," 298.

53 Mühlberger, "Industrie und Gewerbebetriebe des Waldviertels," 244.

54 Blumenbach, *Neueste Landeskunde von Österreich*, 137; Bruckmüller, *Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, 212.

55 Bruckmüller, *Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, 202, 211.

“Hereabouts, flax flourishes and for a long time it constituted a rich source of income for local farmers and businessmen. The fibers were used for domestic spinning and weaving, the linen was then sold at reasonable prices, the flax seeds were processed into oil and flax cake, which were sold or used as animal fodder. However, in recent times income opportunities have been hampered by the introduction of the spinning machine [...].”<sup>56</sup>

While non-agricultural employment opportunities dwindled in the countryside, commercial activity in the city of Zwettl stayed fairly lively in the *Vormärz* period. It had numerous small craft shops specialized in the processing of flax and hemp fibers. Aside from that, food production, leather making, iron and wood crafts were the city’s most important economic pillars. By then, the organization of economic life was strictly regulated by craft guilds, which had monitored economic procedures and access to traditional crafts before the Habsburg government issued the decree of free enterprise in 1859.

Professions supplying the local market, such as pharmacists, bakers, butchers, brewers, or carpenters were subjected to the municipal authority. Traditional crafts were characterized by tight personal networks; apprentices were carefully selected and usually lived in the master craftsman’s household. In contrast to traditional crafts, the sector of commercial trades was handled more liberally already in the eighteenth century. These trades produced goods primarily for trans-regional export.<sup>57</sup> In this regard, many branches of the textile industry gained a high degree of entrepreneurial freedom during the reign of Maria Theresia.<sup>58</sup> The spectrum of professional designations in the textile industry was diversified accordingly. In the *Vormärz* period, there were linen and cotton weavers, cloth manufacturers, cloth-shearers, blanket-makers, hosiers, dyers, trimming-makers, and tailors in the city of Zwettl.<sup>59</sup> The goods manufactured were sold not only in the city and the surrounding area, but also peddled to distant regions.<sup>60</sup> Alongside established master craftsmen and their apprentices, numerous domestic workers and wage laborers also found employment in the urban textile sector.

From the middle of the eighteenth century, the *Waldviertel* was divided between major textile subcontractors. The territory north of the River Kamp was affiliated to the calico manufactories of Schwechat and Šaštín (Sassín) (western Slovakia),

56 Translated and quoted from: Bruckmüller, *Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, 212.

57 Resch, “Industrialisierung und Gewerbe”.

58 Příbram, *Geschichte der österreichischen Gewerbepolitik*, vol. 1; Blumenbach, *Neueste Landeskunde von Österreich*, 130.

59 Blumenbach, *Neueste Landeskunde von Österreich*, 406.

60 Mühlberger, “Industrie und Gewerbebetriebe des Waldviertels,” 242.

while the territory south of the river was affiliated to the manufactory of Friedau.<sup>61</sup> Because Zwettl was located right on the banks of the River Kamp, parts of the city and the suburbs belonged to different subcontractors.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the influence of proto-industrial textile manufactures started to decline, and the city's priory emerged as the main subcontractor for domestic spinning. The most significant branch in Zwettl was linen spinning and weaving. Bleached, unbleached, and dyed linen fabrics and yarn were sold from the city by peddlers. The development of regional flax farming was driven by the constant demand of proto-industrial linen production. Especially local craft businesses and domestic workers benefited from this demand, but it also facilitated the establishment of large enterprises in the region historically known as *Bandelkrämerland* (ribbon peddler country), where a modern ribbon manufactory with eighteen looms was set up in the settlement of Groß-Siegharts at the end of the eighteenth century. In the 1830s, the manufactory had to cease all its operations, but production was shifted to small workshops in the vicinity.<sup>62</sup>

From the last third of the nineteenth century, the Imperial Bureau of Statistics conducted regular population censuses, including systematic occupation surveys. These data allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the income structure of the Zwettl district, as well as for transregional comparisons. The population census of 1869 already includes a section on professions and occupations. Unlike later volumes, the records of the 1869 issue go down to the regional level of the judicial district, which roughly covers the city of Zwettl and the surrounding hinterland. In general, the district of Zwettl can be characterized as agrarian. More than 65 percent of the working population were employed in agriculture and forestry. In the neighboring judicial districts of Groß Gerungs and Ottenschlag, as many as eight out ten people were working in these two sectors.<sup>63</sup> Other employment opportunities in the commercial and service sectors were scarce, except for the regional small towns of Zwettl, Allentsteig, and Weitra. Weitra was one of the few remaining regional centers of textile industry, as reflected by the high occupational numbers in this sector. Zwettl was the seat of the *Bezirkshauptmannschaft* (district government), thus the administrative and political center of the region. Besides public and traditional services, trade and transport sectors were the most developed.

In the city, shops, craft businesses and inns offered various forms of employment. However, in comparison with the district of Weitra, there was no dominant line of occupation in Zwettl as an alternative to agriculture. In the judicial district

61 Blumenbach, *Neueste Landeskunde von Österreich*, 136.

62 Blumenbach, *Neueste Landeskunde von Österreich*, 143.

63 Own calculations based on: K.k. Statistische Zentralkommission, *Summarische Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. December 1869*.

of Weitra, around 1,100 people were employed in the textile industry in the second half of the nineteenth century as compared to only half of that number in the Zwettl district. One of the largest textile enterprises in the *Waldviertel*, the Hackl & Söhne weaving mill operated out of Weitra from 1864. No such counterpart existed in Zwettl.<sup>64</sup> Domestic labor in the textile industry still played a tangible role but did not have the same economic importance as it had for the rural regions of the upper *Waldviertel*. For example, in 1869 every fifth worker in the judicial district of Schrems was employed in the textile sector, but in the Zwettl district only one out of fifty.<sup>65</sup> The main employers were metal, stone, and wood working crafts, as well as food, leather, and paper producers. This illustrates the small-trade structure of the urban economic system. On average, every tradesman had one or two employees. Only the construction business showed a higher concentration, with nearly 30 laborers subordinated to one tradesman.<sup>66</sup>

Up to the turn of the century, the occupational structure remained widely unchanged. In 1890, 73 percent of all 50,000 registered workers in the Zwettl district were engaged in agriculture and forestry—the highest number of all *Waldviertel* districts. Indeed, numbers were slowly decreasing in the first decades of the new century. However, in 1910 agriculture and forestry were still the strongest sectors, accounting for 68 percent of all employees in the district. This was considerably higher than the 45 percent average in the entire territory of the Habsburg lands at the turn of the century.<sup>67</sup> By then, the general progress of industrialization had lessened the share of agriculture in the gross national income. The process of industrial concentration and urbanization led to major regional inequalities. In the 1900s, especially the northeastern part of the Monarchy, Hungary, the coastal lands, and some alpine regions were still mainly agricultural in character.

In the agricultural sector, the share of independent smallholders increased, whereas the employment of foreign, seasonal, and day laborers decreased. In 1910, only 30 percent of the fieldwork in the Zwettl district was carried out by unskilled laborers.<sup>68</sup> Before the end of the century, there was no further expansion of the agricultural area in the district. Therefore, the rising number of independent farmers indicates a reduction in average farm sizes. Small and miniature farms, prevalent

64 Katzenschlager, "Gewerbe und Industrie der Stadt Weitra," 68.

65 K.k. Statistische Zentralkommission, *Summarische Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. December 1869*, 12.

66 K.k. Statistische Zentralkommission, *Summarische Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31. December 1869*, 11.

67 Bruckmüller, *Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, 293.

68 Own calculations based on: K.k. Statistische Zentralkommission, *Berufsstatistik nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31. December 1910*.

in the *Waldviertel*, were hardly capable of surviving without an additional source of income. In most peasant families, this responsibility fell to the men since the women had to take care of the household and the children's education, and would help on the fields. Small-scale agriculture was supported by the liberal legislation, according to which all peasant land could be freely divided and mortgaged. The financial liability of small farmers can be deduced from the large number of foreclosure auctions conducted during the agricultural crisis between 1868 and 1892. However, the direct repercussion of the crisis seems to have been less tangible in the Zwettl district.<sup>69</sup>

The low level of agricultural and commercial competitiveness was reinforced by the lack of an efficient railway network. As a matter of fact, the city was connected to the railway system as late as 1896, and even then only to a local branch line. In the 1860s, the municipal administration was in negotiations with the planning committee of the *Kaiser-Franz-Josefs-Bahn*, a major railway line connecting Vienna with Bohemia, to have the routing revised in the city's favor, but ultimately the tracks were built 20 kilometers further north. Consequently, many regional small towns along the route, such as Gmünd and Eggenburg, benefitted from the railway connection and obtained a clear economic advantage over Zwettl.<sup>70</sup> When the local railway line between Zwettl and Schwarzenau finally linked the city to the main line of the *Franz-Josefs-Bahn* in 1896, the Monarchy was still recovering from the repercussions of the 1873 stock market crash and the ensuing agrarian crisis. Consequently, the late railway connection failed to have a profound impact on the city's urban economy. Although the railway had no importance for the export of local products, it facilitated the distribution of consumer goods from other regions, expanding the product line of local businesses.<sup>71</sup>

The importance of the commercial sector declined in the Zwettl district up to the end of the century—in the same way as in almost all districts of the *Waldviertel*. This general development of geographic relocation brought about a new phase of agrarianization. Furthermore, many small commercial businesses were not profitable enough to cover all household expenses. In 1890, nearly every fourth tradesman had an additional source of income, mostly in agriculture or the trade sector, and twenty years later the proportion increased to every third.<sup>72</sup>

69 Bruckmüller, "Die 'Macht' der Bauern?" 295; Bauer, "Die Agrarwirtschaft."

70 Eigner and Martsch, "Ungleiche Geschwister," 443; Ulsperger, "Horn, Eggenburg, Retz," 28.

71 Komlosy, "Vom Kleinraum zur Peripherie," 320.

72 Own calculations based on the occupational statistics 1890, 1910: K.k. Statistische Zentralkommission, *Berufsstatistik nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31. December 1890*; K.k. Statistische Zentralkommission, *Berufsstatistik nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31. December 1910*.

This development demonstrates the limited competitiveness of small urban businesses in rural areas. The primary reasons are twofold: first, the improved transport infrastructure forced local craftsmen into price competition with major industrial producers in other regions of the Empire; second, the purchasing power of Zwettl's population was among the lowest in Lower Austria. A foothold in agriculture could reduce food costs and depending on the size of the landholdings potentially generate additional income. Because of the discontinuation of domestic wage work, women and children were able to help with maintaining fields and pastures. The result was that urban crafts and commercial activity mostly catered to local consumers, providing them with everyday goods and services.

The former strong interdependence between the weaver and the farmer became less evident by the end of the century.<sup>73</sup> Unskilled domestic labor for the textile industry was in low demand. However, another branch was emerging in rural cities, namely the garment industry. Fabrics and yarns were now delivered to local tailors and milliners from the new centers of the textile industry. The only true export articles of the Zwettl region continued to be flax and hemp fibers, as well as poppyseeds. The first two were also the only non-food cash crops cultivated in the area. The high degree of supplementary activities demonstrates that no clear sectoral division of labor had developed before the end of the nineteenth century. Instead, a multilayered or at least a dual occupational structure persisted. The close interconnection between commerce and agriculture was a distinct feature of Zwettl's economic system and the region in general.

Primarily linked to the development of public and state institutions, the expansion of the service sector was particularly noticeable. The growing civil service sector offered new professional opportunities for skilled employees from cities and the countryside, advancing the emergence of a rural bourgeoisie which incrementally populated the small towns.<sup>74</sup>

The growing small-town bourgeoisie signifies that the city's social fabric had become more diverse by the end of the century. Whereas agriculture remained the backbone of urban economy, slowly but steadily, the city opened up in sociocultural terms. The small-town bourgeoisie was represented mostly by non-native, educated workers, finding employment in the expanding regional bureaucracy of state administration, as well as in the growing education sector. The 1869 educational reforms expanded access to education, increased compulsory schooling to eight years, and supported the dissemination of progressive and liberal principles in the countryside. Caused by the growing number of pupils, in 1870 the city of Zwettl constructed

73 Komlosy, "Vom Kleinraum zur Peripherie," 301.

74 Eigner and Martsch, "Ungleiche Geschwister."

a separate building for the new *Bürgerschule* (secondary school).<sup>75</sup> Many rural schoolteachers and civil servants seeking employment in rural small towns were educated in larger cities. They then introduced their conception of urban culture to the regional small towns and created a kind of "micro urbanity" by establishing numerous clubs and societies and reimagining urban space.<sup>76</sup> The formation of local clubs and societies was also stimulated by a more liberal association law in 1867. In the following years, the number of associations in Zwettl increased from four to 27, including a firemen's society (1871), a gymnastics club (1886), a cyclist club (1885), and an agricultural casino (1890).<sup>77</sup> While propagating modern political and cultural ideals, civil organization in clubs and societies helped consolidate the small-town community. In general, they expressed the public desire for communal participation and leisure activities. The utilization of urban space encapsulated the small-town bourgeoisie's self-conception and need for representation. Infrastructural projects and cultural events mitigated the feeling of rural backwardness.<sup>78</sup> In an effort to break with backwardness, the Zwettl beautification society encouraged the modification of the historical city structure. Segments of crumbling fortifications were replaced by a river promenade, and the last parts of the city wall had to make way for a representative railway station and the adjacent square. A municipal park was established at the junction of the River Zwettl and the River Kamp and was decorated with a music pavilion, which the local music society would use for giving concerts. Subsequently, the city opened another park in honor of Emperor Franz Josef's fifteenth anniversary on the throne.<sup>79</sup>

In addition, the bourgeoisie's interest in fashion and leisure promoted the establishment of modern professions in Zwettl that had not existed a hundred years before. Among them, for example, there were two club soda producers and a bicycle dealer. The consumer needs of the new bourgeoisie were reflected in the expanding range of goods available. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the city already had confectioners, milliners, gold and silversmiths, watchmakers, gardeners, tobacco traders, umbrella producers, photographers, book binders, and paper-hangers.<sup>80</sup> These businesses targeted wealthy customers who wanted to emulate the latest fashion trends of leading European cities, giving Zwettl a flair of urbanity in a rural setting. The growing range of consumer goods shows that, by the early 1900s,

75 Trischler, "Die Entwicklung des öffentlichen Pflichtschulwesens," 233.

76 Stekl and Heiss, "Klein- und mittelstädtische Lebenswelten," 563.

77 Hinterndorfer, "Wohltätigkeit, Selbsthilfe und organisierte Geselligkeit," 373.

78 Stekl and Heiss, "Klein- und mittelstädtische Lebenswelten," 578; Eigner and Martsch, "Ungleiche Geschwister," 449.

79 Hinterndorfer, "Städtische Repräsentation."

80 K.k. Handelsministerium, Österreichischer Zentralkataster, 621.

the rigid economic system that had characterized the city for most of the nineteenth century was slowly breaking up. The newly emerging businesses certainly diversified the city's commercial sector, albeit they only targeted a small number of customers. Most businesses such as general stores, which typically offered a wide variety of services and goods, still catered for customers from all walks of life.

## Conclusion

The socioeconomic history of Zwettl in the nineteenth century is characterized by growing ambivalence between tradition and modernity. The city remained deeply entrenched in the region, but a clear functional and territorial distinction between the city and its hinterland became increasingly difficult to identify. In general, the urban economic structure largely remained small-scale until the end of the century. Urban craft businesses mainly produced goods for everyday use, targeting local consumers. Around the turn of the century, however, the growing small-town bourgeoisie initiated the establishment of new lines of businesses. The expansion of the communication and transport infrastructure, which gradually started to penetrate the rural periphery, facilitated the diffusion of the latest trends and consumer goods in the *Waldviertel* region. Nevertheless, although to varying degrees, most people in the city and the surrounding region were still involved in agriculture. Many citizens owned or rented plots of arable land in the vicinity of the city in order to cultivate food for self-sufficiency. That is why, the common classification of Zwettl as a prime example of an *Ackerbürgerstadt* still holds for the nineteenth century.

Weber defined cities according to their economic and political organization. The case study of Zwettl shows that the political reforms of the post-1848 era had a significant impact on the development of urban economy. The growing responsibility and economic independence of urban citizens led to a coalescence of urban and household economy. This interconnection is central for the nineteenth century. The number of citizens engaged in agriculture remained consistently high throughout the century, however, large-scale commercial farming was less viable than earlier. Small land plots were used for subsistence agriculture in order to reduce household expenses. The high significance of small-scale agriculture was an essential reason why the multilayered or dual occupational structure, characteristic of pre-industrial cities, continued to exist throughout the century.

Even though the *Ackerbürgerstadt* seems to be a marginal note in Max Weber's work, it may be a useful heuristic framework for the analysis of modern cities in rural regions. However, the original concept needs to be extended. The *Ackerbürgerstadt* exhibited a deep interconnection between urban and household economy, which

was consolidated rather than re-structured by the political reforms and economic development of the post-1848 era. In this sense, the *Ackerbürgerstadt* mostly eludes the historic narrative of modernization. Instead, its development throughout the nineteenth century was characterized by persistence and adaptability. The urban economic system was completely adjusted to local conditions and demand. The case study illustrates that the 'agrarian city' is an alternative model of urban development in times of far-reaching socioeconomic change. However, changes as glimpses of "modernity" became more tangible on a sociocultural level driven by the growing small-town bourgeoisie. The *Ackerbürgerstadt* of the nineteenth century cannot be fully understood in purely economic terms; we also have to pay attention to the socio-cultural shifts that profoundly changed the perception of the rural small town and the living environment of its population.

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# Oesterreich ist eben Oesterreich

## Politics and Community Histories in the Austro–Hungarian Empire

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**Abstract.** The study offers a comparative analysis of historical *grand récits* written during the period of the Austro–Hungarian Empire in the imperial center, Hungary and Bohemia. On the one hand, the study focuses on different strategies of legitimizing the existence of the empire from Austro-German historians and, on the other, on how compatible these historical visions were with those of Hungarian and Czech scholars. Rather than seeing “imperial” and “national” histories as isolated, by genre different narratives, our aim is to study them as community histories which have serious implications for each other: smaller (national) community histories for the larger (imperial) community, and vice versa. The study does not only rely on the analysis of these community histories, but aims to situate them in the larger context of the historical argumentation of the contemporary political discourse, as well as the central notions with which loyalty to Austria could be expressed. According to the conclusion of the study, there is no discernible common ground for Austro-German historians in terms of defining the mission and essence of Austria or even for basic notions describing the empire’s past. Also, their definitions of crucial notions such as the “nation” significantly contradicted the major Hungarian master narratives.

**Keywords:** Austro–Hungarian Empire, master narratives, historiography, Hungary, Bohemia, community histories, dualism, pacte mémoriel

*I am convinced that some books by Austrian historians caused more harm than any lost battle.  
A lost battle only becomes fatal if the historian constructs the fall of Austria from it.*  
(Richard von Kralik)

In 1927, while Oszkár Jászi must have already been working on his major, impactful work on the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy that was published two years later,<sup>1</sup> the French historical journal *Revue Historique* published a special volume in honor of the golden jubilee of its founding. In this volume, the editors asked leading

1 Jászi, *The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy*.

historians of several countries to give an account of the development of historical research in their respective countries in the last fifty years. The three core lands of the late Habsburg Empire also took part in the survey. In the Austrian, Czech, and Hungarian accounts, a certain hesitancy can be detected. Henrik Marczali, historian of the thousand-year-old “Great Hungary,” hardly referred to the major changes in the country’s situation, mutilated by the treaty of Trianon, and nor did he mention the historiography of the different minorities of the historical Hungary.<sup>2</sup> The young Czechoslovak state was represented by Josef Šusta, a young member of the “Goll-school” and former student of the prestigious Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung. Šusta only dedicated a few, albeit friendly remarks to the Slovaks, and did not present the work of Slovak historians.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, it was the Austrian Emil von Ottenthal who explicitly wrote about the difficulties he was facing when trying to make sense of the new Austrian state: for him it was impossible to respond to the question defined by the review in the framework of the new and ad hoc political frontiers of his country.<sup>4</sup>

While Jászi was elaborating his thesis according to which the Monarchy was predestined for deconstruction by its inner “centrifugal forces”—a thesis that would remain dominant throughout the better part of the twentieth century—, these three scholars were discernibly puzzled by the current form of their respective countries. Today, however, these entities seem to us more natural than the empire, the destruction of which gave them life. This is also demonstrated by the fact that the late-nineteenth century historiography of the region is mostly discussed in terms of national frameworks. Furthermore, the vast majority of those pieces of work which introduce a comparative perspective consider East Central Europe to be their field, excluding Austria (after all, a “Western European” country) from their research.<sup>5</sup>

This article focuses on Habsburg Central Europe. It aims at examining and comparing Austro-German, Hungarian, and (to a lesser extent) Czech historical narratives from the perspective of the empire, and not exclusively in their “national” contexts. The main question is how the historical legitimization of Austria was elaborated from the imperial center and how these visons of history were compatible with those of Hungarian and Czech historians. How did these coexisting communities interpret their shared and conflictual pasts? How compatible were their historical narratives? These questions can be summarized with the notion of the *pacte mémoriel*. This term

2 Marczali, “Hongrie.”

3 Šusta, “Tchécoslovaquie.”

4 Ottenthal, “Autriche.”

5 E.g. Baár, *Historians and Nationalism*; Janowski, “Három történész Közép-Európából”; Niederhauser, *A történetírás története Kelet-Európában*. A significant exception is Pohl, “National Origin Narratives.”

was elaborated by André Burguière as a part of his criticism of the famous concept of *lieux de mémoire* introduced by Pierre Nora. Burguière considered that Nora's concept only amounted to an inventory of the elements of national memory, in which every single piece finds its place and coexists peacefully. Instead of this mere inventory, the processes have to be examined through which collective memory is created through bargaining, oblivion, denial, and rupture. The resulting pact gives an interpretation of the past that guarantees the survival of the community.<sup>6</sup> The present research inquires whether such a pact was possible in the Habsburg Empire.

## Community histories

To study this question, I rely on historical syntheses (in French, *grand récits*) which involve discussion of the history of the given community from its beginnings to contemporary times. These works are always representative and intend to directly form collective memory,<sup>7</sup> elaborating the canon of history.<sup>8</sup> They aim to achieve this through providing a *master narrative*; that is, a narrative that provides a dominant vision of the past regarding its structure and the meaning attributed to it.<sup>9</sup> This meaning and structure cannot be deduced merely from the historical sources—as Marnix Beyen put it, a certain *fantasy* is needed as well.<sup>10</sup> The authors also have to pass judgement on historical figures based on the extent to which they follow or deviate from the imagined ideal development. For these reasons, “positivist” scholarship (by which we do not refer to August Comte’s theory, but to the practice of the tireless search for and respect for facts, which was inspired much more by Leopold von Ranke than the French philosopher<sup>11</sup>) always maintained a certain suspicion of this genre of history writing. The influential Czech positivist historian Jaroslav Goll expressed his aversion to the genre in the following way: “When telling the history of our own people, we never limit ourselves to merely showing what ha[s] happened. We unceasingly pass judgement, evaluate and say: it is a good thing that this and that happened this way, or it’s a shame. This gives historiography a political character.”<sup>12</sup>

6 Burguière, “Nemzeti örökség, emlékezet és történelem,” 155. Moritz Csáky also criticized this aspect of *lieux de mémoire*. However, he considered it to be only one specific interpretation of the concept; accordingly, he did not feel it necessary to invent a notion that would replace Nora's. Cf. Csáky, “Culture as a Space of Communication,” 194.

7 Nora, “Entre mémoire et histoire,” 40.

8 On the notion of the canon with regard to historical *grand récit*, see Gyáni, “Kánon, ellenkánon és politikai megfelelés.”

9 Thijs, “The Metaphor of the Master,” 60–74.

10 Beyen, “Who is the Nation and What Does It Do,” 68.

11 Cf. Bourdé and Martin, *Les écoles historiques*, 207.

12 Quoted by Plaschka, *Von Palacky bis Pekař*, 66.

Literature tends to tie this type of history writing to the notion of the nation and labels it “national” communities larger and smaller than the nation are also in need of this genre: their members require a narrative of the past which forms their imaginary in such a way that they perceive themselves as a community. It is no accident that *fantasy*, with which notion Beyen described the particularity of master narratives, is so similar to *imagination*, the key concept in Benedict Anderson’s famous theory about how communities function.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the notion of community also allows us to see “imperial” and “national” historical narratives not as isolated by genre-different perspectives but as narratives which have serious implications for each other: smaller (national) community histories for the larger (imperial) community, and vice versa. After all, the “empire” and its “nations” were not isolated from each other, but constituted somewhat of a “multi-layered” community. For these reasons, I consider it wiser to talk about “community histories” or “community master narratives.” It is also worth noting that *community* happens to be a notion that theoretically well-informed students of Habsburg Central Europe increasingly use, as it has fewer problematic implications than notions such as “nation” or “group.”<sup>14</sup>

## Performative discourse

After defining our main sources, the question remains: what to study exactly in this ocean of texts? What do we need to look for in order to answer our question regarding the legitimacy of the empire and the possibilities of a *pacte mémoriel*? One guiding line is the concept of *performative discourse* introduced by Pierre Bourdieu. As Bourdieu explained, the representation of reality is itself part of that reality: it is part of a struggle which aims at enforcing a certain perception of the world in order to create or eliminate groups. The representation of regions (such as the empire or a part of it) is never neutral: inevitably, it is a statement regarding the aspirations and existence of certain groups.<sup>15</sup>

With regard to the empire, several notions can be identified which indicate this importance. In fact, the complex identity crises of Cisleithania’s German community can hardly be understood without a close inspection of such central notions. Such a notion is *Oesterreich* itself, which already had diverse meanings before 1867, but with the *Ausgleich* (Compromise) into a phase of permanent crisis.<sup>16</sup> The most flagrant example of this is how in two laws legislated a few days apart, we find two

13 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

14 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. For example, Maxwell, *Everyday Nationalism in Hungary*, 58.

15 Bourdieu, “Identity and Representation.”

16 Bruckmüller, “*Oesterreichbegriff und Oesterreich-Bewusstsein*,” 256.

different interpretations of *Österreich*: one law uses it as a reference to the entire empire (including Hungary), while in the other, it represents Cisleithania exclusively.<sup>17</sup> This contradiction also appears in the great Meyer encyclopedia, in which *Österreich* is defined as Cisleithania, while its subchapter on *Geschichte Österreichs* includes Hungary's history as well.<sup>18</sup> In official circles, the question of the adequate name for the empire arose immediately after the *Ausgleich*. Liberal and centralist historian Alfred von Arneth was charged with the task of proposing the new name. Arneth considered the *Ausgleich* to be a domestic affair which should have no impact on the name of the empire; hence, he wanted to preserve the name *Österreichische Monarchie*. However, the Hungarian prime minister, Gyula Andrássy, firmly rejected this idea and proposed the *Austro-Hungarian Empire* and *Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*, which were accepted by Franz Joseph.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, throughout the period *Österreich* had at least three meanings: the two regions situated above and below the river Enns; Cisleithania; and finally, the totality of the empire in the sense of *Gesamtstaat*.<sup>20</sup> To complicate the matter further, this notion of the *Gesamtstaat* itself could be understood in at least three different ways. It could refer to the centralized structure of the administration, as in the famous book by Hermann Ignaz Bidermann.<sup>21</sup> But it could also mean a more abstract notion of the powerful empire as employed in the works of Adolf Fischhof who argued for the dualistic system (in contrast to Bidermann's concept) in order to save the *Gesamtstaat*.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the German community used to refer to its own interest as the interest of the *Gesamtsaat* in order to establish it as superior to the interests of the other national communities of the empire.<sup>23</sup>

The notion of *österreich* followed a similarly complicated path. In the *Vormärz* (pre-1848) period, *österreich* or *altösterreich* meant supra-national, rational thinking; it expressed a loyalty towards the empire as a whole and was not at all limited to the Germans of Austria.<sup>24</sup> This meaning did not perish completely in the second half of the nineteenth century: when Henrik Marczali requested entry to the Viennese Archives to complete his research on Joseph II, a most delicate historical topic, Baron Braun, councilor of state, expressed his faith in the historian by saying

17 Stourzh, "Die dualistischen Reichsstruktur," 109.

18 Bruckmüller, "Österreichbegriff und Österreich-Bewusstsein," 262.

19 Wertheimer, *Gróf Andrássy Gyula élete és kora*, vol. I, 518–25.

20 Bruckmüller, "Österreichbegriff und Österreich-Bewusstsein," 262.

21 Bidermann, *Geschichte de österreichischen Gesammt-Staats-Idee*.

22 Fischhof and Unger, *Zur Lösung der ungarische Frage*.

23 Kirchhoff, *Die Deutschen in der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie*, 64–5.

24 Kořalka, *Tschechen im Habsburgerreich und in Europa*, 29.

that he was sure that Marczali was a *guter Österreicher*.<sup>25</sup> However, another meaning became increasingly dominant during the period under examination that contradicted this spirit, claiming that only the German inhabitants of the empire could be truly loyal to Austria and hence, be true *Österreicher*. This was supported by ideas such as that the Germans as *Staatsnation* are the kind hosts of the other nations,<sup>26</sup> and that they are also the only community which belongs to Austria voluntarily.<sup>27</sup> This harmony between *Österreicher* and *Deutsch* was disrupted by the severe crises during the governments of Hohenwart and Badeni, both of whom introduced measures which favored the Czech community of Bohemia, resulting in *Österreicher* and *Deutsch* increasingly becoming the counter-notions of each other.<sup>28</sup> In a similar manner, the interests of the *Gesamtsaat* ceased being synonyms for the interests of the German community.

The opposition between Austria and Germanness could also be expressed with the notions of *Vaterland* and *Mutterland*. While *Vaterland* referred to the empire, *Mutterland* alluded to Germany—not necessarily to the German Empire, but to the imagined common German cultural space.<sup>29</sup> After the defeat in 1866, the liberal *Die Presse* explained in almost pseudo-Freudian categories how, in the case of a conflict between *Vaterland* and *Mutterland*, the Germans of Austria should keep in mind that their mother is German culture, and their loyalty to Austria (*Vaterlandsliebe*) depends on whether the mother and father live together.<sup>30</sup> *Vaterland* and its variants were used by the central power to outweigh the belonging to smaller regional powers (even during the absolutism of Maria Theresia) and particular national communities.<sup>31</sup> The Austrian state made considerable efforts to instill love of the *Vaterland* in youth, foremost with a course entitled *Vaterlandskunde*. *Patriotismus* was the term used to describe loyal conduct towards the *Vaterland*.

There was another mark of acceptance of Austria's existence: the belief in a particular *österreichische Mission*. After the defeat by Prussia, it was Adolf Fischhof who revisited and conceptualized the mission of Austria.<sup>32</sup> Fischhof refused to see the events of 1866 as a tragedy; rather, he interpreted them as a phase of natural development: Austria no longer had two fronts to fight on; she could concentrate on

25 Marczali, *Emlékeim*, 137.

26 Bruckmüller, “Österreichbegriff und Österreich-Bewusstsein,” 270.

27 Kienzl, *Nation, Identität und Antisemitismus*, 77.

28 Haider, *Im Streit um die österreichische Nation*, 118–21.

29 Haider, *Im Streit um die österreichische Nation*, 59–60.

30 Quoted by Haider, *Im Streit um die österreichische Nation*, 60.

31 Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 49, 62.

32 Haider, *Im Streit um die österreichische Nation*, 87.

her true mission: the defense of Western civilization against Russian barbarism.<sup>33</sup> It did not take much time for this idea to be accepted and transmitted by the liberal press. For both the press and Fischhof, it was evident that this mission meant the spreading of German culture. However, initially this was not purely cultural imperialism; it was more of a mélange of the emancipatory idea of liberalism and ethnic nationalism. For liberals, Germanness initially meant a certain cultural level and acceptance of liberal values which anybody could achieve, regardless of the language they spoke. Gradually, however, and in great part as a result of the several conflicts with Czech nationalists, the liberal concept of Germanness became increasingly ethicized.<sup>34</sup>

The last notion we have to deal with is, of course, *Nation*. In the 1850s, conservative historian and statesman Joseph Alexander von Helfert aimed at introducing a political interpretation of the notion, setting up the ancient Romans as an example, so he could talk about a unified *österreichische Nation*.<sup>35</sup> This concept had certain roots in Maria Theresa's period, when the monarch's reformers of education referred to *Nationalerziehung*, which meant an education that reinforced loyalty to the state (and, evidently, had little to do with nineteenth-century nationalism).<sup>36</sup> However, after the defeat of 1866, the ethnic-linguistic definition of the nation prevailed. In order to (re)comfort the Austro-Germans, the liberal press argued that the end of the German Confederation did not mean the end of the *Deutsche Nation* as defined in cultural terms. The tendency was reinforced during the period: "nation" was thought of as a cultural fact, not a political one. For Austro-Marxists also, the nation was a natural unit which existed before the state.<sup>37</sup>

As we have seen, it was argued at one time that only Germans can be good *Österreicher*, and their interests are identical to those of the *Gesamtstaat*. The notion of nation, however, was spared from these strategies of reinforcing German superiority in the empire: no tentative move was made to monopolize it for the German community. In contrast to what one could have experienced in Transleithania, where nation (*nemzet*) and nationality (*nemzetiség*) stood in binary opposition, legitimizing Magyar supremacy, in Cisleithania the two remained synonyms.

33 Fischhof, *Ein Blick auf Oesterreichs Lage*, 23–4.

34 Judson, "Whether Race or Conviction Should be the Standard," 81–6.

35 Helfert, *Über Nationalgeschichte*, 1.

36 Grimm, *Die Schulreform Maria Theresias*, 128–29. The fact that Helfert himself wrote a lengthy book on Maria Theresa's educational reforms reinforces this affirmation. Cp. Helfert, *Die österreichische Volksschule*.

37 Haider, *Im Streit um die österreichische Nation*, 190–200.

## History as language: historical visons in political discourse

The other important guideline for analyzing historical syntheses is the historical argumentation of the period's political discourse. As is well known, history was awarded special importance throughout the nineteenth century, which era contemporaries called "the century of history" or "the epoch of backward-looking prophets." This was far from mere nostalgia, but a specific way of thinking in which the past served as guiding light for orienting oneself in the present.<sup>38</sup> History can also be regarded as a sort of language with which one expresses their opinion on contemporary matters. In Carl Schorske's terms, this was the period of "thinking with history."<sup>39</sup>

In this section, I will examine the historical argumentation in political pamphlets which deal with the question of the empire. More precisely, I will look at major theoreticians from clearly identifiable political groups, focusing on their views of the empire and the historical arguments supporting them. These views are directly linked to the dualistic system, because, although the acceptance or rejection of dualism did not serve as a defining factor of political preference in Cisleithania as it did in Hungary, every major political group ultimately had to face this question as it was directly linked to their vision of the future of the empire.

Adolf Fischhof, a prominent liberal author, has already been mentioned. His argument for the *raison d'être* of the empire relies on the historical dichotomy of West and East, in which Austria has a crucial role in blocking the latter. In a pamphlet co-written in 1861 with Joseph Unger, Hungary is defined as part of the East; however, she is not qualified as Austria's enemy—on the contrary, the authors speak respectfully of the Hungarians. The two authors elaborated the basic structure of the dualistic system while most of their comrades were preoccupied with the fragile Cisleithanian constitution and Austria's role in German unification, while still relying on the *Verwirkungstheorie* with regard to the other side of Leitha.<sup>40</sup> In the vision of Fischhof and Unger, on the other hand, Austria and Hungary are historically determined to have a mutually respectful, close relationship, the violation of which by either party had led to the demise of both in the past: Austria had to face inner instability while Hungary had lost her historical rights.<sup>41</sup> What made Fischhof's and Unger's argumentation exceptional is that they did not advocate for respect of Hungary's constitutional freedoms only because this country had always been inclined to revolt, but out of honest respect for Hungary's past, which might be due to the fact that Fischhof himself was born in Buda, where he received his education,

38 Varga, Árpád *a város fölött*, 25–6.

39 Schorske, *Thinking with History*, 3.

40 Somogyi, *A birodalmi centralizációtól a dualizmusig*, 132.

41 Fischhof and Unger, *Zur Lösung der ungarischen Frage*, 23.

an important part of which was the cult of Hungary's historical constitution.<sup>42</sup> The lessons of history and Austria's new constitution dictated a relationship that was closer than mere personal union, yet respected the freedoms of Hungary.<sup>43</sup> The two authors practically come to the conclusion that, in order to save the *Gesamstaat* (in the sense of the powerful empire), one has to sacrifice the *Gesamtstaat* (the centralized administration).

The liberal press accepted promptly this dualism, which is also discernible from the fact that for them *Österreich* meant Cisleithania.<sup>44</sup> In the meantime, they were quick to counter-attack at any tentative move from Czech politicians that was aimed at gaining the same rights for their national community. On one occasion, the *Neue Freie Presse* labelled the Czechs the "marauders of history"<sup>45</sup>—it was also in this paper where the historian Theodor Mommsen published his infamous article about the Czechs being the "apostolate of barbarism."<sup>46</sup> In the meantime, the *Neue Freie Presse* defended dualism from its many adversaries.

Such attacks came from Joseph von Helfert, who was at the height of his career in the 1850s, but remained an important figure in the conservative movement even after 1867 and was a prominent member of Taaffe's "iron ring." This true *Altösterreich* wrote a lengthy pamphlet against dualism when it was due for its first renewal in 1876.<sup>47</sup> Helfert dedicated the first passages of a book to the question of Austria's *raison d'être*. He refuted the idea that Austria was merely the outcome of cleverly organized marriages—for marriages between dynasties are never the reason for the rapprochement of countries, but are only the signs of a historical tendency. Austria's existence is a geographical and historical necessity, which transcends the house of the Habsburgs: the "historical instinct" of these countries had driven Austria's countries towards unification as crystal atoms merge into one, obeying the law of nature.<sup>48</sup>

The social democrat Karl Renner's view of Austria is similar to the old conservative's vision to a great extent. Renner also considered that the existence of closely tied country-complexes was not the private matter of the Habsburg family. However, Renner (writing under the pseudonym Rudolf Springer) put the emphasis on the interest of the masses (*Masseninteressen*) instead of geopolitical necessities.<sup>49</sup> Similarly to Helfert, Renner aimed at pointing out how the ambitions of the Anjou

42 C. Lajtai, "Magyar nemzet vagyok."

43 Fischhof and Unger, *Zur Lösung der ungarischen Frage*.

44 Kienzl, *Nation, Identität und Antisemitismus*, 50.

45 Ehrenpreis, "Die 'reichschweite' Presse in der Habsburgmonarchie," 1732.

46 *Neue Freie Presse* 30 October, 1897.

47 Helfert, *Revision des ungarischen Ausgleichs*.

48 Helfert, *Revision des ungarischen Ausgleichs*, 1–7.

49 Springer, *Die Kriese des Dualismus*, 9–10.

and Jagiellon monarchs and Matthias Corvinus had been the creation of an empire just like Austria. The Habsburgs' success was due to the fact that they were in the position to use the resources of the German territories against Ottoman aggression.<sup>50</sup>

Both Helfert and Renner were against the dualist system; nevertheless, they did not want a break from Hungary as the Pan-Germans did, but to integrate it more fully into the empire: Helfert into an old-fashioned empire with federalist elements (which favored the Czechs to a large extent); Renner into a carefully elaborated new system. In both cases, their argumentation led to an image of Hungarian history that radically contradicted the most basic elements of the Hungarian national history narrative. In Helfert's view, Hungary's history did not justify its exceptional position in the empire. Hungary, in his vision, had been weakened by selfish nobility in the Middle Ages, which had led to the Ottoman conquest.<sup>51</sup> The liberation and rebirth of the country were solely the merit of Austria. Furthermore, the laws of 1848 on which the legitimacy of the dualistic system was based represented a radical break from the past, hence they could not justify the *Ausgleich*—which was based on historical continuity.<sup>52</sup>

Renner was perhaps even more hostile to the Hungarian historical self-image. The most important feature in his strategy was considering the Ottoman conquest of Hungary a radical turning point in the country's history. According to Renner, only Upper Hungary, inhabited by Slovaks and Germans, and Transylvania, inhabited by Szeklers and Germans, had been spared, while the regions inhabited by Hungarians fell victim to the Ottoman terror.<sup>53</sup> Hence, there is no continuity whatsoever between medieval and contemporary Hungary, which makes claims based on medieval glory and constitutionality void.

Renner in fact diverted from his party's official position regarding Hungary when he argued for maintaining, and in some sense improving, Austria's relations with the country. The social democratic party officially declared the intention of completely breaking from Hungary in 1903. Otto Bauer represented this view in his famous work on the nationality question in Austria. Bauer considered that, in contrast to the Czechs (whose striving for state rights—that is, a position similar to that of Hungary—Bauer strongly opposed), the Hungarians never became a “nation without history” as they had never lost their ruling class. This class, the nobility, vehemently opposed the taxation policy of Joseph II under the pretext of “national liberty.” The monarch responded with absolutism and colonizing customs policy. The historical memory of this period embittered the relations of Austria and Hungary. It also enabled the Hungarian ruling

50 Springer, *Die Kriese des Dualismus*, 10.

51 Helfert, *Revision des ungarischen Ausgleichs*, 109–10.

52 Helfert, *Revision des ungarischen Ausgleichs*, 86.

53 Springer, *Die Kriese des Dualismus*, 10–1.

classes to legitimize everything with the ideology of the “freedom fight against Vienna.” As long as Austria and Hungary were not separated, this ideology could hinder the natural development of the class struggle in Hungary.<sup>54</sup>

Bauer not only contradicted Renner with regard to Hungary, but he also had very different views about Austria, which did not represent great value to him. Bauer saw Austria's history as, in essence, German history: in his view, Austria only came into being and aimed at stronger relations with Hungary and Bohemia in order to strengthen the Habsburgs' position in the German lands. For Bauer, the whole Central European world revolved around the German *Reich*: all major dynasties of the region wanted to use the combined powers of Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary to overcome the German princes' leaning towards independence, and strengthen the German Empire. This case was lost when attention was diverted from the German question to the Ottoman conquests.<sup>55</sup>

Bauer's account of Austria's history has many similarities with Heinrich Friedjung's vision. Friedjung was a member of the famous Pernerstorfer circle in the late 1860s which rebelled against the liberal political culture and nurtured nationalist as well as socialist ideals.<sup>56</sup> Friedjung himself was an enthusiastic German nationalist until the movement adopted the racial antisemitism of Georg Schönerer in the 1880s. In the mid-1870s, Friedjung published a book against the dualistic system which served as one of the foundations of the German nationalist party's program (and also cost him his position as a secondary school teacher). For Friedjung, Austria belonged to Germany not because of linguistic or ethnic factors, but for reasons of historical development: whereas Switzerland had had a life of her own for a long time, until recently Austria and Germany had constituted one entity.<sup>57</sup> This unity had been disrupted by two major errors on the part of Austria: her attachment to Eastern Europe on the one hand, and to the Habsburg dynasty on the other. The greatest sin of the dynasty was engaging Austria in the counter-reformation, which deprived her of the achievements of German enlightenment.<sup>58</sup> As for the other dire error, Austria's engagement in the East, Friedjung denied the existence of any *österreichische Mission*. For him, the East was something of complete foreignness; a different world of its own which must be completely separated from Austria. The idea of an *österreichische Mission* would only serve those who wanted to detach Austria completely from the German world.<sup>59</sup>

54 Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage*, 413–14.

55 Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage*, 195–99.

56 On the circle and Friedjung's place in it: McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics*.

57 Friedjung, *Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn*, 27.

58 Friedjung, *Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn*, 22–3.

59 Friedjung, *Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn*, 24–5.

Hungary was an integral part of this East, which no German hands should ever touch. Historically, the relationship with Hungary had brought nothing but misfortune to Austria: the dictatorial measures which the Habsburg rulers had to introduce in order to contain this rebellious nation were adapted in the Austrian half as well. Even if Austria had the power to subjugate Hungary, as she had done in the past, it would be a mistake, as this would still mean ties to the East.<sup>60</sup>

The other major political party which introduced “politics in a new key”<sup>61</sup> to Austria was the Christian Social Party dominated by Vienna’s charismatic major, Karl Lueger, whose infamous anti-Hungarian rhetoric served as a diversion from the Czech problem (which was particularly acute in Vienna) and designated a common enemy against which all the nationalities of Austria could unite.<sup>62</sup> This strategy was also visible in the party’s newspaper, the *Reichspost*, in which the Czech question was hardly treated, whereas Hungary was often discussed in a derogatory manner, without the accompaniment of sophisticated, systematic historical visions such as those of Renner’s or Helfert’s. In a series of articles, for example, Adam Trabert discussed Hungarian history, focusing on the occasions when the Hungarian elite had revolted against their king, proving to be a traitorous, ungrateful nation.<sup>63</sup> Another occasion for discussing Hungary was in 1896 during the millennial celebration. At this point, *Reichspost* reproached the Magyar elite for choosing to celebrate a period when the nation was still pagan and conducting deadly campaigns against the Christian countries of Europe.<sup>64</sup>

The most famous Czech critic of the dualist system, František Palacký, provided a different perspective about both Austria’s and Hungary’s history than his above-quoted peers. Palacký was not only the most prominent Czech historian, but an eminent figure in the Czech National Party. He presented his concept in a famous article published in 1866 in both Czech and German. According to him, Austria did have a duty; however, this was not the quasi-timeless mission based on the *longue durée* opposition between West and East. Austria had concrete tasks at precise moments, and her existence would be justified only if she fulfilled these duties. Projecting this argument back into history, Palacký saw the birth of Austria only in 1526, not as the result of a long-term tendency of the core lands gravitating towards each other, but at a clearly definable moment, when European culture needed protection from Ottoman aggression.<sup>65</sup> Later, the duty of supporting the Catholic revival completed

60 Friedjung, *Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn*, 55.

61 Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 133–46.

62 Boyer, *Political Radicalism in late Imperial Vienna*, 215.

63 *Reichspost* 17, 18, 19, and 20 December 1895. (Abendblatt.)

64 *Reichspost*, 16 June 1896.

65 Palacky, *Oesterreichs Staatsidee*, 3–4.

the duties of Austria. These two tasks became outdated; however, a new mission awaited the empire: establishing of the equality of her nations (*Gleichberichtigung*), which she must realize in order to maintain her legitimate place in the world. This would only be possible through the federal system, which respected all political-historical individualities of the empire, while both German centralism and German-Hungarian dualism were illegitimate.<sup>66</sup> The ideological basis of centralism which claims German cultural superiority was false, as Slavs had always been strong pillars of European culture throughout history. Dualism equally disavows history because, in the past, Hungary was the ideal land of *Gleichberichtigung*, proof of which could be found in the country's constitution—foremost, the position of Latin as the administrative language of the multinational state.<sup>67</sup> This noble heritage was tragically cast aside in 1848 when the program of aggressive Magyarization was put in motion. Dualism, in fact, in contrast to what its supporters strove to convey, could not be deduced from history; on the contrary, it was a revolutionary construct that flew in face of every historical tradition.<sup>68</sup> Magyarization was an ulcer on the body of Austria, and if she chose that path, her downfall would be certain.

Finally, we should turn our attention to the other side of the Leitha for a brief moment, where the question of relations with Austria divided the political sphere into supporters of the *Ausgleich* and independentists, although there were certain situations in which this dichotomy could be overcome. Both of these political groups had an important member who at the turn of the century wrote his own narrative of Hungarian history, which proves the validity of the term “thinking with history.”

Count Gyula Andrássy Jr., son of the first prime minister of dualist Hungary, and an impactful politician himself, was an ardent supporter of the *Ausgleich*, although he did have his differences with the monarch concerning the question of the language of the shared army.<sup>69</sup> In his historical account, in line with the argumentation of other supporters of the Compromise, Hungary's history is determined by external forces, and international trends. The greatness of Hungary's most respected statesmen lay in their ability to recognize these trends and act accordingly.<sup>70</sup> The one constant order that world tendencies dictate is that Hungary's place is with the West. Andrássy judged the different revolts according to the extent of which they looked to East for allies—which he harshly condemned, as they countered the only constant law of Hungarian history—while in those rebels who remained aware of this fact, the count recognized the precursors of Deák. For Andrássy, Austria represented the West to which Hungary

66 Palacky, *Oesterreichs Staatsidee*, 37.

67 Palacky, *Oesterreichs Staatsidee*, 18.

68 Palacky, *Oesterreichs Staatsidee*, 48.

69 On Andrássy see Szalai, *Ifjabb Andrássy Gyula élete és pályája*.

70 Andrássy, *A magyar állam fennmaradásának és alkotmányos szabadságának okai*, vol. I, 5, 41.

must tie her faith. Naturally, the count did not deny the conflictual episodes of the past; however, he argued that Austria never succeeded in completely weakening Hungary, precisely because this country historically belonged to the West.<sup>71</sup>

The independentist Ákos Beöthy argued for the relations between Hungary and Austria to be reduced to those of personal union, as did the independentist parties themselves throughout the majority of the period. Beöthy presented the nation as the sole agent of its history. Even during the foundation of the state, Western models and ideas did not influence substantially the nation, but only provided a rough framework.<sup>72</sup> It is in accordance with this concept that Beöthy never pondered the international context and prospects of the independentist movements in history—for him, they were fully legitimate just because of their rightfulness. In his book, Austria appears as completely incompatible with Hungary. Beöthy opposed Austria's "mechanic" character (a very common qualification of Austria at the time) to the "organic" nature of the Hungarian nation. The mechanic Austria and its ruling family knew nothing of noble ideals; her existence was restricted to the soulless clattering of administrative machinery.<sup>73</sup> Although Beöthy also believed that Hungary belonged to Western civilization, he was persuaded that mechanic Austria could not serve as mediator between Hungary and Western Europe.<sup>74</sup>

### **Institutional framework: professional history and the question of the empire**

Research of Austria's history or research of history in Austria?

The notion of narrative which appears frequently in this research brings the famous concept of Hayden White's to the minds of most people. For this research, however, I found the approach of Michel de Certeau more useful. De Certeau also recognized the narrative character of history, but he drew attention to something that his contemporary had neglected: the social and institutional context.<sup>75</sup> For de Certeau, the "historiographical operation" is a social practice which is inseparable from the social and institutional milieu in which it is produced.<sup>76</sup> In the first section of this paper, I aimed at presenting the social context: the notions the usage of which could not be neutral, and the visons of history that political actors used to legitimize and

71 Andrassy, *A magyar állam fennmaradásának és alkotmányos szabadságának okai*, vol. I, 40.

72 Beöthy, *A magyar államiság fejlődése, küzdelmei*, 63.

73 Beöthy, *A magyar államiság fejlődése, küzdelmei*, 659.

74 Beöthy, *A magyar államiság fejlődése, küzdelmei*, 304.

75 Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*, 43–49.

76 de Certeau, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, 77–100.

express their standpoints. In this section, I will present the institutional framework of the three historiographies, mainly concentrating on German-Austria. The focus will be on the ideological questions that concerned the empire, and not on how professional historiography came to be, nor on its wider socio-cultural embeddedness, both of which would merit studies of their own.<sup>77</sup>

The revolutions of 1848–49 brought about a paradigm shift in the empire's policy towards intellectuals. Relying on the experience of the French Revolution during the *Vormärz*, any political involvement by any intellectual, even such loyalists as Joseph von Hormayr, was considered to be a deadly threat to the status quo.<sup>78</sup> This took a heavy toll on universities which became the training schools of functionaries, rather than workshops of scientific fantasy and freedom.<sup>79</sup> After the crisis, Leo Thun, minister of education, broke from this policy, which he considered responsible for the revolutions: not only did it fail to prevent the spread of subversive ideologies, but it left Austria unprotected against them. The empire was in need of state-of-the-art education and scholarship, and it needed to appreciate its faithful intellectuals.<sup>80</sup>

In the discipline of history, it was Thun's secretary of state, the above-mentioned Joseph Alexander von Helfert, who outlined the tasks and goals that applied in the new circumstances. In a book published in 1853, departing from his political definition of the nation that we witnessed above, Helfert defined the task of the historian in researching and writing the *österreichische Nationalgeschichte*, by which he meant the history of the entire empire. This *Nationalgeschichte* must inspire the love of Austria (*Vaterlandsliebe*) in all inhabitants. It had to deduce the path of Austria's development practically in the same way as Helfert explained it in his above-mentioned political pamphlet; that is, by demonstrating how the core lands of Austria had been gravitating towards each other ever since late antiquity. The year 1526 should not be treated as the great moment of unification of Hungary and Bohemia with Austria; instead, the pasts of these countries should be discussed in parallel, emphasizing the numerous ways in which their histories were already entangled, centuries before they came together under the Habsburgs.<sup>81</sup>

With his book, Helfert aimed at defining the guidelines of an institute that was to be established a year afterwards: the Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung (IöG). This institution had a dual task: on the one hand, it had to provide world-class

<sup>77</sup> For a general overview of the region's historiography, one can consult various works. For the Austrian case: Lhotsky, *Österreichische Historiographie*; for Bohemia: Kutnar and Marek, *Přehledné dějiny českého a slovenského dějepisectví*; for Hungary: Romsics, *Clio bűvöletében*.

<sup>78</sup> On Hormayr's case: Robert, *L'idée nationale Autrichienne*.

<sup>79</sup> Lhotsky, "Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsschreibung," 412.

<sup>80</sup> Lhotsky, *Österreichische Historiographie*, 157–61.

<sup>81</sup> Helfert, *Über Nationalgeschichte*, 57–59.

education in the auxiliary sciences following the example of the *École des Chartes* of Paris; on the other hand, it had to convey the ideological goals of the *österreichische Nationalgeschichte* to future historians.

Soon, in a sense, the two goals became opposed. The first generations completed their education under the directorship of Albert Jäger. Franz Krones and Franz Martin Mayer, both of whom taught at the University of Graz and wrote syntheses on Austrian history which we will study in the next section, frequented IöG during this period. Jäger was committed to the Austrian patriot ideals; however, he was soon overshadowed by Theodor von Sickel, who officially took over as director in 1869.<sup>82</sup> This was part of a larger scale process in which Prussian scholars were invited to Austria to help in the development of the reforms of universities and education in general. At first glance, in the context of the period, this should not strike us as unusual, because the German university served as a model for the entirety of Europe and even for Japan; however, some historians are puzzled by this development considering the rivalry between Austria and Prussia in the process of German unification.<sup>83</sup> Sickel himself was protestant and Prussian, and hence understandably indifferent to the idea of Austria. Under his leadership, the focus of IöG shifted completely towards the study of auxiliary sciences, in which he was an extraordinary craftsman. His indifference towards Austrian patriotism was part of a general indifference towards politics, not intentional sabotage. This does not alter the fact that, gradually, the *Institut* which was intended to be the Austrian historical research institution became an institution of historical research that happened to be in Austria.<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, it is a massive exaggeration to see the entire discipline of history as completely indifferent or even hostile to the Austrian idea from this point on. Even among the student unions which are usually seen as the seedbed of anti-Austrian German nationalism,<sup>85</sup> there were some the profile of which included Austrian patriotism.<sup>86</sup> To such a student union of historians belonged Alfons Huber, author of the most appreciated synthesis on Austrian history. The Akademische Historikerklub of Innsbruck was supported by Julius Ficker, Huber's master, who represented the Austrian viewpoint in a fierce debate with Heinrich von Sybel, which is perhaps the most famous clash between *kleindeutsche* and *großdeutsche* historians.<sup>87</sup> A significant

82 For the history of the IöG, see: Lhotsky, *Geschichte des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*.

83 Friedrich Heer saw this process as the deconstruction of Austrian identity. Heer, *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität*, 218.

84 Cp. Lhotsky, *Geschichte des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 7; Fellner, "Die Historiographie zur österreichisch-deutschen Problematik," 149.

85 Whiteside, *The Socialism of Fools*, 43–63.

86 Wilfling, *Akademische Fachvereine*.

87 On the debate see: Koch, "Der Streit zwischen Sybel und Ficker."

step, though arriving late in the period, was the introduction of *Reichsgeschichte*, the history of the Habsburg Empire, at the faculties of law and humanities from 1893. Huber was among the scholars who urged this decision, claiming that without the knowledge of Austria's history, one could not be expected to appreciate the state.<sup>88</sup> Even later, in 1897, a commission for Austria's modern history (*Komission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs*) was set up in order to counterbalance IÖG's focus on medieval history. Here as well, professional aspects were mingled with the goals of identity politics: the study of the period after the union of 1526 was presented as a patriotic duty.<sup>89</sup>

Notwithstanding the importance of these developments, they were the exceptions and not the rule. It was the perceived indifference towards Austria and the predominance of the national vantage point that motivated Richard von Kralik to write his own account of Austrian history. Kralik was a literary man; however, during his long *grand tour* he studied history from personalities such as Mommsen and Treitschke. His historical works were also treated in the review of the IÖG.<sup>90</sup>

### The *kuruc* and the *labanc*

When Alexander Flegler wrote his book on Hungarian historiography in the mid-1870s, he was convinced that "it is impossible that the [...] Compromise [will] not affect the spirit of historical studies."<sup>91</sup> Flegler was right in predicting that the Compromise would shape historical studies; nevertheless, he was wrong in thinking that historians would univocally prove that the goals of the radical independentists were illusions. Instead, the Compromise divided the community of historians in a similar way that it did the political sphere in general, dividing them into groups of *kuruc* (independentists) and *labanc* (loyal to the dynasty and to the *Ausgleich*).

The most important independentist historian was Kálmán Thaly. Thaly did not elaborate a sophisticated, systematic historical narrative which supported the idea of complete rupture from Austria. Rather, he cultivated the quasi-worship of his favorite historical heroes, most importantly Ferenc II Rákóczi, leader of the early eighteenth-century rebellion against the Habsburg court, whom he presented as a perfect saint without the most basic human fallibilities. While this was unacceptable for professional historical scholarship, it played well with the public at large, which showed something of the schizophrenic status of Hungarian public life, while

88 Fellner, "Alfons Huber – Werk und Wirken," 292.

89 On the history of the *Komission* see Fellner, "...Ein wahrhaft patriotisches Werk."

90 On Kralik's life see: Geehr, *The Aesthetics of Horror*.

91 Flegler, *A magyar történetírás történelme*, 264.

Thaly's numerous academic positions showed the limits of early professionalization.<sup>92</sup> Most scholars clearly saw the many limits of Thaly's work; however, he had serious admirers among the younger generation of historians, among them Ignác Acsády, a historian of independentist views who wrote a synthesis of Hungarian history at the turn of the century. Acsády was originally a journalist, which remained his livelihood; nevertheless, he was one of the most original Hungarian historians of the period, and used an innovative methodology for studying demography and economy in early modern Hungary.<sup>93</sup>

The opposite of Thaly was considered to be the bishop Vilmos Fraknói, whose academic positions were comparable to those of Thaly's,<sup>94</sup> while Fraknói was a much more serious scholar who constantly sought to improve himself. His synthesis of Hungarian history is from an early period of his immense oeuvre.

Naturally, there were several personalities who strove to overcome the *kuruc-labanc* antagonism. A circle of Hungarian historians formed in Vienna with the leadership of Lajos Thallóczy. For these scholars, the ideological antagonisms, as well as other features in Hungarian intellectual life, appeared to be provincial.<sup>95</sup> In Hungary, Henrik Marczali, undoubtedly the greatest Hungarian historian of the end of the century, also wanted to emancipate himself from the friction between loyalists and independentists.<sup>96</sup> Marczali not only wrote a synthesis of Hungarian history in 1911, but took great part in the creation of the millennial synthesis written between 1895 and 1898. This letter was a major work of 10 volumes edited by Sándor Szilágyi, who was famous for reconciling historians with very different ideological positions and even personal differences.<sup>97</sup> Among the most important authors we can find Acsády, Fraknói, and Marczali. For the same occasion, another historical opus was published, written by historians József Szalay and Lajos Baróti.

### Enemies and friends—dilettantes and professionals

The birth of Czech professional history was directly linked to Charles University, which stood at the center of German–Czech rivalry. For long, Czech national activists and scholars had striven to establish an equal place for Czech scholarship and education at an essentially German university. The decisive step came with the arrival to power

92 Romsics, *Clio bűvöletében*, 130.

93 On Acsády's life and oeuvre, see Gunst, *Acsády Ignác történetírása*.

94 Romsics, *Clio bűvöletében*, 130–32.

95 Dénes, *A történelmi Magyarország eszménye*, 34.

96 Romsics, *Clio bűvöletében*, 143.

97 On the history of the Millennial *grand récit*, see Mann, "A millenniumi Magyar Nemzet Története."

of Count Taaffe, who negotiated a deal with the Old Czechs who had been in passive resistance until then. Part of the deal was that Charles University would be divided into two parts, a German and a Czech one, both of which could keep the historical name. The university thus became a cultural and intellectual center for the Czechs in 1882.<sup>98</sup>

Among the young scholars who taught at the old-new Czech university was Jaroslav Goll, a former student of the University of Göttingen and leading figure of what became the Goll School. The young scholars of Charles University were immediately faced with a major challenge which was related to the infamous Königinhofer and Grünberger manuscripts forged by Václav Hanka and his collaborators. Goll, with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Jan Gebauer, exposed the forged manuscripts which “proved” the existence of an ancient, highly advanced Czech literary language and state, and became substantial parts of Czech culture. Palacký himself believed in their authenticity and used them as sources for his major historical work. Consequently, their exposure entailed the accusation of anti-patriotism.<sup>99</sup> The second major challenge that the Goll School had to face came from Goll’s former comrade-in-arms, Masaryk, and lasted well into the interwar period. Masaryk strove to fill the void left by Palacký as “father of the nation” who informs his community about the sense of its history.<sup>100</sup> Masaryk, following Palacký’s path, found the “meaning of Czech history” in the Hussite movement, which he described as democratic, and established a direct line from the Hussites to the main figures of the national revival.<sup>101</sup> Evidently, this concept was rejected as an unacceptable anachronism by the Goll School, from which Josef Pekař took up the debate with Masaryk. The main difference between the two was their understanding of history: whether it was a source of inspiration for the nation’s contemporary fights (as Masaryk believed) or whether the past ought to be studied merely for its own sake (as was Pekař’s conviction).<sup>102</sup>

These major conflicts were not related to Austria, in contrast to the situation in Hungary. The Goll School accepted the empire: in 1916, Goll even wrote an article arguing for the necessity of Austria’s existence for which he was reproached in the early 1920s. In the meantime, some reviews in *Český časopis historický* give the impression that the school supported the striving for Bohemian state rights, such as the review of Ede (Eduard) Wertheimer’s biography on Andrassy, who blocked Hohenwart’s attempt at a Czech *Ausgleich*.<sup>103</sup>

98 Kutnar and Marek, *Přehledné dějiny*, 378.

99 On the case of the manuscripts, see Rychterová, “The Manuscripts of Grünberg and Königinhof.”

100 Plaschka, *Von Palacky bis Pekař*, 77–8.

101 Masaryk, *Česká otázka*, 14–5.

102 Plaschka, *Von Palacky bis Pekař*, 80–1. On the debate also see Brušák, “The Meaning of Czech History.”

103 Hoch, “Wertheimer Eudard von.”

Nevertheless, it was necessary to recall these episodes in order to understand why the Goll School did not produce a complete historical synthesis about Bohemia's past before the World War I. In his account of the development of Czech historical studies, quoted at the beginning of this article, Josef Šusta also mentioned this fact, which he considered to be one of the weak points of the Goll School. Šusta referred to political and social factors as reasons for this lack.<sup>104</sup> The categories developed by Carl Schmitt could perhaps help us better understand this phenomenon: Schmitt considered that the essence of every major field is the opposition in which they see the world: politics interprets the world as divided into enemies and friends, whereas aesthetics, for example, sees it as the duality of beautiful and ugly.<sup>105</sup> Historical scholarship at the turn of the century, we might add, operated with the duality of experts and dilettantes. Ever since its birth, the Goll School had experienced the dramatic clash between their notions of the academically *professional* and the political *friend*. This might also be a reason why, in the inaugural address of the *Český časopis historický*, there is no mention of the historical mission of the nation, or the historian's task regarding the nation, whereas the review's Hungarian counterpart *Századok* was packed with such ideas.

Nevertheless, an eminent member of the Goll School published a piece of work that we can consider a historical synthesis, even if it was a secondary school textbook. Josef Pekař published the *History of Our Empire* in 1914.<sup>106</sup> For several experts on Pekař, this book represents the synthesis of the historian that he wanted to complete as a proper historical work, but did not manage to do so.<sup>107</sup> Perhaps it is not an accident that it was the very member of the Goll School who wrote a synthesis who had already proven that he could play the part of the *intellectuel engagé* if necessary: not only did he engage in a debate with Masaryk, but he was also the one who responded to Mommsen's above-quoted article in the *Neue Freie Presse*.<sup>108</sup>

## Gesamtstaat and the empire of nations

Our survey of Austrian community histories should start with the very notion of *Österreich*. The historians examined here (implicitly) defined *österreichische Geschichte* in the title of their works in the same manner as the above-quoted Meyer encyclopedia did: as the history of the whole empire, including Hungary.

104 Šusta, "Tchécoslovaquie," 434.

105 Schmitt, "A politikai fogalma."

106 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*.

107 E.g. Janowski, "Három történész Közép-Európából."

108 Pekař, *Die Böhmen als Apostels der Barbarisierung*.

Franz Krones used the notion of *Österreich* inconsistently. In the first introductory chapters of his book, he claimed to have accepted completely the dualist system as the greatest concession possible without harming the *Gesamtstaat*. Treating the geographical conditions, however, he spoke of *österreichischen Staat*, even though Hungary was included as well.<sup>109</sup> In a later chapter, Hungary was also included as a part of *Natur Österreichs*;<sup>110</sup> nevertheless, when speaking of the events of 1848, *Österreich* and *Ungarn* become separated.<sup>111</sup> Alfons Huber's work gives an example of what literature considers to be the common Austrian interpretation of the Compromise, according to which the common affairs represent a common state positioned above the two separate ones. Establishing a parallel between Albert V and his own period, Huber speaks of today's *österreichisch-ungarischen Kaiserstaat*.<sup>112</sup> Curiously, it was the Christian-Social sympathizer Richard von Kralik who reflected on his usage of *Österreich*, explaining that he did not aim at questioning the validity of the Compromise, but believed that this notion was more adequate for a historical account.<sup>113</sup>

All authors see the empire as uniting nations. This is in line with the affirmation of Pieter M. Judson, according to which even those intellectuals who put their talents at the service of promoting the empire imagined the world as a conglomerate of nations.<sup>114</sup> Krones considered that there were two possible ways of organizing a state: the state can be constituted by one, or by several nations.<sup>115</sup> For Huber, the natural order of things is that one powerful nation obtains the dominant role over other peoples in a series of combats, after which it assimilates or submits them. As Austria represented another way, Huber considered it to be an artificial construct.<sup>116</sup> Even for Kralik, the most committed Austrian patriot, the essence of the empire is to assemble foreign nations in order to achieve higher political and cultural goals.<sup>117</sup> We can see clearly that none of these historians followed Helfert's concept of the nation, according to which Austria is herself a giant nation.

Of the four authors, Franz Krones and Richard Kralik made great efforts to demonstrate a profound idea behind the genesis of Austria. Krones rejected the idea that Austria was an unorganized formation. According to the historian, this major

109 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 87.

110 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 540.

111 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 641.

112 Huber, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. III, 3.

113 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, v.

114 Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 274–75.

115 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 79.

116 Huber, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. I, v.

117 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, iii.

idea is reviled by a more sophisticated intelligence. Krones labelled this idea the *Gesamtstaat*, which became a key concept in his work. For him, *Gesamtstaat* did not concern the structure of the administration, but the idea of the powerful empire. He identified this idea with the dynasty when giving a definition of the dynamics of the empire's history: this dynamic was defined by the dynastic force representing the state, and the national force which aimed to separate from it. The body of the state (*Staatskörper*) moved according to whichever force gained ascendancy.<sup>118</sup> *Gesamtstaat* in Krones' interpretation did not mean a striving for cultural homogenization—that is, Germanization, for which it was a synonym in Hungary and Bohemia. For the historian, the multinational, multicultural profile of the empire is one of its crucial characteristics, which is not to be denied and certainly not to be altered by force. In order to liberate the notion of *Gesamtstaat* from its Germanizing connotations, Krones introduced the notion of *Einheitstaat*. In contemporary works, *Einheitstaat* and *Gesamtstaat* were used as synonyms.<sup>119</sup> For Krones, however, *Einheitstaat* signified a striving for cultural homogeneity: the centralizing measures of Joseph II were introduced to create the *Einheitstaat*; also, the revolutionary Hungarian government of 1848 aimed at creating an *Einheitstaat* by establishing Hungarian as a state language which understandably provoked the nationalities of the country.<sup>120</sup>

Evidently, for Kralik, the most committed patriot, Austria also represented an ideal. For him, it was the logic of world history (*Weltgeschichte*) that made the existence of Austria not only possible, but necessary.<sup>121</sup> Alluding to Huber, Kralik declared that only someone without the gift of historical thinking could see Austria as an artificial creation.<sup>122</sup> The *Gesamtstaat* was the essence of the Austrian idea; federalism or dualism were only manifestations of this main idea. Kralik saluted the Germanizing ambitions in Austrian history—in his view, these were not forced by political considerations but dictated by the universal law of culture.<sup>123</sup>

This shows that the two enthusiastic supporters of Austria in fact had radically different views about the essence and mission of the empire. Using the categories of Moritz Csáky, one could point out that Kralik thought in terms of *Mitteleuropa* (that is, the subordination of the culturally plural region to German culture), whereas Krones imagined Austria as *Zentraleuropa* (accepting cultural diversity as a crucial element of its nature).<sup>124</sup> Another difference between the two is that while Krones

118 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 79–80.

119 E.g., Winkler, *Studien über Gesamtstaatsidee*.

120 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 641.

121 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, v, 274.

122 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 51.

123 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 65.

124 Cp. Csáky, *Das Gedächtnis Zentraleuropas*, 29–31.

placed the dynasty at the center of his interpretation, Kralik aimed to liberate the *österreichische Idee* from the dynasty, defining the three major factors which shape the empire as the *Gesamtstaatsidee*, the national idea, and the historical structures.<sup>125</sup> Although there are several heroes in his account (Rudolf IV, Maria Theresa, Maximilian I), the great accomplishments of these individuals are only manifestations of the *gesamtösterreichische Staatsgedanken*. What really matters is the inner necessity: “Great Austria [Gesamtösterreich] was not born because the Habsburgs gained the right [to] the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary, but the Habsburgs had to [en]sure these rights because the necessity of Great Austria demanded it.”<sup>126</sup>

The popular work of Franz Martin Mayer offers a striking contrast.<sup>127</sup> The historian did not see the creation of the empire as the realization of any idea. For him, Austria’s existence was merely explained by the needs of the Holy Roman Empire for protection on its eastern borders.<sup>128</sup> *Gesamtstaat* signified a mode of administration that was mainly discussed in the chapters dealing with the governance (*Verwaltung*) and only after 1526.<sup>129</sup> The representation of certain events and personalities reinforced this tendency. Albert V, for example, who saw the first unification of the hereditary lands with Hungary and Bohemia, was not the visionary politician that he was for Kralik and Krones.

Alfons Huber represents a middle way between Mayer and Krones. He refused to adopt any meta-historical idea; accordingly, for him, the *Gesamtstaat* was also a governmental technique, the unfolding of which Huber did not have a chance to study as he died after finishing the volume on the Thirty Years’ War. The historian also refused idealizing important personalities from Austria’s history. When working with Helfert in the early 1860s, he rejected softening the tone of the presentation of how Rudolf IV’s *Privilegium maius*, which was considered to be the premier vision of an independent Austria, was forged on the prince’s orders.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, Huber remained loyal to Austria and to a certain extent was able to express this as a historian. He presented Austria as the accomplishment of talented, visionary statesman, and, as a territory, he considered it to be geographically determined to take the form of a single unit.

For Josef Pekař also, the empire was made of nations, although the Czech notion of *národ* was less the perfect equivalent of *Nation* and much more an in-between of *Nation* and *Volk*.<sup>131</sup> The historian emphasized the fragmented nature of “Austria” up

125 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 558.

126 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 80.

127 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*.

128 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. I, 42.

129 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 270.

130 Fellner, “Alfonz Huber – Werke und Wirken,” 282.

131 Kořalka, *Tschechen im Habsburgerreich*, 23–5.

to 1526. Although he mentioned the fact that the name “Oesterreich” appears in 996, in the following chapters, in contrast to his peers, he still referred to the territories in the chapter titles as *zemí alpských* instead of *zemích rakouských*. The creation of the Austrian core lands was not a historical necessity, but, just as the creation of the Bohemian state, the result of the Magyars’ arrival to the Carpathian Basin. In this, the Magyars (whom the author described as savage nomads) were not conscious actors, but their presence constituted a challenge to which state formation was the adequate response.<sup>132</sup> The notion of *vserakousko*, which is closest to *Gesamtstaat* and had Germanizing connotations in Bohemia as well, does not occupy a central place in Pekař’s work. The sole key moment of Austria’s creation is the year 1526, and its essential characteristic is centralization: this interpretation is closer to Mayer’s than Krones’.

## The German question

In the second section (Performative discourse) of this paper, the complex relationship between Germanness and Austrian citizenship was pointed out. Given its importance in Cisleithanian public life, it is no surprise that those historians reflected on the German question in an explicit manner for whom Austria was the most important—that is, Franz Krones and Richard Kralik.

Krones had already raised the question in the long introductory chapter of his work. His view is dynasty-centered in this case as well, as he considers that the question of German unification could be seen as the rivalry between the Hohenzollern and Habsburg dynasties. The conflict was inevitable, and Prussia’s victory was necessary, as Austria could not have been engaged in the West and the East at the same time.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, Krones refers to the new Prussian-led Germany as *Preußen* or *Preußen-Deutschland* and not *Deutschland*. Maria Theresa’s conflict with Frederick the Great is depicted as an inevitability and a major, historically defining moment in Austria’s existence. Maria Theresa was in fact the central heroine for patriotic Austrian historians, who practically built a cult around her person.<sup>134</sup> Presenting the conflict, Krones speaks of the empire as *unsere Staat* (our state), which is one of the very rare moments that his wording permits the reader to identify themselves with Austria. “For our state, this war was a fight for her rights and her existence; it was a process of internal purification and renaissance.”<sup>135</sup> In one of the closing thoughts to his work, Krones also responds to the common Austro-German view, according to

132 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*, 18.

133 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 128–29.

134 Wandruszka, “Die Historiographie der theresianisch-josefinischen Reformzeit,” 20–3.

135 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 179.

which Austria is, in essence, a German state. The historian warns that these kinds of ideas provoke the non-German inhabitants of the country; furthermore, they are false, as Austria is nothing else but Austria: the unification and reconciliation of diverse elements under the aegis of the dynasty and the common interests.<sup>136</sup>

In Richard Kralik's work Bismarck's empire is also referred to as *Preußen* and not *Deutschland*. In contrast to Krones, Kralik declares himself to be a supporter of a *großdeutsche* solution.<sup>137</sup> According to him, Austria had always been the dominant German power; she guaranteed the greatness of Germany throughout her history by defending German borders from French aggression.<sup>138</sup> As already mentioned above, Kralik believed that Germanisation was a natural step in cultural development. However, he not only considered German culture to be essential for the greatness of Austria, but more importantly, he believed that it was in Austria that this culture could reach its full potential. This may be related to a belief common in Austria after the defeat of 1866 that, notwithstanding Prussia's military force, the *wahren Deutschtum* (true Germanness) remained in Austria.<sup>139</sup>

Protestantism and Catholicism were closely related to the German question, as could already have been seen in Friedjung's above-quoted famous book. Only Kralik, who was a man of strong clerical sympathies and anti-modernist convictions, supported counterreformation, claiming that it prevented Austria's falling apart.<sup>140</sup> The three liberal historians univocally condemned the counterreformation. For Krones, counterreformation, similarly to the futile efforts to establish an *Einheitstaat*, only harmed Austria, as it turned massive populations against the imperial center.<sup>141</sup> Huber sees the greatest destruction of the movement in the fact that it led to Austria drifting away from the rest of Germany spiritually, which resulted in political rupture.<sup>142</sup> This opinion is shared by Mayer as well, who sees the Jesuits as the incarnations of the anti-German spirit.<sup>143</sup> Similarly to Friedjung, Mayer argues that counterreformation not only exterminated the Reformation, but Humanism as well, and it also prevented German enlightenment from spreading in Austria, condemning her to regression. Mayer's aversion to Catholicism is a central element in his book. In the last chapters, the historian presents the years of Eduard Taaffe's government as the years of decadence when Germans were deprived of their power at the profit of

136 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 658.

137 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, vi.

138 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 232.

139 Haider, *Im Streit um die österreichische Nation*, 84–5.

140 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 109.

141 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. III, 433.

142 Huber, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. IV, 354.

143 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 360.

Slavs and clericals.<sup>144</sup> Mayer's account is a sense not an Austrian community history, but one of the German populations of Habsburg Central Europe who are the real protagonists of his narrative.

### The notions of political loyalty

The use of such central notions as *Österreich* and *Gesamtstaat* has already been studied above. It is worth briefly examining other notions presented in the second section. The notion of *österreicher* is constantly present only in the work of Kralik. Krones, in enumerating the different peoples of the empire, does not mention the *österreicher* either as the Germans of Austria, or as Austria's people as a whole. It becomes a recurrent actor during the times of Marie Therese, when it refers to the Germans of Austria.

Notions which express loyalty towards the empire, such as *Vaterland* and *Patriotismus* are also practically absent from these works with the exception of Kralik's; however, even in his account, they do not play a central role (as, for example, "nation" does in Hungarian narratives). For Krones, the variants of *Staat* fulfil the role of *Vaterland*, as we have already witnessed above. In these accounts, *Vaterland* and *Vaterlandsliebe* do not appear in relation to Austria but are used to describe the attitude of a historical figure to his own country (most commonly Hungary or Bohemia): "Zápolya [...] was saluted by his comrades as savior of the Fatherland [Retter des Vaterlandes]."<sup>145</sup> Likewise, *Patriot* does not describe loyalty to the *österreichische Vaterland* but to the other country in question. "Even patriotic [patriotisch gesinnte] Hungarians disapproved of Matthias's continued fights for the Czech throne."<sup>146</sup> *Mutterland* appears in the work of Mayer in the sense described in the second section of this paper; that is, to refer to the common German cultural space from which Austria was excluded due to the defeat of 1866.<sup>147</sup>

### Hungary and Bohemia

In relation to Hungary and Bohemia, the diffusion of German *Kultur* is the empire's greatest merit in these master narratives. The most important good of this *Kultur* is the state itself. Nevertheless, there are differences between the authors concerning how they describe German influence on Hungarian and Czech state foundation. In Huber's and Krones' accounts, the German influence is more of a helping hand

144 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 737–39.

145 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. II, 567.

146 Huber, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. III, 224.

147 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 708.

for the founders of the Hungarian state. Krones is most in line with the Hungarian self-image when he describes Hungarians as a resilient community which adopts Western phenomena by making them its own.<sup>148</sup> Mayer's tone is more confrontative, declaring that the Hungarians have never created their own constitution, which is a German creation.<sup>149</sup> In a similar way, Kralik presented the Hungarian and the Bohemian state as purely German foundations.<sup>150</sup>

The *Kultur*, the civilizing measures, could not be implemented at the peripheries of the empire, but only at the cost of major conflict. The national idea is presented as the principal destructive factor which prevents civilizing measures from being properly introduced and which provokes irrational hatred, foremost in Hungarians and Czechs, against Germans. Again, imperial historians project national identity into the past just as much as "national" historians of the period. Religious differences become major social issues only when they meet national ideas. The most important case is naturally the Hussite wars, which are presented as the result of fanatical national hatred. The wars are depicted as the destruction of culture for which the Czech "national movement" is responsible. In Kralik's account, Czech "national radicalism" damaged irreversibly Bohemia's culture; accordingly, the enemies of the Hussites become "the champions of culture against the menacing barbarism."<sup>151</sup>

Hussitism was, of course, the single most important event in national history for the Czech self-image, being of central importance to every single Czech political party.<sup>152</sup> However, as already mentioned, Pekař fought against the ahistorical, idealizing interpretation of the movement. This does not mean that he adapted the derogatory tone of his Austro-German peers in the work examined here. Pekař presents the core of the movement as having complex social, economic, as well as national origins: the economic difference between Czech and German artisans happened to coincide with the fact that one group spoke Czech while the other German.<sup>153</sup> The greater blow to the Masarykian image of the Hussites as followers of national-democratic ideas is Pekař's affirmation that different groups within the movement, such as soldiers and university teachers, all had their own interpretation of the Hussite ideals that were sometimes incompatible with each other.<sup>154</sup>

National passions, envies, and hatred are also blamed for Hungary's downfall in the imperial narratives. Both Mayer and Huber explain Hungary's unpreparedness

148 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 120.

149 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. I, 48.

150 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 17.

151 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 66

152 Cp. Paces, "Religious Images and National Symbols."

153 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*, 63.

154 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*, 64.

for the Ottoman attack as due to national hatred against Germans which consumed their energy, and diverted them from handling the Ottoman menace.<sup>155</sup> The critique of the Hungarian self-image has also a conceptual level, which concerns the notion of the nation. Speaking of Hungary, Mayer used the word in quotation marks to warn his readers that in Hungarian verbiage this only refers to the nobility, excluding the overwhelmingly larger part of the population. Consequently, “Hungarian freedom” loses all its glory: “Constantly, they demanded the restoration of [...] so-called ‘national liberty’ which meant the liberty of the nobility, unruliness for the privileged, slavery for the oppressed classes of the people.”<sup>156</sup> In Mayer’s view, “national liberty” is in fact the denial of progress and civilization, as, in its name the privileged classes refused “every ambition that aimed at improving general conditions and were already introduced in civilized countries.”<sup>157</sup> Krones also clarifies that in the Hungarian and pre-1620 Bohemian context, *Nation* is to be understood *im politischen Sinne*; that is, as referring to the nobility only—consequently, the struggle for national liberty is in reality a struggle for outdated privileges.<sup>158</sup>

For Hungarian historians, the nation (*nemzet*) was in fact the protagonist in every account of Hungarian history. On the one hand, this nation referred to the Magyars, excluding the nationalities who were depicted as passive factors in the national history. In this sense, similarly to how Mayer’s account is in reality more of a German community history than an Austrian one, Hungarian national histories are Magyar community histories.<sup>159</sup> The other important feature of the nation in Hungarian narratives is its class dimension—precisely what the above-quoted Austro-German authors criticized. It was a particular mélange of the estate and the modern definition of the nation which resulted in the protagonist of these narratives becoming the lower nobility. The depiction of the Golden Bull is a vivid example: while in the *Vormärz* it was mostly described as a document that records the *nobility*’s privileges,<sup>160</sup> it assured the rights and privileges of the *nation* in Fraknói’s account.<sup>161</sup> Another example of how the lower nobility becomes identified with the nation is József Szalay’s account of John Szapolyai’s and Ferdinand Habsburg’s rivalry in the re-edited version of the work completed by Lajos Baróti. At the beginning of the third volume, the author affirms that the lower nobility sided with Szapolyai, while a few pages later it is the *nation* who sympathizes with the

<sup>155</sup> Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. I, 431–32; Huber, *Geschichte Österreich*, vol. III, 10.

<sup>156</sup> Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 269.

<sup>157</sup> Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 459.

<sup>158</sup> Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. II, 567; vol. III, 431–32.

<sup>159</sup> Cp. Tarafás, “Nemzeitségek a nemzeti történelemben.”

<sup>160</sup> Lajtai, “Magyar nemzet vagyok,” 154.

<sup>161</sup> Frankl, *A magyar nemzet története*, vol. I, 119. (Fraknói only changed his name after his father’s death, which is why the work referred to here was published under his original family name Frankl.)

Hungarian nobleman.<sup>162</sup> This harmony between the lower nobility and the notion of the nation only starts to crumble when the authors arrive at the absolutist reign of Maria Theresa and her son. Here, the much-needed modernizing reforms clash with the privileges of the nobility which guarantee the “liberty of the nation” and the “independence of the country.”

Another crucial feature of the nation is that it is depicted as the acting protagonist of Hungary’s history in a manner similar to what we have seen in Beöthy’s independentist historical account. Even the great historical tragedies are considered to be the makings of the nation—foremost, its tendency to be divided. “If noblemen and serf unite, perhaps they could have saved Hungary”—wrote Marczali, referring to the peasant revolt which preceded the Ottoman conquest.<sup>163</sup> In a similar way, Baróti believes that the war of independence of 1848 could have been won if there had been harmony instead of disconnect between its leaders.<sup>164</sup>

The community as agency is a crucial feature of community master narratives.<sup>165</sup> It is practically missing, however, from the imperial narratives, where history is formed by concrete historical figures, and sometimes precise groups, such as the Hungarian or Czech nobility. On one interesting occasion the Hungarian and Austro-German perceptions clashed. Huber’s work was translated into Hungarian at the turn of the century. Translations are never only a matter of language; they represent a complex process of cultural transfer, during which an intellectual product is moved from its original field of production to another with its own particularities to which the translated product has to be adopted.<sup>166</sup> The translator (who happened to be Baróti in this case) made this adaptation in a rather invasive way. In the Hungarian version of Huber’s work, he did not include Hungary’s history, as in the Hungarian field of production Hungary was not considered to be part of *Österreich*. Some parts nevertheless had to be kept as they had implications for Austrian or Bohemian history. Such included the period of interregnum after the death of the last king from the house of Árpád. Huber clearly defined which group of clergy and nobility preferred which candidate for the throne. In Baróti’s version, however, it is the *nation* that has to make a decision; it is divided into two groups; and, at the end, decides not to support the pope’s candidate. In this episode, Baróti managed to integrate two major characteristics of how he and his Hungarian peers perceived national history: the nation as history-forming protagonist, that is represented mainly by the nobility.<sup>167</sup>

162 Szalay and Baróti, *A magyar nemzet története*, vol. III, 9, 13.

163 Marczali, *Magyarország története*, 381.

164 Szalay and Baróti, *A magyar nemzet története*, vol. IV, 495.

165 Beyen, “Who is the Nation and What Does It Do,” 68.

166 Bourdieu, “Les conditions sociales de la circulation international des idées,” 4–7.

167 Tarafás, “A tulajdonságokkal bíró ember találkozása,” 147–48.

Generally, it can be stated that the Hungarian authors viewed their country's relation to Austria as harmful to Hungary, which had been degraded to a colony during this relationship. It is not surprising that the independentist Acsády's formulation is the most radical. The historian presents Habsburg rule as one homogenous period of depriving Hungary of its rights and exploiting its resources for the dynasty's ambitious wars. According to Acsády, Austria only attended to the needs of Hungary in order to obtain the necessary resources.<sup>168</sup> It is much more surprising that the famously loyal Fraknói's view is in many ways similar. Although he urges his readers to respect even those noblemen who always supported the Habsburgs, he also affirms that Hungary and Austria had prevented each other from establishing the fundaments of healthy development.<sup>169</sup> Austria's harmful policies are not attributed to certain rulers but to the court and advisors, which implies that the eventual death of certain harmful rulers will not put an end to such policies which are rooted in the *longue durée* political culture of the Viennese court.

Furthermore, the system of values transmitted by the Hungarian works elevates independence above all other factors. "There is no treasure dearer to a nation, than its independence" claimed Marczali in a book from 1911.<sup>170</sup> The historian also implied that the ideal scenario would have been a complete rupture from Austria: "This was a great moment in Central Europe's history, affirms Marczali speaking of György Rákóczi's campaign in Poland, for [it was] the last time [...] it was possible for Hungary to develop without Austria."<sup>171</sup> Independence is not only important in relation to Austria, but is a general measurement of historical phenomena. For Acsády, the greatest merit of St. Stephan's state was to have maintained Hungary's independence.<sup>172</sup> Finally, independence is also depicted as the central value for the contemporaries themselves in every period: in the millennial synthesis, Marczali considers that Hungarians of the eleventh century converted to Christianity so easily because the independence of the country remained intact, whereas the pagan revolt broke out precisely because independence was menaced.<sup>173</sup>

There is one author who explicitly aims to justify Hungary's relations to Austria. However, he is not a historian but a celebrated publicist, Gusztáv Beksics, who was charged with writing the last part of the final volume in the millennial synthesis which dealt with a period that was considered to be too close for historical representation. Beksics, who always supported the *Ausgleich*, presented an

168 Acsády, *A magyar birodalom története*, vol. II, 188.

169 Frnakl, *A magyar nemzet története*, vol. III, 92.

170 Marczali, *Magyarország története*, 675.

171 Marczali, *Magyarország története*, 482.

172 Acsády, *A magyar birodalom története*, vol. I, 76.

173 Marczali, *Magyarország története az Árpádok korában*, 32–38.

image of Hungarian history that one could find in his political pamphlets and which was similar to Andrassy's above-quoted account. He emphasizes the necessity of an empire in Central Europe and claims that the perfect structure of this empire is the "marriage" between centralization and a respect for Hungary's historical rights—that is, the Compromise of 1867 which "draws the curtain on the sad past."<sup>174</sup> By "sad past," Beksics was referring to the period between 1849 and 1867; nevertheless, he could have meant the three-centuries-long relationship with Austria, the depiction of which did not imply a fruitful or justified coexistence with the Habsburg Empire.

## Concluding remarks

Our main questions at the beginning of this article concerned, on the one hand, how the legitimacy of the empire was argued in "imperial" narratives, and, on the other, how compatible these historical accounts were with those of the two other main parts of the empire.

Concerning the first question, one can point to two historians who were most committed to the idea of Austria: Franz von Krones, and Richard von Kralik. In the works of both, the *Gesamtstaat* is understood as it was by the thinkers examined in section two, who strove to preserve the empire, such as Fischhof and Helfert. However, on closer inspection, beyond this similarity Krones and Kralik defined the idea and mission of Austria in radically different ways, in which one can identify the rivalry between *Zentraleurpa* and *Mitteleuropa*.

As stated above, Mayer's work, which has many merits of its own with regard to its impressive presentation of social and cultural history, is more of a community history for the Germans of Habsburg Central Europe than an Austrian history. It is not surprising that Otto Bauer labelled Mayer's work the only considerable achievement related to Austria's history<sup>175</sup> and that this work was revised and republished in 1930's Austria.

Alfons Huber's case is more complicated. He was undoubtedly an Austrian patriot, which he proved when insisting on the introduction of *Reichsgeschichte* at the faculties of law and the humanities. However, he was too much of an honest positivist scholar to introduce meta-historical ideas in his work, such as the *Gesamtstaat* of Krones or Kralik. The historian accepted the nation-obsessed worldview of his time, which left him with the only option of seeing Austria as a *künstlicher Bau*. One wonders if there could have been another way. How different this is to the case of his Belgian contemporary, Henri Pirenne, who incidentally wrote his *Geschichte Belgiens*

174 Beksics, "I. Ferenc József és kora," 517.

175 Bauer, *Geschichte Oesterreichs*, 5.

in the same book series as Huber. Pirenne also had to deal with the history of a community which was perceived to be abnormal by many; nevertheless, he managed to give an original and convincing explanation of Belgium's particularity by treating it as a miniature of Europe; the meeting point of German and Latin civilization.<sup>176</sup>

The Czech case could only be examined briefly as Pekař's textbook was the only complete *grand récit* that the Goll School produced before the First World War. Its explanation of Austria resembles Palacký's view, in that both historians see Austria's beginning in 1526 in a contrasting way to how the Austro-German patriots examined here did. The striving for Bohemian state rights can be experienced in Pekař's narrative, foremost in the way the historian aims to show the equality of the Bohemian and Hungarian state, and claims that the Hungarian state's Slav origins are as equally important as the German influence.<sup>177</sup>

Considering compatibility—the possibility of an Austrian–Hungarian *pacte mémorial*—the results look rather gloomy. First of all, it should be pointed out that, with the exception of Fischhof, the historical image transmitted by the Austro-German political discourse is only compatible with the basic elements of Hungarian self-representation when the author argues for the break with Hungary. As for the historical *grand récits*, the question needs to be raised whether one can truly speak of “imperial history,” given that most of our authors see the *Staat* as the main object of their books, especially Krones and Huber. While the dualist system could have easily been integrated into a truly imperial narrative the main object of which was the empire or the *Vaterland*, it is hard to see how a two-state system could have been integrated into a state history. The other major issue on the part of the Austro-German authors is their interpretation of the Hungarian nation, which is absolutely incompatible with the self-image of the Hungarian authors: the two are in fact counter-canons.

Regarding the Hungarian narratives, the results urge us to re-examine the common thesis in literature that Hungarian historians, even those with independentist inclinations, have accepted the relations with Austria. Péter Gunst has already pointed out that the acceptance of the *Ausgleich* by these historians personally did not determine their views of the past.<sup>178</sup> Our research points in this direction, warning that instead of the personality of the historians, their work and its implications need to be closely studied in order to determine how they could have influenced the perception of Hungary's relations with Austria.

In the past decades, Austria has been seen as an inspiring historical field of study in relation to certain phenomena that define our contemporary world, such

176 Tarafás, “Miniatures of Europe.”

177 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*, 33.

178 Gunst, “Egy történeti monográfia születése,” 291.

as modernity,<sup>179</sup> populist politics,<sup>180</sup> and globalization.<sup>181</sup> Perhaps it would also be worth studying the diverse community histories of Austria, their relations with each other, and the accomplishments and failures at reconciling them into one larger community history that can transcend particular narratives of the conflictual past. Such research could provide us with valuable lessons in relation to our contemporary dilemmas that the question of a common European history raises.

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# 1918 and the Habsburg Monarchy as Reflected in Slovak Historiography\*

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**Abstract.** With regard to the “long” nineteenth-century history of the Habsburg monarchy, the new generation of post-1989 historians have strengthened research into social history, the history of previously unstudied social classes, the church, nobility, bourgeoisie, and environmental history, as well as the politics of memory.

The Czechoslovak centenary increased historians’ interest in the year 1918 and the constitutional changes in the Central European region. It involved the culmination of previous revisitations of the World War I years, which also benefited from gaining a 100-year perspective. The Habsburg monarchy, whose agony and downfall accompanied the entire period of war (1914–1918), was not left behind because the year 1918 marked a significant milestone in Slovak history. Exceptional media attention and the completion of numerous research projects have recently helped make the final years of the monarchy and the related topics essential ones.

Remarkably, with regard to the demise of the monarchy, Slovak historiography has focused not on “great” and international history, but primarily on regional history and its elites; on the fates of “ordinary” people living on the periphery, on life stories, and socio-historical aspects. The recognition of regional events that occurred in the final months of the monarchy and the first months of the republic is the greatest contribution of recent historical research. Another contribution of the extensive research related to the year 1918 is a number of editions of sources compiled primarily from the resources of regional archives. The result of such partial approaches is the knowledge

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that the year 1918 did not represent the discontinuity that was formerly assumed. On the contrary, there is evidence of surprising continuity in the positions of professionals such as generals, officers, professors, judges, and even senior old regime officers within the new establishment. In recent years, Slovak historiography has also managed to produce several pieces of work concerned with historical memory in relation to the final years of the monarchy.

**Keywords:** Slovak historiography after 1989, Habsburg Monarchy in historical memory, continuities and discontinuities, social and regional history

The year 1918 marked a significant milestone in Slovak history. From the ruins of the Habsburg monarchy, Czechoslovakia emerged. This ensured favorable conditions for the development of all that was being denied to Slovaks within Hungary—i.e. a national identity, language, educational system, culture, political institutions and mechanisms. Simultaneously, social structures, political structures and political culture became fully formed and ultimately gave birth to a modern nation. As Europe opened up, Slovak inhabitants had a chance to expand their horizons. They were able to absorb foreign cultural stimuli and fuse them with local traditions. The example of the more advanced Bohemia proved to be stimulating. For the first time in history, the territory of Slovakia had been designated—and has remained the same until now, apart from some minor changes. After 1918, the Slovaks became actors in the formation of their own state, which had a profound effect on their lives.

## The Monarchy and the Republic

According to Tomáš G. Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, every state has to espouse a system of ideas if it is to justify its existence. František Palacký recognized the role of the Habsburg monarchy in providing a kind of a safeguard for small nations and in creating the conditions that would allow individual nations to develop equally. Nevertheless, in the century of nationalism, the monarchy failed to fulfil such an ambition.<sup>1</sup>

Instead, it proposed sovereign rule and the concept of dynasty as symbols of integration to its inhabitants, which factors were to play a defining role in unification. However, both symbols—sovereign and dynasty—gradually assumed an air of hollowness and contemporaries started to question their significance. The symbols were too traditional and detached from reality to have a mobilizing effect on a broad spectrum of inhabitants of such an immense and varied empire. Additionally, they were too rational in circumstances that called for emotional values, which were encouraged by the respective nationalisms. With the onset of mass culture and politics, the former

1 Palacký, *Idea státu rakouského*.

proved to be competitive environments and offered various alternative identities to the masses. Naturally, both national self-identification related to the modern understanding of the state as the product of a national community and the call for the democratization of politics had more success than the concept of an “Austrianism” that could not take on the ideology of nationalisms—the latter which, being dynamic and flexible phenomena, also managed to appropriate all the positive aspects of the empire.

On the one hand, the recognition and equal rights of the empire’s nations were asserted; on the other, there were calls to abolish all differences. The monarchy thus found itself at odds with reality and it was the differences that the respective nationalisms highlighted. The dynasty and the sovereign as the unifying factors failed utterly in an era that shunned supranational symbols.<sup>2</sup>

The Czechoslovak Republic was based on the notions of humanism and democracy, the principles which were formulated by Masaryk himself in his work. Even though complex political and economic circumstances complicated the growth of the state in the interwar period, and there were instances of a democratic deficit, the contribution of the state to the development of a democratic political culture is undeniable. This fact is even more pronounced if we compare Czechoslovakia’s political situation with that of neighboring countries, which were then home to autocratic and undemocratic regimes.

The 1918 constitutional changes brought about the dissolution of the multinational Habsburg state. In the ashes of the former monarchy, new states emerged and proclaimed themselves nation states. Czechoslovakia, too, distanced itself from the monarchy and viewed it as an archaic structure with numerous semi-feudal features. The republic’s way of legitimizing itself was (also) to renounce the values and priorities of the former state, which were deemed “unworthy” of the twentieth century (Fig. 1–2).

## **The issue of continuity**

On the other hand, republicanism, and, in many cases, the democratic system, were not impediments to the new elites. They adopted, cultivated, and expanded many features of the old monarchy. The mental legacy was too powerful—after all, the people were the same. This is why even in a strictly republican Czechoslovakia, the office of the first president shared many similarities with those of the former emperor (the myth and cult of the founder and “father” of the state, frugality, his uniform, his passion for horseback riding, the national birthday celebrations, his old age, charisma, and authority, etc.). To see discontinuity with the former state in the creation of Czechoslovakia is to perceive reality in simplified terms and to cultivate a myth.

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<sup>2</sup> Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities.”



Figure 1 An allegory of Slovaks' suffering in Hungary (Literary Archive of the Slovak National Library in Martin)



Figure 2 An allegory of Slovaks' happy lives in Czechoslovakia (Literary Archive of the Slovak National Library in Martin)

This may pose a paradox, but there is logic behind it. In spite of distancing itself from it, continuity with the monarchy was demonstrated in the form of unchanging rituals that gave new meaning to old symbols (the status and authority of the sovereign and the president, as mentioned earlier). Contemporary critics as well as the daily press noted such phenomena with embarrassment: “When lecturing about the president, teachers spoke the same way they used to do under the Kaiser. Progressives’ lectures and articles about the head of the state reek of sycophancy and devotedness. Once again, they are just insincere empty words.”<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, a recent theory claims that the successor state which most resembled the Habsburg monarchy vis-à-vis its structure (e.g. the ethnicity issue, and the elimination of major civilizational differences) and potential development (democratic, economic, and political) was not Austria, but Czechoslovakia.<sup>4</sup>

3 Republikánství a systém demokracie. *Pražský večerník* from 4. 8. 1923. As quoted in Pehr, “Deset let existence meziválečného Československa,” 196.

4 Ther, “Druhý život habsburské monarchie v Československu,” 121.

The Czechoslovak centenary increased historians' interest in the year 1918 and the constitutional changes in the Central European region. This involved the culmination of the previous revisitations of the World War I years, which also benefited from gaining a 100-year perspective. The Habsburg monarchy, whose agony and downfall accompanied the entire period of war (1914–1918) was not left behind. The exceptional media attention and the completion of numerous research projects have recently helped make the final years of the monarchy and the relating topics essential ones.

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The outstanding synthetic approach of Gabriela Dudeková Kováčová focused on social history and *Alltagsgeschichte* of World War I. She observed the mechanisms of state propaganda, the regime's repressive measures and their effect on families and children. The new theoretical and interpretative approaches are implemented, or rather based, on brand new data.<sup>6</sup> Economic history was contributed to by several key studies that related the stories of individual entrepreneurial elites.<sup>7</sup>

Another contribution made by the extensive research related to the year 1918 (the monarchy's final stage and the early months of the republic) is a number of editions of sources compiled primarily from the resources of regional archives. Indeed, they show firsthand that matters were often not perceived the same way as they were seen and interpreted in Prague.<sup>8</sup>

5 E.g. Furmaník, *Spiš a vznik Československej republiky*; Tokárová and Pavlovič, eds, *Na ceste k slovenskej štátnosti*, 11–239; Jarinkovič, Kárpáty and Dulovič, eds, *Košice 1918–1938*; Belej, Keresteš and Palárik, eds, *Milníky 20. storočia v regióne Nitrianskeho kraja*. Likewise, see texts regarding the regions of Galanta, Šala and Dunajská Streda (V. Nováková), Púchov (P. Makyna), Kysuce, Orava and Spiš (P. Matula) and Košice (V. Kárpáty) in the collective monograph: Letz and Makyna, eds, *Rok 1918 v historickej pamäti Slovenska*. With regard to Hungarians on the future Slovak territory: Simon, *Az első év kisebbségen*; Simon, "Az 1918–19-es államfordulat első hetei"; Kerényi, "Gömör az 1919-es államfordulatok tükrében"; Simon, "Tri obsadenia Košíc. Paralely a poučenia."

6 Dudeková Kováčová, Človek vo vojne. New interpretative approaches mainly from social history are implemented e.g., in Kováč, Kowalská and Šoltés, eds, *Spoločnosť na Slovensku*, Dudeková Kováčová, "Filantrop a sociálny politik"; Vörös, "Slovenský Walenrod," and Mannová, *Minulosť ako supermarket?*

7 Holec, *Dinamitos történelem*; Holec, *Dejiny plné dynamitu*; Gaučík, *Podnik v osídlach štátu*.

8 Bandolová et al., eds, *Od Uhorského kráľovstva k Československej republike*; Bartal et al., eds, *Začleňovanie Slovenska*.

The result of such partial approaches has been the re-affirmation of the knowledge that the year 1918 did not represent the discontinuity that was formerly assumed.<sup>9</sup> On the contrary, there is evidence of surprising continuity in the positions of professionals such as generals, officers, professors, judges, and even old senior regime officers in the new establishment. There are many examples of Slovaks, Germans, and Hungarians changing their coats and having successful careers even within the framework of the new state. This was especially visible in the sphere of state administration.

Veronika Szeghy-Gayer examined the mayors of municipal towns and towns with an established council in Slovakia. She arrived at clear conclusions: Out of 39 mayors, only ten (26 percent) fled to the new Hungary, 27 stayed in Czechoslovakia, and data about the remaining two are missing. Out of the 27 mayors who stayed, 14 pledged allegiance to the new state (and another did likewise, but only later); seven mayors did not pledge allegiance but stayed politically active, and five did neither. Every single compelling life story of multiple identities bears testament to political pragmatism.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, the results of Veronika Szeghy-Gayer's analysis reveal much greater continuity than one would expect. For example, take the case of the town of Bardejov: In December 1923, as many as 39 percent of the pre-1918 members of the town council remained among the elected. In general, a considerable degree of adaptability became a characteristic trait not only of Bardejov, but throughout the whole of Eastern Slovakia.<sup>11</sup>

In the Czech Republic too, the centenary became the impulse that prompted socio-historical analysis. Unlike in Slovakia, extensive volumes and research projects regarding lieux de mémoire were produced. Martin Klečacký analyzed the county governors in Bohemia: the surprising results show that 40 percent of the highest-ranking officers stayed in their office until 1920, and almost 30 percent were transferred due to organizational reasons, which might have been linked to promotion.<sup>12</sup>

This already emphasized continuity was also confirmed by the German historian Robert Luft, who illustrated how several Vienna Reichstag members were "transformed" into members of the new Czechoslovak parliament.<sup>13</sup> Similarly,

9 From the point of view of the Slovak national program, see Kováč, "Rok 1918 – kontinuita a diskontinuita." The argumentation of its author is based on the knowledge that the year 1918 was a major milestone in Slovak history, with significant discontinuous elements, and that several major changes had their social and political roots in the pre-war period.

10 Szeghy-Gayer, "Meštanostovia na rázcestí," 346–47. Just as remarkable were the conclusions regarding the post-1918 changes perceived by the Hungarian intelligentsia in Prešov and Košice, as defined in the work of Szeghy-Gayer, *Felvidékből Szlovenszkó*.

11 Szeghy-Gayer, "Államfordulat és az újrastrukturálódó helyi elit," 1215–36 (especially 1233).

12 Klečacký, "Prevzetí moci," 693–732 (especially 711–12).

13 Luft, *Parlamentarische Führungsgruppen*.

aging Austrian officers proved to be qualified and indispensable, in stark contrast to legionary officers, who lacked both proper training and theoretical knowledge. As with military school graduates, the latter were slow to replace the old cadres.<sup>14</sup> So, of what discontinuity do we speak? The state simply did not have enough professionals—it had to retain former ones, and only gradually replaced them.

### **The attitude to monarchy – evolution, differences, characteristics**

The official attitude towards the former monarchy did not tolerate any reflection on the topic of continuity. The development of the Slovak relationship towards Austria-Hungary in the “long” nineteenth century, as shaped by the official historical memory, followed a comparatively simple trajectory. Slovak historiography mirrored it all the way, from its humble beginnings to its institutional professionalization. Shortly after 1918, the Czech model was thoroughly adopted. The Czech public, politicians, and historians alike dissociated themselves from the monarchy, the Habsburg dynasty, and the Catholicism associated with it. They considered it to be the cause of all that was wrong with their past. Czechoslovakia was to be the atonement for all wrongdoings, starting from the Battle of White Mountain and the subsequent “Dark Ages” to the failed aspirations of the nineteenth-century National Revival. This was in line with the so-called 11 Beneš Memoranda, which were penned at the turn of 1918/1919 for the purposes of the Paris Peace Conference and which established a variety of constructs and stereotypes used in the creation of a common Czechoslovak past within and before the Habsburg monarchy.<sup>15</sup>

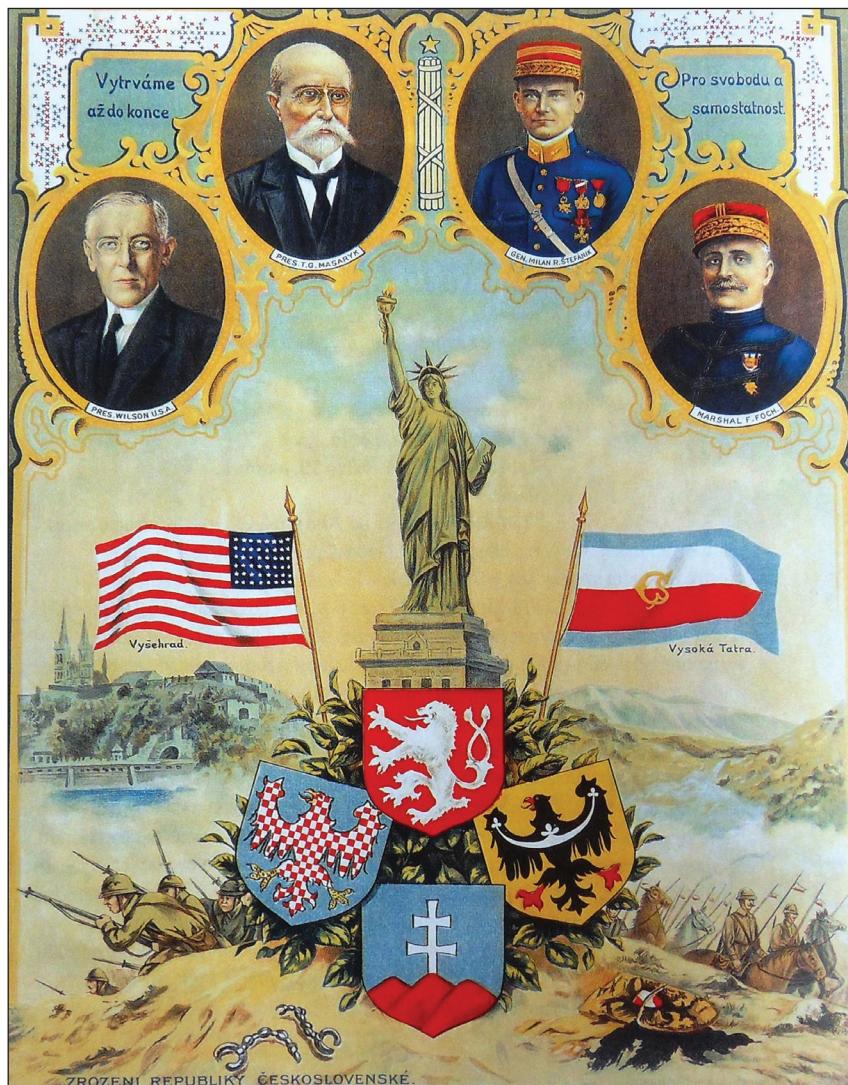
The singular position of Czechoslovaks in history and also within the Slavic family was emphasized as early as in the first memorandum. This was due to a certain uniqueness, which Beneš emphasized—the same way Polish, Romanian, and Yugoslav politicians highlighted the importance of “their nations.” Even the Czech (not Czechoslovak) historians, politicians, and sociologists allegedly were not all that clear about the special character of Czechoslovak national history (which is in itself an artificial construct). In this case, the alleged uniqueness lay at the root of the philosophy of Czech history (Fig. 3).

“All great Czechs and Slovaks have fought for great, humane ideas all their lives and thus, this shows that Czechoslovaks have successfully resisted the Germans’ (and Hungarians’) brutal violence only through the strength of spirit and high moral principles.”<sup>16</sup>

14 See Kalhous, *Budování armády*; Hofman, “Causa Rudolf Kalhous,” 190–96.

15 Raschhofer, ed., *Die tschechoslowakischen Denkschriften*.

16 Raschhofer, ed., *Die tschechoslowakischen Denkschriften*, 27 (Memorandum no. 1).



**Figure 3** A poster celebrating the foundation of Czechoslovakia. It is rich with symbolic attributes (shackles and the Austrian eagle at the bottom, a clear identification with American values).

The alleged great historical role of Czechoslovaks lay in putting these principles into practice. The second, specifically Czech justification of the special role of Czechoslovaks was their great struggle against the Germans—their “hereditary enemies,” who had almost exterminated them. Now, they were resurrected. Such rhetoric was, in a way, compulsory; a way of pandering to the French and thus scoring the necessary political points and sympathy. Both explanations can also be merged. In their unity, the civilizational mission of the Czechoslovaks can be epitomized.

In other words, the emphasis was put on the fierce and irreconcilable struggle against the Germans as well as the feverish search for a moral, and, above all, new religious life, the latter being a result of the former. It is therefore hardly surprising that Bohemia was the cradle of great religious crises in Europe throughout history.

The Czechoslovaks also led the Slavic solidarity movement, and a memorandum refers to the words of the French Slavist and Sorbonne professor Louis Eisenmann. He spoke of the historical roots of this phenomenon, all the way from Dobrovský to Kollár:

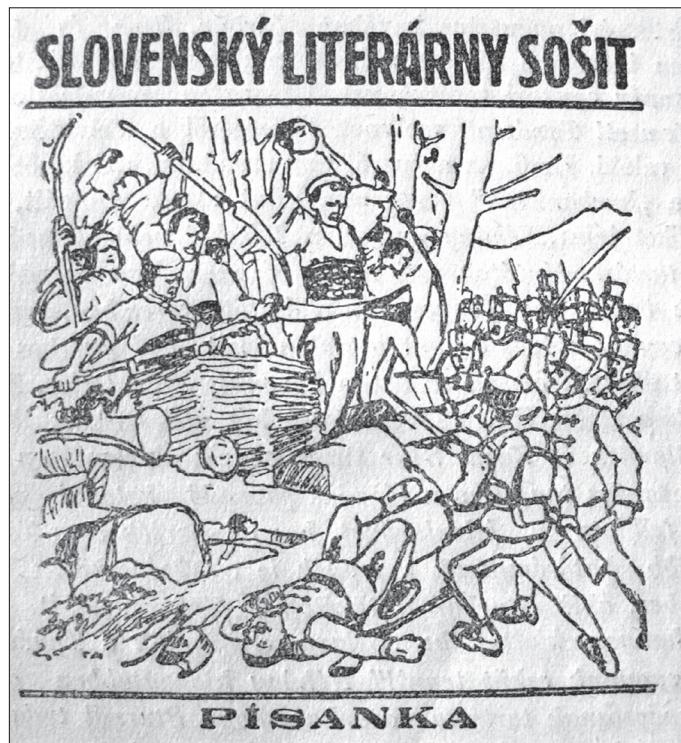
“Kollár was a Slovak living in Budapest, the son of one of the most imperiled Slavic nations. He could clearly observe the growing threat posed by the Hungarian national movement. The threat clearly manifested itself in the 1848/9 revolution...”<sup>17</sup>

Hence, the source of small nations’ unity, which also had a moral dimension. Hence also the strong philosophical justification of the idea of Slavic solidarity.

The Czech discourse, with its outright rejection and criticism of the Habsburg past, also made its mark on Slovak public opinion and the local educational system. Most of the history textbooks, were, after all, Czech or translated from Czech works. And yet, the Slovak elites had nothing (or very little) against the monarchy, even less against the dynasty, and nothing at all against Catholicism. There was a deeply rooted sense of loyalty towards the state and the dynasty among the Slovak political and intellectual elites. If there were objections, they were against Hungarians and the ethnic and political conditions in Hungary.

According to the official interpretation and official historical memory, the Czechoslovaks’ history was one of struggles with German and Hungarian oppressors. The Germans and Hungarians were painted as egoistic, violent, and ambitious; the Czechoslovaks, on the other hand, were peace-loving, hard-working and temperate in all things. Czechoslovakia was introduced as the heir to Hussite traditions and the messenger of democratic and social values. The official interpretation claimed that the establishment of the republic saved Slovaks from extinction, and the central themes in scholarly circles became Hungarian ethnic policy and state-supported assimilationist efforts (Fig. 4). Hungary was thus perceived mainly through the prism of its ethnic practice. The state’s endeavors in the sphere of industrial and agrarian development, transport infrastructure (95 percent of railway lines on the territory of present-day Slovakia were built before 1914) as well as culture and modernization in general faded into the background. When evaluating Slovak politics before 1918, the importance of Czech input was emphasized, as it was in the case of the internationalization of the issue of Slovaks in Europe (Robert William Seton-Watson, Björnstjerne Björnson, William Ritter, French bohemists).

17 Raschhofer, ed., *Die tschechoslowakischen Denkschriften*, 31 (Memorandum no. 1).



**Figure 4** From the work of Pechány, Adolf, *Mit tanítanak a felvidéki iskolákbán?* [What do they teach in Slovak schools?]. N. p. 1929, p. 15. This is a picture from a Slovak primary school workbook. Hungarian past was regarded as a life-and-death struggle.

There was no interest in mentioning the futility of Magyarization, nor of its short-sighted and counterproductive character.<sup>18</sup> In light of this fact, it is impossible to explain why, had there been a referendum in 1918 (or shortly afterwards), the Slovaks would have likely voted to remain in the monarchy. That is why such public opinion was rather not discussed.

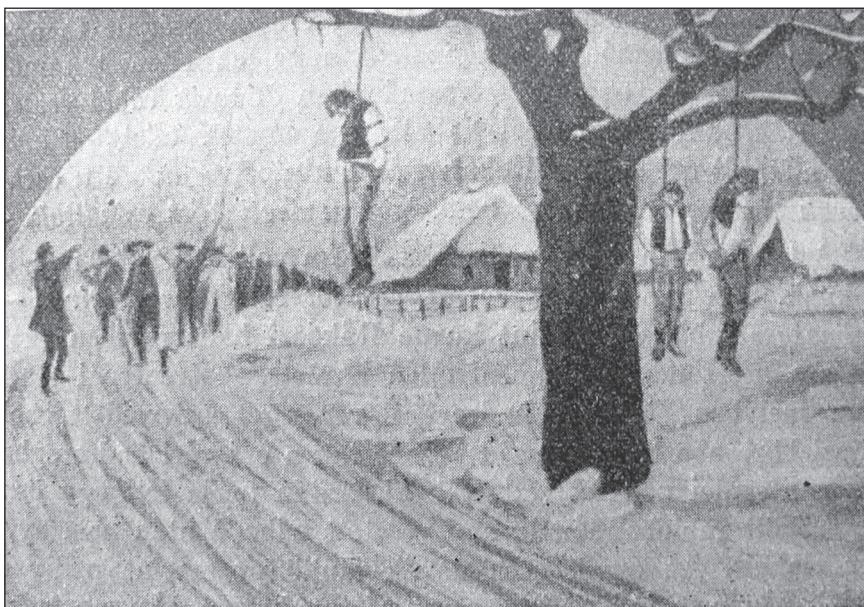
Official images of the harsh pre-1918 conditions which allegedly jeopardized the very existence of the Slovak nation were introduced into the school curriculum. Student populations who were being influenced in such a manner had no opportunity to compare their own empirical experience with the official historical memory. The images of hanged men lining the roadsides and gendarmes opening fire on defenseless crowds were meant to convince children that the new republic had brought salvation from the terrors of the past (Fig. 5). Similarly, the caricatures of an arrogant Hungarian landlord in periodicals and satirical magazines epitomized the

<sup>18</sup> Rapant, *K počiatkom maďarizácie*; Rapant, *Ilegálna maďarizácia 1790–1840*; Svetoň, *Slováci v Maďarsku*; Svetoň, *Obyvateľstvo Slovenska*.

former regime. On the state's tenth anniversary in 1928, many memorials, statues, and literary works were created in Slovakia.<sup>19</sup> They revisited the pre-republic conditions in the spirit of the aforementioned rhetoric.

The political forces that criticized the republic's ethnic practice and certain Czech attitudes often declared that conditions in Hungary were in many ways more favorable. Such attitudes were a means of political and manipulative instrumentalization within the framework of political debates. During the period of the wartime Slovak Republic, both Czechoslovakia and the monarchy were subject to critical reappraisal. A logical continuation of Slovak National Revival efforts (linguistic until the end of the eighteenth century and political since the 1840s) was sought; one that would inevitably lead to the establishment of an independent state.

The restoration of Czechoslovakia and the rise of the Communists to power once again led to the cultivation of a positive attitude towards the common Czechoslovak state; however, this was projected in numerous reinterpretations in accordance with the new Marxist doctrine. The dynamic Marxist historiography followed the line of the critical stance towards the monarchy. The nineteenth-century Hungary and



**Figure 5** From the work of Pechány, Adolf: *Mit tanítanak a felvidéki iskolákban?* [What do they teach in Slovak schools?]. N. p. 1929, p. 22. This is a picture from Albert Pražák's history textbook for year three students of secondary schools. Hungarian past was regarded as an attempt to exterminate Slovaks.

19 See Holec, "The Černová Tragedy," 9–26; Holec, "A Trianon-diskurzus," 31–45; modified Holec, "Trianonský diskurz," 131–50.

especially the period of the Dual Monarchy became objects of sharp criticism due to the ethnic practice and social policy, as well as the aristocratism and elitism of the society at the time. The attitude towards the Slovak workers' movement before 1918 was rather ambivalent and Czecho-Slovak cooperation was stressed in this sphere as well.

It was not until the 1960s that problematizing of the monarchy was possible, thanks to political détente. The best manifestation of these changes was a big international conference that was held in Bratislava to mark the centenary of the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. This led to the production of a 1000-page conference proceedings, which has retained its scholarly value up to now.<sup>20</sup>

In the following decades, several major monographs in the field of the political and economic history of the Habsburg monarchy were written by historians of the then 'middle generation' (Július Mésároš, Ladislav Tajták, Pavel Hapák, Milan Podrimavský, Milan Krajčovič, and Dušan Kováč et al.).<sup>21</sup>

After 1989, a new generation of historians emerged. With regard to the "long" nineteenth-century history of the Habsburg monarchy, they strengthened research in social history, the history of previously unstudied social classes, the church, nobility, bourgeoisie, and environmental history, as well as the politics of memory (Eva Kowalská, Elena Mannová, Peter Macho, Daniela Kodajová, Dušan Škvarna, Peter Švorc, László Vörös, Peter Šoltés, Gabriela Dudeková Kováčová, Štefan Gaučík, Daniel Hupko, Ján Golian, Miroslav Michela, Jakub Drábik, Attila Simon, and József Demmel, a Hungarian historian based in Slovakia). They enthusiastically started collaborating internationally and took part in discussions and foreign publications.<sup>22</sup>

An interesting phenomenon is the relatively neutral attitude towards the last rulers and members of the Habsburg dynasty. Books with these topics are popular among readers, which is also a result of their being a taboo subject before the year 1989. Biographies of this character are also represented by a wide range of translated literature.

Nowadays, a completely new generation, unburdened by this conflicted past, has entered the field with fresh new topics (Jana Májeková, Blažena Križová, et al.).

20 Vantuch and Holotík, eds, *Der österreichisch-ungarische Ausgleich 1867*.

21 Vörös, "Rozpad Uhorska" and other articles in this book written by Slovak and Hungarian historians.

22 Mannová, "Clio na slovenský spôsob"; Haslinger, "Národné alebo nadnárodné dejiny?"; Švorc, "Slovenská historiografia"; Dudeková, "Sociálne dejiny"; Macho, "Poznámky k výskumu kolektívnych," Holec, "Hospodárske dejiny na Slovensku"; Holec, "Krátke' dejiny 'dlhého' storočia."

## The most recent historiographic revisititations of the Monarchy and the year 1918

The centenary of the monarchy's dissolution has led to a plethora of exhibitions<sup>23</sup> and cultural events, as well as academic and non-academic literature. In professional historiography, brand new topics and new interpretative approaches have been brought to the table. Thanks to these, our knowledge has shifted to new contexts.

In relation to constructing historical consciousness in interwar Czechoslovakia, the importance of the Beneš Memoranda cannot be overlooked. The memoranda not only tried to legitimize the creation of the state, but also, in the spirit of the latter (at times calculating), argumentation and the national mythology was created—as well as public holidays, narratives in history textbooks, historical stereotypes, etc.<sup>24</sup> The calculating aspect was not a one-off feature, only used at the peace conference, but it literally institutionalized the basic principles of official historical memory. In addition, it provided the new state with a certain political character and tasks: this was its political and historical-philosophical role.

The most recent Czech work in the field of the construction of historical memory focuses on the creation of public holidays in Czechoslovakia.<sup>25</sup> The Slovak historian Miroslav Michela focused on Hungarian traditions and public holidays (15 March and 20 August), which were recoded and given new meaning after 1918. Despite the restrictions and sanctions imposed by the Czechoslovak government, the Hungarian minority preserved these traditions and public holidays. The Hungarians had a strong national and cultural awareness. After the dissolution of Austria-Hungary, it was as if they had “inherited” the role of the successors of the former Hungarian regime. For them, the monarchy's demise was a national tragedy. Both the chosen public holidays, as well as other local festivities and celebrations, promoted Hungarians' sense of national identity. Despite borders, this created an image of a unified Hungarian society brought together by historical misfortune.

Of the numerous Czech volumes dealing with the year 1918 and the history of Czechoslovakia, we will mention the most impressive one (over 1000 pages long). This was the result of collaboration between many foreign and Slovak (Jakub Drábik, Ľudovít Hallon, Roman Holec, Rudolf Chmel, Dušan Kováč, Jakub Štofaník) historians. Here, too, entirely new topics have been identified thanks to completely new approaches to most of the problem areas.<sup>26</sup> While the above-mentioned work commences with 1918 and continues up to the interwar period, a classic monograph

23 E.g. Česko-slovenská výstava; Besedič et al., *Trianon. Zrod novej hranice*.

24 See Krekovič, Mannová and Krekovičová, eds, *Mýty naše slovenské; Findor, Začiatky národných dejín*, but also Ducháček, Václav Chaloupecký.

25 Hájková et al., *Sláva republike!*

26 Hájková and Horák, eds, *Republika československá 1918–1939*.

by Jan Rychlík, an expert in the field of Slovak studies, covers the period from the outbreak of World War I until the foundation of the republic.<sup>27</sup> Of Slovak works, we can mention the latest book on Trianon, which completes and draws on earlier work by Miroslav Michela.<sup>28</sup>

In recent years, Slovak historiography has also managed to produce several significant pieces of work concerned with historical memory in relation to the final years of the monarchy.<sup>29</sup> Most recently, a collective monograph dealing with the role of 1918 in Central European historical memory has been published in cooperation with Hungarian (László Szarka), Czech, and Polish historians. A similar project was separately carried out by Czech historians.<sup>30</sup> Another work about one of the “founders” of Czechoslovakia, Milan Rastislav Štefánik, has also gained critical recognition thanks to its complexity and new approaches. It explores Štefánik as the symbol who has captured the imaginations of Czechoslovak historians and nurtured various political interpretations for decades. Among these, Peter Macho’s innovative work stands out. It offers an insight into the phenomenon of a national hero, his posthumous cult, as well as his symbolic presence in public spaces, and the crucial contextual symbolism and related festivities.<sup>31</sup> Štefánik has also been the subject of other approaches and of an impressive, unconventional modern biography that pieces together individual fragments of his life and constructs his persona around them.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the publication of numerous memoirs penned by ordinary Czech and Slovak soldiers has enhanced the historical memory of World War I even more. They recount time spent at the front, experiences as prisoners of war, and the new conditions that awaited them upon their return home.

Even in such an exact domain as the state economy, several links connecting the monarchy and the republic can be identified and thus considered its legacy. Some are of practical political and economic significance (budgeting); others are related to the mental state of post-World War I society and of inertia regarding certain stereotypes, but they, too, were directed towards economic practice.

A completely new topic has been introduced by Antonie Doležalová.<sup>33</sup> When analyzing state budget planning after 1918, a strong tendency to copy the Austrian model can be observed. The Czechoslovak practice of creating state budgets was a continuation of the Austrian predecessor’s modus operandi. The state budget took the

27 Rychlík, 1918. *Rozpad Rakousko-Uherska*.

28 Michela, *Pod heslom integrity*; Holec, *Trianon. Triumf a katastrofa*.

29 Michela and Vörös, eds, *Rozpad Uhorska a trianonská mierová zmluva*.

30 Letz and Makyna, eds, *Rok 1918 v historickej pamäti Slovenska*; Hálek and Moskovič, *Fenomén Maffie*.

31 Macho, *Milan Rastislav Štefánik*.

32 Kšiňan, *Milan Rastislav Štefánik*. See also Holec, *Hlinka. Otec národa?*

33 Doležalová, *Rašín, Engliš a ti druzí*.

form of a constitutional law; however, it lacked sanctions associated with non-compliance with the budget rules. Other procedures such as dealing with a deficit, tax increases, etc., also copied Austrian economic approaches. The philosophical background that fostered a prominent role for the state and economic interventionism can be found in the World War I years. The role of the insatiable state bureaucracy consistently continued to grow. Before World War I, the state redistributed around 15 percent of GDP; however, after World War I, it was at least 25 percent. By the end of the 1930s, annually, national debt represented 46 percent of GDP, mainly because of the expansion of the state sector. Gradually, however, steps were taken to create distance from the Austro-Hungarian practice: this included the separate budgeting of investments or state enterprises, transfers of chapters, changes resulting from the different accounting of individual budget items, etc. Compared to other countries, the scope of the redistributive processes was extremely wide, and similarly, social expenditure was also extremely high. Despite this, compared to other successor states, Czechoslovakia fared exceptionally well. Inflationary pressure in Romania, Poland, the Kingdom of Serbians, Croatians, and Slovenians (not to mention in the defeated states such as Austria and Hungary) was considerably greater. It led to budgetary chaos, the accumulation of national debt, and the collapse of foreign trade.

It is intriguing to note the legacy of the monarchy in the economic sphere. It was the decisive role of the state concerning organizational, distributive, and decision-making matters that became prevailing. In the critical years of war, the state took responsibility for everything. This is why there was a strong tendency of the state to assume responsibility for everything after the war, as well as to place all decision-making power in the state's hands.

The Czechoslovak state behaved in quite the opposite way. The steadfast enforcement of economic liberalism rejected all conscious interference in economic development. Market and entrepreneurial mechanisms were left to run their course, and it was just the national framework of rules that was controlled. Understandably, such an approach discriminated against the Slovak economy due to the prevalence of enterprises that were not only financially undersized but also burdened with higher production costs. The latter were a significant threat to their existence; therefore, it is hardly surprising that in certain entrepreneurial circles and among economic elites, the spirit of nostalgia for the “good, old days” of Hungarian economic policy prevailed.

In this context, it was quickly forgotten that the highly regarded Hungarian so-called industrial acts (1881, 1890, 1899, 1907), which were considered an example of state-led industrialization, did not disadvantage individual regions, but a large proportion of their inhabitants.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> See Holec, “Die ungarische Wirtschafts- und Industriepolitik”; Pauliny, “Die Industriepolitik in Ungarn und Österreich”; Pázmándi, “Industrialisierung und Urbanisierung.”

Hungarian economic policy demonstrated growing tendencies towards protectionism, but internally, especially as regards legislation, a characteristic liberal approach was maintained. This allowed for the smooth formation of business entities and the business environment itself. From the outside, legislative measures aimed at supporting a domestic industrial sector seemed attractive. As a matter of fact, all decision-making processes and the effects of supportive measures were hampered by an ever-present framework of nationalism. The Hungarian government's policies that were meant to promote industry did not live up to expectations; nevertheless, the state had a key role in economic growth. The Hungarian government, hindered in its independent customs policy by the existing customs union, not only allowed the entry of foreign investment, but also used other ways of promoting industrial development, mainly subsidies—the most common mechanism for supporting industry. When inspecting the number of subsidies granted by the state to individual regions, we come to the surprising conclusion that Felvidék (approximately present-day Slovakia) had become the focal point of state support. If the textile and clothing industry was allocated the largest share of subsidies (57 percent), then Slovakia benefited from up to 40 percent of them.<sup>35</sup> Zoltán Gál, who studied banks' capital strength and their business pre-World War I, reached corresponding conclusions.<sup>36</sup>

Slovakia inherited almost 19 percent of all industry in the predominantly agrarian Kingdom of Hungary. This figure corresponds to the number of people employed in industry, the number of industrial enterprises and other criteria. The Hungarian geographer Pál Beluszky attempted to determine the degree of "social modernization" in early twentieth century Hungary using twelve economic, social, cultural, and urbanization criteria. Four groups of regions were identified. Among them was the territory of the present-day Slovakia, which, along with Budapest, played a central part. This made clear how essential a position it played within the Hungarian state.<sup>37</sup>

The few economic elites in Slovakia departed the monarchy with concerns about the possibility that the unjust economic and political practices followed by the liberal Hungarian governments could repeat themselves in the newly founded Czechoslovak Republic. The threats were no longer assimilationist intentions and the ethnic discrimination experienced during their coexistence with Hungary, but mainly Czech economic strength.

35 Pázmándi, "Industrialisierung und Urbanisierung," 165. Also see MNL OL, Miniszterelnökség, K-28, 74. tétel, 30. cs., 19-1939-18768, A felsőmagyarországi gyáripar állami támogatása 1882–1914.

36 Gál, "A Felvidék városainak pénzintézeti funkciói."

37 Beluszky and Győri, *Magyar városhálózat*, 85–8.

These worries were soon to be justified by further development in the republic. Czechoslovakia's heterogeneity (i.e., diverse levels of economic development) proved to be a drawback. Slovakia, the most developed region in Hungary (second to the Budapest agglomeration), delivered only 8 percent of the entire economic potential. It was only in the mid-thirties that Slovakia reached pre-war production levels.<sup>38</sup> This was a source of politically motivated observations about how Slovaks had prospered within Hungary, and what pitfalls and dangers they were exposed to in Czechoslovakia. These were designed to blackmail Czechs by depicting an alternative to the Czech economic (and ultimately, political) practice.

\* \* \*

Interpretations of the monarchy and the year 1918 in Slovak historiography are now devoid of any ideological burden, as well as of political and national instrumentalization. The crucial thing is not to put emphasis on who the agents of the 1918 coup were (domestic or exiled elites, foreign armies, the Entente, the working class etc.), or to cultivate pro-Entente or anti-Hungarian attitudes, as can be observed in some recent marginal and so-called nationally oriented texts.<sup>39</sup> The Habsburg Monarchy in its last 50 years is a historical era that is an integral part of Slovak history. It should not be glorified or ignored, but neither should it be erased from the national narrative of the nineteenth and twentieth century.

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<sup>38</sup> See Holec, "Ekonomické aspekty"; Holec, "K problémom česko-slovenskej kapitálovej spolupráce"; Holec, "Die Slowaken zwischen Monarchie und Republik"; Holec, *Štát s dvoma tvárami*.

<sup>39</sup> Typical of the national point of view are books and articles written by Slovak historian Marián Hronský. F. e. Hronský, *The Struggle for Slovakia*; Hronský, *Mikulášska rezolúcia*.

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## From Semi-Colony to Sub-Empire

### The Changeable Status of the Hungarian Kingdom in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy\*

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**Abstract.** This study analyses the historiographical application of two concepts (colony, and empire), the contemporary interpretations of which fundamentally determined judgements about the status of Hungary within the Habsburg Monarchy. Despite the fact that the concept of 'colony' as used in the eighteenth century was widely known, the category of the 'semi-colony' eventually proved to be unable to describe the conditions of the Austrian–Hungarian world in the second half of the nineteenth century. The term 'Hungarian Empire' clearly arose from the language of the nineteenth century. Various meanings of this were formulated: as a term for the one-time territory of Hungarian Kingdom (the Holy Crown of St. Stephen, meaning Hungary proper, Transylvania, Croatia, and Slavonia) on the one hand; and another one that included expansion beyond the Carpathian basin (mainly toward southeastern Europe). A third meaning also existed: a Hungarian-centered version that included all Habsburg provinces, which from time to time was hard to distinguish from the first and second meanings mentioned above. Reviewing the asymmetrical but parallel developments of the concepts of 'colony' and 'empire,' we must establish that in the long term the case for the usage of both terms has been undermined. Even more does this opinion seem to be valid in the case of derivative, retrospectively constructed concepts (such as semi-colony, and sub-empire) that are not rooted in the dictionary of the historical sources and conceptual history of political ideas.

**Keywords:** Marxist historiography, colony, 'semi-colony,' empire, 'Hungarian empire,' 'sub-empire'

The historiographies of all nations must elaborate their relation to transnational concepts. Such an attempt has a chance to be effective only in the case when the terminology of the historian fits the discourse of the historical sources. In this study, I try to analyse the historiographical application of two concepts (colony, and empire),

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the contemporary interpretations of which fundamentally determined judgements about the status of Hungary in the Habsburg Monarchy. From a historiographical point of view, related derivative terms that are not rooted either in the dictionary of the historical sources, nor in discourses of the conceptual history of political ideas (semi-colony, sub-empire), are particularly noteworthy.

### **The historical relevance of the concept of the 'semi-colony'**

In the 'Iron Age' of Marxist historiography in the 1950s, a leading Hungarian economic historian, Vilmos Sándor, self-critically interpreted the former use of the term 'semi-colony' as applied to the status of Hungary in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

"The introduction of this concept, the semi-colonial situation of Hungary, which proclaimed the dependent and submissive situation of Hungary, had the advantage of not only being simpler, better known and more comprehensible than any other likely theory, but also of having considerable propagandistic force. It was suitable for leaving a permanent record in public consciousness."<sup>1</sup>

The self-critical comment quoted above from Vilmos Sándor essentially reflected on the fact that, as compared to post-1945 historians who branded Hungary's pre-1867 status 'colonial,' the former's own application of Lenin's concept of the 'semi-colony' to post-Compromise relations between Austria and Hungary was, relatively speaking, a progressive step. But before we put all the blame on the Marxists for even raising the question, we must clarify that the starting point—the thesis of Hungary's colonial dependence on Austria—was not something that communist historians came up with; in actual fact, it was deeply rooted in the traditions of Hungarian historiography—and it was not just embraced by the pro-independence *kuruc* school either. Even if we limit ourselves to merely staking out some of the more important stages of the proliferation of this idea, we must go all the way back to the very dawn of professional history writing in Hungary and point to Henrik Marczali's work on the era of Joseph II. This was the first historical work in Hungary to rely on the study of archival sources on file in Vienna. In this work, Marczali elaborated the thesis of Hungary's 'colonial dependence,' quoting the typology of Wilhelm Roscher, a prominent figure of the historical school of national economics.<sup>2</sup> In Marczali's usage, the concept of the 'colony' still preserved its original double meaning. On the one hand, the term was still used in reference to

1 Sándor, "Magyarország függőségének jellege," 94.

2 Roscher, *Kolonien*; Marczali, *Magyarország*, 108, 134, 142.

the actual ‘coloni’ (*colonus* meaning ‘settler’); on the other hand, it was also understood as referring to the colonial relationship between the United Kingdom and its colonies in the sense of global economics and politics. Applying both meanings to Hungary simultaneously seemed to be possible: on the one hand, the central parts of the country taken back from the Ottomans—namely, the Great Hungarian Plain, which Marczali identified as one of the country’s economic systems—were characterized by intensive resettlement throughout the entire eighteenth century; on the other hand, the northwestern part of Hungary—which Marczali understood as the vehicle of another, more Western type of economic system within Hungary—was very much subject to the influence of the hereditary provinces that made every effort to monopolize their markets and reinforce Hungary’s dependence.<sup>3</sup> In his analysis, Marczali used careful, nuanced language:

“Then again, our homeland was not entirely a colony; it did have its own industry even if much oppressed by that of the mother country. And as far as colonization itself is concerned, the old Hungary played at least as much of a role as the hereditary provinces.”<sup>4</sup>

In this respect Marczali reflected on the so-called ‘old Hungary’ itself as a colonizer, still in a sense not the developed national viewpoint.

It was Ferenc Eckhart’s work on Hungary’s colonial status that laid the foundations of writing history based on archival sources available in Vienna. Having exploited nearly all the relevant documentation, Eckhart was fully aware both of the novelty of his work as far as his treatment of the historical sources was concerned and of the topicality of his concept.

“Time and time again, our recent historical literature echoes the acrid accusations that Vienna’s economic policy treated Hungary as if it were a colony and that its objective was to keep the country in permanent dependence on Austria. Thus far, no systematic work based on archival research has been done to verify whether this accusation is justified, although the issue merits thorough and complete analysis in the light of the important consequences it has had to date.”<sup>5</sup>

In writing about industrial policy, he further expounded this link by placing it into an international context.

3 Marczali, *Magyarország*, 113. “Hungary, which is a colony in [an] economic respect, still must pay for the fact that [s]he is not quite a colony in political regard.”

4 Marczali, *Magyarország*, 143.

5 Eckhart, *A bécsi udvar*, 4. In this respect, his work does not contain direct historiographical references. On Eckhart, see recently Törő, *A szellemtörténet*.

“In Vienna, the Monarchy was seen not only as a political but also as an economic unit; it is only self-explanatory that the efforts to gain industrial independence for the Monarchy from foreign nations were concentrated in those parts of the Monarchy that had most industrial potential to begin with, which were, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the hereditary provinces. Within this economic unit, Hungary was meant to play the same role as, in the eyes of Colbert, all of Central Europe played vis-à-vis France, or as his follower, Frederick the Great expected Poland to play vis-à-vis Prussia: that of a supplier of raw materials and a market for manufactured goods; in other words, as a target of economic exploitation.”<sup>6</sup>

This language makes it very clear—and it also follows from the basic concept of his entire book—that for Eckhart, the terminology used by Vienna’s contemporary economic policy consultants is an accurate reflection of the actual economic impact that those policies had.

“Vienna’s mercantilist industrial policy in Hungary was in fact a colonial policy. If we read the views of Justi—the »cameralist« widely read by Vienna councillors—on what economic treatment he recommends in dealing with colonies, and then compare those partly with the policies we have detailed above and partly with the express views of the economic council, it is impossible not to agree with the Hungarian historians blaming the Queen on account of the fact that, under her rule, the country’s economic exploitation reached levels normally seen in how other European countries treat their colonies.”<sup>7</sup>

In his grand synthesis, Gyula Szekfű essentially shared the same views about Hungary’s ‘colonial status.’ Writing about the absolutism of Leopold I, he spoke of the “original sin” of Austrian absolutism and the “whole Austrian state-idea.” “Hungary is the colonial territory of the Austrian provinces having highly developed industry, this concept in the bud exists in the texts of Austrian cameralists when they first imagine the politically so different lands of the Monarchy as a unified economic area.”<sup>8</sup> Even concerning Maria Theresa—notwithstanding all his respect and empathy for her—he

6 Eckhart, *A bécsi udvar*, 120.

7 Eckhart, *A bécsi udvar*, 124. The German résumé expresses more sharply the essence of this statement: “Ungarn blieb infolge der Industriepolitik Maria Theresias in der Entwicklung zurück und nahm an dem sich allgemein durch die kapitalistischen Unternehmungen hebenden Wohlstand nicht teil; es wurde einer fremden Industrie ausgeliefert und wie eine Kolonie behandelt.” Eckhart, *A bécsi udvar*, 360.

8 Szekfű, *Magyar történet. A tizenhetedik század*, 346. In the references he relies on works of O. Redlich and H. Srbik, but—as he writes—in regard to economics, he had to “turn away” from their concepts. Szekfű, *Magyar történet. A tizenhetedik század*, 422.

had to point out that “the queen had been convinced in her heart of hearts [...] that she had acted properly when she had sunk one country of her monarchy into such a colonial status.”<sup>9</sup> During World War II even Domokos Kosáry in his article on Lajos Kossuth’s nationalism could not break away from this dominant discourse, but his formulation concerning the age of reforms—“we were almost in colonial dependence”—contained some effort to interpret more cautiously.<sup>10</sup>

We consider it important to give these aspects proper emphasis, partly in order to highlight the fact that Hungary’s colonial status within the Habsburg Empire was part of the dominant discourse even before the communists took over, and partly because we believe it worthwhile to point out the fact that this position admittedly and consciously confronted the views proposed by Austrian historians to the opposite effect.

After 1945, in the new political environment, this familiar old discourse re-emerged once again, this time with renewed content. In this context, it seems quite significant that József Révai, one of the regime’s chief ideologists at the time, had praised Eckhart in a book he had written back in 1932 when he was still in prison, and published only much later. As he wrote, “the tax exemption enjoyed by the Hungarian nobility was undoubtedly one of the reasons—although not a primary reason—behind Austria’s colonial customs policy. In fact, on many occasions, this tax exemption protected Hungarian manufactories against the Vienna government’s colonial policies....”<sup>11</sup> Révai, however, was eventually able to reverse his earlier evaluation of Hungary’s semi-colonial status. As he wrote in 1948, the Compromise “made Hungary dependent on Austria. In economic terms, this meant maintaining the country’s semi-colonial status, slowing down Hungary’s independent economic development, and impeding Hungarian industrial development....”<sup>12</sup> Erzsébet Andics, coming home from Moscow as a leading historian, formulated the sharpest ideological signal of the decisive year in her inaugural address for the reorganized Hungarian Historical Association in the spring of 1949:

“[H]ardly disputable is that the second terrible distress of Hungarian people was the [its] century old colonial fate. We could not completely overcome its serious economic, political and cultural consequences [until now]

9 Szekfű, *Magyar történet. A tizennyolcadik század*, 320. In the bibliography he declared the following: concerning modern descriptions “of the economic, customs- and commercial policy relations,” he had exclusively taken his bearing from Eckhart’s work. Szekfű, *Magyar történet. A tizennyolcadik század*, 484.

10 Kosáry, “A Pesti Hírlap nacionalizmusa,” 374.

11 Révai, “Marx és a magyar forradalom,” 111. On the origin of this text and its later variants, see Lackó’s masterful analysis: Lackó “Révai-problémák,” 229–63.

12 Révai, *48 útján*, 71–72. On the frequent changes in the views of Révai, see Hanák, “Historizálás és történetiség,” 176–77, 214.

and we have a lot of task[s] in this field for the future. At the same time [,] Hungarian historiography glorified the Habsburg [...] dynasty and its colonizer politics.”<sup>13</sup>

The concept—which, as we have seen, was nothing new to begin with—underwent yet another metamorphosis in which it was equipped with all the bells and whistles of academic argumentation—this, however, did not happen at the hands of the honorary president (Révai) or the president (Andics) of the Hungarian Historical Association, even though they were frequently quoted on the issue.

In this respect, we could highlight Zsigmond Pál Pach’s work, published in 1949 under the title *Az eredeti tőkefelhalmozás gyarmati korláta Magyarországon 1848 előtt* (Colonial Impediments to the Primitive Accumulation of Capital in Hungary Prior to 1848), first in the relaunched historical review *Századok*, and one year later in a separate pamphlet.<sup>14</sup> The paper listed all previous literature from Adolf Beer to Heinrich Srbik, from Marczali through Eckhart to Szekfű, and even quoted a number of titles by Soviet historians in the bibliography, while also profusely quoting Marx, Lenin, and Stalin.<sup>15</sup> In Pach’s interpretation, “the colonial system of the Habsburgs” had gone through various stages in Hungary, with the initial stage of the process taking place during the early eighteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The second stage was “the development of a fully-fledged system of colonialism and protectionism [...] under the rule of Maria Theresa and Joseph II.”<sup>17</sup> The third stage started at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup> Of course, portraying this process as a class struggle that reached well into the first half of the nineteenth century primarily served the purpose of creating historical justification for the 1848/49 bourgeois revolution and war of independence.

13 Andics, “Elnöki székfoglaló,” 7. *Századok* had a huge delay in publication: Andics’s inaugural address of 27 March 1949 appeared in the volume of 1948.

14 Pach, *Az eredeti tőkefelhalmozás*. This study originally constituted the second part of the work: P. Zsigmond, “Szempontok az eredeti tőkefelhalmozás vizsgálatához Magyarországon;” P. Zsigmond, “Szempontok az eredeti tőkefelhalmozás vizsgálatához Magyarországon, II.” Later, however, it was also published as an offprint under another title: Pach, *Az eredeti tőkefelhalmozás*. I quote this latter version of the paper.

15 Among the references we can find Aladár Mód’s (1908–1973) comment as well, who, as the chief editor of the ideological periodical published by the communist party, criticized the 1948 volume of *Századok*, including the first part of the Pach paper on primitive accumulation. Mód in his book *Mód, 400 év küzdelem*, first published in 1943 but then also in several revised and enlarged editions, contributed to the temporal extension of the colonial discourse to nineteenth-century Hungarian history, but in his narrative the accent was not put on this terminology. Mód, *400 év küzdelem*, 98, 273. On Mód see Romsics, *Clio bűvöletében*, 352–55, 381–82.

16 Pach, *Az eredeti tőkefelhalmozás*, 14.

17 Pach, *Az eredeti tőkefelhalmozás*, 30.

18 Pach, *Az eredeti tőkefelhalmozás*, 35.

The complete range of the renewed terminology was canonized during the years of the writing of the new university textbooks on the era. Concerning the pre-1848 Vormärz period, there was no need for terminological innovation, but with regard to the relations to the Habsburgs after 1849 some new explanation was to be invented. The colony discourse was given, ready for reinterpretation. The relevant volume had a preface written by Zsigmond Pál Pach and Péter Hanák.

“After the failed revolution and war of independence, the ensuing absolutism introduced severe colonial oppression while the feudal system also survived in vestigial forms. Under such conditions, no complete harmony could arise between the relations of production and the productive forces. After the achievements of the revolution of 1848–49 and the counter-revolutionary system of absolutism, the final balance of the era of the bourgeois revolution was drawn in 1867. [...] after the Compromise, bourgeois development lagged behind, dragged down by the heavy heritage of the Middle Ages: the development of capitalism followed the Prussian model with all its failures and frustrations; vestiges of the feudal past survived throughout the entire era, strong as ever; the dependence and oppression that had weighed the country down in the era of the Habsburg Empire lived on in the form of the semi-colonial relations linking the country to Austria; as far as the methods of governance were concerned, many of their absolutistic characteristics stayed around to haunt; and, finally, a multiethnic Hungary preserved and in fact strengthened its state systems for the oppression of its national minorities.”<sup>19</sup>

However, the terminology related to Hungary’s ‘semi-colonial’ status still needed to be elaborated by the various specialty areas.

Economic historians studying the era following 1867 had an important role to play in the application of the concept of the ‘semi-colony’. In addition to Pach, we must mention Vilmos Sándor, whose self-critical comment from his later work we have quoted in our introduction. A footnote to the very first chapter of his monograph on industrial development in the period between 1867 and 1900 offers a more elaborate definition:

“During the period between 1849 and 1867, Hungary’s colonial status implied that the country lost its independence, it became a part of the Austrian empire, while from 1867 its semi-colonial situation allowed the country to recuperate its independent statehood in a restricted way with foreign affairs, military affairs, and any related financial affairs remaining common imperial affairs. At the same time, as far as the country’s

19 Pach and Hanák, “Bevezetés,” 1–2.

economic reality was concerned, its colonial dependence on Austria lived on essentially without any change.”<sup>20</sup>

During the discussions on the new university textbook (1954), it became clear that the editors themselves had different interpretations for the term ‘colony’. Péter Hanák for example, quoting texts from Marx, suggested a more precise definition for this colonial status. Instead of term ‘agrarian capitalism,’ he suggested speaking about developing capitalism in circumstances of colonial relations.<sup>21</sup>

Other warnings arrived from outside as well. During a debate in the editorial office of *Századok*, Nyina Mickun (1907–1987) said “I do not agree with the proposition that Hungary was a colony. This is an issue we have not yet resolved even though resolving it would be of utmost importance.”<sup>22</sup> While her field of expertise was Spanish history, her comment could not be merely shrugged off: she was the sister-in-law of communist party leader Mátyás Rákosi.

Moving onto the international scene, the Czechoslovak Institute of Party History organized a conference in Prague in 1955. They invited delegations from Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Austria to discuss the history of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy and to contrast—and, if possible, reconcile—all the diverging views on it. The successor states of the Habsburg Empire were only represented by Marxist participants, although not just party historians, but also academics and university professors. The topics were arranged ahead of time. The participants gave presentations and comments. As a by-product of the proceedings, harsh debates arose concerning both the concepts of ‘colony’ and ‘semi-colony’ and the Hungarian positions related to them. Hungary delegated Zsigmond Pál Pach, Vilmos Sándor, and Tibor Erényi, the latter representing the Hungarian Institute of Party History. The two scholars most noted for their unflinching positions on the issue were Pavel Reinmann (1902–1976) from Prague and Július Mésároš (1923–2006) from Bratislava. Even though the two did not agree on all aspects, they shared the opinion that the terminology that “certain Hungarian historians” had been using widely “for a number of years now” “to describe Hungary’s situation during the era of Dualism as ‘colonial’ or ‘semi-colonial’ was unacceptable.”<sup>23</sup> Both Pach and Sándor challenged this position, but since the Austrian delegation was also inclined to accept the position of the Czech and Slovak historians, a surprisingly wide platform—one reaching beyond the bounds of Cisleithania—seemed to be forming; the Hungarian historians must have found themselves in quite a difficult

20 Sándor, *Nagyipari fejlődés*, 13.

21 Balázs, “Beszámoló,” 205. Hanák’s critical remarks mostly concerned Révai.

22 Andics, “A *Századok* szerkesztőbizottságának vitaülése,” 662.

23 Zsigmond Pál Pach, Report, 7 October 1955. MTAL II. Osztály, 86. d. 12. For published reports on the conference, see Sándor and Erényi, “Beszámoló.” The volume later published in Czech modestly called the conference in its subtitle a ‘consultation’: Staněk, ed., *Otázky vývoje kapitalismu*.

situation. So much so that at the end of his report on the conference submitted to an in-camera meeting of the Main Committee of Historiography—which, as far as I know, he never published—Pach exploded:

“My comrades will be fully aware of the fact that the terms ‘colonial’ and ‘semi-colonial’ have been proposed time and again in various forms for several years now, but there has been no study, or even a mere attempt at a study, that would have defined the concepts ‘colony’ and ‘semi-colony’ from one aspect or another, but based on the classics of Marxism-Leninism and, as I have said, would have tried to tackle the issue on that basis. I believe there is a need for a study designed with this theoretical objective to contribute to the clarification of the issue.”<sup>24</sup>

Finally, the “general staff” of the conference accepted resolutions for future cooperation and decided to meet again in 1957.

The planned conference was eventually hosted in Budapest in 1958. The topic of the conference changed, however, because Pach could not give the second presentation on the capitalist development of agriculture; instead, Vilmos Sándor was assigned to give a presentation on the nature of the relationship between Austria and Hungary.<sup>25</sup> The first version of his paper was published in Hungarian, but he informed the reader that the text had been written in the second half of 1957 and the final more fully elaborated version was presented at the conference in December 1958. He asked the would-be discussion partners to take into account this final German version of his text.<sup>26</sup> This is the reason why the German version of the conference proceedings did include a chapter on Hungary’s ‘semi-colonial situation’—the sentence we quoted at the beginning of this paper is certainly nowhere to be found in print.<sup>27</sup> The study unambiguously emphasized the importance of the 1955 conference held in Prague insofar as the Hungarian historians had revised their position.<sup>28</sup> The job that Pach outlined in his report on the Prague conference was thus undertaken by Vilmos Sándor inasmuch as he filtered through the relevant views of the classical authors of Marxism (first and foremost, Lenin) and came to the following conclusion: “In view of the facts explained in detail above, neither nation [...] forming part of the multiethnic state of the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy can be considered either a colonist or a colony

24 Zsigmond Pál Pach, Report, 7 October 1955. MTAL II. Osztály, 86. d. 12.

25 “A kapitalizmus fejlődése az egykori osztrák-magyar monarchia országaiban” munkakonferencia tudományos programtervezetének módosítása. [Modification of the program of workshop ‘The Development of the Capitalism in the Countries of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy’] n. d. MTAL II. Osztály, 223. d. 5.

26 Sándor, “Magyarország függőségének jellege,” 111.

27 Sándor, “Der Character der Abhängigkeit,” 307.

28 Sándor, “Magyarország függőségének jellege,” 95.

either from the perspective of economics or politics.<sup>29</sup> Pach, who had chaired the panel of the first section on the comparative analysis of economic and social structures, spoke in favor of the revised position during the debate regarding the second topic, but by then only as a contributor. First and foremost, he referenced the earlier statement of his own made back in December 1957 during the debate about the university textbook, by which time he had already publicly revised his own views:

“The volume—which has been in use as a university textbook for years now—describes Hungary’s status as ‘colonial’ during the era of absolutism and as ‘semi-colonial’ during the era of Dualism. This terminology is in line with the position that Hungarian Marxist historiography held back in 1952–53. Since then, we have seen that this terminology was exaggerated and one-sided. Hungary cannot be called a colony even during the era of absolutism and it can certainly not be simply considered a semi-colony after the Compromise. Within the dualist state organisation of the multi-ethnic Monarchy, Hungary was certainly in a dependent situation both politically and economically, yet at the same time the Hungarian nation was also in the role of the ruling nation at least in respect of the non-Hungarian peoples of the country.”<sup>30</sup>

During the discussion, György Ránki and Tibor Kolossa also supported the revisionist efforts of Vilmos Sándor, although they made some critical remarks as well. International consensus was also formed about the issue eventually: Polish historian Józef Buszko (1925–2003) stated clearly that the terms ‘colony’ and ‘semi-colony’ were useless as far as their applicability to East Europe was concerned, while Slovak historian Július Mésároš, who had already played an active role back in 1955, explained his conviction that specific research work was much more important than terminological debate.<sup>31</sup>

Aladár Mód, professor of Eötvös Loránd University, a leading figure of ‘national communist’ historiography, and chair of the third section, considered the total rejection of the terminology ‘dependency’ and ‘semi-colony’ suggested by Vilmos Sándor to be dangerous. He agreed that the terminology needed some precision, but claimed that Hungary was in a semi-colonial status before 1848 and remained dependent on the center of the Monarchy with some semi-colonial features after the Compromise.<sup>32</sup>

29 Sándor, “Magyarország függőségének jellege,” 102. The statement was based on quotations from Lenin.

30 Puskás and Szuhay, “A ‘Magyarország története’ c. egyetemi tankönyv,” 792.

31 Sándor, “Der Character der Abhängigkeit,” 333. This means he repeated his position from 1954. Mód, 400 év küzdelem, 309. See a similar report on the conference: Kende and Surányi, “A kapitalizmus fejlődése.”

32 Kende and Surányi, “A kapitalizmus fejlődése,” 949.

We could say that, for all intents and purposes, this put an end to the brief academic career of the adjective ‘semi-colonial.’ Yet Vilmos Sándor had found justification for introducing its use; Péter Hanák later confirmed its applicability in his essay on historiography and in highly poetical terms—and the impact of the term certainly “continues to reverberate” in public consciousness to date.<sup>33</sup>

## Sub-Empire building?

While the use of the term ‘semi-colony’ was clearly an attempt to introduce a retrospectively constructed conceptual framework with the aim of interpreting Hungary’s situation within the Monarchy (the conclusion that Hungary was in a colonial situation in the eighteenth century was itself rooted in contemporary discourse), the term ‘Hungarian Empire’ clearly arose from the language of the nineteenth century. Many examples can be quoted to support this claim. For the different interpretations of the concept ‘Hungarian Empire’ in the Vormärz period must be mentioned the inaugural lecture of Ignác Romsics in 2002 and the more recently published paper of Bálint Varga<sup>34</sup> as essential works. According to them, the main distinctive difference between the various meanings constitutes the use of the term for the one-time territory of Hungarian Kingdom (the Holy Crown of St. Stephen, meaning Hungary proper, Transylvania, Croatia, and Slavonia) on the one hand, or, as an imperialist concept, another one involving its expansion beyond the Carpathian basin (mainly toward southeastern Europe).<sup>35</sup> However, as is clear from the texts, a third meaning also existed: a Hungarian-centered version of all Habsburg provinces, which from time to time was hard to distinguish from the first and second meanings mentioned above.<sup>36</sup> It must be not forgotten that the concept of an Austrian Empire in the sense of the *Gesammtreich* was first formulated in legal terms as late as in the so-called Constitution of 4 March 1849 (*Reichsverfassung für das Kaiserthum Oesterreich*). The attributes (*untheilbare und unauflösbar*) in their administrative-juridical and economic expansive totality pushed the Hungarian political elite towards having declared, independent, nation-state ambitions.

The most obvious place to look for examples would be in the field of geography, as geopolitics is clearly one of the aspects that take center stage when discussing the overall issue. In a piece of work entitled *A Magyar birodalom természeti viszonyainak*

33 Hanák, “Magyarország az Osztrák–Magyar Monarchiában,” 314.

34 Romsics, “A magyar birodalmi gondolat,” 136–37; Varga, “The Two Faces.”

35 Romsics uses the term primarily with the second meaning. Romsics, “A magyar birodalmi gondolat,” 122.

36 Bálint Varga, in the English version of his paper formulates carefully concerning these visions: “I would hesitate to call their scattered initiatives a discourse.” Varga, “The Two Faces,” 126.

*leírása* (The Natural History of the Hungarian Empire), János Hunfalvy offered a definition that seemed to be self-explanatory in terms of natural geography: “The Hungarian empire is a geographical unit that is clearly distinct in its overall natural characteristics; its borders are, with just a handful of exceptions, marked by natural boundaries, that is, mountain ridges and rivers.”<sup>37</sup> Of course, in terms of geography, the weak points of the above claim are more than apparent: namely, “in terms of natural geography, the country’s most problematic borders are its southern borders.”<sup>38</sup> This reflects the fact that Hunfalvy, much in line with the public-law thinking of the era, made a distinction between “Hungary in the strict sense” and the other parts of the empire—namely, “the other Hungarian homeland: Transylvania,” as well as Croatia and Slavonia, and the Military Frontier, just to make the list short.

Having reviewed the descriptive categories of natural geography, the post-Compromise era’s system of statistical concepts also jumps to the forefront. Since the very beginning, the official statistical publications of the era reflected a unique, dual sense of loyalty. While one of the handbooks discussed the foreign trade relations of the “Austrian-Hungarian Empire,” another one detailed the mining industry of the “Hungarian empire.”<sup>39</sup> This could not have been any other way, really, as any foreign trade transaction could only be concluded within the framework of the single customs union, while all actors in the extractive industries within the territory of Hungary were local mining operations. Károly Keleti, the head of the Statistical Office, wrote the following in justification of the title of his seminal work *Hazánk és népe* (Our Homeland and Its People):<sup>40</sup> “...so, lest we wander off into obsolete theories or arbitrary rambling, and instead to depict our society as it exists in the sense of or our very own era, we must consider that our subject matter is our homeland as a state and as a country.” What this means in effect is that “the countries under the Crown of Saint Stephen must be described in societal terms as a political whole, as a territory where the population lives and its farm animals are bred, while, at the same time, offering at least an outline of how the individual countries are delimited and divided, this serving as the backdrop, as it were, for a description of the society, and,

<sup>37</sup> Hunfalvy, *A magyar birodalom természeti viszonyainak leírása*, 112. See the same concept repeated twenty years later: Hunfalvy, *A magyar birodalom földrajza*, 1–13.

<sup>38</sup> Hajdú, “Az ‘államtáj’ és a ‘tájállam’,” 138. This has been mentioned in Hunfalvy’s work as well: “Toward South neither the borders of Croatia, nor those of Dalmatia had been settled by the nature itself.” Hunfalvy, *A magyar birodalom természeti viszonyainak leírása*, 113.

<sup>39</sup> “Külkereskedelmi viszonyok 1868 [Foreign trade relations, 1868],” HSK, vol. II, no. IV, 32 ff; “A Magyar birodalom bányászata 1867-ben [Mining of the Hungarian Empire in 1867],” HSK, vol. II, no. I, 143–73.

<sup>40</sup> Keleti, *Hazánk és népe*. The title of this work was clearly inspired by Wilhelm Riehl (*Land und Leute*).

in other words, comprising, along with the people and all its institutions, the state.”<sup>41</sup> And even though the public-law status of some territories was not yet formalized at the time, the narrative took the “individual countries” and developed the concept of “all the empire under the Crown of Saint Stephen”; that is, “the Hungarian empire.”<sup>42</sup> Yet somewhat later he saw no problem discussing the grape production or the mining industry of “the Austrian–Hungarian Empire.”<sup>43</sup> When discussing the customs union agreement concluded between Austria and Hungary as part of the Compromise, he interpreted such a customs union as “a single customs area” created in order to liberally harmonize the interests of “Saint Stephen’s realm and the Austrian Empire” since “the interests of the nations are common.”<sup>44</sup> In a state where no provincial level exists in public administration,<sup>45</sup> statistical publications must bridge the gap between local municipalities and counties, and, in fact, countries by construing maps for such major regions as, for example, “the right side of River Danube,” “the left side of River Danube,” “the right side of River Tisza,” “the left side of River Tisza,” etc., because the big picture must be construed bottom up from autonomous local elements all the way to the level of the countries and, eventually, to the crown that holds them together (that is, the empire as a whole).

However, let us not think for a second that political thinkers, politicians, and policy makers had no concerns about the asymmetrical use of the concept of the empire. This could not have been any other way because it was central to the so-called public-law issue. However – or possibly for this very reason – it very rarely took center stage in debates. The again, it is hardly an accident that at the end of January 1867, Kálmán Ghyczy (1808–1888), one of the representatives of the Hungarian National Assembly sent out as part of the 67 Committee to negotiate the so-called “common relations,” normally known to be prone to worrying too much, openly raised the problematic nature of using the concept of ‘empire.’ If the text had spoken only about the “the empire of his Majesty and that of the Austrian House,” Ghyczy would have not mentioned it, although even then he suggested avoiding its use.

“If, however, the word ‘empire’ is understood the way it is usually understood across Europe, namely as meaning ‘state’; if it means an Austrian state; if it means what the German terms ‘Reich’ or ‘Österreichischer Kaiser-Staat’ mean; if, as I say, the word ‘empire’ is taken to mean all those

41 Keleti, *Hazánk és népe*, 33–4.

42 Keleti, *Hazánk és népe*, 36.

43 Keleti, *Hazánk és népe*, 110, 180–81.

44 Keleti, *Hazánk és népe*, 286.

45 “Hungarian public administration does not know provincial division, enclosed between the counties and the government which could unify more counties in itself.” Edelényi-Szabó, “Magyarország közjogi alkatrészeinek,” 660.

things—and in this context Hungary is considered as part of this state—then I believe accepting the word ‘empire’ in that sense would clearly put an end to Hungary’s independence and self-determination. I therefore believe that this amendment should be drafted without the expressions ‘empire,’ ‘both halves of the empire,’ or ‘the two halves’...”<sup>46</sup>

Right after his intervention, the “spiritus rector” of the Austrian–Hungarian Compromise, Ferenc Deák, took the floor, making reference to the fact that the word ‘empire’ was used both in the acts of 1848 and in the addresses of the National Assembly of 1861, and such documents could hardly be seen as aiming at “undermining the country’s independence or expressing Hungary’s subservience.” His argumentation from this point on was of great interest to anyone interested in the history of concepts:

“When the clear and detailed explanation of a term is included in the act or address or it is explained as part of the principles expounded in this House, I have no concern whatsoever that a word could be construed to have any other meaning than what it is assigned in our clearly formulated terms and definitions; thus, I have no reservations whatsoever about keeping the word »empire« in the text.”<sup>47</sup>

I would not like to challenge Ferenc Deák’s statement in this paper—in all probability, he was fully aware of the fact that any text, let alone a corpus of various texts drafted on various occasions, can be interpreted in more than one way. Also, our space is limited and therefore we cannot delve into an analysis of all further aspects of the debate. However, it is certainly of interest for our purposes here that Deák enjoyed the support of the majority of the committee, and the decision was adopted accordingly on the relevant point.

During the discussion on the common affairs in the National Assembly in March 1867, Ghyczy returned back to this question. Counter to the minister’s proposal, he argued that Hungary was interested not in the sustainability and great power status of the “empire” but that of the “Monarchy.”<sup>48</sup>

As these hard battles went on in the National Assembly, the country’s politicians also recorded interesting thought experiments in their diaries. Baron József Eötvös, Minister of Religion and Education in 1848, and after 1867 one of the leading figures of the circle of centralists who played a key role in preparing the Compromise, as well as author of the volume *A 19. század uralkodó eszméinek*

46 *A közös viszonyok rendezésére vonatkozó okmánytár*, 69–70. (30 January 1867) The content of Ghyczy’s speech briefly summarized: in Kónyi, ed., *Deák Ferenc*, 243. About Ghyczy’s career see Szigeti, *Hazámnak hasznos*.

47 *A közös viszonyok rendezésére vonatkozó okmánytár*, 71. For the answer of Deák with small differences, see also Kónyi, ed., *Deák Ferenc*, 243–44.

48 *Képviselőházi Napló*, IV. 5. (22 March 1867).

*befolyása az államra* (Dominant Ideas of the Nineteenth Century and Their Impact on the State), prompted by the outbreak of the Austro–Prussian War, pondered over the opportunities awaiting Hungary as a consequence of the war:

“Austria’s withdrawal from the German Bund would mostly eliminate the danger of Hungary’s absorption because of German preponderance; and since the formation of a single great German state (which I believe to be inevitable) would have the same impact on Austria’s German provinces as the unified Italy had on Venice, and since the secessionist aspirations that are bound to crop up in the German provinces may be impeded temporarily but will eventually reach their objectives, it is foreseeable that the *Austrian empire* will gradually and eventually become a *Hungarian empire*. It follows that while *the power wielded by the overall empire has thus far threatened the independence of our nation, and therefore our primary interest has been to ensure that it does not become exceedingly powerful and that, as much as it is possible, we maintain our difference and thereby safeguard ourselves against assimilation, today our interest is quite the opposite: now, the empire should hold itself as strong against the outside world as is possible, while internally it should be organized in a manner that allows us to influence all its parts constituent.*”<sup>49</sup>

Before we come to think that Eötvös, now a minister, forgot all about his related concerns in the wake of the conclusion of the peace treaty and the public-law compromise, let us quote a passage from his 1870 diary as a reminder (duly noting that his assumptions had certainly changed under the looming shadow of the new war):

“...[F]rom now on, the future of the nation will depend on whether our empire survives for a while, at least until Hungary progresses to a degree of cultivation where it can assume the place of Austria, that is, where it becomes able to create a great empire. For the very moment when Germany becomes a fully-fledged state, the German parts of our empire will, beyond the shadow of a doubt, join it, and *I never considered the creation of dualism as anything else than a transitional period towards the creation of an independent Hungarian empire.*”<sup>50</sup>

49 Lukinich ed., Báró Eötvös József: *Naplójegyzetek*, 169–70. (17 July 1866. Italics in original.) As István Hajnal pointed out in his work on Hungarian foreign policy in 1848, the idea of the Hungarian-centered empire dates back at least to 1848, to the Batthyány and Kossuth ministerial period: Hajnal, *A Batthyány-kormány*, 56, 82, 84, 108, 114, 161. The work was originally written for the jubilee of Kossuth in 1952, but first published as late as in 1957 and later in 1987. The manuscripts are found in MTA KIK Kézirattár, Ms 5387/12-15. The original concept at that time was closely connected to the given moment in the process of German unification as well.

50 Czegle, “Eötvös József: *Naplójegyzetek*,” 378. (18 August 1870. Italics mine – Gy. K.) On the close linkage between Eötvös’ diary remarks and the events on the international scene (Königgrätz, Franco–Prussian war) see Romsics, “A magyar birodalmi gondolat,” 136–37.

Granted, he also had to realize that this would be an empire of an entirely different sort of constitution:

“The only objective towards which we can work is not the strengthening (consolidation) of the Monarchy, which would be impossible with our delegation, but to ensure that by the time the German provinces run off to join their greater homeland, Hungary is ready and prepared to assume the position of the Austrian empire. The constituent parts required for the creation of an appropriately strong empire are given. The Polish, Romanian, and Hungarian nations, joined by our Catholic Slavs, are strong enough building blocks for the creation of a state that can survive even between Pan-Slavism and a unified Germany. The only question is whether the Hungarian people have the ability to become the core of such an empire and whether we will have enough time. That is what everything depends on.”<sup>51</sup>

As far as the outcome of the public-law controversy is concerned, it should suffice to compare the Austrian and the Hungarian acts on the Austrian–Hungarian Compromise in terms of what they say about common affairs. As is widely known, the two texts were not merely drafted at different times and in different structures, but they also show substantial differences in terms of form and content. Looking at the parallel texts fleetingly, one might say that the word ‘empire’ (‘Reich’) appears in both texts in the context of, for example, foreign affairs and foreign representation. However, looking at the two texts more thoroughly, the way they are worded is substantially different, especially in light of the controversy and debates we refer to above, in terms of how the two texts refer to the “two halves,” in how only the Hungarian text contains the phrase “common foreign minister,” and how in Hungary acknowledges that foreign affairs are common affairs.<sup>52</sup>

#### Act of 21 December 1867

*On the common affairs affecting all the countries of the Austrian Monarchy and on the manner of handling such affairs.*

Section 1 Paragraph a.: [...] Foreign affairs, including providing for the representation of the empire in diplomacy and commerce abroad and adopting any

#### Article 1867: XII.

*On the affairs of common interest between the countries of the Hungarian Crown and the other countries under the rule of his Excellency and on the handling of such affairs.*

Section 8.: [...] providing for the representation of the empire in diplomacy

51 Czegle, “Eötvös József: Naplójegyzetek,” 409 (28 November 1870).

52 For the texts of Austrian and Hungarian articles, their parallel German publication and their systematic comparison, see Sutter, “Die Ausgleichsverhandlungen,” 159–83. The German text was translated into Hungarian by Ágnes Deák in 2001 [!]: Deák, “Az 1867. decemberi ausztriai törvénycikkek.” The Hungarian text in *Magyar Törvénytár*, 333–44.

measures that may become necessary in the context of the international treaties; however, approving international treaties, in case such is necessary in the interest of the constitution, shall fall within the competence of the representative bodies of the two halves of the empire (the Reichsrat and the Hungarian National Assembly). [... *den Verträtungskörpern der beiden Reichshälften (dem Reichsrat und dem ungarischen Reichstage vorbehalten bleibt.*]

A letter written by Antal Csengery, a fellow leader of the Deák Party, recounts how Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Andrásy discussed the confusion arising from the terms 'imperial minister' and 'common minister' and reports on a meeting with Beust and his Austrian fellow ministers in January 1868, shedding some light on the situation at the time:

"A heap of Hungarian dailies and National Assembly minutes lay in front of Beust, with the word 'empire' underlined in red in all copies. Both Beust and Becke claimed that they had been granted the title 'Reichsminister' by way of having been appointed by His Excellency... to which Andrásy responded that the members of the committee [delegation] in general resented the use of the term they considered to be in breach of the law, and that such resentment was shared by the whole country. The empire was united towards foreign entities but was divided internally. [...] The term 'common minister' was more appropriate in the light of the idea of dualism as created by the Austrian–Hungarian Compromise—this is why the legislations of both parties used that term.—The common ministers responded passionately.—Andrásy stood up and commented: 'I guess I'll just get my hat and leave then.'—All of a sudden, Beust changed his tone and said the Hungarian Prime Minister had misunderstood them. After all, all they had wanted to do was approach the Hungarian Prime Minister and ask him for his guidance as to what they should do."<sup>53</sup>

Andrásy explained that the German text of the law never used the term *Reichsminister*; at most, it used the phrase *gemeinsames Ministerium*.

and commerce abroad and adopting any measures that may become necessary in the context of the international treaties shall be part of the responsibility of the common foreign minister in agreement with, and subject to the approval of, the ministries of both halves. Each ministry shall communicate the international treaties to their respective legislations. Therefore, Hungary also considers such foreign affairs common[...].

53 Csengery, ed., *Csengery Antal hátrahagyott iratai*, 248–49. (30 January 1868) The story originated from the first meetings of the common affairs committee and the purpose of discussion was a parliamentary interpellation.

We could list example after example of efforts to construct a certain historical past. Even prior to writing the millennial history of Hungary, there was harsh debate around whether Hungarian statehood should be linked to Saint Stephen or Árpád.<sup>54</sup> Catholic and Protestant, *labanc* and *kuruc*, pro-Compromise and Forty-Eighter pro-independence positions were pitted against one another. In such an environment, the series of volumes edited by Sándor Szilágyi under the title *A Magyar nemzet története* (The History of the Hungarian Nation) made an attempt to create peace between the ruler and the nation. As writer Mór Jókai summarized in his afterword to Volume X:

“The first millennium of the Conquest of Hungary has come to completion. It has been a success. The Hungarian nation has found itself. Its heart and mind have come to an agreement. It has kept and manifested its warrior virtues yet is seen by the world as a guardian of peace. As it serves its country and crown loyally and voluntarily, it no more fears servitude. It does not fight foreign nations anymore but competes with them; it surrounds itself not with enemies but with allies.”<sup>55</sup>

However, as we know, lasting peace never arrived; in fact, the crisis-ridden decades of the era of Dualism brought to surface quite a number of concepts in historiography that were critical of dualism itself. It may not be an accident that two of the authors we are about to mention here represent the generation of historians writing Hungary’s millennial history. Gusztáv Beksics (1846–1906), a member of the Hungarian National Assembly, was a publicist rather than a historian; he wrote a summary of the most sensitive era under the title *I. Ferencz József és kora* (Franz Joseph I and His Era) in which he attempted to place the era of dualism into the context of a wider national discourse:

“The most important task is to widen the very basis of our national existence, that is, to harmonise our efforts and aspirations. Whoever succeeds at consolidating the Hungarian nation, that is, establishing the harmony between our national and state foundations, will have for ever safeguarded the survival of the Hungarian race as well as the national character and independence of the state thus created.”<sup>56</sup>

Beksics is especially interesting for us because he criticized Article 1867: XII even before the country’s millennial history was written and, in fact, he put together a critical dictionary of terms from the perspective of the history of concepts in a

54 Sinkó, “Árpád kontra Szent István”; Varga, *Árpád a város felett*, 9–43.

55 Jókai, “Utószó,” 838.

56 Beksics, “I. Ferencz József,” 398. (In the language of the era and Beksics, the term ‘race’ is a cultural category meaning ‘a race of people’ or a nationality.) On the historical transformation of Beksics’s ideas, see: Nagy, “A ‘nemzeti állam’ eszméje”; Müller, *Beksics Gusztáv pályája*.

chapter entitled *Hibás közjogi elnevezések* (Incorrect Public Law Terms). In that chapter, he stated the following:

“[I]t would be highly appropriate to make wider use in our public law terminology of the terms ‘Hungarian state,’ ‘Hungarian empire,’ and ‘Hungarian Monarchy,’ and to afford a more restricted use to the term ‘country,’ which even highly respected orators often use instead of the word ‘homeland’ when speaking in the National Assembly.”<sup>57</sup>

It is interesting to see how he made reference to the 1867 debate between Ghyczy and Deák concerning the ‘empire’ concept, although he gave a somewhat ‘modernizing’ reinterpretation of Deák’s position when he said “Deák was absolutely right in saying that every word means whatever meaning we attribute to it...” However, he did not agree on everything even with Ghyczy; he believed that “the word ‘empire’ is not acceptable even in the sense in which Ghyczy would have accepted it. The Habsburgs do not have a common empire; they have *two empires*: the Hungarian and the Austrian. The *single* empire is not acceptable even as a mere idea for such incorrect concepts can become practice and, like Tisza said in the 67 Committee, it may be turned against us.”<sup>58</sup> He was of the opinion that the designation “both halves of the empire” is also incorrect and the term “both states of the Monarchy” would be preferable; and that the term “Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy” is also “objectionable” and the term “Austrian and Hungarian Monarchy” should be used. The term “Austria-Hungary,” which abounds in international treaties, is also fundamentally “flawed,” he insists. His reason for conceptual purification is that “incorrect expressions gradually give rise to incorrect concepts, and incorrect concepts gradually give rise to public law *injuria*.”<sup>59</sup> But Beksics went much further than that. In a historical piece he wrote at the end of his life, he reached back to King Matthias’ empire in an effort to identify a historical precedent that would foreshadow the nation’s future. After the death of King Matthias and the tragic battle of Mohács, Hungary set out on the wrong path when the Habsburgs gave up the “historical foundation” that “the Hungarian king must become a Hungarian.”

“And even though the Hungarian king may have countries outside Hungary, political leadership must be in the hand of Hungary. And as we will see, the Monarchy slowly but insistently develops to eventually reach exactly that objective. The traditions and established customs of over three centuries may from time to time impede this great transformation process but they cannot stop it. *The rule of the facts, the rule of the laws of state and national development cannot be overthrown.*”<sup>60</sup>

57 Beksics, *A dualismus története*, 270.

58 Beksics, *A dualismus története*, 272. (Italics in the original.)

59 Beksics, *A dualismus története*, 273.

60 Beksics, *Mátyás király birodalma*, 118. (Italics mine – Gy. K.)

Therefore, trusting the strength of this evolutionary process, there is no need to give up on the idea of the Monarchy; what must be achieved is that “Hungary should assume leadership within the dual Monarchy of the Habsburgs, whether the actual form of this is dualism or personal union.”<sup>61</sup> And while – as we have seen – the idea of Hungary’s leading role within the Monarchy was not a tenet Beksics came up with, the way he linked it to ‘national assimilation’ in a social Darwinist style and the way he set out to promote the idea also in the Balkans can be said to have fully reversed the direction Eötvös had been investigating with the aim of finding the way forward.<sup>62</sup>

It is not at all beside the point that yet another author of Hungary’s millennial history also decided, at the end of his life, to write an imperial history of Hungary. Just as critical of the Habsburgs as Beksics, Ignác Acsády deployed some peculiar reasoning in an effort to match up the ‘old Hungarian empire’ with the recently emerging ‘colonial situation’:

“However, as hostile as the royal power may have been in its attitudes towards the territory of Hungary, as little effort as it may have dedicated to its defence, acts, and century-old institutions, and as much as it downgraded it into an economic *colony* by making it a victim of Vienna’s predatory greed, the centre of gravity of Hungarian national life remained in the royal territories of Hungary during this century, with Transylvania’s influence on the fate of Hungarians being rather the exception than the rule for the time being. The fact that Hungary had a king wearing its crown (even though that king may have lived abroad), the fact that Hungary had its own state authorities (even though forced to serve foreign interests), and the fact that there was a Hungarian National Assembly (even though its role was mostly limited to voting to pass tax laws and its acts of any other nature remained without implementation) had a moral impact on the future of the Hungarian people that is beyond measure. It was these institutions that incorporated *the memory of the old Hungarian empire*, it was these institutions that symbolised state independence, and that kept the traditions of old national unity in the masses, which, even in the most critical of situations, insisted tenaciously on keeping the ideal of a free and independent Hungary alive.”<sup>63</sup>

According to Acsády, “the ancient unity of the Hungarian empire” was only reinstated by the National Assembly of 1847/48, which was then once again “torn apart” by the new emperor “[as] soon as he ascended to the throne.”<sup>64</sup> However, in

61 Beksics, *Mátyás király birodalma*, 179.

62 On Beksics’s views concerning this subject, Müller, *Beksics Gusztáv pályája*, 161–64.

63 Acsády, *A magyar birodalom*, vol. II, 274–75. (Italics mine – Gy. K.).

64 Acsády, *A magyar birodalom*, vol. II, 732, 749. The phrase “torn apart” concerns the formation of Serbian Voivodina.

discussing the outcomes of the Austrian–Hungarian Compromise, what he has to offer is fundamentally a series of questions:

“Have the nation’s political leaders at all times made appropriate use of the means afforded by the Compromise to safeguard the national interests in all relations? Have they been able to thwart the re-emergence of old Austrian and centralizing traditions? Has the antiquated feudal spirit not awokened once again in our public life, and has it not become, promoted as it was by the Viennese, and in general, European reaction, a factor of influence out to assert selfish class interests in our public life to the detriment of the common interests of the nation? Answering these questions is hardly the task of our generation of historians.”<sup>65</sup>

On the other hand, he believed that the “radical changes” seen in “our national and social lives and in the emergence of the bourgeoisie” were commendable; he was most appreciative of the cooperation between state and society.<sup>66</sup>

The geographical, statistical, political, and historical constructs in which the contemporary idea of the Hungarian empire found its expression were never able to take root in the actual political practice of the era. There was no way a given concept could capture two realities that contradicted one another. The concept of the ‘Hungarian empire’ could not depict, at the very same time, both the imperial status of the Austrian–Hungarian Monarchy towards the world outside and that of the Hungarian empire towards world within. The very dynamics of the processes involved prevented this to begin with. Thanks to the different rates of development seen in the Cisleithanian and Transleithanian parts of the Monarchy, the gap between the two parts of the empire narrowed (just think of the changing of the quotas, set out in contract, benefitting Hungary); however, in terms of their social and political constitution (suffrage, managing the problem of the nationalities through granting them cultural autonomy, etc.), the two parties seemed to be drifting farther and farther away from one another. Various actors following distinct nation-building practices found that the Austrian–Hungarian Compromise offered them different opportunities.

One of the difficulties the history of concepts tends to run into is the inability of a given term to describe the phenomenon it tries to capture. Even more serious problems may emerge when the historian, who thinks in terms of the concepts of his or her own era, faces the challenge of finding his or her bearings amidst the wildly different linguistic coordinates of historical sources. How can you bridge the discursive spaces of the two different eras? How can you promote understanding or even establish a dialogue between two distinct historical worlds—that of the present

65 Acsády, *A magyar birodalom*, vol. II, 796.

66 Acsády, *A magyar birodalom*, vol. II, 796.

and that of the past? We have shown above how, despite the fact that the concept of the 'colony' as used in the eighteenth century was widely known, the category of the 'semi-colony' eventually proved incapable of describing the conditions of the Austrian-Hungarian world in the second half of the nineteenth century, even though—during a brief transitional period—quite a few attempts were made at its introduction from within very different ideological systems.

There are also a number of later examples of how conceptual frameworks that projected contemporary concepts back into the past failed to help establish discourse between the historian and the past, and in fact frustrated those efforts. During the 1960s, Krisztina Maria Fink set out to track down the historical origins of the European Economic Community (EEC) in the Habsburg Empire.<sup>67</sup> Without discarding the actual possibility of historical parallels off the bat, it may be worth mentioning that her dissertation encountered criticism by her contemporaries, who had concluded that the external historical circumstances and the respective situations of the parties involved in economic integration during these two distinct eras were so strikingly different that such historical projection of the EEC back into the era of the Habsburg Empire was of little relevance.<sup>68</sup> This is one of the reasons why one finds it really hard to understand some of her conclusions, including the claim that, despite all its political disadvantages, "forced integration" as introduced by neoabsolutism was the most successful stage of development in the emergence of the economic union.<sup>69</sup> In fact, in discussing the current situation of the EEC, Fink concluded that "Only supranationality guarantees the interlocking of the national economies involved, going beyond a mere customs union, and even the customs union is untenable without commun competences, unless it leads to a free trade area."<sup>70</sup> From there, it took only one step for her to comment on the Compromise of 1867 as follows:

"Thus, one can certainly claim that the retarding moment was actually brought into the course of things by the 1867 treaty. This held out the prospect of an economic separation after every ten years and thus inhibited the natural progression through stirring public opinion and through constant interference with production and trade. Lasting uncertainty also had a crippling effect on legislation and administration, and the slogan of the 'monarchy with a deadline' [Monarchie auf Kündigung] arose."<sup>71</sup>

67 Fink, *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie*.

68 Freudenberg, "Krisztina Maria Fink"; Varga, "Krisztina Maria Fink." The question was how could the author compare the EEC, a collaboration of sovereign members, to the customs union of the Monarchy formed in the shadow of the Tsarist military intervention and the Habsburg revenge for revolution?

69 Fink, *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie*, 19.

70 Fink, *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie*, 24.

71 Fink, *Die österreichisch-ungarische Monarchie*, 35–6.

Looking at things from this angle, there is no mention of the fact that in a dynamic economy it might be a good idea to adjust the regulatory environment to changing conditions at least once every ten years. What one thinks about one's own present is, of course, one's own business even if one is a historian; however, taking historical processes out of their contemporary contexts is a practice that is at least dubious.

In the early twenty-first century, the enlargement of the European Union once again led to the knee-jerk reflex of finding historical parallels between the Union and the Monarchy. “The EU shows many more similarities with the Habsburg state than with the states organized along national principles, especially after its forthcoming enlargement, which will integrate a vast amount of territory in regions formerly belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire,”<sup>72</sup> wrote Andrea Komlosy in 2004. At that time, the author interpreted the market of the Habsburg Monarchy (first and foremost, migration) in the context of the dual concepts of center and periphery, focusing mainly on the Cisleithanian part of the Empire: “Hungary is not considered here because of its *de facto* independence after the Dual Settlements of 1867.”<sup>73</sup> In this interpretation, the Habsburg Empire itself existed as a “world economy” in the sense of Wallerstein with its internal centers (cores) and peripheries, although because of the “economic integration and political fragmentation,” only the Empire’s Cisleithanian territories succeeded in building modern centralized states over territorial units of power.<sup>74</sup>

Ten years later, Komlosy’s interpretation of the Monarchy resurfaced in an entirely new context; by then, Hungary had also assumed her own position: “The Dual Settlement of 1867 had separated the k. u. k. monarchy into two k. sub-empires.”<sup>75</sup> In this structure, there was no synchronicity between the “economic and political level[s]” of center and periphery. The Czechs, who beyond any doubt whatsoever enjoyed a central position economically, never achieved political autonomy, while the Hungarians, who achieved political self-determination by means of the Austrian-Hungarian Compromise, never managed to break out of their peripheral situation economically.

“The Dual Settlement succeeded in overcoming the secessionist ambitions of Hungarian independentist nationalists by offering the Hungarian elites political autonomy, which came near to independence and could be interpreted as such by Hungarian politicians. The Hungarian government

72 Komlosy, “State, Regions, and Borders,” 175.

73 Komlosy, “State, Regions, and Borders,” 174.

74 Komlosy, “State, Regions, and Borders,” 143–48.

75 Komlosy, “Imperial Cohesion,” 398. The volume discusses the “nation building” process inside the empires—presumably this is the reason for the neologism in the terminology. See: Berger and Miller, “Introduction.”

was able to pursue sovereign politics, while at the same time benefited from a huge market where Hungarian agricultural products enjoyed a quasi-monopoly.”<sup>76</sup>

In answering the question *cui bono* (in fact, the real question was: *cui malo*) the two halves of the Monarchy quoted very different statistical data and relied on very different value judgments. In the debates of the era, the general rule seemed to have been that the neighbor’s garden was always greener. In light of the recent international quantitative analyses of the past few decades, it is not a very good idea to simply assume the viewpoint, even experimentally, of one of the old public-law actors.<sup>77</sup> According to Komlosy, two distinct models of nation building emerged within the space of the Monarchy, itself fragmented in multiple ways: “practically multi-ethnic pluralism in Austria and Magyarization in Hungary.”<sup>78</sup> However, in the context of governance, whether such distinctions make any sense can only be measured based on whether they prove to be useful, and the author herself cannot but admit that neither model proved to be successful then and there. It would seem that the concept of ‘sub-empire building’—a concept created after the fact to help historical interpretation—would not in fact have been attractive enough for either actor because it would not have granted sufficient leeway for the desired degree of sovereignty. Thus, this neologism is also unsuitable for expressing the complexity of the historical relations typical of the era of dualism.

Suppose the dualist Monarchy as two sub-empires means not taking into consideration the basic principle of Austro-Hungary: “one empire toward foreign entities but divided internally”—as Andrásy explained to the common ministers, cited above. From this point of view, while looking at the empire from outside, it could seem almost the same whether freedom or despotism unified the empire. Under the circumstances of market integration and internal constitutional dualism—as Pieter Judson formulated it—“neither state could change the arrangement without the agreement of the other.”<sup>79</sup> In this respect, internal empire-building ideas concerning the future could be interpreted as fictions; as the retrospective historical visions projected into the past. Key concepts are always slogans as well. Reviewing the asymmetric parallel developments of the concepts of ‘colony’ and ‘empire’ we must

76 Komlosy, “Imperial Cohesion,” 400–2.

77 In support of the statement that Hungarian agriculture monopolized the market of the Monarchy there is no citation from the recent economic history literature, except for the books of Komlos and Good, but neither Komlos nor Good uses the term monopoly, or quasi-monopoly, for the Austro-Hungarian customs union: Komlos, *The Habsburg Monarchy*; Good, *The Economic Rise*.

78 Komlosy, “Imperial Cohesion,” 371.

79 Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 262.

establish that the real grounds for their usage in the long term have been lost. This opinion seems to be even more valid in the case of the derivative, retrospectively constructed concepts—perhaps I may call them conceptual mutations (semi-colony, sub-empire)—not rooted in the dictionary of the historical sources and conceptual history of political ideas.

\* \* \*

P.S.

And now, having addressed the topical aspects of the issue, the historian cannot shy away from looking into the present and the future either. In 2014, an entertaining map appeared on the Internet. It presented how Europe was expected to look in 2022.<sup>80</sup> Without taking the gag seriously, even for a fleeting second, the historian might find it interesting to reflect upon why the authors of this topographical joke may have thought that a future Europe (in which the European Union is limited to East Europe, from Poland to Ukraine) would include three empires, a big one and two small ones: a “Merkelreich” that will have peacefully absorbed France; a “Catalan Empire” that will have seceded from Spain; and, last but not least, a “Hungarian Empire.” How does this foreign image relate to the present-day Hungarian governmental discourse on the colonial attitude of Brussels? Do our visions of the future reflect our prejudices just as much as our visions of the past? Is it historical continuity, or is it permanent changeability that more accurately reflects a given country’s place in history, the aspirations surrounding that place, and how these aspirations are judged?

Translated by Attila Török

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# The Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns

## A History of Urbanism on the Ground\*

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**Abstract.** This article surveys the work carried out in the past two decades on the Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns in a Central European context. With its more than 550 atlases published in nineteen European countries in the last fifty years, the European Atlas of Historic Towns is one of the most comprehensive collaborative projects in the field of humanities. The countries of East Central Europe could join the project only after the fall of the Iron Curtain, and Hungary published its first atlas as late as 2010. In four subsequent project phases, the Hungarian atlas team has been working on nineteen atlases of eighteen towns, out of which eight have been published so far. The editors follow the standards set by the International Commission for the History of Towns and have adopted best practices represented by the Austrian, Polish and Irish atlas series. In addition to describing the source basis and the main methodological concerns, the article highlights examples of comparative urban research for which the atlases offer an unparalleled potential. The article also advocates a more extensive use of this exceptional resource.

**Keywords:** urban topography, town plans, Central Europe, spatial turn, comparative urban studies

### Concept, structure, and contents

At the end of the Second World War a desire grew up amongst European countries to work together in the spirit of reconciliation. For its part, the International Commission for the History of Towns (ICHT) agreed in 1955 in Rome to the production of a European historic towns atlas. The intention was then, and still is, to facilitate comparative urban studies and to encourage a better understanding of common European roots.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Simms, “The European Historic Towns Atlas Project,” 13.

“No one could better summarize the essence of the genesis of the European historic towns atlas series than Anngret Simms, the Grand Dame of historical geography, long-time convenor of this large-scale European project and editor of the Irish Historic Towns Atlas series.”

With more than 500 atlases published in nineteen European countries so far, the European Atlas of Historic Towns is one of the longest-running collaborative enterprises in the field of the humanities in Europe.<sup>2</sup> The atlases follow a common conceptual scheme and include maps on a uniform scale to ensure comparability across towns or town types, and have some compulsory elements regarding the types of maps and their specified scales present in each atlas, namely:

1. A multi-coloured cadastral map at the scale of 1:2500 from the early nineteenth century, redrawn to precise standards representing the town as closely as possible to 1840—that is to say, before the onset of the Industrial Revolution.
2. A map of the town in its surrounding region from the early nineteenth century at a scale of between 1:50,000 and 1:100,000.
3. A modern town plan at the scale of 1:5000. To these were to be added a growth map that presents a diachronic approach, as well as an essay that focuses on the topographical development of the town concerned.”<sup>3</sup>

Most atlas series go well beyond this scheme and publish additional cartographic and visual sources (town plans, surveys and prospects), as well as edited maps resulting from historical research on specific topics. According to an important addition to the guidelines proposed by Ferdinand Opll in 2012, the study and the cartographic materials should go beyond the pre-industrial period, leading up to the present.<sup>4</sup> In general, the atlases are based on the functional approach to towns, stressing the importance of spatial development and change over time.

Despite the common research agenda, related research and publications rely on the resources of participating countries. This organisational scheme allows for a degree of flexibility and the consideration of local specificities, but it inevitably endangers full uniformity. The ICHT has therefore established an Atlas Working Group (AWG) that coordinates the work and advocates the use of common standards.<sup>5</sup>

2 The website [staedtegeschichte.de](http://www.uni-muenster.de/Staedtegeschichte/portal/staedteatlanten/index.html) offers an overview of the European atlas project in German, English and French (<http://www.uni-muenster.de/Staedtegeschichte/portal/staedteatlanten/index.html>, accessed 3 August 2021).

3 Simms, “The European Historic Towns Atlas Project,” 18–9; Clarke, “Construction and Deconstruction.”

4 Opll, “Should the Historic Towns Atlas continue?”

5 See <https://www.historiaurbium.org/activities/historic-towns-atlases/atlas-working-group/>, accessed 3 August 2021. The first convenors were Anngret Simms (Dublin) and Ferdinand

The European project has undergone major changes over its more than fifty years of publications. These changes are not only technical, i.e., by now all atlas teams are using modern digital technology rather than hand-drawn maps, but they are also conceptual, reflecting new approaches to urban space. For the initiators of the project, the main goal was indeed to go back to the “common European roots”, i.e., to the “origins”, and to reconstruct the ground plans of the towns in question at the time of their foundation, typically in the High Middle Ages. Their main sources for this reconstruction were the cadastral surveys, discovered for urban historical research in the 1960s. These were the first accurate measurements of urban (and rural) space on the level of individual plots, prepared by the absolutist states from the late eighteenth century onwards, to make administration and taxation more efficient. These maps therefore show many features later destroyed by industrialization. However, the advance of urban archaeological research, as well as the extension of source criticism to the cadastral surveys rendered the original aim of the atlases illusory, or at least hard to pursue.<sup>6</sup>

The discovery of the limits of the cadastral surveys for regressive topographical reconstruction, nonetheless, did not lead to the abandoning or marginalization of the Historic Towns Atlas (HTA) project, but rather to a reconceptualization of its aims. In brief, the atlases have switched from a conservative morphological focus to being part of the “spatial turn” in historical research. Consequently, they have ceased to be the exclusive domain of medievalists and have become part of the toolkit for studying the lived space of cities and towns in any period of their existence. The editors and researchers working on the atlases are well aware that town plans are interesting not only (and often not primarily) for their “petrified” traces of the Middle Ages, but for the dynamic reflection of all periods of urban social and economic development. The more than 500 atlases also clearly demonstrate that individual cities and towns do not evolve or change independently but in interaction with each other. Thus, by placing the maps side by side and comparing them, one can see regional patterns.<sup>7</sup>

## The Atlas project moves East

Surprisingly for a project conceived, as quoted above, “in the spirit of reconciliation”, the Cold War cast its long shadow on the way and time European countries joined the research and publication of the HTAs. The first volume of atlases, containing reconstructed historical maps of eight cities and towns in Great Britain was

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Oppl (Vienna), the current convenors are Keith Lilley (Belfast), Daniel Stracke (Münster), and Katalin Szende (Budapest).

<sup>6</sup> Clarke, “Construction and Deconstruction”; Szende, “How Far Back.”

<sup>7</sup> Simms, “Paradigm Shift.”

published in 1969,<sup>8</sup> and the first German atlas reached the stage of printing in 1973.<sup>9</sup> As a reflection on the historic fragmentation of the country and the high number of its cities and towns, the German atlas consists of three regional series (Rhineland, Westphalia and Hessen), as well as an overall “*Deutscher Städteatlas*” series (later renewed as *Deutscher Historischer Städteatlas*). In the late 1970s and the 1980s, almost a dozen West European and Nordic countries followed suit in publishing historic towns atlases.<sup>10</sup> In principle, the current political boundaries, with a few exceptions, serve as guidance for the inclusion of a given town in a “national” atlas series.<sup>11</sup>

It was, however, only in the 1990s, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, that two East Central European countries, Poland and the Czech Republic, got involved in the HTA project. It may have been the classified character of detailed topographic information that had hindered the countries in the *Ostblock* from joining the enterprise, or simply the lack of interest and incentive. The first few Polish and Bohemian volumes received strong support from Germany, more specifically from the *Institut für vergleichende Städtegeschichte* (Institute of Comparative Urban History) in Münster, where the German and the Westphalian atlas series are based, and where many of the methodological principles of the atlas scheme were laid down. German scholars’ intention to collaborate was stimulated by the common historical roots, the presence of German populations in the region since the High Middle Ages, and by the modern need to do justice to this coexistence in an unbiassed way. Exceptionally, the atlas of Wrocław (Breslau) was published both in the *Deutscher Städteatlas* series (1989) and twice in the Polish series (in 2001, and in a revised edition in 2017).<sup>12</sup> The Polish atlas, similarly to the German series, is being published in several sub-series based on the historical provinces of the country; currently the following sub-series are running: Royal Prussia, Kuyavia, Masuria, Silesia, and Lesser Poland.

8 Lobel, ed., *Historic Towns*.

9 Stoob, ed., *Deutscher Städteatlas*.

10 See the list (currently updated to 2019) at [https://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/staedtegeschichte/portal/europaeische\\_staedteatlanten/european\\_towns\\_atlases\\_bearb\\_updated\\_sept\\_2019.pdf](https://www.uni-muenster.de/imperia/md/content/staedtegeschichte/portal/europaeische_staedteatlanten/european_towns_atlases_bearb_updated_sept_2019.pdf), accessed 3 August 2021.

11 “By prior agreement, towns and cities located in Northern Ireland are included in the Irish Historic Towns Atlas based in Dublin. In a few cases towns that were no longer in Germany are treated as part of the *Deutscher Städteatlas* on historical grounds.” Quote from: Simms and Clarke, eds, *Lords and Towns*, introduction to Appendix A, 493. On a similar principle, the atlas of the South Tyrolian town of Merano/Meran appeared in 1988 as Vol. 3. No. 7 of the *Österreichischer Städteatlas* series although belonging to Italy, and in 2020, the atlas of Vyborg/Viipuri was published as part of the Scandinavian Atlas of Historic Towns (New Series 3) although the town is presently situated in the Russian Federation.

12 The most recent and most reliable edition: Eysymontt and Goliński, eds, *Wrocław. Wrocław*, 2017. Previous versions were edited by Hugo Weczerka (Deutscher Städteatlas Vol. 4. No. 5, 1989) and Marta Mlynarska-Kaletynowa (Atlas Historyczny Miast Polskich Vol. 4. Śląsk, No. 1, 2001).



Figure 1 Historic Towns Atlases published in East Central Europe up to August 2021.  
Cartography: Béla Nagy.

After 2000, further East Central European countries, namely Romania (2000), Croatia (2005), Hungary (2010) and Ukraine (2014), joined in. Plans are in place to launch the atlas series in Slovakia and Slovenia as well, both of which would fill long-standing research gaps (Fig. 1).<sup>13</sup> In this region, the issue of changing political borders is even more complex than elsewhere in Europe. The adherence to the current borders is an acceptable compromise; however, due to the specificities of the source material and the pertaining historical research, more cross-border cooperation in the editorial work on the atlases would be desirable and justified. All East Central European atlas series—unlike those in Western Europe—publish the topographic study and the captions to all illustrations in bilingual form, adding German or English translation to the local vernaculars.

13 In Slovakia, the preparatory work is coordinated by Juraj Šedivý (Comenius University, Bratislava) and Martin Pekár (Jan Pavol Šafárik University, Košice), in Slovenia the project in preparation under the direction of Miha Kosi (Milko Kos Institute, Ljubljana).

The years indicated above mark the publication of the first atlas in each respective country, but the date that was always preceded by several years of preparatory work. Hungary, the closer subject of my report, clearly exemplifies this long “gestation period”.

## Phases and results of the Atlas project in Hungary

Scholars in Hungary started working with the European scheme of Historic Towns Atlases in 2004. By that time, as the dates listed above indicate, Hungary was surrounded by several countries where the atlas project was already running. This was encouraging for the feasibility of the project and made it even more urgent to fill the gap in the middle of the Carpathian Basin. But the need had been formulated much earlier by Jenő Szűcs (1928–1988), a historian best known today for his pioneering work on nation-building and on *The Three Historical Regions of Europe*.<sup>14</sup> However, in the 1950s and 1960s, his main field of research was urban history. At a session of the Historical Commission of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) in 1966, he proposed that “The analysis of the beginnings and first phase of Hungarian urban development, the identification of town types and their basic traits [...] cannot be imagined without the profound and complex study of urban town plans. [...] It is a long-time elementary need of Hungarian research on urban history to prepare an atlas of urban ground plans.”<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, it took four more decades before Szűcs’s desire could be—at least partially—fulfilled. The work was commenced by taking up contact with the Austrian Atlas team, as well as the Münster Institute; particular thanks are due in this respect to Ferdinand Opll and Peter Johanek for their advice and encouragement. The first round of information-gathering was followed by a successful grant application to the Hungarian Research Fund (OTKA T 46866), under the leadership of András Kubinyi (1929–2007), a prominent urban historian and member of the HAS and the ICHT. He directed the project that was hosted by the Institute of History of the HAS until his death in 2007, when the leadership was taken over by Katalin Szende (Central European University), Kubinyi’s successor in the ICHT since 2002.

The first project phase (2004–2008) saw the completion of the editorial work on four towns: Buda (up to 1686) by András Végh; Kecskemét by Edit Sárosi; Sátoraljaújhely by István Tringli, and Sopron by Ferenc Jankó, József Kücsán, and Katalin Szende. By now, all four atlases have been published;<sup>16</sup> the considerable delay

14 Szűcs, “The Three Historical Regions of Europe”; Szűcs, *Nation und Geschichte*.

15 Rúzsás and Szűcs, “A várostörténeti kutatás,” 27.

16 See the project’s website, <https://www.varosatlasz.hu/en/> for the bibliographic data. All the published atlases are available in digital format at <https://www.varosatlasz.hu/en/atlasses>, accessed 3 August 2021.

in the publication date is due to difficulties in securing funding for the very costly printing. The second round of the project (2010–2014), also financed by the Hungarian Research Fund and hosted by the Central European University (OTKA K 81568, PI Katalin Szende), advanced the work with research on six further towns: Buda (1686–1848) by Katalin Simon; Kőszeg by a team led by István Bariska; Miskolc by Éva Gyulai; Pécs by a team led by Tamás Fedele; Szeged by a team led by László Blazovich, and Vác by a team led by Márta Velladics. From among these the atlases of Szeged, Buda, Kőszeg, and Pécs have been published. The third project phase (2016–2020, OTKA K 116594), hosted again by the Institute of History, added five more cities and towns: Nyírbátor, Óbuda, Pápa, Székesfehérvár and Szekszárd, while working on the publication of the previously researched ones. From the second phase, the project could employ a part-time cartographer, and from the third phase a full-time researcher, Magdolna Szilágyi, coordinated the work of the team. 2021 saw the start of a fourth phase (NKFI/OTKA 135814) with four more cities, under István Tringli's leadership, who has been co-editor of the series from the outset. The cities and towns recently taken on board are Győr, Ózd, Pest, and Szombathely (Fig. 2).

In the selection of towns, we have followed the principle of broad and relatively even geographical distribution within the country, and the proportionate coverage of a variety of morphological and historical town types. The nineteen atlases in the project so far represent eighteen cities and towns, including six royal towns: Buda (in two parts), Óbuda, Pest (all of these on the territory of modern-day Budapest), Sopron,

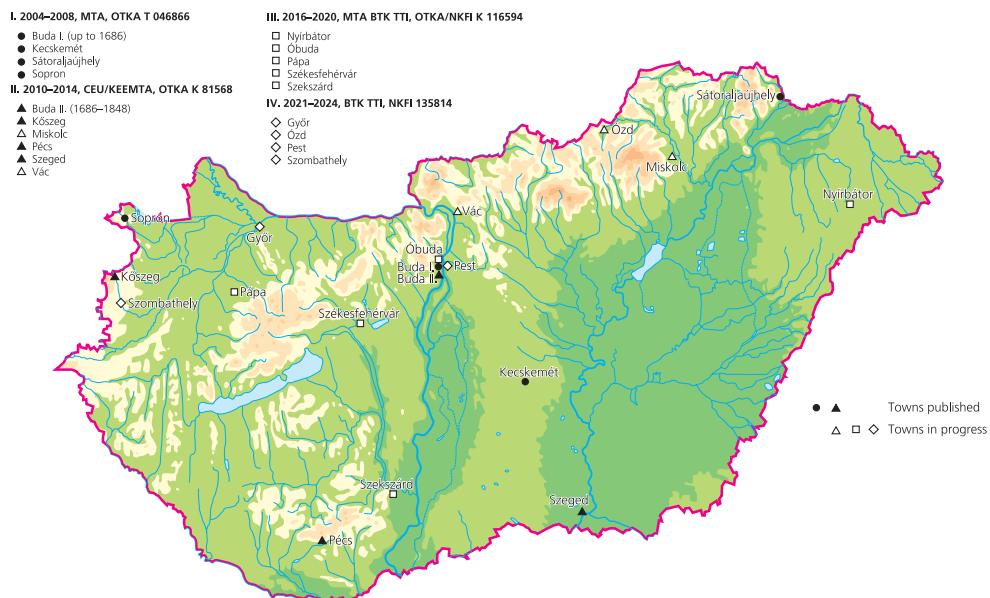


Figure 2 Hungarian Atlas of Historic Towns, atlases by project phases.

Cartography: Béla Nagy.

Szeged and Székesfehérvár; three bishops' seats: Győr, Pécs, and Vác; eight market towns: Kecskemét, Kőszeg, Miskolc, Nyírbátor, Pápa, Sátoraljaújhely, Szekszárd, and Szombathely, while Ózd was an industrial center that had gained urban status as late as the nineteenth century. Given the fact that most royal towns and mining towns that used to belong to the Kingdom of Hungary up to 1920 are now on the territory of the neighbouring countries, therefore are potential subjects of their respective atlas series, the selection of the Hungarian "atlas towns" can be considered representative of the historical urban stock within the current political boundaries. Some of the towns changed their status over time: for instance, Óbuda was among the most important royal centers between the eleventh and the thirteenth centuries but lost its significance and became a market town owned from the fourteenth century by the queens, and later by private landlords, whereas Kőszeg was taken over by the king from a private landowner for much of the fourteenth century to become subjected to private land-owners again. The numerous seigneurial or market towns offer comparative examples for trans-European research on this important but often neglected town type.

In addition to the academic arguments described above, pragmatic considerations also play a role in the choices. The availability of a sufficient amount and quality of sources often poses a serious challenge, especially for the central part of Hungary, where the archives had been destroyed several times prior to the eighteenth century. Another important factor is the quality and extent of previous historical and archaeological research on the given localities, either in the form of town monographs or topographical works, as well as the possibility to involve local experts and institutions. However, even with a fair amount of preliminary research, it is always necessary to do more archival work and topographical surveys, and to collect the results of published and unpublished archaeological investigations to ensure the systematic character of the final products.

The fact that Hungary is a latecomer in the HTA project has presented us with both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, our published output is still limited compared to Bohemia and Poland, let alone Germany and Austria. On the other hand, we got involved with an already well-developed project and could learn from the methodological lessons that the other national projects had gone through. While following all the above-described standards of the ICHT, we adopted a model that seemed most useful to us, a combination of the Austrian, Polish and Irish approaches. Regarding the source base, the Hungarian atlases are closely tied to the Austrian, Czech, Romanian, and partly to the Croatian and (for Lesser Poland) the Polish series, since the first series of cadastral surveys were prepared for these territories in the framework of the Habsburg Monarchy. In Austrian scholarship, this survey is known as the *Franziszeischer Kataster*; however, on the territory east of the River Leitha, cadastral mapping did not start under Francis I (1792–1835) but only during

the reign of Franz Joseph (1849–1916).<sup>17</sup> In Hungary, the work commenced at the country's western border by royal order in 1849, and the surveys of the first towns, namely Sopron, Győr, and Kőszeg, were ready by 1856. The central and eastern parts were completed even later: for instance, Buda was surveyed as late as 1872, one year prior to its unification with Pest and Óbuda. However, since industrialization proceeded slower than in Bohemia and the Austrian provinces, even surveys done in the second half of the nineteenth century preserved largely pre-industrial townscapes.

The sheets of the cadastral maps are pasted together for creating the base map, and redrawn at a scale of 1:2500, following the common standard and symbology. The map of the town in its surrounding is taken—similarly to other East Central European series—from the first and second military surveys of the Habsburg Monarchy (prepared in 1763–1785 and 1819–1869, respectively) resized at a scale of 1:50,000. The growth phases of the given town are displayed on a series of maps showing each phase separately instead of overlaying them on a single map. This is a slight technical deviation from most other series, allowing for a clearer visualisation. The maps listed above form “Part A” or the standard compulsory part of the cartographic material of each atlas. “Part B”, in addition, contains further thematic maps, displaying features of social topography or settlement morphology, depending on the source basis and on other ongoing or recently completed locally relevant research projects. These may show the various jurisdictional or administrative units; the building time and height of individual buildings; the spatial distribution of various crafts or other occupational groups. They call the readers' attention to various aspects of social uses of space. Finally, “Part C” of the cartographic material includes reproductions of selected historic maps, views, and partial surveys. The cartographic part is complemented by a textual one, consisting of a detailed historical topographical study, and of comments to maps in “Part B” and “Part C”. They are complemented, following the excellent example of Irish atlases, by a detailed topographic gazetteer divided into thematic units. This part, which is probably the most work-intensive element of the atlases, offers an invaluable basis both for local historical and for larger-scale comparative research.

In our experience, the preparation and publication of the atlases gives a new impetus to topographical investigations connected to each city well beyond the concrete editorial work. The discovery of new archaeological, cartographic and archival materials and the need for systematic and accurate visualisation of details usually lead to discovering new connections or patterns, and to raising new questions. The topographic data summarized in the atlases serve as an important resource for local inhabitants and administration. It has been particularly reassuring to see the engagement of architects and urban planners both in the preparation and the later use of the atlases.

17 Kain and Baigent, *The Cadastral Map*, 196–202.

## The use of the atlases in research and plans for the future

With the publication of every new atlas, the question of “where next?” also arises. The issue is both about which town’s atlas should continue the series, and how to go ahead with the enterprise on the technical standards of our own times while remaining faithful to the roots and ensuring sustainability and comparability with earlier publications. The Atlas Working Group is very much aware of the challenges and organizes workshops that discuss methodological issues connected to the editing and use of the atlases. Two of those workshops took place in Budapest, in 2012 and 2019, with the agenda of discussing the digital presentation of the atlases besides publishing them as printed volumes. The first discussion has resulted in setting up a Digital Initiative within the AWG, spearheaded by the Irish Historic Towns Atlas and the Institut für vergleichende Städtegeschichte in Münster. It has become clear that digital technology has much more to offer than simply preparing maps on the screen rather than on the drawing board. The second meeting that adjoined the General Assembly of the ICHT in Budapest between 19 and 21 September 2019 reported important methodological progress by the various atlas teams in using GIS and related technologies in visualizing historical, archaeological and geographic data.

The ideal aim in my view would be to create a common digital portal where all the atlases could not only be reached via links to the respective “national” atlas series, but all of them could be studied together in a comparative way. So far, issues of copyright and the huge bulk of older atlases only available in printed format have raised high barriers that can only be surmounted with the participating countries’ common effort and by acquiring common resources to realize such plans. The results of hitherto pursued comparative projects should provide encouragement to work towards this goal. Let me close my report by referring to a few such examples.

The first and hitherto most rewarding enterprise was initiated by Anngret Simms, who raised the questions of how urban space was shaped by seigniorial power in the pre-industrial period and how such processes were reflected “on the ground”. The answers to these complex questions take us to the essence of comparative urban history, to the study of the ground plans of newly founded or redeveloped cities and towns—or of places that were contested or divided by different urban agents. The conference convened in Dublin to discuss these issues was followed by a volume entitled *Lords and Towns*, which not only contains case studies based on the different national atlas projects, but also offers essays on the symbolic meanings of town plans, as well as methodological surveys by archaeologists, art historians and historical geographers.<sup>18</sup>

18 Simms and Clarke, eds, *Lords and Towns*, especially studies by Dietrich Denecke, Matthias Untermann, and Jürgen Paul.

A more specific but chronologically and spatially broad-ranging topic on comparative urban morphology is the use of the grid plan as a means of developing or redeveloping urban sites. Many of the Polish atlases have been instrumental in approaching this topic, both from quantitative-metrological and historical points of view, aiming at the reconstruction of the ideal scheme of plot division at the time of the foundation or rearrangement of the town plan and its connection to the land allotment to the plots within the boundaries of the town.<sup>19</sup> The atlas of Lviv also offers a valuable contribution to this theme,<sup>20</sup> and many of the Czech towns (re-)founded in the second half of the thirteenth century, for instance Plzeň or České Budějovice, followed the same topographical scheme.<sup>21</sup> Considering the medieval kingdom of Hungary from this point of view not only leads us to the example of Zagreb,<sup>22</sup> but also to the question of why the grid plan was so rare in the Carpathian Basin compared to other parts of East Central Europe. Furthermore, it is worth asking to what extent Central Europe can be compared to the newly established colonial cities of the New World.<sup>23</sup> Further directions of comparative research inspired by the Historic Towns Atlases led to the study of urban networks on the peripheries of medieval Europe: Anglo-Norman Meath and the Kulmerland, a region in modern-day Poland colonized by the Teutonic Order.<sup>24</sup>

The HTAs allow historians to address several extremely topical issues, such as resource management, and energy production and consumption in a long-term historical perspective. For instance, the topography of mills in the four towns included in the first Hungarian HTA project, Buda, Sopron, Kecskemét and Sátoraljaújhely, revealed different levels of complexity regarding the placement of watermills, as well as the combination of water energy with other sources of “powering the city” via windmills, as well as human or animal power.<sup>25</sup> A particularly urban phenomenon was the use of moats for energy production, as well as for fish-breeding. The water circulating around many town defences, with its system of sluices and dams, was well suited for driving mills. How widespread this highly ecological solution was throughout medieval Europe was revealed by a survey based on the atlases and other topographical studies.<sup>26</sup>

19 Krasnowolski, “Muster urbanistischer Anlagen”; Krasnowolski, “Medieval Settlement.”

20 Dolynska and Kapral, “The Development of Lviv.”

21 Atlases edited by J. Anderle and V. Bůžek, respectively.

22 Bedenko, *Zagrebacki Gradec*; Slukan Altić, “The Medieval Planned Town,” 318–20.

23 Szende, “Town Foundations.”

24 Maleszka and Czaja, “The Urban Networks.”

25 Szende, “Mills and Towns.”

26 Vadas, “Economic Exploitation.”

Another equally relevant theme is the placement of hospitals, leper houses, and other institutions for the confinement of patients with contagious diseases. Besides a general interest in the history of social care and the Church, the current pandemic calls attention to the importance of early isolation practices and the competing or complementary roles of municipal and state authorities in its regulation. A survey carried out on a limited number of towns shows characteristic patterns in the choices of hospital locations.<sup>27</sup> The *Epidemic Urbanism* project, with a strong global scope, may serve as an inspiration for intensifying the study of the interaction between epidemics and topographical change in the urban context.<sup>28</sup>

Likewise, town halls as centers of municipal governance—and the fact whether there was a town hall at all in a city or town—reveal much about the potentials and self-perception of a civic community. This thematic focus has already yielded important comparative studies concerning Central Europe in the framework of ICHT's inquiries on the political functions of urban spaces.<sup>29</sup>

Finally, a possible next step in the analysis of the rich material assembled in the atlases may be to examine the long-term topographical development of cities and towns in a typological framework. Ordering the “atlas towns” into one or more functional types allows us to take stock of the research resources accumulated through the more than five decades of work on HTAs. Practically all historic towns represent more than one type simultaneously or over time. A locality may have been, for instance, a river port, an industrial town, and a seat of ecclesiastic power at the same time. In fact, the more functions a town incorporated, the greater its centrality was. This framework offers possibilities for comparative research both within and across town types. The next step that we propose is to test the explanatory potential of typology on selected town types through targeted topographical trial projects with the participation of several national atlas teams. This should include establishing a set of features within and across town types that enable systematic topographical analysis and following change over time: emergence, development, alterations, or eventual decline. One must also keep in mind that towns underwent enormous transformation, and some of the typological attributions applied for the earlier periods were no longer present in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>30</sup>

I hope this report has shown that the often tedious and painstaking work on atlases does pay off. The broader we cast the net with preparing and publicizing new

27 Pauly, *Peregrinorum*; Szende, “Sag mir.”

28 Gharipour and DeClercq, eds, *Epidemic Urbanism*; see also the related YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCi40kwiBsOGgaxkqpTNx2Vg>, accessed 4 August 2021.

29 See the thematic block “Town Halls and other Urban Spaces of Political Representation” in Czaja et al., eds, *Political Functions*; Opll, “Konstanz und Wandel.”

30 Szende and Szilágyi, “Town Typology”, 283–84.

atlases, the more reliable and exciting answers we can get not only to the “how” but also to the “why” questions. All regions and towns of Europe, on either side of the former Iron Curtain, can provide new data and arguments for urban morphological studies on a European scale.<sup>31</sup> This is why it is so important that more countries join the project and more historians and geographers become acquainted with and use the already published atlases.

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31 Simms, “The Challenge,” 318–21. The Hungarian Atlas team is extremely grateful to Anngret Simms for her constant support and inspiration in setting up and carrying on our project.

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## Sanctuaries in Roman Dacia: Materiality and Religious Experience. By Csaba Szabó.

Archaeopress Roman Archaeology 49. Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018. 241 pp.

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In spite of important exceptions bridging the two fields, the archaeology of the Roman provinces and the study of Roman polytheistic religion often appear even today as separate disciplines. Archaeologists dedicate most of their efforts to the publication and interpretation of the material brought to light by their excavations. On the other hand, the most innovative scholars of religious history pay more attention to theoretical approaches taken from sociology, anthropology, and religious studies than to collecting and evaluating large bodies of archaeological and epigraphic evidence. More intense dialogue between these two fields has great potential for advancing our understanding of the religious history of the ancient world.

The book under review, Csaba Szabó's doctoral dissertation defended in Erfurt and Pécs, is an attempt to achieve just this.<sup>1</sup> Szabó aims to analyse the rich epigraphic and archaeological evidence about sanctuaries in Roman Dacia using the questions and methods developed by the Lived Ancient Religion Project (LAR), one of the most innovative research programmes in this field, headed by Jörg Rüpke at Erfurt. As will become clear from the following, Szabó often succeeds in making the epigraphic and archaeological material "speak" about religious experiences in Dacia, even if his reconstructions are not always fully convincing. Szabó's approach is made even more important by the fact that much—often very high quality—research on Roman Dacia was published in Romanian, and therefore remains inaccessible to most foreign scholars.

The Introduction (pp. 1–10) presents the main categories and methodological assumptions according to which the material regarding religion in Roman Dacia is analysed. For Szabó's work, the most important element and major methodological innovation of the LAR project is the category of "space sacralization", which is used

<sup>1</sup> A number of reviews of this book have already appeared. See e.g., Donev, "Sanctuaries in Roman Dacia"; van Haepen, "Sanctuaries in Roman Dacia"; Moser, "Putting the Sacred into Space."

instead of the more traditional concepts of “cult place” or “sanctuary”. Using the category of space sacralization means focusing on the dynamic aspects of religious communication: places of religious communication are not simply “out there”, but need to be created and maintained, and are often abandoned. From this approach, the strategies, possibilities, and limits of space sacralization emerge as intriguing topics of analysis. As Szabó explains, the focus on space sacralization also means that sanctuaries are not the only possible objects of analysis, since a wide range of other places can become the objects of sacralization. Such places include corners on a street where an altar is placed, a courtyard of a house with a cult niche, or even the body of a pilgrim visiting a healing sanctuary. Sacralized places are further divided into primary, secondary, and shared places. Unfortunately, the author only gives a definition of primary sacralized spaces (small, often portable objects in the property of, and used by private individuals; p. 3), while uncovering the meaning of secondary and shared spaces is left to the reader. From the subsequent chapters it seems that secondary sacralized spaces are the sanctuaries, banquet rooms, and gathering places of small religious groups (e.g. the worshippers of Mithras or Iuppiter Dolichenus), whereas shared spaces are the sanctuaries managed by cities: these were often large buildings or complexes visited by a large number of people of often very diverse origin. However, the book is almost completely dedicated to the analysis of secondary and shared sacralized places, with very little attention paid to the first category of sacralized places. Indeed, the author explicitly states that he will not deal with funerary practices and domestic (household) religion, although these topics are of foremost importance in the LAR approach (p.7).<sup>2</sup>

The longest chapter (Chapter 2, pp. 11–127) of the book is dedicated to an analysis of religious life in Apulum (Alba Iulia/Gyulafehérvár). Here, the author offers a detailed analysis of the epigraphic and archaeological evidence on religious life in the fort and civilian settlements (Colonia Aurelia Apulensis, Municipium Septimum Apulense). From the multifaceted analysis, the central role in religious life of the elite, both local and imperial, through the performance of rituals, priesthoods, and financial support for religious infrastructure (*euergetism*) clearly emerges. Case studies are devoted to the Asklepieion, the sanctuary of Liber Pater, and the cult of Mithras. The close analysis of the archaeological material and the spatial relations between the various small-group sanctuaries allow the reconstruction of the “soundscape” and “sensescape” of the cult places. This is the most stimulating and valuable part of the book. A critical analysis of the archaeological material that supposedly proves the early existence of Christianity in Apulum rounds off the chapter and convincingly argues that most objects cannot be taken as indicators of

<sup>2</sup> This choice is justified by the claim that Romanian archaeology concentrated on Limesforschung and urban archaeology—an argument the present reviewer cannot understand.

the Christian creed. Here, as elsewhere, the author is attentive and laudably critical of the use of ancient evidence for the purposes of identity politics both in modern Hungary and in Romania.

In the short Chapter 3 (pp. 128–140), *Porolissum* and *Praetorium*, two settlements with a primarily military character, are analysed. In contrast to what the title of the chapter suggests, however, from the rich religious landscape of these settlements only the sanctuaries of Iuppiter Dolichenus are discussed in detail, with special attention to the interpersonal networks of the soldiers involved in the cult.

The following chapter deals with small rural sanctuaries, with a special focus on the healing sanctuary of *Germisara* and the mining settlement of *Ampelum*.

The three main chapters of the book treat a wealth of archaeological and epigraphic material and contain a large number of interesting observations, and the reader sometimes has a hard time following or even finding the main thread. For this reason, the concluding Chapter 5 is expected to bring together the different topics that have emerged in the course of the analysis. This expectation is unfortunately not fulfilled by the conclusions. In this chapter, the main motives of the book are enumerated again. The question of the differences between Dacia and other provinces of the Roman Empire is posed at the end of the book. The answer given to this question is worth quoting:

“The specificity of this province is that Empire-scale infrastructure and connectivity were already well established when it was conquered and led to a much more rapid transmission of religious traditions, which were appropriated in a much more diverse society than in other provinces—apparently, with the passive presence and cultural memory of the indigenous Dacians. It seems also that all the visible materiality of Roman religious communication was left by a few hundred people from three or four generations. The religious life of the other hundreds of thousands [is] gone without much in the way of material traces”.

This rather simple conclusion does not do justice to the wealth of material analysed in the book.

Szabó’s book discusses a huge amount of source material and contains a large number of important and interesting observations. However, some points of criticism should also be made. As already mentioned, a structural weakness of the book is that it does not consequently apply the theoretical concepts outlined in the introduction. This leads the author to the counter-intuitive statement that the fort at *Apulum* was a temple: “The orientation of the fort and their buildings, the urban-like structure of the internal road system (*cardo, decumanus*), the presence of the *lustratio exercitus* and the numerous *genii loci* suggest that the fort was a templum, a

privileged area protected by sacral law, with performances and even festivals" (p. 2). However, the presence of religious infrastructure and the performance of religious rituals do not turn a fort into a temple. The concept of space sacralisation could have been useful when describing this phenomenon and in transgressing the dichotomy of sacred vs. secular places.

The use of theoretical concepts taken from religious studies is sometimes not clear enough and seems to be attached to the source material rather mechanically: I admit that I did not always understand the use of these concepts. A case in point is the concept of agency. A simple definition of agency is the ability to provoke change in the world. Research in anthropology and religious studies has shown that not only individuals but institutions, networks of people, and even objects and machines can possess religious agency.<sup>3</sup> In line with this idea, Szabó supposes that buildings possessed agency in religious communication. One understands that people do not perform their actions in a lifeless and passive scenery, but constantly interact with them, and in this sense a wall, a gate, or a theatre can play a certain role in religious communication (i.e. they have agency). The question is, how did they do this, and what difference did buildings and objects make in religious rituals? Unfortunately, as the author himself admits, the sources from Dacia do not allow one to specify how exactly the walls influenced religious rituals (pp. 16–17): this makes the statement on the agency of walls an unsubstantiated claim. Similarly, I do not see how it furthers our understanding of ancient religion if we ascribe religious agency to simple vessels used in rituals without explaining what exactly constituted the agency of these objects (p. 83). Neither can I understand how "money and power were used consciously as religious agents in some public spaces of Ampelum" (p. 160): it was rather money and power that gave certain individuals religious agency, because the latter could be used to finance dedications and building projects or to attain priesthood and political office.

Another area where I cannot follow Szabó is regarding the application of the concept of individuality to dedications. Szabó is undoubtedly right in using the typology of individuality developed by Rüpke (practical, moral, competitive, representative, reflexive), as it allows a conceptualization of much of individual religious behaviour in ancient polytheism. Regarding the dedications set up by persons who among their other public duties served as priests, Szabó states without any further explanation: "Mentioning the priestly title on the inscription did not mean necessarily also a sacerdotal act, but it was an act of moral religious individuality". While I perfectly agree with the first part of the statement, I cannot see what the reference to a priestly office in a *cursus honorum* has to do with moral individuality, defined by Rüpke as follows: "Moral individuality involves the ascription of responsibility

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3 For a concise and up-to-date discussion on agency see Sax, "Agency."

to persons for their own behaviour, concepts of sin and punishment as well as law.”<sup>4</sup> As far as I can see, a simple reference to a priesthood has nothing to do with this conception of moral individuality.

Szabó has digested and cited an impressive amount of secondary literature. However, he sometimes uses the works he cites in an imprecise way. On p. 142, for instance, he claims that the period of Roman rule in Dacia caused transformation of the natural environment, including massive deforestation. In support of this claim, “Woolf 2012, 48–61” is quoted in fn. 31. Woolf, however, claims that there was no massive deforestation.<sup>5</sup> In the discussion of the unusual bilingual inscription of C. Sentinus Iustinus from Germisara, “Várhelyi 2013” is cited. This work, however, does not appear in the bibliography, and neither was I able to identify this work in any online resource. Furthermore, Szabó understands this inscription to be the personal creation of Sentinus, and interprets it as a sign of religious individuality. However, “Piso 2015”, a paper cited by Szabó himself, argues, in my opinion convincingly, that this text was written by a professional “poet” who offered his services to the visitors of the healing sanctuary at Germisara. This does not mean, of course, that the inscription did not reflect the personal preferences of Sentinus, but deeper engagement with this topic could have enriched the discussion on religious individuality. Analysing the Germisara inscription, Szabó writes about the “metamorphosis” of Sentinus, which is not borne out by the text in any way. To be sure, there are references to healing and an encounter with the divinity, which could be interpreted as a “metamorphosis” of the pilgrim (see the well-known cases of Aelius Aristeides or Lucius in Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses*), but the fact remains that no evidence for this idea can be found in the inscription.

A final remark on the use and translation of the Latin texts is called for. The author cites many inscriptions in the original, without providing a translation. In some cases, his interpretations are false. Regarding the inscription of P. Aelius Theimes, Szabó states that the temple for the Syrian divinities was “rebuilt” by the dedicatory, while the text clearly speaks about the construction of the temple (*templum fecit*). In the same way, in discussing the inscription of Statorius in Apulum, Szabó writes about the reconstruction of the Mithraeum, while the text unmistakably states that the sanctuary was built by Statorius (*templum pr[o] / [sal]utem sua suorum / [que p]ecunia mea feci* /, p. 105). Even more disturbing are grave grammatical errors in the use of Latin and Greek termini, such as “territorii” (p. 11), “temenoi” (p. 15), “locus sancta” (p. 64), and “carmen latinae” (p. 153).

4 Rüpke, “Individualization and Individuation.”

5 Woolf, *Rome. An Empire’s Story*, 61: “Repeated attempts to convict Roman civilization of causing deforestation and soil erosion have failed to convince.”

These criticisms aside, Szabó's book is an important contribution to the religious history of Roman Dacia. Readers interested in provincial religion will find here a wealth of relevant source material and a number of valuable observations. The book also shows how the detailed analysis of archaeological and epigraphic remains from a Roman province can be combined with the theoretically informed study of the history of ancient polytheism. It is to be hoped that many further studies will follow Szabó's lead.

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**Cultural Encounters on Byzantium's Northern Frontier, c. AD 500–700: Coins, Artifacts and History.** By Andrei Gandila.  
New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018. xix+376 pp.

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The book under review, *Cultural Encounters* (abbreviated from *Cultural Encounters on Byzantium's Northern Frontier, c. AD 500–700: Coins, Artifacts and History*), is a monograph by Dr. Andrei Gandila, currently associate professor at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. *Cultural Encounters* is the expanded and updated version of his PhD thesis, defended in 2013 at the University of Florida. The focus of the work is the Danube frontier of the Byzantine Empire in Late Antiquity (AD 500–700), which is today divided between Hungary, Romania, Serbia, and Bulgaria. Despite finishing his PhD research in the US, his background as a native of Romania, archaeological field work in Romania and Italy, and much research in museums and libraries in Europe and the US guarantee that the author's work is of high quality and reliability, thus destined to be a great success in elucidating the complicated history of the interaction between the "Barbaricum" and Byzantium during the period under discussion.

Since its publication, *Cultural Encounters* has received much attention from academics.<sup>1</sup> Tracing the reasons for this, I think that—except for the author's personal background and rich academic experience—the interdisciplinary analysis is its main merit. This guarantees that the author's arguments are supported by strong written sources, material objects, and theoretical practice: these include rich historical sources (the works of more than 50 authors from antiquity are cited; see the bibliography on pp. 291–292), a wide range of archaeological evidence (including coins, pottery, amphorae, lamps, molds and metallurgical products, brooches and

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<sup>1</sup> It has been reviewed by seven scholars: White, "Review of *Cultural Encounters*"; Madgearu, "Review of *Cultural Encounters*"; Somogyi "Review of *Cultural Encounters*"; and Wołoszyn "Review of *Cultural Encounters*"; Baker, "Review of *Cultural Encounters*"; Decker, "Review of *Cultural Encounters*"; Freeman, "Review of *Cultural Encounters*"; Sarantis, "Review of *Cultural Encounters*".

buckles, mainly described on pp. 33–100, 154–191), and other kinds of anthropological sources (mainly in chapter seven).<sup>2</sup> Among all this evidence, I believe the most fascinating is the archaeological data. The illustrations of the material objects, charts of statistical data, and distribution maps provide detailed information about the archaeological findings, and clearly show the intensive interaction of the Danube borderlands with Byzantium, while also showing the author's patience and diligence in dealing with the complicated data (most of the material objects are published in different languages, which are not easy to collect and sort out). One more thing I feel is attractive is that the author manages to avoid a national narrative. Although a native Romanian, he impartially criticizes the traditional national narrative of Hungarian, Bulgarian and Romanian scholars on the relations of these countries with the Roman-Byzantine Empire (continuity vs. discontinuity, autochthony vs. immigrationism). This avoidance of a national narrative is a welcome contemporary way of overcoming nationalism and culture-oriented theory.

Since the theme of the work is the frontier, our attention will no doubt turn to the field of frontier studies. Frontier studies about the Roman Empire (especially the military frontier) can be traced back to the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The establishment of the Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (the first meeting was held in 1949 in Newcastle upon Tyne) further promoted the field.<sup>4</sup> However, previous studies focused much on the physical frontier in relation to its function of defense and separation, with less attention being paid to the cultural sense. The author of the work points out that the “birth” of Late Antiquity, a special and emerging field, challenged the argument of the “decline and fall of the Roman Empire raised by Edward Gibbon [and] changed our understanding of ancient frontiers”. Based on the author's further elucidation of the impact of the school of Late Antique studies and the French “Annales School” on frontier studies, we could summarize this phenomenon as involving a cultural turn that shifts our perspective of the frontier as political and military in nature to seeing the latter as associated with vivid cultural interaction. Especially with regard to Roman frontier studies, the author also rightly shows that the creation and expansion of the EU brought about “renewed interest in frontiers” and “new and exciting vistas for the study of interaction between different cultures and civilizations” (p. 1).

2 As the author proclaims, “A common thread of all chapters is the realization that only by pulling together various strands of information, often the province of diverse disciplines and specializations, can we build a nuanced and multifaceted narrative of frontier history,” (p. 5).

3 Freeman, “Review: Roman Frontier Studies,” 465.

4 The next congress (LIMES Congress) will be held in Nijmegen in 2022; for further information please check: <https://limes2022.org/>.

As the author further shows, compared with other frontiers, the Danube frontier has attracted less attention; this is due to its complexity in history and modern reality. Furthermore, if we compare the research on it associated with the Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire, less focus has been placed on the latter—the reason for this is similar to that for its general neglect. As far as I know, in recent years, except for the work reviewed here, the following excellent pieces focus on the same region: Alexander Sarantis' *Justinian's Balkan Wars*, Georgios Kardaras' *Byzantium and the Avars, 6<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> Century AD*, and Alexandru Madgearu's *Byzantine Military Organization on the Danube, 10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> Centuries*.<sup>5</sup> The publication of this work shows the rising interest in the region—and more generally, in the Balkans—in recent years.

The whole work consists of an introduction, a conclusion, and seven main chapters. I now introduce these in order.

The introduction is an excellent summary of the whole work: if one is time-constrained, reading through it will be enough to pick up the main argument and understand the theoretical basis and content. The author first points out the causes (discussed in the second paragraph of the review) of the recent interest in frontier studies; under this, he shows that, compared with other areas of the Late Roman frontier, “there is still much to be learned about the evolution of the Danube frontier in Late Antiquity and its many functions, as it separated and at the same time brought together the early Byzantine Empire and the northern barbaricum” (p. 2). With this in mind, he lists his main argument that form the core of the work in three areas: “the broad debate surrounding frontier culture, the role of liminal spaces, and the creation of identities; the archaeology of culture contact on the periphery with special emphasis on the role of Byzantine money outside the frontier; the creation of Early Medieval ethnicities, languages, and states in Eastern Europe” (pp. 2–3).

The first chapter could be regarded as theoretical preparation, and includes a discussion of the historical background for the role of the Danube frontier in Late Antiquity. In the first part, the author points out that the frontier theories by Gibbon, Turner, Lattimore, and Alföldi are all linear, then—through discussing the “Grand Strategy” theory of Luttwak, who believes in the “view of a rational, pragmatic, and well-informed frontier policy, which adapted to external threats” (p. 12)—claims that due to much debate about the “Great Strategy” theory, its appearance really “reshaped and refined the frontier paradigm. In the light of growing

5 Sarantis, *Justinian's Balkan Wars*; Kardaras, *Byzantium and the Avars*; Madgearu, *Byzantine Military Organization*. The last two works were included in the series “East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450,” which is edited by Florin Curta and Dušan Zupka—of whom Florin Curta, a distinguished scholar of Byzantium and the Slavs, was also the PhD supervisor of Dr. Andrei Gandila.

interest in social, economic, and religious issues, military strategy has been forced into the background" (p. 13). In the next part, the author traces back the situation of the Danube frontier from the Roman Empire to the Justinian period, and in the following part brings into focus the Lower Danube frontier and its political role of separation, as illuminated by ancient texts (p. 15). In this part, his emphasis is on the claim that "in the sixth century static frontiers mattered more than ever. Separation, rather than inclusion, seems to have been the order of the day" (p. 31).

Analysis of the archaeological evidence is the main feature of his work. As general background (chapter two), with the help of the archaeological findings, the author intends to show the cultural diversity in the Danube region and beyond. It should be admitted that this part plays a really important role in the whole work (pp. 33–100). It provides rich archaeological data and descriptions of material objects with detailed analysis. The author uses ceramics (amphorae, lamps), metal items (brooches, buckles, and jewelry), and a number of Christian objects that cut across these categories and constitute the main type of goods found north of the Danube) (p. 42)—which he defines as Byzantine imports and imitations—to show that Byzantine items were frequently transferred to the north of the Danube, and local Byzantine imitations were made, which consequently leads to the identification of a specific region with mixed cultural features.

Christianity to the north of the Danube frontier is the focus of chapter three. With the help of textual and archaeological evidence, the author discusses the spread and existence of Christianity in the north of Danube from the Constantine the Great to Justinian. He believes that the spread of Christianity was driven by political force, not religious, and that "through analyzing as far as the sixth century is concerned, we can only conclude that Christianity was hardly an unequivocal phenomenon in the lands north of the Danube and it will take more solid archaeological evidence to change this conviction" (p. 130).

Chapter four acts as a summary of the previous two chapters' analyses. In this chapter, building on the archaeological evidence analyzed in the previous chapters, the author tries to show that the Danube in much of the period under discussion acted as a real frontier which the empire tried to hold, even though it was also a region with cultural encounters, but ultimately not a homogeneous zone of culture.<sup>6</sup>

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6 "The Danube remained a daunting natural and political barrier regardless of the facet we wish to emphasize, be it demographic, economic or religious. Continuous cultural interaction was not meant to engender some kind of 'open frontier' but to reinforce and secure the existing one. Byzantine goods filtered through the deliberate—and, indeed, inevitable—permeability of the Danube frontier and embarked on a journey which took them through several levels of value and meaning, from functional, close to the frontier, to symbolical in more distant regions in *barbaricum*." (p. 152).

The reason for the special conditions in the Danube frontier is the cultural strategy which was reluctantly chosen by the Byzantine emperors (p.152).

Chapter five mainly analyzes the flow of Byzantine coins beyond the Danube frontier in the context of the literary and archaeological evidence. With the help of numerous charts and maps of the distribution of coins, the author conducts multivariate analyses in time and space which are used to highlight clusters of small change in one region, the predominance of gold coins in another, the frequency of distant mints, and comparisons between the age-structure of single finds and hoards.

Following the analysis in chapter five, chapter six compares the coin finds in the Danube frontier, Transcaucasia, and the Carpathian Basin. The author points out that because of the different geographical environment and political goals, the coins indicate the different policies in each frontier. Regarding the Danube frontier, “coin finds as well as other categories of artifacts reveal a cultural policy of inclusion as a more sustainable long-term solution for ensuring the security of the Balkans” (p. 216).

Chapter seven discusses the function of money in societies living beyond the frontier of Early Byzantium. The author first discusses the function of different Byzantine coins in their own society, and the research background for them in the discussed regions. Then, using the archaeological data and through comparing the function of the coins in “more recent traditional societies in contact with capitalist states using a carefully regulated currency” (p. 248), the author shows that Byzantine coins in the Danube borderlands lost their function as currency, but were used as “souvenirs, apotropaic amulets, jewelry, objects of prestige, or simply raw material for the production of copper-alloy items” (p. 279).

In the conclusion, the author points out the contradictions between the written sources and archaeological evidence in interpreting the role played by the Danube frontier. In emphasizing the significance of coins for elucidating the issue with the world-systems paradigm, the author concludes that, “on one hand, Roman emperors were interested in securing the Balkans by closely guarding the river [while] on the other communication and contact with barbaricum became integral to the frontier strategy which included interaction, exchange, and the recruitment of ‘barbarians’ in the Roman army. No ‘Grand Strategy’ was applied on the Danube frontier but a larger repertoire of solutions depending on the balance of power and the Empire’s agenda at one time or another” (p. 280).

In reading the work, two limitations may easily be noticed. The first is the handling of the academic terms. Though the author confesses that “depending on region, language, and intellectual tradition Late Roman, Early Byzantine or Byzantine may be used as labels for the period covering the sixth and seventh centuries” (p. 8), it is still a little confusing to find Roman, Late Roman, and Byzantine used in the same paragraph, and even the same sentence, especially for the lay reader. In addition,

problems are associated with the coins. The author mentions that, “many unprovenanced coins from museum collections may not have been found locally but brought by collectors from Byzantine provinces” (p. 156) and that “information about hoards is equally incomplete. More than half of the total number of hoards have been dispersed, either divided between finders or otherwise lost in unknown circumstances” (p. 156). This surely puts the author in a dangerous position and reduces the reliability of the analysis and argument.

Regardless of these limitations, this work will be very helpful to readers who have a deep interest in the Danube frontier in Late Antiquity, which topic has still not been fully studied. The vivid narration, in-depth discussion, and especially the rich and hard-won archaeological evidence, as well as the long bibliography, will be a good guide, leading readers into an intriguing adventure into the “jungle of history.”

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Gene und Geschichte. Was die Archäogenetik zur Geschichtsforschung beitragen kann. By Mitscha Meier and Steffen Patzold. Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann KG, 2021. 163 pp.

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In 2021, Mischa Meier<sup>1</sup> and Steffen Patzold<sup>2</sup> published *Gene und Geschichte* (Genes and History) about the historical interpretation of archaeogenetic results. The book deals with the problem in seven chapters, with the cited literature in the eighth chapter.

The introduction presents the main purposes of the work. After listing a few geneticists' publications on human history, including ones by Johannes Krause, his co-author Thomas Trappe, and Joseph K. Pickrell, and David Reich,<sup>3</sup> Meier and Patzold tell us that their aim is to evaluate the current state of research and its influence on historiography.

In the second (shortest) chapter, Meier and Patzold clarify what the term "history" should mean. For the authors, it is something which history and/or archaeology students should learn in their first semester: Accordingly, the study of history is connected with the appearance of written sources. In other words: there are regional differences in where history "starts". Everything that existed before written sources and deals with the human past, they contend, is the domain of archaeology and other disciplines, rather than history. The authors intend to investigate the contribution of archaeogenetics to historical research thus narrowly defined. This division of the human past based on the availability of written sources is well established and well known, but not universally accepted. This position is especially true for scholars at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, who study ancient genomes from the human past. For them, as well as for other experts,

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3 Their bestsellers reached a wide audience. Krause and Trappe, "Die Reise unserer Gene"; Reich, "Who We Are and How We Got Here."

the scope of “history” is broader. As the historian Daniel Smail states, “[i]f humanity is the proper subject of history, then surely Paleolithic is part of our history.”<sup>4</sup> To criticize Krause for his contribution to “history” is equally strange, as at least 40 or 50 percent of his publications contribute to the research of what the authors would term “prehistory”<sup>5</sup>.

Chapter three deals with the problem of doing history. The authors emphasize that history is not simply the human past, it is not a summary of past events, nor is it a summary of the artefacts from the past. Their intention is to explain how history is written, what archaeogenetics may mean in this process, and how it may contribute to it. They claim that history begins where somebody has an interest in a specific event in the past and tries to interpret it. This interpretation will always remain subjective and will always depend on the individual’s interests and questions. Much depends also on the narration: how we tell the story of the past event. In this chapter, they state that archaeogenetics does not pose any new questions that could fundamentally affect history or historiography. It is merely a tool to verify or contradict already known hypotheses of historiography. They argue that the main achievement of archaeogenetics is different: it can produce new, unique data for history and for those interested in human history, a goal that they consider significant.

It is hard to pose fundamentally new research questions that have never been asked. However, we can repeatedly re-examine existing questions by evaluating new sources, which may lead to a revision of previous interpretations. This is precisely where archeogenetics can make its greatest contribution. We can certainly agree with the authors that the acquisition of new data for historical sciences is a major achievement. It is already clear that by using the tools of archaeogenetics we can answer previously unanswered questions.<sup>6</sup>

In the fourth chapter, the authors explain the basic difference between historical research and the natural sciences, especially genetics. They emphasize that it is impossible to reconstruct the reality of the past in all its complexity. History is the study of humans as social beings. In doing history, scholars attempt to determine how these social beings interacted, or—at least—they try to reconstruct some aspects of these complex interactions. On the other hand, natural sciences operate with questions that are more concrete. For example, archeogenetics can decide whether the *Yersinia Pestis* was the cause of the Black Death pandemic in the fourteenth century. It can definitively

4 Smail, “In the Grip of Sacred History.”

5 <https://www.shh.mpg.de/Johannes-Krause-Publications> (accessed: 30 September 2021).

6 The problem of the Avar-age elite is a pertinent example. It has been revealed that the known, analyzed, and richly furnished persons had a biological relation, which is enormously important from the perspective of social organization. Csáky et al., “Genetic Insights into the Social Organisation.”

demonstrate that the answer is “yes.” However, the actual story of the pandemic and how it influenced society and the era are questions for history to explore.

The authors sharply criticize the sensationalistic titles of some archeogenetical articles, titles that they label as caricatures oversimplifying highly complex issues. In addition, the authors also confront some results of archaeogenetics about the epidemics of fourteenth century England and conclude that aDNA genetic data also need to be interpreted. At the end of the chapter, they address the possibilities of integrating natural and historical sciences, a goal that they welcome even though they emphasize that it is crucial to understand, accept, and respect that the two work with different methods.

In the fifth chapter, the authors summarize the main results of archaeogenetics in the last ten years, concentrating on three topics: the fourteenth century plague; the sixth century plague of Justinian; and migration and mobility in the migration period. This the longest and most developed chapter, particularly concerning the uses of archeogenetics to understand the migration period.

In their discussion of the migration period, they clarify some questions concerning the history of research into this period and emphasize how the “Vienna School” of historians helped to change the older image of a *Völkerwanderung*. Among important aspects of this large topic, they first discuss the fall of the Roman Empire and the transformation of the Roman world. Second, they address the romantic idea of migrating peoples in the light of the possibilities of multiple identities, the processes by which early medieval groups were formed, and how they should be investigated. Third, they address ethnicity, emphasizing that not only must we abandon the search for biologically defined “peoples”, but also the search for permanent ethnic identities. Today, ethnic identity is considered as unstable and subject to change even within a single lifetime. Perhaps the most important discussion is the fourth one concerning the statement that archaeological cultures are mere constructs of archaeologists. Any ethnic interpretation of material culture is problematic, hence the usage of these ethnic groups in archaeogenetics is also very dangerous (“thin ice” in the words of Meier and Patzold). Finally, in the fifth portion of the chapter the authors emphasize research that demonstrates the complexity of the movements by different groups of people.

The authors give a detailed analysis of a 2016 paper published in *Nature* by Stephan Schiffels and Wolfgang Haak on the migration of Angles and Saxons to Britain in the fifth to sixth centuries.<sup>7</sup> This critique is 23 pages, longer than chapters two and three combined! The authors do not discuss the methods of geneticists, only the results from the perspective of history. They criticize much in this article.

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<sup>7</sup> Schiffels et al., “Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon genomes.”

In particular, they argue that the results are far more interesting from the perspective of population genetics than from that of historiography. They criticize the authors for a lack of familiarity with the latest historical literature (especially Guy Halsall's 2014 book<sup>8</sup>). They emphasize that admixtures can be interpreted not just as a result of migration but also of other processes. They also point out that there was already a dense network connecting Britain, Gaul, and northwest Germany, therefore it is not surprising that people were mixed. In summary, the authors think that the article does not address the actual current questions of early Britain's historiography.

The topic discussed in this chapter is the migration of the Lombards from Pannonia to Italy. After 106 pages of critique, the authors start introducing what they consider successful combinations of archeogenetics and history. They offer a favorable evaluation of the contributions of Patrick Geary and Krishna Veeramah in their *Nature Communications* article that analyzes the cemeteries of Szólád and Collegno, sympathizing with their careful formulations concerning many important aspects of aDNA research and calling their work exemplary for future research.<sup>9</sup> In particular, they emphasize the importance of Geary and Veeramah's cautious interpretations. The main goal of their study, as the authors point out, was neither the verification nor the disconfirmation of wandering theories but rather the exploration of the inner social organization of smaller groupings. Meier and Patzold cite European Research Council-sponsored *HistoGenes*<sup>10</sup> as a project that can bring much to the research of the human past. They welcome the fact that the historians Walter Pohl and Patrick Geary are among the leaders of the project. However, for some reason, the two other project leaders, the archeologist Tivadar Vida and the geneticist Johannes Krause, are passed over in silence.

Chapter six deals with a more general problem. Here the authors attempt to evaluate how the natural sciences and their methodologies are increasingly used and, indeed, expected in historical research. They warn against this phenomenon and suggest a more conscious use of these methods. They think that cooperation can be a win-win situation but without carefully thought out, reasoned questions and modest interpretations it cannot work well. From an archaeological point of view, this chapter is somewhat surprising, since archaeology developed a productive collaboration with the natural sciences many decades ago. The natural sciences have made a great impact on archaeological research and they broaden research fields and questions of archaeology. Indeed, archaeology has experienced a paradigm shift caused by natural sciences.<sup>11</sup>

8 Halsall, "Worlds of Arthur."

9 Amorim et al., "Understanding 6<sup>th</sup>-Century Barbarian Social Organization."

10 Pohl et al., "Integrating Genetic."

11 Turney, "Radiocarbon Revolution."

The final, seventh chapter entitled “How could cooperation work?” deals with cooperation between natural sciences and history. This is essentially a summary of the entire book and its conclusions. They state that archaeogenetics is a young discipline just starting to produce significant results concerning the migration period. They emphasize that archaeogenetics is useful only in answering specific questions. They consider that it is just one tool in the toolbox of historical research and that it is especially appropriate for analyses of smaller communities. For formulating more general theories about history, the other tools of historical research are required. They repeatedly state that the analysis of aDNA is not history; it is just material for interpretation, together with other sources.

The book has certain positive features. One is the publicity it provides that will intensify the discussion about archaeogenetics and history. The authors’ discussion about the complexity of possible forms of historical data interpretation is also important. We cannot emphasize enough that cautious interpretations are crucial in this field. They are critical from the perspective of historiography: they help us in avoiding big mistakes when asking questions or interpreting our data. The authors also warn against the political use of genetic results, which is a veritable danger.<sup>12</sup> They are certainly correct in arguing that archaeogenetics has the most robust tools for the analysis of the small or, more precisely, completely excavated communities. They also rightly express their high hopes about the current *HistoGenes* project, which is led by four scholars: two historians, an archaeologist and a geneticist.

However, their positivity about *HistoGenes* is somewhat confusing since the book is built upon strong criticism of Johannes Krause and his *Die Reise unserer Gene*, a book repeatedly cited with much irony. They also doubt the main purpose of the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, considering it excessive and criticizing it already for the word *Menschheitsgeschichte* in its name. It is also strange that they overlook Johannes Krause and Tivadar Vida in the context of the *HistoGenes* project, though both are leaders of the project: Vida coordinates its archaeological investigations, while Krause is the head of genetic analysis. The authors put the focus on a bestseller, written in a readily accessible style, without taking into account Krause’s vast, more specialized and scientific work.

Meier and Patzold’s *Gene und Geschichte* could be a treasure trove and a fundamental guideline for geneticists, archaeologists, and historians dealing with aDNA in avoiding major errors, but, sadly, it is not. Unfortunately, the ironic tone in which an old understanding of the historical craft is employed to proclaim the superiority of the historian over the natural scientist<sup>13</sup> ruins the book. The stated goals, namely

12 Hakenbeck, “Genetics, Archaeology and the Far Right.”

13 They use the word “Hilfswissenschaft” for archaeology and other disciplines that deal with the human past which is truly old-fashioned, although they say “hat überhaupt nichts Ehrenrühriges an sich” (p. 129).

the evaluation of the state of research in the field of archaeogenetics and its impact on history, cannot be accomplished in this way. We should understand that the discipline of archeogenetics has so far focused on history prior to the Middle Ages, and as it moves into the more recent past, its greatest results are in the future.

## Literature

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**Conservation's Roots: Managing for Sustainability  
in Preindustrial Europe, 1100–1800. Edited by Abigail P. Dowling  
and Richard Keyser.**

Environment in History: International Perspectives 19. New York: Berghahn Books, 2020. 364 pp.

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Words such as sustainability, conservation, nature protection, and environmental footprint have become so fashionable that as it often happens in such cases, they have completely lost their meaning. These notions appear in everyday speech, in the media, as well as in the scholarly literature, in many cases with considerably different agendas in different contexts. As the importance of the present environmental crisis has entered the discourse in social sciences and humanities, increasing attention has been paid to its historical aspects. Scholars have discovered—or invented rather—the roots of modern environmentalism and conservation in pre-modern times, trying to apply modern concepts for past land-use practices. Doing away with this rather damaging approach is the main background to the book presented here. To use its editors' words, the volume is a product of “the frustration that we, the editors, shared concerning the unawareness and simplistic narratives about preindustrial environmental history.” In this case, the frustration found fertile ground, as the volume is an exceptionally well-thought-out contribution to the idea of conservation and sustainable management in pre-modern Europe.

When dealing with pre-modern conservationism and sustainable management, research mostly draws on the formation of state forestry in early modern times. In many cases, from the fifteenth or rather the sixteenth century onwards, scholars interpreted efforts of different state offices (chambers) to conserve forests held by monarchs as new developments. However, these efforts were not new, but mostly extended formerly existing practices. The individual studies in this book address these practices in the medieval and early modern period, mostly focusing on two resources, i.e., forests and water.

Neither the introduction by the editors, nor the afterword are mere summaries of the articles in the volume. While the introduction carefully sets the scene, pointing to shortcomings of previous studies in historical sustainability, in the afterword Paul Warde lays out the tasks for future research. Apart from these, the volume includes twelve chapters divided into three parts: the first addresses multiple-use resources, the second focuses on sustainability in water resource-use, while the third is dedicated to forests.

The first third of the volume focuses on the problem of conservation and sustainable multiple-use resource management in parklands, hunting parks, and heathlands. The latter, probably lesser known to those who focus their research on Central Europe, is a shrubland vegetation that used to be widespread in northwest Europe but has heavily decreased over the past centuries. Apart from analyzing landscapes of different uses, Dolly Jørgensen's study discusses how to control pigs, these important inhabitants of the medieval countryside and city. The studies in this part of the book are somewhat less coherent as they address diverse problems, which does not mean that they lose the focus of the volume. Each study offers a clear idea of clearly how practices that were meant to regulate resource-use took form and became dominant.

Let me point to two issues in the first set of papers that make them valuable not only in the study of sustainability, but also in social, economic, and legal history. The first is that in these areas and landscapes the authors identify a clear tendency for people to take control over every single resource. In the northern part of Italy, as demonstrated by Cristina Arrigoni Martelli, urban authorities' increasing control over hunting is seen in the late medieval period. While the inhabitants of the *contado* practiced hunting for smaller game with only a few restrictions—that were meant to ensure the lasting availability of these animals—in legislative sources, increasing control by expanding towns is well expressed. They first marked out certain spaces where no hunting was allowed, then gradually extended these restrictions to larger areas, and finally went as far as to prohibit catching birds by mills and their dams. The control is expressed in entirely different ways in legislations regulating the common heathland-use in the Campine region in the Low Countries studied by Maïka De Keyzer. The exploitation of these common pastures was not solely based on customs but was controlled by very detailed sets of local laws, many of which had been extant from early modern times. These bottom-up regulations were no less detailed than those legislated by *podestàs* in Italian towns. Just to mention but one example the author provides: people had the right to mine peat in the common heathlands, a fuel of increasing importance in late medieval and early modern times. However, it was forbidden to simply abandon the pits after mining, as leaving thin layers of soil open would have been a danger to effective herding. Accordingly, minders had to re-bury the pits in order to prevent sand movement.

Partly connected to this, a second common element of the first studies is the emphasis on secondary and tertiary uses of landscapes. This is emphasized by Jørgensen, who points to the fact that pigs were driven not only to parklands to eat acorn, but also to ploughlands to eat up what was left there after the harvest. Similarly, Abigail P. Dowling's contribution addresses how an elite park, the primary goal of which was to serve as a hunting ground, made a significant income, amongst other things, from selling firewood and timber harvesting.

Three studies in the volume are dedicated to issues of water conservancy in pre-modern times. The scope of these studies is wide. While Michael Zeheter chose to discuss the fishing regulations at Lake Constance, Richard Hoffmann's paper gives a comparative study of European fishing regulations in the late medieval period. Both studies have their merits, as in many ways Hoffmann shows how the very detailed sets of regulations that Zeheter points to in a local context re-appear in regulations of distant areas of Europe. Both authors emphasize the two most important aspects of regulations: first, to supply fish for the communities, and second, to secure the lasting presence of fish in rivers and lakes, or by seashores. The last paper in this part by Eva Jakobsson introduces the readers to a peculiar Swedish "institution" called the King Vein (*Kungsådra*). As she argues, it was a form of royal control over the waterways of Sweden, meaning a share of the water flow that none of the actors had the right to back up.

The most important merits of the studies in the third part of the book dedicated to woodlands are, firstly, that they demonstrate that conservation practices expressed in early modern legislations are rooted in the Middle Ages (see especially Richard Keyser on France) and, secondly, that in addition to state administrations, local administrations were also keen on governing forest resources. The latter is demonstrated by Sara Morrison in the case of Sherwood Forest in England, and by Sébastien Poublanc on the example of forests in southern France. Both authors show that in early modern times local customs were very much respected in organizing local forestry, despite existing state forest regulations. The other important point that both authors make is that local regulations were indeed focused on serving local interests rather than supplying state needs (which would have been timber for ship building).

The last two chapters in this part of the book move away from Western Europe and discuss forest conservation practices in Prussia and East Central Europe (Czech lands and, to some extent, Hungary). Oliver Augé discusses Prussian forest management before the publication of *Sylvicultura oeconomica* by Hans Carl von Carlowitz in 1713. His paper shows that the forms of forest conservation Carlowitz proposed did not come *ex nihilo* but were indeed rooted in pre-modern practices widely applied in Prussia well before the early eighteenth century. The last paper, written

by Péter Szabó, to some extent goes beyond many of the studies: because in addition to discussing forms of pre-modern forestry in East Central Europe, it problematizes how these practices were denied by modern state forestry, and then gradually re-discovered and re-applied in recent decades. His paper points to a practice whose sources are scarce, and which probably would deserve further study, namely litter raking. He demonstrates that while coppicing and herding in wood-pastures, increasingly re-introduced in past decades, are shown to have been sustainable ways to exploit woodlands and have proved to be important for biodiversity and historical landscape preservation, litter raking seems to have removed major amounts of minerals from the forests, harming their ecosystem-balance. The latter discovery also points to a significant perspective, namely the need for a non-romanticizing view of pre-modern practices, which in recent years has been increasingly characteristic of both scholarly works and communications to wider publics.

The volume reflects great editorial care. Almost every study supports the main thesis of the collection, which is that while there was a clear tendency for sustainable forest (land) and water resource management in pre-modern times, this motivation was social and economic, rather than ecological. Not only do the papers implicitly communicate with each other, but they also refer to each other, pointing to the commonalities or differences in practices in the areas studied. With very few exceptions, the papers draw on archival material that in many cases had seldom been studied previously, and even those that build on printed sources raise new perspectives and pose different questions than previous authors. Accordingly, the volume will undoubtedly become one of the key references in pre-modern sustainability studies.

Folk Songs and Material Culture in Medieval Central Europe:  
Old Stones and New Music. By Nancy van Deusen.  
Turnhout: Brepols, 2019. 279 pp.

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Nancy van Deusen's *Folk Songs and Material Culture in Medieval Central Europe: Old Stones and New Music* is the sixth volume in the series *Studies in the History of Daily Life (800–1600)*, published by Brepols. When the editors of the present journal proposed that I write a review of this monograph, I gladly accepted: I am a musicologist specialising in late-medieval and early modern Europe, and I have a particular interest in the music performed in the rural areas of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Central Europe. Thus, I was eager to read the book, as its title seemed to promise a discussion of a fascinating yet slippery topic: in historical musicology that deals with medieval and early modern Europe, the very term 'folk song' has largely fallen out of fashion and numerous scholars doubt that we have access to the 'folk music' of those epochs at all. I soon realised, however, that both the title and the book's inclusion in the abovementioned series are rather misleading: van Deusen's monograph is not devoted to songs in medieval Central Europe, and nor does it discuss the daily life of medieval Central Europeans. Rather, her study is an attempt to deconstruct, primarily, twentieth-century research on folk songs in Hungary by recovering conceptual tools developed by medieval thinkers and highlighting, moreover, the traits common to folk song research and the study of medieval chant. By dealing 'with the present through the attainments of the past' (p. xi), the book commendably pleads for 'breaking down boundaries between historical studies and ethnomusicology' and argues for a 'comparative methodology that transcends the arbitrary borders of time and space' (pp. xii–xiii). The 'old stones' of the title refer to the 'building material' appropriated from the past—the latter treated as a quarry—recombined to create something new. In van Deusen's argumentation, this architectural metaphor resonates with the medieval conception of substance as a 'silva' (literally, a 'forest full of trees'); a repository of pre-existing substance to be used (see the useful glossary on pp. 243–248). Van Deusen applies this main concept—creation

through the combination of pre-existing chunks of substance—to a wide range of topics: for instance, Herder's working procedure (p. 29), the psalm *Beatus vir* (p. 112), the constructive process of chants and folk songs (pp. 118–119), the activity of individual singer-composers who collect folk melodies (p. 198), and so on. Mixing up such diverse sources and tracing connections is probably what van Deusen regards as a way to avoid the abovementioned borders of time and space. On p. 53, for instance, she exposes the structural correspondences—‘the bringing together of “chunks”—between a paragraph from a discourse by Kodály (delivered in 1963), folk music, and medieval and Byzantine composition of the ninth-tenth century. The approach is courageous, yet it appears utterly arbitrary to a reader like myself, trained in historical musicology.

This is not to say that there are no important points raised in this book; quite the contrary. In Chapter 3 (pp. 37–56), for instance, Van Deusen discusses the limits of many concepts currently used for analysing and categorising both medieval and folk music. She argues that common dichotomies found in scientific literature (such as rural/urban, folk/cultivated, natural/artificial) ‘often in real life, with examination, and in comparison with the realities of life, break down’ and that they are ‘constructs perceived as useful in analysis, reiterated in the telling, repeated perhaps through decades of scholarly literature’ but that ‘may reflect neither the circumstances described nor the perceptions, actually, of those who have described them’ (p. 38). In Chapter 4 (pp. 57–81), instead, she recovers a medieval conceptualisation of sound as material by discussing the medieval reception of Plato's *Timaeus*, focusing in particular on Chalcidius' rendition of the Greek ‘*hyle*’ as ‘*silva*’; a concept that plays a central role in van Deusen's argumentation that goes beyond the realm of medieval studies, as mentioned above. The very idea of using the medieval equipment of concepts to provide methodological input to twenty-first-century research is an inspiring form of anachronism that should not be dismissed too easily. All in all, however, I found it extremely difficult to follow the reasoning behind *Folk Songs and Material Culture in Medieval Central Europe*: to re-use van Deusen's metaphor, the book appears to me to be composed of chunks, yet one put together with no compelling logic.

Furthermore, van Deusen often refers to her own experiences as a foreigner in Budapest, using them not only to lighten the scientific prose (successfully), but also to illustrate some fundamental points of her argumentation (in my opinion, less successfully). In Chapter 8 (pp. 147–157), for instance, she tackles the ‘passion for collection’ that characterised both historical musicology and folk music research, tracing in particular methodological similarities between the study of medieval sequences and twentieth-century folk songs. She seems to think that a collecting attitude was (or is) particularly strong in Hungary, and she introduces

the chapter by sketching Hungarian research culture as a culture 'of gathering, of community, of the never-ceasing web of human contact, of constant exchange and conversation' (p. 147). She does so by recounting a day spent in the library of the Musicology Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences: 'the "librarian" (or caretaker of the reading room) is speaking loudly on the telephone, after it has also insistently rung many times, workmen are working outside of the windows, an assistant is typing cards on a manual typewriter, and the research colleague is, as he has told me, under desperate pressure to finish a paper he is going to give soon and is flapping through the large-format pages of the collected edition of the composer's works with which he has to do. Colleagues come in and out, greeting and chatting with one another, as has been the case in the same way for decades' (p. 147). She concludes the anecdote noting that, 'for a "Westerner", it is an impossible situation, and in this context, it is of interest that, by contrast, the New York-based, North-American-influenced Central European University Library across the Danube informs those entering the reading room that "Silence must be maintained at all times"' (pp. 147–148). Van Deusen sees in this contrast not only a difference between the library cultures of North America and Hungary, but also a manifestation of a precise methodological tradition: 'What kinds of mental work can be accomplished under these circumstances? For what is this environment conducive? The answer is: collecting' (p. 148). Besides the fact that I cannot see the relation between collecting melodies—a work that, in my experience, requires a high level of concentration—and a loud working space, I wonder about the relevance and the scientific value of such anecdotes, which appear over and over in the course of the book (see, for instance, pp. 7–8, 37–38, 83, 99–101, 124, and 193). Furthermore, all too often I find van Deusen to be too quick to identify relations between intellectual traditions and socio-political features: in Chapter 10, devoted to nationalism and folk music, she seems to suggest that the passion for collection she finds in Hungarian musicology is a reaction to a 'tendency to fragmentation in this part of the world', exemplified, for instance, 'by the fact that my colleagues at universities in Budapest needed several different jobs to make a modest living' (p. 179). An interesting hypothesis that would call for solid evidence, especially in a scientific publication.

To conclude, van Deusen's *Folk Songs and Material Culture in Medieval Central Europe* is a most curious book. The irritation I experienced while reading it was certainly also due to its experimental character: given the publisher and the series in which the book appeared, I expected a 'traditional' study of historical musicology, and my expectations were frustrated. This said, I see nonetheless a short circuit between this publication and its intended readership: van Deusen states in the preface that 'it is hoped that its reading audience will include not only historical

musicologists and medievalists, but also a much wider audience of ethnomusicologists and those interested in cultural studies' (p. xi). Given this objective, a clearer structure and more convincing argumentation—convincing by the methodological standards of the disciplines van Deusen wants to connect—would have been advisable.



**The Hymnbook of Valentin Triller (Wrocław 1555): Musical Past and Regionalism in Early Modern Silesia.** By Antonio Chemotti. Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2020. 292 pp.

**The Polyphonic Hymns of Valentin Triller's *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein* (Wrocław 1555).** By Antonio Chemotti. Warsaw: Instytut Sztuki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2019. 157 pp.

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In 1555, the Silesian pastor and editor Valentin Triller partnered with the Wrocław printer Crispin Scharffenberg to produce a hymnbook titled *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein* (A Silesian Songbook). This work, however, was far more than an ordinary collection of hymns for congregational or private devotional use. According to Antonio Chemotti, “The dialogue between the hymnbook’s paratexts and content offers a unique perspective on the musical culture of mid-sixteenth-century Silesia. In this regard I will suggest that appropriate geographical contextualisation is essential for the comprehension of *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein*, whose embeddedness in a regional context is suggested by its very title.” Chemotti’s primary goal in this monograph is to closely examine “the relation between the hymnbook and the cultural climate of Silesia” and attempt “an interpretation of *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein* as an expression of a »Silesian culture«.” In this monograph, he succeeds in a masterful way.

In chapter one Chemotti aims “to situate *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein* within a specific production system, and to gather all of the available information regarding the life and work of its editor.” In 1552, printer Crispin Scharffenberg moved to Wrocław and purchased the printing firm of Andreas Winkler. Over the course of his career in Wrocław, he printed a total of 13 volumes with musical notation. *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein* was Scharffenberg’s first hymnbook and the first hymnbook to appear in print in Silesia since Adam Dyon’s *Gesang Buchlien* in 1525. The hymnbook first appeared in print in 1555 with the title *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein* (A Silesian Songbook). It was reissued in 1559 with a new title page: *Ein Christlich Singebuch* (A Christian Songbook). The contents of the hymnbook remained the same.

Most likely the unsold copies from the 1555 print run were repackaged with a new title page. What little we know of the editor, Valentin Triller, can be gleaned from the publication's paratexts: he was born in Silesia, was the Lutheran pastor in the village of Panthenau in the duchy of Brieg (Polish Brzeg), was married, and had children. According to Chemotti, Triller collectively referred to the hymns in *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein* as "my songs" (*meine gesenge*), so there is no reason to think that he was not also the author of many of the texts.

In chapter two, Chemotti discusses the paratexts that introduce the hymnbook, focusing on the title page, dedicatory letter, and preface. He begins by discussing the geographical implications of the title page, noting that Triller expressly called the collection a "Silesian" hymnbook. The reference to Silesia goes beyond its dedication to Georg II, Duke of Liegnitz and Brieg, to encompass the whole of Silesia as a region. This regional identification is expanded in the "Preface to the Christian Reader," in which Triller refers to "our Silesia." According to Chemotti, "The ideal reader Triller imagined while writing the preface was another fellow Silesian. ... Thus, the 'Christian reader' addressed in the forward is not characterised just by a religious identity, but implicitly also by a regional one." In the dedication letter Triller expands the geographical emphasis of the hymnbook to include issues of religious identity that appeared in the region. After addressing the dedicatee and discussing the theological idea of music as a gift of God to be used as a means of making an appropriate "sacrifice of praise," Triller turns to ideas of religious identity in Silesia. Chemotti explains that heterodox theological views had been spreading through the region among groups of spiritualists and Anabaptists since the 1520s. The most prominent spiritualist group was comprised of the followers of Kaspar Schwenckfeld, who, among other heresies, did not acknowledge the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Triller argues that the presence of such groups tainted not only the reputation of the Lutheran church, but also undermined the spiritual and temporal authority of Georg II, who was engaged in ridding the duchy of the heresy. His dedication letter also includes a short confession of faith, drawn from the Augsburg Confession. According to Chemotti, "Taking all its parts into consideration, the dedication letter adds an important political and religious dimension to the hymnbook. It presents the collection of hymns as a manifesto of faith, with the unconcealed intent of declaring the Lutheranism of the ecclesiastical community living in the lands of Duke Georg II." The hymnbook, therefore, acquired a confessional meaning. In addition to viewing the hymnbook as a declaration of Lutheran orthodoxy, Chemotti suggests that its design made Triller's hymnbook operate in a way similar to Lutheran church orders.

"*Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein* is not a randomly assembled collection of hymns. Quite the contrary, its contents, structure, and paratexts reveal

a coherent plan for framing the soundscape of vernacular devotions and liturgies, constituting a musical counterpart to the regulations we find in sixteenth-century church orders.”

In chapter two, Chemotti also analyzes “what sorts of values could be attached to musical repertoires perceived as old, irrespective of the actual nature of these repertoires in terms of age, genre, or language.” Some Lutheran hymnbooks promoted “old songs” as examples of pious Christians who knew the truth in the dark days of false doctrine. But these opinions centered on the texts, not the music of the old songs. Triller focused on the melodies of the old songs (the “old familiar melodies”). “It is clear that Triller’s interest in the ‘old melodies’ was music- rather than text-oriented.” Another of Triller’s reasons for publishing a hymnbook is that many songbooks circulating in Silesia had unfamiliar foreign melodies or were poorly made. The word “foreign” can also be viewed geographically (meaning outside Silesia). All in all, Triller seems to consider the hymnbook’s repertory to be a waning tradition, and the publication is “presented as some sort of commemorative volume, a *Gedenkschrift* to save a musical heritage...” The past to which Triller refers is not the biblical past, but the experienced and personally remembered past. “Triller’s Preface to the Christian Reader remains a unique testimony of an early modern awareness of the past in music, an awareness that it is related to a collective identity based on a sense of belonging to a region.”

At the end of chapter two, Chemotti asks who may have been the intended user of *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein*. “Besides the aspects discussed above, the paratexts include some thought-provoking remarks concerning the ideal user Triller envisioned for *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein*.” According to Triller, the hymnbook was published “for the benefit of the Christians who live about us, especially in the villages, who do not always know how to sing different, difficult notes and poems.” However, some characteristics of the hymnbook suggest that some of the pieces were intended for trained singers. Chemotti states,

“I think that *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein* was primarily conceived for the person responsible for leading the singing in a church ... This person could have involved other performers ... depending on the genre of the hymn and the available musical forces. ... Triller’s hymnbook, like many others, certainly could have been used in a domestic environment, but several features suggest that its editor was first and foremost thinking of public worship.”

In chapter three, Chemotti discusses the order that underlies *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein*, examining rubrics, the order of the hymns, their texts, and their hymn tunes. Hymns 1 and 145 frame the collection with suitable hymns for the opening and closing of a Christian celebration. Hymns 2 through 144 are organized

according to type and function. For example, hymns 2–56 are a set of hymns de tempore, numbers 57–66 are hymns on the Christian church and sanctorale, numbers 67–76 are hymns for the entire church year, numbers 77–83 are metrical psalms, numbers 86–100 are hymns for times of distress and for thanksgiving, and so on. According to Chemotti, Triller “published 145 vernacular hymns and organised them in a coherent collection, easing their retrieval and instructing the reader in their use. In doing so, he largely relied on pre-existing customs, some of which were rooted in late medieval practices, while others had more modern foundations.” Through his hymnbook, “Triller aimed at reforming the soundscape of vernacular Lutheran liturgy and devotion in Silesia.”

Chapter four, the largest and most extensive chapter, is chiefly concerned with the musical repertory itself. Chemotti first analyzes musical aspects such as type of notation and number of parts. He observes that *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein* “uses two notational systems: German gothic notation, sometimes including mensural elements, and white mensural notation. Eighty-one hymns are monodic, while fifty-one are polyphonic. Four further hymns consist of just one part, but it is likely that Triller envisaged them for polyphonic performance. Many of the hymns that are notated for more than one part could also be performed monodically. Nine hymns have no musical notation, but they carry title rubrics that refer to one or more appropriate hymn tunes.” Chemotti next examines the genre definitions that appear on the title page and in the title rubrics accompanying each hymn. He finds that the majority of the hymn tunes were sung with a Latin sacred text. In the title rubrics, Triller identifies the chants by genre: antiphon, benedicamus, hymn, introit, prosa, etc. The majority of hymn tunes Triller used were office hymns, sequences, and antiphons. Chemotti also observes Triller’s labelling of many songs as old or old and familiar. These labels confirm that Triller “regarded the repertory’s age as a fundamental aspect of the hymnbook worth underscoring.” It is interesting to note that none of the chant tunes are labeled as “old.”

Chemotti then discusses the circulation of the hymn tunes, comparing them to the printed Kirchenlied tradition and the content of the hymnbooks issued before Triller’s. Is the repertory in *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein* really different from other hymnbooks? Chemotti compared Triller’s repertory to the standard modern source *Das deutsche Kirchenlied* and found that of 117 hymn tunes from *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein*, more than half did not appear in any hymnbook predating Triller’s. “This aspect is of supreme importance: not only was *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein* not a reprint of a pre-existing source, but even for the individual hymn tunes Triller resorted largely to a hitherto unexploited repertory.”

After analyzing the monophonic hymns, Chemotti examines the circulation of the polyphonic hymn settings. In *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein* there are fifty-one polyphonic

hymns. Twenty-three of them are found in sources that predate Triller's hymnbook. The remaining twenty-eight hymns are unica. Chemotti concludes that he is "unable to detail the chronological and geographical distribution of the unica, but it seems safe to assume that they were 'at home' in Silesia and in the neighboring regions." He notes that there are "general stylistic affinities" between the unica and the musical style cultivated in central Europe, especially in polyphonic settings of the same cantus firmus.

Of the twenty-three polyphonic hymns with concordances older than *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein*, Chemotti finds that they had been circulating for decades, with some dating back to the first half of the fifteenth century. After discussing the Bohemian connection of the concordances, Chemotti examines two of Triller's polyphonic hymns with Bohemian connections: contrafacta of *Vani sancte spiritus – Da gaudiorum* and *Martir felix insignita* in depth. Chemotti next analyzes the connections between Triller's contrafacta of German secular polyphonic songs and some of the German sacred songs using *Ach mein Got sprich mir freundlich zu* and its model *Ein Maidlein sagt mir freundlich zu* as a case study.

In the concluding chapter, Chemotti asks what impact *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein* really had. In order to answer the question, he conducts a detailed study of the surviving copies and examines the circulation of its hymns in other printed and handwritten collections. He notes that although Triller's hymnbook was not a great commercial success (we don't know how many copies were produced and it was never reprinted), it did have an impact on hymnody in Silesia and the region in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For example, two important collections document an early modern, non-Silesian reception of Triller's hymnbook: Leisentrit's *Geistliche Lieder und Psalmen* (1567) and other Catholic hymnbooks, and various seventeenth-century Lutheran hymn collections, including Praetorius's *Musae Sioniae*. Although *Ein Schlesich singebüchlein* might seem to have been of secondary importance, published by an obscure pastor in a region on the periphery of great musical developments in the sixteenth century, it does have its value in early modern sacred music history. As Chemotti points out, "it is a source offering great potential for scholars interested in the history of its peculiar hymn tunes as well as vernacular hymnody in general."

Antonio Chemotti's *The Hymnbook of Valentin Triller* is a detailed, in-depth historiographic examination of a significant source in the history of Reformation hymnody in Silesia. The author's exceptionally close reading of the hymnbook's texts and paratexts reveals a wealth of information about the transmission and use of monophonic and polyphonic hymns in a particular region, time, and culture. More than just a study of a particular hymnbook, Chemotti's work is a model example of historical and historiographical writing. *The Hymnbook of Valentin Triller* deserves, and rewards, as close a reading as Chemotti gave to his subject.

In 2019, Chemotti edited and published *The Polyphonic Hymns of Valentin Triller's Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein*, which serves as both an independent examination of a single repertory and as a companion volume to *The Hymnbook of Valentin Triller*. Its subject matter is the fifty-one explicitly polyphonic hymns found in *Ein Schlesisch singebüchlein*. Eight of the hymns are set for two voices and forty-three are set for three voices.

Chemotti's edition contains three major sections. Section one, the introduction, is an extensive description of the hymns and a discussion of the editorial decisions made. After a brief introduction to the hymnbook, Chemotti describes the polyphonic hymns and their layout. Because Triller's hymnbook is in choirbook format, the individual parts are printed consecutively. Chemotti argues that, because of this layout, each part would have to have been transcribed to another medium (a performance copy) or memorized for performance. Chemotti also notes that there are two different voice dispositions used. Sometimes the first voice presented is the discantus part and sometimes the first voice presented is the tenor part. Apparently Triller placed the voice containing the pre-existent hymn melody first so as to aid in identification of each tune.

Chemotti next analyzes the “implicitly” polyphonic hymns found in the hymnbook. Four of the hymns were printed as monophonic melodies, yet they could have been performed polyphonically. The hymn melodies are labeled “Tenor” and all four are contrafacta of popular polyphonic Lieder circulating in Silesia. Therefore, it would have been relatively easy for them to be performed using all voices of the model. (The polyphonic Lieder are given in Appendix B). Chemotti then notes that “one of the extant copies of Valentin Triller's hymnbook, PL-Wu SDM 93, carries various handwritten annotations and corrections, mostly made by one scribe at the turn of the sixteenth century.” Nine of the hymns “were reworked in a very substantial way through the addition of substitutive parts and/or the rewriting of the printed ones.” (These nine hymns are given in Appendix A.)

In the next subsection, Chemotti provides an overview of the two types of notation found in the hymnbook (white mensural and German gothic with mensural elements). A majority of the hymns are in binary meter with a “cut-C” mensuration sign. Those that are in triple meter begin with a “cut-C-3” sign. Five of the hymns change from duple to triple meter at some point; in each case a plain “3” is used to indicate the triple meter section. In the final subsection Chemotti describes the critical edition, methods of text underlay, and placement of editorial accidentals.

Section two contains a modern edition of the polyphonic hymns in order of appearance. Section three consists of Appendixes A and B and the Critical Apparatus. The Critical Apparatus contains basic information about the hymns, including rubrics, folio number, the modern edition of the text in Wackernagel's

*Das deutsche Kirchenlied von der ältesten Zeit bis zu Anfang des XVII. Jahrhunderts*, the text incipit of the hymn tune used as the model for the contrafactum, references to the hymn tune or Triller's contrafactum in *Das Deutsche Kirchenlied*, information on cleffing and mensural signs, notes to the edition, and notes on the text underlay.

Many, if not most, studies of Reformation church song only concern monophonic chorales and chorale motets in High Renaissance style. In *The Polyphonic Hymns of Valentin Triller's Ein Schlesich singebüchlein* Antonio Chemotti examines another type of Reformation polyphonic song meant for communal worship by common people in small parishes with few musical resources. These hymns are not just polyphonic settings of Reformation standards handed down from Wittenberg and associated composers. In many cases, they are settings of popular hymns that apparently had been circulating in Silesia for generations. In his work, Chemotti has provided not just an in-depth look at a selected repertory in a particular hymnbook, but also has given us a glimpse into the sacred musical world of ordinary worship in mid-sixteenth-century Silesia.



## The Exorcist of Sombor. The Mentality of an Eighteenth-Century Franciscan Friar. By Dániel Bárth.

New York–London: Routledge, 2020. 294 pp.

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Dániel Bárth's book, as indicated by the title, is written for scholars of the history of religion, of the history of mentalities, as well as for those who study popular belief. His choice of subject, the life story of the Southern Slavic Franciscan friar, Rochus Szmendrovich, who became famous and got in trouble for his exorcisms, invokes the quintessential monograph of a recently influential historical trend, 'microhistory', a classic written by Giovanni Levi and published in English under the title *Inheriting Power: The Story of an Exorcist*.<sup>1</sup> Microhistory, the historian's version of Clifford Geertz's "thick description", can only be explored where there is an exceptional source—which is how Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie was able to write, based on records from the Inquisition, the story of the early-fourteenth-century Pyrenean village, Montaillou, where Cathar prefects were hiding; or how Carlo Ginzburg wrote about the strange and original worldviews of the Italian miller, Menocchio, convicted as a heretic at the end of the sixteenth century. Bárth discovered a gem of this type fifteen years ago in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Kalocsa when he found a set of documents containing the letters of the eighteenth-century Franciscan exorcist and the decisions of the ecclesiastical investigation about him. In his introduction, he gives a vivid description of the 'big catch' and his own process. He tells us how his research transformed from the first studies, through a long and thorough archival investigation in Hungary and abroad, into a microhistorical-biographical monograph of the history of mentality, the final form of which was completed and published with the support of the European Research Committee (ERC) funded research project headed by Éva Pócs (*Vernacular religion on the boundary of Eastern and Western Christianity: continuity, changes and interactions*).

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1 Levi, *Inheriting Power*.

It is worth reviewing the structure of the book because, considering the recent historical and ethnographical scholarly literature, it offers unusual and ground-breaking solutions. Bárth starts by taking document “shards”, i.e., eight “fragments”, to reconstruct the adventurous life journey of the protagonist, Petrus/Rochus Szmendrovich (1727–1782). He presents the colourful painted wooden panels (with folk representations of the Devil) the young Petrus might have seen in the chapel of Saint Barbara in Velika Mlaka, his native village near Zagreb. The author studied the Szmendrovich family tree originating from the noble circles of Turopolje of a special status. He describes the witchcraft hysteria sweeping across the region in 1733–1734 when Petrus was six years old, how he chose the clerical path at the age of 17, and how he served as the parish priest of Sesvete near Požega between 1756 and 1763. The surviving inventories of the diocesan visits inform us about Petrus’s living environments and his everyday obligations, and they even mention two lists of his books. Bárth goes on to tell the reader how Szmendrovich joined the Franciscan Order at the age of 36, where he was given the monastic name, Rochus, and two years later, in 1766, he moved to Sombor, the venue of the book’s central storyline, the series of exorcisms that led to the scandals and the ecclesiastical investigation. Finally, Bárth briefly discusses Rochus’s activities as a catechist missionary after he was forced to leave Sombor, when he served as a priest near Čakovec. In the final years of his life, he was struggling with the problematic affairs of the charitable foundation he had created when leaving the parish of Sesvete.

The book focuses on a three-year period (1766–1769) when the congregation of the province appointed Rochus as an Illyrian preacher in Sombor, an ethnically and religiously mixed city. After a few months, he made himself noticed with a spectacular exorcism ritual: in December 1766, he exorcised the Devil from a Catholic woman called Anna who complained of demonic possession over the course of two weeks with a series of repeated rites; first at the sacristy, then at the church itself, in front of a large audience. The therapy provided by the exorcist priest gained popularity primarily with the ‘schismatic’ (Orthodox) population of the city; about thirty citizens went to see the friar with similar complaints. Rochus found nineteen of these cases justified and performed the exorcism; he allegedly managed to convert many of them to Catholic faith. For the church spectacle in Sombor, they even had a special elevation constructed for the participants of the ritual and for the ‘audience’.

The unusual events divided fellow Franciscans, secular leaders, as well as the ecclesiastic magistrate and residents of the city. Besides the approving and supportive voices, there were also critical opinions; soon enough someone reported the friar to the superior ecclesiastical authority at the Archbishopric’s Consistory at Kalocsa. The most exciting chapter of Bárth’s book is the analysis of the investigation launched following the report, lasting for over two years and consisting of multiple rounds.

In the first round, the dean of Upper Bács, Antonius Bajalich, hurried to the scene to gather first-hand information about the unusual rituals. He did a thorough investigation and found many irregularities in the secretly observed exorcism rituals. Thus, he consulted the minister of the Franciscan friary and the magistrate of the city. Finally, in the name of the archbishop's Holy See, he prohibited the continuation of exorcisms, and interrogated Father Rochus with a nine-point, critical and straightforward questionnaire. The latter was not shy with his defensive explanations—his descriptions reveal an unprecedentedly complex picture of the beliefs about demonic possession and the practice of exorcism in the age.

The unfolding investigation, however, took an unexpected turn: in April 1767, Father Rochus was indicted in front of the consistory of the archbishop of Kalocsa, and with the help of his supporters in Sombor, he managed to convince the members of the prelates' consistory of the acceptable nature of his activities. Therefore, they merely lightly reprimanded him and allowed him to pursue his exorcist activities on condition that he always asked for their permission beforehand, and gave his special justifications. There are two such 'legalised' exorcisms with Rochus's description of symptoms and accounts that give us a detailed picture, "like so many snapshots or fragmented frames from a film reel"—as Bárth puts it.

After a shorter, calmer period comes the third act: in May 1769, presumably following another report, Father Rochus was once again called to Kalocsa along with the two possessed subjects he was going to exorcise, a Hungarian woman and a Southern Slav Catholic man, as well as the local clerics supporting the Franciscan. The investigation by the consistory received detailed instructions from Archbishop József Bathány himself; in addition, the county doctor also participated. This time the investigation ended with the humiliation and defeat of the exorcist. He was unable to 'prove' the demonic possession, and the consistory rather established 'natural causes' of the illnesses and prohibited any further exorcisms. Despite the months-long protests for Rochus by his supporters in Sombor, the Holy See stood by this decision, and the Franciscan province put an end to the scandals by transferring the friar to another location.

The biography, edited from the 'fragments' and the three-year-long exorcism saga of the first chapter makes up almost half of the book and is in itself a colourful, complete microhistory. However, it is followed by a detailed analysis of roughly the same proportions, divided into eight chapters. Bárth goes over the story over and over again, exploring its background in detailed analyses of social history, church history, and cultural history.

The ethnic and religious diversity of Sombor, a settlement "at the border of Western and Eastern Christianity", provides an important background to the phenomenon of the 'interconfessional' exorcism performed by a Catholic preacher to

Orthodox believers, which offended some of the Catholics for being interconfessional. However, the enigmatic question of why it was among the Orthodox believers that the exorcist priest was so popular is left unanswered. In relation to this, I would like to suggest a few parallels: recent studies by Dóra Czégeyi, Vilmos Keszeg, Tünde Komáromi, Éva Pócs, and Aurél Vajkai have discovered that in Transylvania, many of the Hungarian Calvinist and Catholic believers turn to the Greek Catholic priest, as a “priest with magical powers” whenever they want to curse or bewitch someone. That is, the magical services condemned in their own religion are accepted from the priest of another congregation, and are used if needed. Was it not something similar that happened at the end of the eighteenth century in the southern land when Orthodox believers turned to a Franciscan friar for exorcism?

Another issue of the history of religion and ideas is the problem of internal conflicts within the clerical hierarchy. Bárth approaches this topic following the popular guidelines of *nouvelle histoire* or “history from the bottom up”, as E. P. Thompson once suggested. For this, an analysis was needed of the different preferences and the increasingly diverse religious views of the more “populistic” Franciscan Order and the hierarchically higher secular clergy on the one hand, and of the lower clergy and the administration of the Archbispopric of Kalocsa, on the other. Furthermore, the many divisive conflicts of interests and rivalries within the various religious communities had to be discovered as well. The result is a picture of the institution of ‘monastic priesthood’ in Sombor, of the inner division of the Franciscan convent, and of the followers and adversaries of Rochus.

The most important context of Rochus Szmendrovich’s story is, without a doubt, the practice of exorcism, the interpretation of demonic possession and the associated, much debated consideration of demonology undergoing a change in the eighteenth century, and the Catholic Enlightenment and ‘Counter-Enlightenment’ – Bárth looks at all these in his analysis. The first two topics have recently caught the attention of Hungarian ethnographers. In 2012, Éva Pócs and András Zempléni organized a monumental international conference in Pécs about the historical and anthropological analysis of spirit possession, with the participation of such internationally acclaimed experts as Janice Boddy, Moshe Sluhovski, Sarah Ferber, Nancy Caciola, and Thomas Csordas. On this occasion, Bárth also presented the protagonist of his book—hopefully the conference volume will sooner or later also be published. Another sign of interest in the topic is the debate organized in 2013 by the Hungarian Ethnographical Society (by Dániel Bárth himself) and published in *Ethnographia* in 2014 about the paper of János Szulovszky, in which he contests Éva Pócs’s approach to the analysis of spirit possession, and argues that the exorcism practices of the Church are still going on until this day.<sup>2</sup>

2 Szulovszky, “Lehet-e a szellemi néprajznak kereszteny tudományos megközelítése?”

When presenting more universal contextual connections, Bárth could rely on his own previous analyses,<sup>3</sup> the most recent results of international research, and possible international parallels. One such parallel is the above-noted analysis by Giovanni Levi of the late-seventeenth-century exorcist from Piemonte, Giovan Battista Chiesa, which provided a good example of the anthropological interpretation of the history of the concepts of disease. Another example is the activity of the ‘miracle doctor’, Johann Joseph Gassner, presented in Eric Midelfort’s book (*Exorcism and Enlightenment*).<sup>4</sup> Gassner was a contemporary of Szmendrovich, whose medical practices treating tens of thousands of patients extended from traditional exorcism to the ‘more modern’ hypnosis. Besides these two contemporary cases, Bárth takes a detour to review the early modern history of exorcism and mentions the thus far sporadically documented early modern cases in Hungary.

One of the most exciting parts of the book is Bárth’s arduous work to investigate the sources of irregularities that displeased the high clerical authorities investigating Rochus’s exorcisms. He explains that the practice of exorcism, after the infamous and often scandalous early modern cases, was somewhat reduced over the course of the eighteenth century. For instance, the *Flagellum daemonum* by the Italian Girolamo Menghi (1644), available in several copies in Hungary at the time, was considered too ‘superstitious’ in the early eighteenth century and was put on the index. Based on the bibliographical indices of the Sesvete parish and the Franciscan convent’s library and on Rochus’s notes, Bárth reconstructs the possible readings of the exorcist and concludes that he was mostly relying on this very handbook, probably without being aware of it being prohibited. The dean questioning him, on the other hand, was well aware and even confiscated the book from him during the investigation. Bárth conducts a microscopical comparative analysis of the cases described in the demonological handbook and of the most characteristic symptoms of the patients treated by Rochus, examining why certain methods and certain ritual forms in the itemized exorcism liturgy may have seemed more effective in the eyes of contemporaries or of the priest performing the ritual. In his philological, epistemological, and anthropological analysis, Bárth also discusses why the exorcist’s activities were so popular with the ‘audience’, what the “theatre of devilish strife” was like, and why despite all the disapproval Rochus insisted on public ceremonies.

Bárth concludes his volume by touching upon the wider context: with a brief review of the reform attempts of the Catholic Enlightenment also appearing in Hungary and of the recurrent protests of those rejecting the innovations. This process in a European context is called—following Max Weber—the “disenchantment of the world”. In Hungary, it included banning witch-trials in this period, more

3 Bárth, *Benedikció és exorcizmus a kora újkori Magyarországon*.

4 Midelfort, *Exorcism and Enlightenment. Johann Joseph Gassner*.

precisely in 1768, on the proposal of Empress Maria Theresa's personal physician, Gerard van Swieten, and the continuing fight against superstition under the rule of Joseph II, a process comprehensively explored in a recent monograph by Péter Tóth G., another member of the research group headed by Éva Pócs.<sup>5</sup>

Thanks to Dániel Bárth, the Church's investigation of the exorcisms of the Franciscan friar from Sombor has become the most thoroughly documented and most diversely analysed story of this great eighteenth-century transformation.

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## Two Travellers in Europe. An Early-Nineteenth-Century Panorama

Technológiai utazás a modern kor hajnalán: Válogatás Gerics Pál és Lehrmann József georgikoni professzorok nyugat-európai jelentéseiből és naplóiból (1820–1825). Edited by György Kurucz.

Budapest: Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary – L’Harmattan Publishing, 2020. 744 pp.

“Kedves Hazámfiai, mozdulni kell...”: Georgikoni peregrinatio oeconomica a 19. század elején. By György Kurucz.

Budapest: Corvina Publishing – Ráday Collection Budapest, 2020. 303 pp.

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Two books, a monograph and a compilation of primary source texts by György Kurucz were published last year. Their topic is the same: one can follow two young men in their ‘technological’ journeys across most of Europe. Through the primary texts we may gain insight into the stops on their journey, which reached the most diverse places on the continent, as well as in Great Britain. The monograph presents the latter from an external point of view, simultaneously analyzing and commenting on the observations of the two characters and placing them into the context of the history of science.

Historian György Kurucz (professor and vice-rector of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, Budapest) has been deeply involved in dealing with the activities of the Festetics family who played a preeminent role in Hungarian cultural history. First, he directed his attention to the Georgikon school of agriculture at Keszthely—the first European agricultural institution to operate at the level of tertiary education –, and later to the efforts of the founder of Georgikon, Count György Festetics, to organize and modernize his estates. Kurucz has raised completely new questions in a long-researched field. Based on his thorough archival research and knowledge of international literature, he has drawn attention to unknown facts and uninvestigated connections. Having written a grand monograph

about the count, his attention now focused on the count's son, László. His fundamental conclusion is that the widespread and simplistic judgement of Count László Festetics as someone who in his attempt to manage assets squandered them and increased his debt to the point of bankruptcy is not sound. Instead, he was a "sapien and active" aristocrat who followed his father's footsteps and tried to modernize and improve conditions for agriculture on his estates and in his college of farming (Georgikon) in a versatile way. He knew that increasing production, improving quality, and selling produce more efficiently were essential factors, and that in order to achieve this, besides having highly skilled employees and teaching staff, knowing about and implementing world-class methods was necessary. In order to achieve his goals he singled out two intelligent young professionals who navigated comfortably in society. One of them was Pál Gerics, a physician and veterinarian; the other the horticulturist and viticulturist József (Joseph) Lehrmann. They were sent on an almost five-year journey across Europe.

The two volumes, published on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their departure, see their journeys through. It is conceivable that the journey of the two young men was planned by Count György Festetics (d. 1819), but the detailed itinerary was certainly elaborated by László, his son. Not only were the stops on the itinerary and locations to be visited defined in the detailed instructions, but also the persons with whom to become acquainted, and the fields the travelers were to familiarize themselves with. The purpose of the *peregrinatio oeconomica* of the two young professionals—sometimes accomplished together, sometimes separately—was to serve the development of the homeland (Hungary), beyond collecting and transferring directly utilizable knowledge to the Festetics estates and the Georgikon school. After returning, both professionals became professors at Georgikon. Gerics was later awarded the office of *archon* (provost), and became a member of the *Directio* of the estates.

The count's approach of sending his employees on multiannual study tours was typical of Europe's enlightened monarchs and aristocrats. Such a method of obtaining knowledge was the accepted method of enhancing the circulation of the knowledge of that age, as pointed out by Kurucz in his introductory chapter. It should be noted that Count György Festetics had already sent his employees on similar journeys—for example, his horticulturist, Gergely Bene. In first place, both György and László Festetics attempted to select professionals with experience from Göttingen or other foreign centers of knowledge for the teaching staff of Georgikon.

The two books, published by two different publishers and in different formats, masterfully complement one another. The source collection prepared by Kurucz, besides the instructions of the count, includes the diaries of the two travelers that detail their observations, and a series of accounts sent to the *Directio* at Keszthely complemented by the summary reports of Gerics and Lehrmann (re)written in

hindsight. While Gerics noted down his observations in Hungarian, Lehrmann did so in German. Of the two, Gerics's accounts are especially thrilling due to his extensive interests, clear understanding of problems, and colloquies with high-ranking or admittedly best-in-profession personalities. His fluent style makes these accounts extraordinarily readable. His hosts often shared with him otherwise professionally undisclosed pieces of information. Lehrmann's scope of interest was narrower. He moved mostly among the disciplines of horticulture and viticulture, and included a multitude of valuable information related to these areas. A recurring element of the accounts of both is descriptions of flower gardens, parks, horticultural firms, and botanical gardens, which forms a valuable layer of the original text. Just like Lehrmann, Gerics was also at home with botany, an interest common among physicians at the time. Furthermore, we come to know him through his writings as a highly erudite intellectual in other fields, too.

The scope of experience obtained and delivered in writing encompasses innumerable fields of science and culture, and is so wide and so inexhaustibly rich that international researchers of such may also significantly benefit from it. The flood of information regularly sent via mail to Keszthely was in many ways utilizable for the *Directio* that was managing the Festetics estates, and for the Georgikon agricultural school, too. Models, sketches, engravings, and packages of books complemented the letters. (The package from Paris, for example, included 49 books, four technological illustrations, five models of tools, and an additional 12 medical and veterinary aids.) Lamentably, the bankruptcy of the Festetics estates that occurred only a few years later made it impossible to actively utilize the majority of the knowledge that had been obtained. In the still functioning Georgikon, however, the transfer of knowledge from the observations was accomplished for decades to come. In retrospect, the manuscript written by Gerics is evidence of his intention of publishing it. Therefore, he also perceived the significance of obtaining knowledge and making observations correctly.

One subject of the journey that encompassed many areas, labelled by László Festetics as outstandingly important, was obtaining information on sheep farming and how to promote the direct sale of wool. Wool was a question of life or death in those times, as it were, since wool production was practically the only secure and significant source of income of major Hungarian landowners in the 1820s. Its sale, however, was only possible under quite disadvantageous conditions defined by intermediary merchants. Gerics was assigned the task of becoming oriented about the potential sales of Hungarian wool to the merchants and wool factories of the countries that were visited. Experiences in this field were distressing, and are a good example of the state of affairs of Hungarian trade at the time. High quality Hungarian wool was remarketed as German or even British. "Hungarian" wool, on

the other hand, was identified as dirty and unsorted, and was left out of consideration. Gerics gave advice for promoting the direct sale of wool—for example, he recommended sending agents to the English market.

Besides fulfilling their previously determined tasks of describing their visits, the diaries and accounts of the two young travelers also give us the opportunity to gain insight into their personal observations, opinions, and experiences. Although their personalities remain in the background because of the genre and point of view of the ‘employee reports,’ we still get to know about their particular living conditions and hardships. Gerics noted down in Stuttgart that he had even been able to see six codices of King Mathias’ *Bibliotheca Corviniana*, and in Bologna he had had a discussion with Cardinal Mezzofanti in Hungarian.

In order to achieve the goals of these study trips, which were extensive both geographically and in terms of their subjects, it was necessary for the two young men to obtain a multitude of letters of introduction. They were furnished with these not only by their commissioner, Count László Festetics, via his network of connections (partly due to the fact that his wife was a Hohenzollern princess), but Gerics and Lehrmann themselves also used their new acquaintances to request further letters of introduction, whenever possible. This was the only way to gain admittance to a great many places—and in turn, they were received in the most amicable manner.

These letters of introduction not only made entry possible to the residences of the high nobility, estates, factories, the collections of academic departments, laboratories, and wine cellars, but also helped them to be taken into confidence by the owners, managers, professors, and scientific circles who welcomed them in the locations and institutions they visited. Thus they were able to participate in events as esteemed guests that could normally only be visited by insiders. Additionally, information was shared with them that otherwise would not have been available to them, either in the literature or anywhere else. The essence of technological journeys is *autopsia*: getting to experience the theory in the literature in practice; and, if necessary, finding contradictions, posing questions on the spot, and having the opportunity to discuss them. On many occasions, their hosts were also eager to know the opinions and observations of our travelers. *Autopsia* was of decisive importance in the case of the visits to universities, since the travelers (mostly Gerics) were able to participate in human and animal autopsies and witness pioneering experiments, as well as consult inventors in person. The travelers could familiarize themselves with the latest sowing machines, as well as the then newly invented stethoscope.

The famous French vineyards with their viticulture and viniculture made a lasting impression on Lehrmann, but he also found it important to record a modern greenhouse in a drawing and mail it to the *Directio*. He was at liberty to meet leading botanists and head gardeners of gardens of the era (for example, the Thouin brothers of Paris).

Consequently, besides the diversity of locations, one may get to know about the magnates of Europe, experimental model farmers, world-renowned scientists, bankers, and a series of other interesting personalities while reading the texts.

On the cover of this extensive publication, Kurucz modestly lists himself as “editor” of the detailed records provided by the two travelers, albeit it was he who wrote the voluminous introductory treatise and selected and published the ably chosen excerpts from the vast source text. Additionally, it was he who transcribed the entirety of the vast text material written in Hungarian and in German gothic script that he personally researched in various collections (in the National Archives of Hungary, and in the Manuscript Collection in the National Széchényi Library). He also supplied the text with numerous annotations and a list of names of referenced persons for identification, in addition to preparing an extensive index of proper names. Perhaps the only question one is left with concerns the following shortcoming: “Why is this tremendous amount of work not even referred to in a single line!?”

Kurucz begins both volumes with an introductory treatise. He provides comprehensive perspective about the background of the documents in both: on the one hand, he describes the aspirations of Counts György and László Festetics, and on the other the economic literature, its arborescent interactions and effects, and also the acquisition of technical books for Georgikon.

The monograph volume is a rather differentiated and multidisciplinary elaboration of the topic. The author starts from a distance, summarizing the educational/organizational activities of György Festetics. In relation to the educational strategy of Georgikon in Keszthely, and the enlargement of the estate library (the Helikon Library today), which serves as a model for adaptation, we are given a survey of the extraordinarily rich book collection of economic literature of the era. Thus we are introduced to a cross-section of the international (mostly English and German) economic literature of the time. Naturally, the central part of the volume comprises a description and analysis of the journey, and its examination from different perspectives.

The volume of original texts forms part of the primary source publication series of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church of Hungary, and its stated aim is to fill a gap in education. It is all the more suitable for this purpose, since we have not been able to read a similarly thorough and versatile travelogue and scientific overview by Hungarian authors from the respective decades thus far. The descriptions selected by Kurucz are rather economical: they are informative, yet not lengthy. (Kurucz has edited out some redundant sections, though.) In his introductory treatise, the analysis of the *peregrinatio oeconomica* is not omitted either.

While the source publication volume does not include figures, the monograph is exceptionally ambitious with its high-quality layout. The multifaceted observations about the genre of technological journeys and the internalization of culture

as a whole are highlighted by a multitude of (approximately) contemporary engravings: townscapes, country houses, factories, and figures depicting snapshots of life from university education to social milieu.

Thanks to the work of Kurucz, we can now draw on this gigantic mass of information at our liking. The appreciative accounts of the two young travelers and their objective professional descriptions and subjective comments will be extremely useful for foreign researchers as well. In the monograph, one may find reference to descriptions omitted from the primary text volume for reasons of brevity, since the main text practically provides a complete summary of the journey of the two young travelers. Thus one may search for any of the places and subjects that were visited, as we are informed about the content and nature of the descriptions via short mentions.

These two volumes are a treasure trove for domestic and international researchers. The precise and detailed indices compiled by Kurucz help the reader find the details they are most interested in. Nevertheless, once readers hold the book in their hands, they will not be satisfied with this much: the text will inspire further exploration. Should one wish to get to know, 'on foot', the Europe of the decade following Napoleon, it can be done by reading through these two volumes.



**Le culte des héros en Europe Centrale, 1880–1945.**

Edited by Eszter Balázs and Clara Royer.

Études et Travaux d'EUR'ORBEM (online), 2019. 286 pp.

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This volume is the outcome of two conferences organized in Budapest in November 2010 and in Paris in November 2011, edited by Clara Royer, maître de conférences at the Sorbonne University, and Eszter Balázs, assistant professor at the Kodolányi János University. It provides an overview of research on the construction of heroism and the social and political use of hero cults in Central and Eastern Europe. Following current trends in research on heroism, the papers apply interdisciplinary methods in order to uncover the construction and patterns of such cults in the region. The volume emphasizes the construction of heroes between 1880 and 1945, a period of rapid modernization but still somewhat neglected by historical research on the topic. The figures under scrutiny often feed from the tradition of heroism as connected to national independence and wars of independence in Central Europe, with Adam Mickiewicz and Sándor Petőfi being the most notable examples of this kind, but alternative ways of hero cults are also analyzed. The volume is structured into three larger sections that include studies similar in their topic: studying heroes beyond the norms (three articles); the culture of heroes and their use for political mobilization (four articles); “self-made” and alternative heroes (three articles). The case studies cover all regions of Central Europe; the truly interdisciplinary character of the papers is reflected by the use of literary, historical, and sociological approaches.

The volume provides several angles to analyzing the mechanisms of heroism in Central Europe. One of them is to look at how marginalized groups turned to the construction of heroes and used them in their identity discourse, despite the fact that their heroes often formed part of the “official” (national) pantheon of heroes as well. This, of course, directs our attention to the malleability of heroism and the appropriation of historical figures by different social groups and ideologies. An excellent example of the continual re-interpretation of historical heroes is the

case of Naftali Botwin (chapter by Gerben Zaagsma), a Polish-Jewish communist who was executed for the murder of a policeman in 1925. Botwin's legacy could be altered based on whether he is recalled as a "communist of Jewish descent," a "Jewish communist," or a "Jew" (p. 138). His legacy acquired multiple meanings according to the stance of the interpreter, directing attention to the transnational nature of heroism. Hero cults thus play a key role in identity construction, which is well exemplified by most contributions. Mateusz Chmurski describes the self-heroicizing of literary figures (Karol Irzykowski, Ladislav Klíma, and Géza Csáth) who developed their own imaginary construction of their self in clear opposition to the established national mythology. Eszter Balázs also deals with identity constructions, namely those of artists in the case of literary modernists in Hungary. She argues that the culture of dueling (the metaphorical opposite of the pen) was adapted and transformed by intellectuals not as part of middle-class values but as a distinctive aristocratic feature that was to establish and assure an elite status for modernist writers.

A key feature of the historical construction of heroes is the alternation of continuity and discontinuity in discourses on heroes and heroines. A case in point is the World War I and the political reorganization of Central Europe in its aftermath. The emergence of new multicultural states in post-Habsburg territories created the possibility of a novel (state) discourse on national historical figures, which fundamentally changed the schemes of interpretation. Another important development was the emergence of technological innovations that made it possible to spread the culture of heroism in new ways and to wider social groups. A case in point for the long-term continuity in the construction of heroes is Józef Piłsudski, whose cult was actively fostered from the moment of his death in 1935, including the transfer of his body to the Wawel Cathedral two years later. The pattern was repeated some sixty years later when the Cathedral provided a controversial opportunity to construct a hero cult around the late Lech Kaczyński (chapter by Michel Masłowski). In contrast, the permanent reappropriation of the Uskoks by different ethnic groups and in changing political contexts demonstrates how historical figures and social groups may inspire radically different hero cults (chapter by Daniel Baric).

The most original contribution of the volume, I believe, is to challenge the stereotypical construction of the hero as a male warrior (intellectual or military) through the description of several female figures that indeed became part of national narratives, and, at the same time, these heroes beyond the norms were transformed to fit the accepted patterns of heroism. In this vein, Katarzyna Pabijanek argues that "others" (such as the Jew or the woman) had to be conceptualized in a collective setting and transformed to the liking of the dominant narrative. The Jewish war hero had to "renounce his ethnic and religious otherness," and the female martyr "was deprived of her femininity and made an official virgin" (p. 66). Emilia Platek's

virginity, in a transgressive act, is seen thus as an invisible armor to protect her from the enemy's attack. Gender analysis plays a crucial role in other contributions as well. Andrea Pető positions Arrow-Cross women and provides a gendered analysis of the culture of heroes in far-right political circles during the World War II. In a similar vein, Dietlin Hüchtker analyzes the life story of three women and describes how women became active agents in identity construction and in specific political movements.

In sum, *Le culte des héros en Europe Centrale* is a welcome contribution to the field and provides fascinating examples of the construction of heroes from diverse disciplinary approaches. The only shortcoming of the volume might be that the reader sometimes wonders how the highly diverse types of heroes and their conceptualization could fit into one framework, an issue that could have been addressed in a concluding chapter.



**Collision of Identities. Assimilation and Myth-making among  
Hungary's Greek Catholics. By Bertalan Pusztai.**  
Bucharest: Editura Universitară, 2019. 391 pp.

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The Greek Catholic churches of East Central Europe were established between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in the political buffer zone of the eastern and western part of Europe where different ethnic groups have coexisted ever since. They were characterized by an ambiguous position between Eastern and Western Christianity, but they also formed a bridge between two political and cultural spheres. The ethnic character of the denomination was very important: originally, Greek Catholics were Rusyns, Ukrainians, and Romanians and religious and ethnic affiliations were closely intertwined in their lives. The autonomous Greek Catholic churches played a central role in the increasing political activity and nation-building processes of these minorities in the nineteenth century. These churches were greatly influenced by political processes and transformations: the border changes after World War I and the decades of prohibition after World War II were significant turning points for their communities. More recently, the Eastern European regime changes have created the opportunity for their re-emergence and re-organization.

In the past 30 years, Greek Catholic churches—their history and their communities—have aroused increasing interest among scholars, especially (church) historians and anthropologists. Bertalan Pusztai from the University of Szeged has studied a less well-known group, Hungarian Greek Catholics, for decades. He conducted ethnographic fieldwork in some (former and present-day) Hungarian Greek Catholic communities of Subcarpathian Ukraine and Transylvania, and did extensive historical research on the nineteenth and twentieth century assimilation and identity-building processes of Hungarian Greek Catholics.

Hungarian-speaking Greek Catholics lived in a multiple-minority situation in the northeastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary and in Transylvania: they were a linguistic minority group within a minority church. They were the descendants of Rusyn and Romanian Greek Catholics who went through a long process

of assimilation during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and wanted to both identify with the Hungarian nation and emphasize their separation from other nationalities. Still, their ethnically intermediary position—their Rusyn and Romanian ethnic origins, Hungarian language and identity—created a climate of suspicion around them.

The present volume “seeks to give an overview of the identity-shaping discursive processes and strategies of Hungarian Greek Catholics triggered by their assimilation” (p. 8). Following the first introductory chapter (*The Hungarian Greek Catholics: Identity and Historical Consciousness*) the book contains the slightly or considerably modified English versions of the author’s seven, previously published (English and Hungarian) studies on the topic.

The second chapter, *Assimilation on the Hungarian Greek Catholic Periphery*, examines the ethnic and religious changes in a Subcarpathian village from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, focusing on the linguistic assimilation process of the local Rusyn community.

The next chapter, *Discursive Tactics and Identity Search at the Fin de Siècle*, analyzes the so-called Memorial Album published in honor of the pilgrimage of a group of Hungarian Greek Catholics to Rome in 1900. The author discusses the visual symbolism and the discursive layers of the album and considers it to be a symbolic representation of the Hungarian Greek Catholic community and an important step in the creation of a unique historical consciousness that formed the basis of a new Hungarian Greek Catholic identity.

*Discouraging Boundaries: Identity Creation in the Interwar Period* elaborates further on the creation of this historical consciousness and the attempts of the Greek Catholic elite to position this group in the social space of the time; that is, the seriously traumatized Hungarian society of the interwar period. The chapter is based on the analysis of the Greek Catholic press and gives an overview of the “invention” of this group’s history that was an important part of the process of their integration.

Chapter 5, *A Religious Diaspora Community in the Interwar Years*, presents the history of a Greek Catholic community that was formed outside the “main” Greek Catholic areas of northeastern Hungary. The author focuses on the most intensive years of community building and formation between 1921 and 1936 and shows the most important factors in the empowerment of this local religious group.

*The Fate of Hungarian Greek Catholics in 20<sup>th</sup> century Szeklerland, Romania* is an essay based on archival documents and interviews but written in the name of a fictive Greek Catholic priest of a Transylvanian village. It introduces the reader to the twentieth-century assimilation processes and political changes of the region and the fate of the rather small local Greek Catholic communities.

The next chapter, *Institutional Changes in the Greek Catholic Church in Hungary, 1950–2000*, summarizes the history of the Greek Catholic Church in Hungary and its institutions, focusing on the second half of the twentieth century and especially the post-socialist period.

The last chapter, *Paths to Identification in a Double Minority*, is based on field-work in three Subcarpathian villages. The author examines the different identification strategies of former Hungarian Greek Catholics in the socialist era and the confessional conflicts that arose from “collisions of identity” (p. 186) within these communities after the regime change and the revitalization of Greek Catholicism, in parallel with more general sociopolitical transformations.

The *Appendix* of the book (pp. 215–391) contains the English translation of the Memorial Book of the Roman Pilgrimage of the Greek Catholic Hungarians.

The book comprises separate studies, each analyzing different “aspects of the social history of Hungarian Greek Catholicism” (p. 7) and they can be read individually. Despite the differences in the focus of the studies, they also complement one another and in the end the reader gets a general overview of the main topics and concepts of the study of Hungarian Greek Catholics and their eighteenth–twentieth-century history (although this structure leads to a fair amount of repetition as well). We get to know about assimilated, Hungarian-speaking communities of Rusyn and Romanian ethnic origin with a distinct religious identity. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the elite of these geographically and socially peripheral communities struggled for national and social integration and the survival of their religious identity and traditions at the same time. The author’s historical overviews and ethnographic accounts also show that, in the case of Hungarian Greek Catholics, and depending on the circumstances, ethnic and religious identity can both support and contradict each other.

This collection of studies—complemented with the translation of an important historical source—will be of great interest to international researchers of Greek Catholicism and Greek Catholic Churches and also to scholars attentive to the questions of religious transmission and the questions of continuity and change in religious traditions and identity in general.

## Austerities and Aspirations. A Comparative History of Growth, Consumption, and Quality of Life in East Central Europe since 1945. By Béla Tomka.

Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2020. 456 pp.

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*Austerities and Aspirations* suggests a new methodological approach for a more nuanced understanding of convergence and divergence between East Central and Western European countries. Specialized in social policy and economic history, with a particular focus on international comparisons, Professor Béla Tomka, who is best known for his outstanding *A Social History of Twentieth-Century Europe*,<sup>1</sup> is an expert on twentieth-century Hungarian society.<sup>2</sup> His results in comparative historical research are remarkable in Hungarian historiography. The current volume is a revisited version of his book published in 2011, which mainly concentrated on twentieth-century Hungary.<sup>3</sup>

The well-constructed book consists of five main chapters, with several sub-chapters leaving space for the elaboration of details. The introduction conceptualizes the *triple approach to well-being*: the concepts of economic growth, consumption, and quality of life. Tomka explains his approach by saying that it is meant to overcome the deficiencies of economic analysis focusing merely on GDP and economic output, while the available data on consumption practices and quality of life might facilitate a more complex understanding of economic and social history. Following the introduction of the aims and scope of his research and the possible methods, sources, and their deficiencies, the author argues in favor of long-term and comparative methods. Tomka is clearly aware of the methodological difficulties and shortcomings and reflects upon them throughout the book. In the introduction, we also get a brief description of the volume's content and structure. While

1 Tomka, *A Social History*.

2 Tomka, *Welfare in East and West*.

3 Tomka, *Gazdasági növekedés*.

an overall analysis is given of thirteen Western and Northern countries considered to be “Western Europe”,<sup>4</sup> the focus is on East Central Europe, which in this case is restricted to the V4 countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary).

The three longest chapters describing the main analytical categories follow the triple approach. Thus, the second chapter focuses on *economic growth* first in the West, then in the East. After listing the possible methods for measuring economic output, the characteristics of Eastern European data are determined, which raises a question about the comparability of market economies and command economies. It needs to be highlighted that while the title promises the investigation of the post-1945 era, Tomka offers a broader perspective, reaching back to the end of the nineteenth century. The periodization of growth patterns somewhat differs from the traditional historical periods: considering Western trends of economic growth, the structural changes connected to the oil crisis in the 1970s are seen as a dividing line. This subchapter also examines the factors determining how national economies have converged or diverged, concluding that the latter half of the twentieth century saw convergence in the West. Subsequently, East Central European growth patterns starting from the post-war recovery up to the 1989 regime changes are contextualized. This subchapter traces the unbalanced nature of centrally planned or command economies in the early 1950s, the reforms of the 1960s, and the subsequent crises of the 1970s. The section ends with a comparative examination of Eastern and Western economies.

In the third part, the structure, practices, and policies of *consumption* are evaluated first in the West, then in the East. The chapter explores the consumption patterns of Western societies, along with the categories of household expenditures like food, clothing, housing, and consumer durables. Differentiation is made by income inequalities (class structure), gender, generations, and the urban/rural divide. Factors of mass production and commercialization are identified, as well as structural changes in people’s working time and social benefits, affecting their leisure time activities. The author examines the concept of the consumer society and its homogenizing effects (i.e., Americanization and Europeanization), including the post-materialistic value-orientation perceived among the youth. Consumption in East Central Europe is analyzed by the same categories (i.e., household expenditures, social structure, balance of work, and leisure time); in addition, practices of black-marketing and informal economic trends connected to the shortage of goods and services are discussed. Tomka questions the existence of a “socialist consumer culture”. He argues that we cannot speak of consumer culture within the Socialist Bloc, as there was a lack of consumer choices and a constant shortage of goods in

<sup>4</sup> The EU-15 states with the exception of Luxembourg, Greece, Spain, and Portugal, but including Norway and Switzerland.

command economies. However, it should be noted that the availability of goods and choices cannot be considered equivalent to the purchasing power necessary to become a consumer. The chapter ends with the comparative examination of Western and Eastern trends of consumption, along with the concepts of convergence versus divergence.

The concept of the *quality of life* is investigated based on the same categories. Life expectancy and mortality rates are made out to be the most accurate determinants of life quality, as Tomka uses the Human Development Index (HDI) to conceptualize people's well-being. While the author is aware that quality of life is hardly quantifiable, especially in historical analyses, it is questionable whether it is mortality rates that best describe the quality of people's lives. Rather, longer life expectancy seems to indicate that we might contribute to the growth of the national economy for longer. Based on Tomka's approach, gendered differences in average life expectancy would mean that women generally live better than men, which is hard to assert in the light of the gendered inequalities of everyday life, discrimination, and violence against women.

Chapter five deals with what determines change in the three areas discussed, by tracing the factors that shaped convergence and divergence. Finally, the advancements after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc are tracked: changes in Western societies and the recently developing regimes in the East. The main conclusion of the triple approach is that convergence and divergence are constantly altering phenomena, and that in the second half of the twentieth century, divergence between the East and the West created a development gap. In this period, among the former Bloc countries, Poland and Hungary followed similar patterns, while Czechoslovakia slightly differed from them. The other main finding is that in the interwar period and before 1945, there were more similarities among East Central European countries than supposed earlier.

The book is essentially descriptive, reviewing immense amounts of data from secondary literature, combined in several valuable charts. Nevertheless, conclusions are scarcely drawn, though antecedents and consequences would be essential for historical analysis. For example, in the case of a gendered inquiry of leisure time, the text does not make it obvious where the differences originate from. Therefore, the idea of women's reproductive work, possibly the main reason for why they have less free time, is completely missing. Also, considering the conclusions about the quality of life, the author does not clarify the causes of the phenomenon. The significant decrease in middle-aged men's life expectancy in East Central Europe in the 1960s could be explained by poor working conditions and an unbalanced division of labor between the sexes. Similarly, displaying women's outstanding life expectancy in the same period, when family allowance programs withdrew them from the labor

market, would also require contextualization. Besides the deficiencies concerning the gendered aspects of the analysis—which are mostly related to the methodology used—the same problem appears regarding the presentation of the situation of different social layers.

Another challenging issue that needs to be highlighted is the economic convergence in the wake of World War II. The assumption that it was in 1939 that Hungary's economic performance has ever been closest to that of Western countries raises numerous questions, as the author does not give any historical context to this surprising finding. However, it should be remembered that at that time Hungary was an ally of Nazi Germany, and the preparations for war account for most of the country's growing output that served German military interests. Therefore, questions like what this outstanding economic performance indicates should be raised, since in the Horthy era millions lived under devastating conditions, especially in rural Hungary. Without proper contextualization, some of Tomka's conclusions might be easily misinterpreted. Since the book targets non-Hungarian academic audiences, it would have been even more important to include basic historical facts about Hungarian society. In this case, contextualization seems essential, because the paradigm we use for talking about the past of the economy might determine its future as well. In addition, studies by East Central European scholars intended for international readerships could contribute to a more favorable understanding and reassessment of the region's history.

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