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For the Benefit of Generations to Come or for the Sake of Survival?

Measures for Protecting Forests in Early Modern Hungary

András Vadas 

Institute of Historical Studies, Department of Medieval History, Eötvös Loránd University, H-1088
Budapest, Múzeum körút 6–8; vadas.andras@btk.elte.hu

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Abstract. The paper discusses the changes in the forest legislation on different levels of early modern administration in Hungary. By using a wide variety of sources—laws, decrees, instructive documents, and letters—it explains how forests were regarded and handled in the period of the Ottomans’ presence in the Carpathian Basin. In analyzing the sources, the paper shows how the importance of protecting and taking care of forests at different levels of administration can be attested, what the goal of this care for wooded areas was, and how the presence of the Ottoman-age wars changed the ways forests were used in the frontier and the hinterland.

Keywords: Forest management, Ottoman wars, conservation, mining, landscape change, environmental history

“It is certainly known to you my Lord that at the town of Murska Sobota [Muraszombat] there is no forest where trees for the sake of the *palanka* [a wooden palisaded fortification] could be felled but you would have to go wherever you find them.”¹

“In the borders of the village of Pucza [in the borders of Csákánydoroszló] there was a really old pasture, that because of the carelessness of the *pro-visores*, stewards, and *ispánok* was destroyed. The forest took it back, but

* The author is currently holding a postdoctoral position at Henan University (Kaifeng). The article was written by the support of the joint project of the Russian Foundation for Basic Research and the Foundation for Support of the Russian Language and Culture (Hungary) “The Habsburg Monarchy: new trends in the research of economic, sociopolitical, and national development of the Central-European composite state,” No 19-59-23005.

1 “Nagod ellöt nilvan vagion hogh az muraŷszombati varosnak ninchen ollian erdeje ahol palank karot vaghatnanak hanem oda köl meniel az hol találnak.” Letter of Ferenc Lippich to Ádám Batthyány, 8 June 1652 MNL OL P 1314 no. 29 425.

beforehand 225 cartloads of hay had been harvested there [annually]. The steward should have the pasture cleansed and cleared.”²

The above two sources from the mid-third of the seventeenth century tell two stories of forests in the broader frontier zone of the Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, in some areas, either because of the construction of palisaded fortifications or for other reasons, there was a lack of forests, at least in high forests; on the other hand, because of the lack of the usage of pastures, reforestation began that endangered the hay-supply originating there. Both Murska Sobota and Pucza were in the hands of a wealthy Hungarian noble family, the Batthyáns. They had one of the largest landholdings in Western Hungary, and much of their lands lay in the frontier zone of the two polities. As such, they not only were heavily involved in organizing effective farming on their holdings but also had to take all measures to protect them from frequent Ottoman raids and plunders in the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, even in periods of peace.

In the wars for military defense strategies, for fuel and firewood, for building military buildings, and for other purposes as well as in the economies, forests were of major importance. Hence, measures of managing forests had an important role both in legislation on different administrative levels, as well as in documents connected to the administration of individual estates. The perceptions of forests unfolding from contemporary sources, and the ways war raging in the frontier zone changed the perception of forests are the main questions this article addresses. In doing so, first, it sketches a brief overview of the main research results on early modern forests in the Carpathian Basin. After that, three groups of evidence are briefly presented, laws and royal decrees, decisions made at the gatherings of noble counties, and sources of private land management, which in this case will primarily consist of letters. In analyzing the sources, the paper explains how the importance of protecting and taking care of forests at different levels of administration can be verified and identifies the goal of this care for wooded areas.

When studying the history of forests in the early modern Carpathian Basin, research has been preoccupied with the problem of the loss of forests, and in general with changes in the extent of forest cover on the country level. This can be largely attributed to Hungarian historians' anti-Ottoman sentiments in the early twentieth century. In the important overview of Hungarian history written in the interwar period by two prominent historians, Bálint Hóman and Gyula Szekfű, this view was

2 “Ugian azon pucza neveő falu hataran vagion egi nagi örög Reéth, az ki tisztartok, birak, safarok, es ispanok gondviseletlensege miat el pusztult, Erdeőne leot, az kinmeg teőmet az eleőt, két száz huszon eotszekér széna. Méltó hogi ez monstani Tisztarto az rétet eőszszel meg irtassa és meg tisztitassa.” MNL OL P 1322 Urbáriumok III. No. 20. (Urbarium of the Manor of Güssing [Újvár, Némétújvár], ca. 1630) Urbarium of Csákány. fol. 166.

largely emphatic in the description of the impact of the Ottoman occupation.³ The image of settlements abandoned due to Ottoman plundering and forests, and plowlands becoming wastelands presented in a chapter by Szekfű was later criticized by scholars in different disciplines, including ecologists, historians, and archaeologists. Forestry experts were also critical of this theory already in the interwar period.⁴

Nevertheless, referring to the loss of forests is still prevalent and, even more so, in the context of the frontier zones of Ottoman-Hungarian wars, where in many cases the literature assumes complete deforestation. In a recent article, it is argued that even though locally the felling of trees for military tactics or for the sake of constructing wooden palisades may have caused a scarcity in forest resources—especially in high forests, the trees of which could be used as building material, the consumption of these fortifications was probably rather limited and may have had only a local impact on the forest cover.⁵ Despite recent results in the assessment of the impact of the Ottoman wars on waterways, forests, and pastures, a comprehensive re-evaluation of landscape changes in the areas affected by the Ottomans either by their constant presence or by occasional plundering still needs to be done.⁶

While the early modern times have recurrently been considered from an environmental perspective as a period of ecological crisis, another series of work on early modern forest history is also to be noted as in many ways it existed parallel to what has already been introduced. As early as 1947, István Imreh drew attention to and published a series of sixteenth to eighteenth-century sources from eastern Transylvania, the Székely Lands (Ținutul Secuiesc, Székelyföld) that presented a different image. These sources are village regulations written in vernacular Hungarian and meant to control the rights of the usage of the natural resources at the commonly held lands in the Székely settlements, including forests.⁷ In Imreh's footsteps Ágnes R. Várkonyi praised these fascinating sources as unique traces of care for the forests, and conscious awareness of the importance of maintaining some special balance with the environment.⁸ The sources repeatedly draw attention to the dangers of resource overuse and emphasize the importance of preserving the forests for future generations. Both Imreh and R. Várkonyi saw these sources as unique forms of

3 Hóman and Szekfű, *Magyar történet*, vol, V, 6. (written by Gyula Szekfű)

4 Vági, "Van-e hazánkban"; Weidlein, "A dűlőnévkutatás"; Kaán, *Alföldi kérdések*, 11–43.

5 Vadas and Szabó, "Not Seeing the Forest for the Trees."

6 Ágoston, "Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet"; Vadas and Szabó, "Not Seeing the Forest for the Trees"; Vadas, *Egy határfolyó környezettörténete*; Sárosi, *Deserting Villages*, 57–94.

7 Imreh, *Székely falutörvények*; Imreh, *A rendtartó székely falu*; Imreh, *A törvényhozó székely falu*.

8 R. Várkonyi, "Ökológiai gondokodás"; R. Várkonyi, *Pelikán a fiaival*, passim.

conservation policies and forest management that may have stemmed from ancient practices.⁹ Two aspects are worth noting about the uniqueness of these practices. First, the Székely Lands had a rather peculiar landownership system, with large areas in the border of villages remaining commons throughout the early modern period.¹⁰ This necessitated much more systematic regulation within the community than with privately owned lands. The second point to be considered is that these regulations also occur elsewhere—throughout Northwestern and Central Europe—if there were significant commonly held lands.¹¹

This twofold image of early modern forest history of the Carpathian Basin is still prevalent in the literature—for some communities, it was a period of constant crisis and a period of the loss of the forested landscape, while for others, it was a period of maintained balance with nature. Along with this rather simplistic view, there has been little consideration in Hungarian scholarship of how the perception of forests changed in the administrations of different European polities at that time. In the past roughly twenty years when historians have devoted considerable attention to forest resources in the early modern period, several analysts have argued that in various parts of Europe, and even outside it, this is the period when forests started to be understood as finite, which resulted in a more conscious management of the remaining resources with a significant involvement of royal administration and legislation.

The promulgation of rather complex legislation on the use of forest resources has been shown in several polities, ranging from Spain through the Venetian Republic, parts of the Holy Roman Empire, and the Ottoman Empire, to as far as Japan.¹² The factors that influenced the change in the extent of available forest resources as well as, of course, the chronology of the process differ in each case, but the problem itself, i.e., understanding the finiteness of the resource, was similar in the above polities. The control of natural resources was an increasingly important aspect of

9 Imreh, *A törvényhozó székely falu*, 244; R. Várkonyi, “Ökológiai gondolkodás,” 59.

10 Tagányi, “Földközösség,” 216–18.

11 Keyzer, “Sustaining Premodern Heathlands”; Starlander, “Conflict and Negotiation”; Sundberg, “Nordic Common Lands and Common Rights.” See also several other studies in de Moor, Warde, and Shaw-Taylor, *The Management of Common Land*; Laborda Peman and de Moor, “A Tale of Two Commons.”

12 For a concise overview of the relevant legislative efforts in Europe at the time, see: Wing, *Roots of Empire*, 19–28. For the different countries, see: Wing, *Roots of Empire* and Arroyo and Trápaga Monchet, “Forestry, Territorial Organization” (for Spain and their colonies); Appuhn, “Inventing Nature” (for the Venetian Republic); Warde, *Ecology, Economy, and State Formation* (for Germany, esp. Württemberg); Mikhail, *Nature and Empire*, 128–136 and White, *The Climate of Rebellion*, 28–31 (for the Ottoman Empire); Falkowski, “Fear and Abundance” (for the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth); Totman, *The Green Archipelago* (for Japan).

state-building in the early modern period. In addition, it served as a platform where state control could be expressed.¹³

To gain a comprehensive image of how Habsburg and local administration considered forests, the paper looks at different levels of decision-making, different authorities that had a word in the utilization of forest resources in early modern Hungary, i.e., the state ruled by the Habsburgs, the county, and individual landowners

Sources of three levels of the administration—country, county, estate

Three levels of legislation and decision-making are discussed in this paper. First, laws and decrees from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the one hand, I chose to include royal decrees from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (up to 1700).¹⁴ These sources provide a good basis for analyzing the Habsburg policy towards forests in the Kingdom of Hungary. The royal decrees of the Habsburg rulers were included in the so-called *Corpus Juris Hungarici*. This—unofficial—collection of Hungarian laws was first gathered in 1584 by Zakariás Mossóczy and Miklós Telegdi.¹⁵ From that time on, laws passed were regularly published in thick volumes throughout the early modern period and the modern times. In 1896, celebrating the millennium of the conquest of the Carpathian Basin by the Magyars the publication of a new series was launched, the editorial work of which was led by Dezső Márkus. This series was the basis of the analysis of forest-related laws in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Most of the legislative documents concern the strategic importance of forests and say less about the royal initiative of forest management, which I have pursued by studying the instructions to the royal officers of the ruler's estates. To gain a more comprehensive view of the royal policy towards forests, and especially to understand whether there is any sign of the changing control or perception of forests, one further type of source is included in the present analysis: royal instructive documents to the chief officers of the royal domains.¹⁶ Two types of documents were consulted when doing the present research. First, the general instructions sent to the leading officers of royal domains were examined, such as the ones edited by István Kenyeres in the above-cited two volumes. Second, one document was studied

13 E.g., Arroyo and Monchet, "Forestry, Territorial Organization."

14 Kolosvári and Óvári, eds., *Corpus juris Hungarici. 1526–1607; Corpus juris Hungarici. 1608–1657; Corpus juris Hungarici 1658–1740.*

15 Mikó, *A középkori Magyar Királyság törvényei.*

16 Kenyeres, ed. *XVI. századi uradalmi utasítások*, vol. I–II.

that was addressed to forest administrators in general. This document, the so-called *Constitutio Maximiliana seu norma silvas camerales propagandi et colendi* was published in 1565 and followed the German antitypes applied in Austria. The document mostly concerns the forestry of the mining areas in Upper-Hungary (today's Slovakia), nonetheless proves to be one of the best sources to shed light on how forests as resources were perceived in the mid-sixteenth century.

The second group of evidence that was consulted when writing this article consists of forest-related decisions at a lower level of administration, on the level of the noble countries. From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, the noble countries took up new roles. While in the Middle Ages their role was almost exclusively the administration of justice, in the aftermath of the Battle of Mohács (1526) and the deep political crisis of the coming decades, local administration became increasingly important.¹⁷ Noble counties from the mid-sixteenth century onwards were among the most important decision-making forums, where, apart from jurisdiction, local governance, taxation, as well as military issues were discussed.¹⁸ It is from the last quarter of the sixteenth century that the decisions of these gatherings were put into writing (or came down to us). To understand the role forests played in the life of counties, especially at the frontier, the proceedings of these gatherings have been consulted in the case of four counties in Western Transdanubia (*Dunántúl*): Vas, Sopron, Zala, and Győr (Fig. 1).¹⁹

For the regulation of forest use on the local level, an important estate complex has been chosen that belonged to the Batthyány family. Going back to the late medieval period, they were amongst the wealthiest Hungarian families. Not only were they the wealthiest but from the sixteenth century onwards, they had one of the most complex administrative systems of all private landowners in the country. This went a growing literacy related to accounting. A prominent member of the family, Ádám Batthyány I (1610–1659) radically reformed farming methods and the economy of the Batthyány estate complex.²⁰ Part of the reform included building a highly professional and decentralized administrative system. As part of this, the heads of the administration, the *provisores* (*tiszttartó* in Hungarian) of the different manors, had to inform the landlord, Ádám Batthyány of all farming, trade, and administrative

17 Tringli, “Megyék.”

18 Dominkovits, “Vármegyei vezetők” (with reference to the most important literature).

19 For Vas: Tóth, *Vas vármegye*, vol. 1–2; for Sopron: Tóth, *Sopron vármegye*; Turbuly, *Sopron vármegye*; for Zala: Bilkei and Turbuly, *Zala vármegye*; Turbuly, *Zala vármegye*; for Győr: Gecsényi et al., *Győr vármegye*. See part of the original sources online: adatbazisokonline.hu (accessed: 4 December 2021).

20 Koltai, *Batthyány Ádám*; Póka, “A Batthyány-birtokkomplexum igazgatása”; Vadas, *Egy határfolyó környezettörténete*, 61–68.

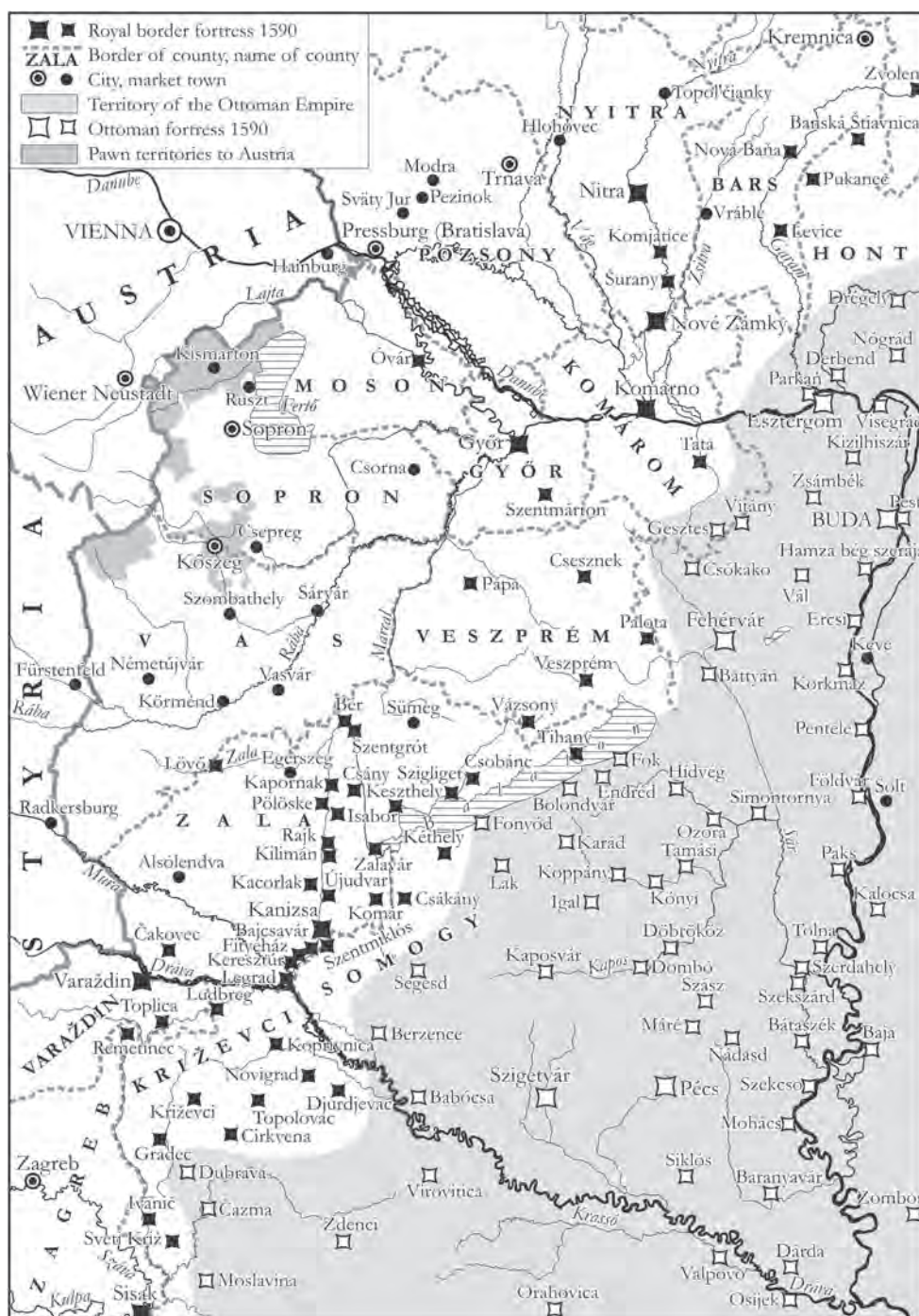


Figure 1 Counties and major fortifications in Transdanubia around 1590
(map prepared by Béla Nagy)

issues in the settlements under their authority. This is reflected in the immense number of accounts, letters, and *urbaria* (terriers) preserved in the well-kept archives of the family. The almost 50,000 letters sent to Ádám Batthyány (and the thousands his father Ferenc received) that are available reflect a systematic accounting of the estates. After the death of Ádám in 1659, the administration quickly fell apart, which is reflected in the drastic decrease in the number of documents related to the administration, including letters, terriers, and instructive documents.

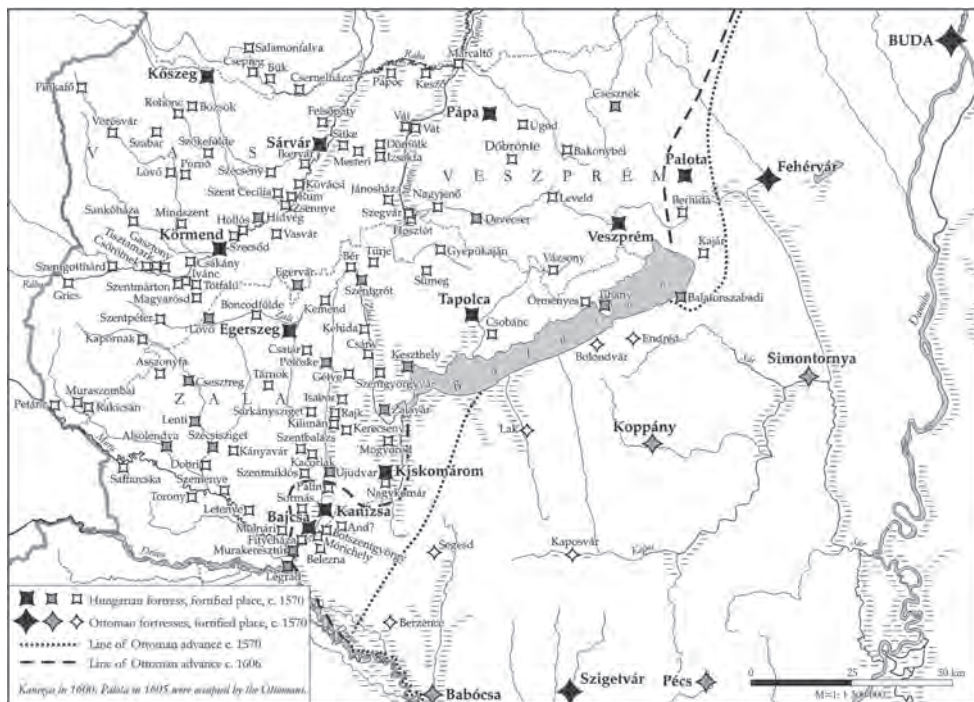


Figure 2 Western-Hungary and the fortifications in the region after the fall of Kanizsa (1600)
(map prepared by Béla Nagy)

The estate complex was organized around the small town of Körmen. From the Fifteen Years' War (1591–1606) onwards, the town was at a strategic location in the broader frontier zone between the Kingdom of Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. As such, it was not only the center of the local economy and farming but of the military with a series of fortifications along the River Rába (Raab) where the town lies.²¹ Because of this, there were two different administrative systems in Körmen: the military, and the civilian. The defense of the town was in the hands of the captains or rather of the vice-captains, as in most cases the latter were office-bearers who

21 Vadas, *Egy határfolyó környezettörténete* [For the history of the frontier]. See: Pálffy, "The Habsburg Defense System"; Pálffy, "The Origins and Development."

resided in the town. They were responsible for the maintenance of the planks and the moat. They had to organize supplies for the German mercenaries who lived in Körmend and were in charge of guarding and controlling the riversides—watching for the Ottomans. The issue of border defense was, however, very much connected to the local economy and farming. Mills and mill dams regulated the water levels along the river, and forests provided an opportunity to control the right bank to hinder raids. The latter also concerned the leaders of the civilian administration, the *provisores*, who had to manage local farming, as some of the lands of the manorial complex were on the right bank. Because of this dual role of forests, in the thousands of letters, instructions provided to the *provisores*, an important role appears to be attributed to forests.

Forest legislation in early modern Hungary—from the Kingdom to the county

Following the Battle of Mohács and the gradual occupation of the central plain areas of the Carpathian Basin by the Ottomans in the 1530s and 1540s, the most important endeavor of Ferdinand I and his successors on the Hungarian throne was to secure the remainder of his newly gained realm. This is well reflected in the forest-related legislation, which almost exclusively concerns the protection of the country from the Ottoman advance. The most important element of these regulations was to secure forest resources for the sake of war. The basis of these laws was Ferdinand I's 1563 decree in which he authorized the cutting down of forests in similar cases—both for fuelwood of military complexes and for fortification works—which was renewed by later Habsburg rulers and extended to other areas:

“It has been established that forests of lords, such as nobles, that are in the vicinity of the places to be fortified (if these places do not have enough forests of their own) can be freely cut down for the buildings and the wall of the fortifications, but for that, and only for that purpose.”²²

This proved to be the basic principle followed throughout the presence of the Ottomans in the Carpathian Basin. Some of the later regulations specified the areas from which trees could be cut to ease the fortification works; nonetheless the regulations provide little insight into the royal policy towards forests.

22 “Statutum est etiam, ut silvae, tam dominorum, quam nobilium, locis muniendis vicinae, pro fabricis, et structuris munitionum finitimarum (quae scilicet proprias, et sufficientes silvas, ipsae non habuerint) tantum, et non in alios usus ad succidendum debeant esse liberae.” Kolosvári and Óvári, eds, *Corpus juris Hungarici. 1526–1607*, 492 (1563, no. 22). See furthermore: 802 (1596, no. 51), 886–88 (1600, no. 17).

One further issue related to forests appears in the early modern laws of Hungary, and that is the potential threats associated with forests. Roads crossing them were prone to robbers and bandits, which rulers tried to minimize to stabilize trade and secure the related income.²³ In response to the presence of bandits in the mid-sixteenth century—probably not independent of the growing internal crisis—in 1548 Ferdinand I decreed the following:

“As these robbers, who tend to endanger the safety of roads, usually hide in thick forests in that area, it has been decided that forests along roads should be cleared [of trees] in the width of 200 cubits by the tenants of the neighboring counties so that the robbers would not have a chance.”²⁴

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, apart from the above regulations, very few decrees addressed the issue of forests at all in the Kingdom of Hungary. This was somewhat different on the level of the counties, where forests had a crucial importance and were the foci of many local negotiations in each of the counties discussed above.

The most significant issue that unfolds from the proceedings of the county gatherings is frontier protection and the role of forests in it. While on the level of the state, Habsburg rulers took measures to secure forest resources for the construction of the major fortifications that served to protect Vienna—such as Győr, Komárom–Komárno (Révkomárom), or Nové Zámky (Érsekújvár)²⁵—that meant to withhold the main Ottoman campaigns, for the counties in addition to these, minor raids also proved threatening. In trying to prevent them, the self-organization of defense on the county level proved crucial. This included several measures that is in all the above counties’ decisions.

In several decisions, the landlords of the counties obliged themselves to fell a certain number of trees for building smaller fortifications, ramparts, and other safety measures. Not only did they have to cut trees but, in some cases, their tenants had to transport the felled trees by cart to the construction site.²⁶ There are further forest-related issues also appearing in county decisions. First, there is a good number of occasions when forests were cleared for strategic reasons, so that Ottomans would not be

23 Cf. Szilágyi, “Utakról és utazókról.”

24 “Et quia latrones hujusmodi, a quibus infestari solent itinera, in partibus illis sylvarum densitate solent delitescere, statutum est; ut hujusmodi sylvae, per ducentorum cubitorum spatium, circumquaque penes vias, per colonos vicinorum comitatuum succidantur, ut commoditas illis latronibus sit sublata.” Kolosvári and Óvári, eds, *Corpus juris Hungarici. 1526–1607*, 244 (1548, no. 49).

25 Pálffy, “The Habsburg Defense System”; Pálffy, “The Origins and Development.”

26 See e.g., Turbulý, *Sopron vármegye*, vol. 2, 15 (no. 453).

able to approach the frontier unperceived.²⁷ Second, Vas County recurrently ordered the felling of trees into rivers, flooding certain areas and hindering crossing.²⁸ This was practiced widely from the early years of the Ottoman advance in the Carpathian Basin. In the 1570s it was the north-south running valleys in Zala County that were regularly flooded in these ways, and following the fall of Kanizsa (today Nagykanizsa) in the center of Western-Transdanubia, it was mostly the valley of the Rába and the gallery forests that served the protection of the hinterland.²⁹ This is reflected not only in the county decisions of Zala and then Vas County, but is very much put forward in the letters and other sources connected to the military and the civic population of the area. This is shown by the letters sent to Ádám Batthyány I and to other members of the family, as well as by instructive documents from the period.

Forest management at manorial complexes—royal and private

While on the level of the Kingdom, as well as on that of county administrations, forests mostly appear in the context of war and frontier protection, at the level of private land ownership and land-management, they were important sources of income and considered as economic assets. The case of the estate complex of the Batthyány family, mentioned in the introduction to this article, well reflects this fact. Their case is particularly interesting, as their policy towards forest management could not disregard the proximity of the frontier zone, and the leading members of the family were involved in military defense.

The manorial complex studied here with Körmend in its center only had one major forest, the so-called Dobogói Forest, supplemented by some smaller groves. This woodland was situated at the confluence of the River Rába and the River Pinka,³⁰ one of the former's larger tributaries. The trees—mostly oak—could withstand temporary water cover in the forest, but the lack of acorns, which were the basis of pig foraging for a good part of the year, caused problems in the economy. The Dobogói Forest was one of the two forbidden forests (*silva prohibita*) at the manor. “Forbidden” or “prohibited” forest is a term frequently found in the legal evidence in Hungary at this time. Dozens of *urbaria* refer to their existence, which helps understand the idea behind their formation in the second half of the Middle

27 Bilkei and Turbulý, *Zala vármegye*, vol. 1, 45 (no. 208), 46 (no. 216); Tóth, *Zala vármegye*, vol. 3, 41 (no. 1938).

28 On this in details, see: Vadas, “A River Between Worlds”; Vadas, *Egy határfolyó*, 69–98.

29 Tóth, *Vas vármegye*, vol. 1, 45 (no. 120), 155 (no. 584), 243 (no. 719).

30 “Item penes eandem possessionem Nadallja silvam dolorosam et glandiferam ad prefatum castrum Kermendh pertinentem inter fluvios Raba et Pynkwa in territorio dicti dominj Kermend existendi sitam.” MNL VML XII.1. Jegyzőkönyvek. 1589. no. 85. fol. 120.

Ages.³¹ These were forests that formed part of the landlord's private property, usually referred to as an allodial part of their holdings. "Forbidden," or in Hungarian *tilalmas* or *tiltott* refers to the utilization of forests by the tenants. This forbidden nature of the Dobogói Forest is important, as every single time local administrators needed wood or wanted to use the forest, they had to ask their landlord for permission. The letters testify to intensive usage. The main function—as usual with oak forests—was to provide acorn (for masting), while the timber produced was initially only of secondary importance.

The Dobogói Forest's importance in providing acorns for pigs is emphasized, for instance, in a letter from 1646. It explains how the local *provisor*, as was usual for issues related to local farming and provisioning, warns the landlord that the acorns left in the woods after a flood would only support the pigs for about a month.³² This estimate may have been cautionary—or intentionally exaggerated to urge reaction from the landlord—, but by the end of the year, there was no mast left at the domain.³³

Pigs provided an important income for the landlord, and probably to the locals who drove their pigs to the forests in secret, as well as to administrators who also had their animals there for months. Accepting pigs by local administrators in allodial forests was a recurrent issue that is well reflected in regulations (instructions) of royal estates in the Kingdom of Hungary, as well as in the regulations of princely estates in Transylvania. The so-called *Compilatae Constitutiones*, published in 1669, collecting the laws passed in the 1650s and 1660s in Transylvania includes the following on this issue:

"Therefore, when driving the pigs of the treasury out for the acorn to the royal manors and the forests, the officers of the district shall arrange to have enough acorn, and the pigs should be taken to the royal forests with due consideration [to the available acorn]. Up to the present, there have been numerous abuses by the vice-officials, who would not allow the local poor to drive their pigs to the forests, but instead took in pigs to herd amongst those of the royal treasury."³⁴

31 For the Szabó, *Woodland and Forests*, 60, 66.

32 Letter of István Nemsem to Ádám Batthyány, 28 September 1646 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 33 647).

33 Letter of István Nemsem to Ádám Batthyány, 22 December 1646 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 33 651).

34 "Ennek utána mikor makkra hajlatnak a fiscus sertés marhái, a Regius fundusra és erdőkre, azon székeknek tisztai illendőképpen intézzék el, honnal juthatna illendőképen makk, s ahhoz képest hajtassanak a fiscus marhái a regius funduson lévő erdőkre. Mivel pedig sok helyeken eddig abutáltak a vicetisztek, sokszor a magok erdeikből a szegénység marháit kirekesztvén, más idegen marhákat fogadtak a fiscus marhái közzé." Kolosvári and Óvári, eds, *Corpus Juris Hungarici, 1550–1848. évi erdélyi törvények*, 303.

At Körmend, the Dobogói Forest had a role not only in herding pigs. Although it was not primarily reserved by the Batthyány family for their usage to harvest timber, the Forest proved an important timber reserve in case of emergency. For instance, in early 1648, after a major flood on the River Rába, when it turned out that all the wooden parts of the manorial mill had to be replaced,³⁵ the wood was provisioned from outside the domain.³⁶ But when there was an immediate need, such as in 1641 or in 1651, the landlord was asked to provide permission for the use of the forbidden forest for harvesting timber.³⁷

Even though the Dobogói Forest was not used systematically for wood supply, it had to be regularly maintained, especially after floods. A letter from 1655 leaves no doubt about this. After a flood in February 1655, the accountant of the castle of Körmend orders tenant peasants from two nearby villages, Boldogasszony and Győrvár (both belonged to the manorial complex for only a short period), to collect the fallen trees in the forest. The job was not completed for a while, as a few days later the Rába inundated the forest again and the tenant peasants had to be sent home.³⁸ Eventually, the fallen trees were collected, and a letter dating from ten days later tells of timber processed there and prepared for delivery to the mill's dam.³⁹

It seldom happened, but there is at least one occasion when tree was harvested from the forbidden forest when the emergency was only 'celestial'. In a letter, the provisor of the estate András Hidasy asked for permission from the landlord, Ferenc Batthyány, the father of Ádám I, to allow the harvesting of timber from the forest to build a dwelling for the preacher as winter was approaching.⁴⁰

35 "Mivel az Nagod parancsolatia szerint az Uyvarj álcz ala iűt volt az itt valo malom nyzetni, azt mondgya az aálcz, hogy itt az minymeő faia vagion az malomnak, az mind oda vagion..." ["as ordered by you my lord, the carpenter from Güssing came down here to see what happened with the mill here. The carpenter says all the timber of the mill is busted"]. Letter of István Nemsem to Ádám Batthyány, 3 January 1648 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 33 676).

36 Letter of István Nemsem to Ádám Batthyány, 20 January 1648 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 33 677).

37 Letter of András Hidasy to Ádám Batthyány, 16 September 1641 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 19 265), and letter of István Nemsem to Ádám Batthyány, 21 March 1651 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 33 801).

38 "Kegmes uram ha Ngod io valia Dobogoi Erdőben nemmÿ dúlt fa vagion Györvarÿ gialogokat, Boldogasszony falviakat ra haitom, es hasogatast csinaltatok, s, az vár, elöt valo keret be keritem ne legyen az vár kert nélkül, be is iűtek volt az gialogok, de nagy Viznek miatta haza boczatam úketh..." ["My lord, as there are many fallen trees in the Dogobói Forest in case you gave permission, I could order the tenant peasant of Győrvár and Boldogasszony to chop the trees, and I will have the garden in front of the castle surrounded by a fence so that the castle would not be without a garden. The peasants came to do the work, but I had to let them go because of the high waters"]. Letter of Mihály Szokoly to Ádám Batthyány, 12 February 1655 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 48 128).

39 Letter of Mihály Szokoly to Ádám Batthyány, 22 February 1655 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 48 121).

40 Letter of András Hidasy to Ferenc Batthyány, 18 September 1622 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 19 075).

These sources testify to a well-defined set of regulations regarding the forbidden forests. Nonetheless, regulations sometimes did not meet practice, which is reflected not only in alien pigs being kept in forests but, naturally, in other trespasses as well. Two examples from the holdings of the Batthyány family testify to that. Both are related to the illegal felling of trees. A letter of complaint was sent to Ádám Batthyány by an administrator at nearby Csákány (cited in the introduction) that tells of tenants who ‘tricked’ the forest-shepherd (*erdőpásztor*) and used the felled trees as firewood.⁴¹ The winter was not particularly cold according to regional reconstructions, which shows that such forests were probably recurrent places of trespasses and were not products of extremely harsh winter conditions.⁴² It was not only the tenants who probably posed a threat to these forests, but a letter from a few years later complains that the local forbidden forest was completely destroyed by soldiers stationed in the small fortification.⁴³

It seems that on the local level landlords such as Ádám Batthyány took numerous measures to take control over the incomes connected to the forests. In this process, banning the common usage of forests was an important step. This move towards conscious management of available resources is well reflected in the above-mentioned instructions of royal officers of the royal domains. The instructions recurrently refer to the lack of care for forests and the possible incomes that could be realized by the conscious usage of these areas.⁴⁴ Even more typical of the management changes—or the idea of managing woodlands—is the above discussed *Constitutio Maximiliana*. The document, known in Hungary as a “forest-directive” (*erdőpátens*), reflects very complex ideas of managing forests that officials had to follow. It includes a set of regulations on managing the ruler’s forests (King Maximilian II at the time) but also surveyed the available resources. The level of detail and the purpose of the survey is highlighted by a passage from the document:

“On the other side, to the left, there is a nice pine forest mixed with beech. As of now, it has also been devastated by the shepherds of the goatherd; we order and will have them banned [from the forest] so that our forests would serve the goals of our copper smelter more carefully. [...] Leaving Bistra, our officers went back to Schemnitzka, from there they rode alongside the Schemnitzka Stream to Polonka, then on foot [they went to] to the River Hron. Christoph Falbenstainer from 1548 until now has lived

41 Letter of Ferenc Gencsy to Ádám Batthyány, 25 February 1643 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 15 839).

42 Dobrovolný et al., “Monthly, Seasonal and Annual Temperature Reconstructions.”

43 Letter of Ferenc Gencsy to Ádám Batthyány, 15 September 1649 (MNL OL P 1314 no. 15 883).

44 See e.g., Kenyeres, *XVI. századi uradalmi utasítások*, vol. 1, 111 (no. 7), 212 (no. 15), 226 (no. 28), 354 (no. 25), 411 (no. 16), 435–436 (no. 18), vol. 2, 574 (no. 10), 594 (no. 8), 620 (no. 32), 746 (no. 11).

up the trees along both banks of the River Hron from Polonka towards the Schemnitzka Stream and has the wood drifted on the Hron for the new copper furnace. In this area, only a small part of the forest has been left standing and only a couple of trees have been left at the heights. [As however] these trees are not productive, and neither is the small untouched grove, unlike the other forests, it could not be used for the said purpose, to provide some benefit, we forbid this farming to him and order to leave nursing trees in places protected from winds to facilitate the renewal of the forest. As they noticed there in part of the cleared forest, nothing has been left that could at least give some hope of the forest to regenerate. Furthermore, they noticed, that the tenants of Lehota turned the different places used for charcoal burning and the clearings for their benefit by turning them into plowlands and meadows. We strictly forbid that not only to them but also to anyone who attempts the same, in order to help the necessary regeneration of forests.”⁴⁵

The above quotation is only a small segment of the rather lengthy instruction for handling forests at royal domains. Nonetheless, it helps to identify the main principles along which forestry was envisaged in the mid-sixteenth century Habsburg

45 “Ex opposito huius loci ad sinistram manum etiam pulchra aequae subnigra, fagisque abundans silva est. Eam similiter caprigeni pecoris magistri ac pastores hucusque attriverunt, qui ut hinc quoque cum gregibus suis amoveantur, et ut silva praesertim cum in commodum cupri officinarum nostrarum converti possit accuratius alatur, mandamus ac praecipimus. Wistra relicta commissarii nostri in regressu ad Schemnitzkam, inde Polunkam ac postea secus decursum Schemnitzkae fluvii ad Granam fluvium equis ac pedibus contenderunt. Ubi incipiendo a Polunka iuxta Schemnitzkam fluvium ab anno 1548 in hodiernum usque diem Christophorus Falbenstainer ultra spatium unius in longitudinem protensi integri milliaris ex utraque Granae fluvii parte, quicquid illic sylvarum fuit, sustulit lignaque inde excisa ad novam cupri conflatoriam officinam per eundem Granam fluvium demisit. Et licet in eo tractu parvam quandam sylvae particulam praetergressus sit, arboresque nonnullas in locis aeditioribus intactas reliquerit, tamen quia arbores illae neque foecundae, neque neglectae sylvulae portiuncula, quam tam aequae ut reliqua ligna ad destinatos usus convertere poterat, quid emolumenti, cum tanti non sit, adferre possit, hoc amplius per ipsum ne fiat, illi interdictum volumus, simulque iniungimus, ut deinceps in locis, ubi a ventorum impetuosius flatibus persistere possunt, arbores foecundas pro nascentibus sylvis relinquat. Compertum enim ibidem est, in utraque excisae sylvae parte prorsus nihil, quod saltem spem aliquam repullulandi prae se ferret extare. Quin et hoc deprehensum est incolas pagi Lehotae exectas areas, sylvarumque ad dexteram excisarum loca, suos in usus pro coficiendis ibidem agris ac pratis convertisse. Quod non tantum ipsis sed et relinquis similia comentibus omnibus pro necessario sylvarum incremento severe prohibitum esse volumus.” – ÖStA FHKa Sonderbestände, Sammlungen und Selekte Patente 3.49 (Waldordnung für Ungarn) (15 May 1565). For the edition: Tagányi, *Magyar erdészeti oklevéltár*, vol. 1, 96–167 (no. 143). The document was produced in German and was then translated into Latin (I used the Latin version in writing the present paper).

administration. The main principle, similarly to what the Batthyány family material pointed to, was to secure every possible income for the Hungarian Chamber (and the ruler), which included locals herding animals in the forests. This is reflected in the above quotation on the ban of herding goats in particular forests. The problem does not seem to have been grazing itself, but the fact that it threatened forest regeneration. This shows an awareness of the difficulty of forest regeneration with sheep and goat grazing.

The most important priority in the *Constitutio* was the facilitation of the mining process, in this case of copper mining, a major income of the Habsburg rulers in the sixteenth century.⁴⁶ That large amounts of wood required, the accessibility of which was crucial to the successful functioning of copper furnaces in Upper-Hungary. This priority is well reflected in the discussion of forests which only proved “useless” if they lacked a waterway to drift timber towards the furnaces.

The above paragraph testifies to a systematic attempt to take control of one of the most important economic resources the Kingdom of Hungary provided, namely wood. This resource was even more crucial in the context of war, as it had a special strategic value as shown by the bans on the trade of this commodity.⁴⁷ This was just as much the case with the Habsburg administration and private landowners, especially those—such as the Batthyány family—that accumulated significant knowledge of farming and administration.

Conclusion

The forest regulations on different levels of Hungarian administration tell at least two stories. The first, very similar to numerous early modern states, is that rulers, as well as landlords on different levels, extended their lordship to forests. On the one hand, this is connected to the commodification of timber and fuelwood, which in the early modern times proved an important source of income, on the other, there was a fear of the exhaustion of forest resources.⁴⁸ Both these processes appeared in other polities in Europe of the period, both in areas where forests were much scarcer at the time,⁴⁹ as well as in areas that were apparently amongst the richest in forests.⁵⁰ This striving for securing the resource can be attested on the level of individual estates,

46 Kenyeres, “I. Ferdinánd magyarországi,” 89. For the importance of mining in the forest resource-use: Romhányi, Laszlovszky, and Pinke, “Environmental Impacts,” 263–73; Magyar, *A feudalizmus kori erdőgazdálkodás*.

47 Várkonyi, *Ünnepek és hétköznapiak*, 53–54.

48 Warde, “Fear of Wood Shortage”; Warde, “Early Modern ‘Resource Crisis’”. For Poland, see: Falkowski, “Fear and Abundance.”

49 E.g., Warde, “Fear of Wood Shortage”; “Early Modern ‘Resource Crisis.’”

50 Falkowski, “Fear and Abundance.”

such as those of the Batthyánys, who took several measures to secure forest-related income for themselves. It was not only this family that took measures, but so did the Habsburg family through the instructions sent to the royal officials at different estates of the Chamber, as well as in the forest-directive discussed along these lines.

The forests however tell another story as well, that is only partially present in other parts of Europe, namely their strategic importance in war. This means not only the importance of timber and fuelwood as war material, but rather is a key element of the military tactics of the Hungarian–Habsburg defense against the Ottomans. This is reflected in the legislative sources—the laws decreed by the king—and in the decisions of the noble county gatherings. This role of forests is seen not only in administrative sources on the state or the country level but also appears in the decision-making on forest use on the local level, such as at the frontier estates of the Batthyánys.

The above sources could not shed detailed light on how the Habsburgs and the Hungarian military and civic administrations combined these two purposes; nonetheless, they demonstrate that when writing about early modern forests in the Carpathian Basin, neither a simplistic view that concentrates on the conservation and the concern for the resource, nor its view as a “victim” of wars tells enough.

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Descriptions of the Forests of Slavonia in Travelogues of the Early Modern Age

Robert Skenderović 

Croatian Institute for History – Branch for the History of Slavonia, Syrmia, and Baranya; Ante Starčevića 8, Slavonski Brod, Croatia; rskender@isp.hr

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Abstract. Forest history is a relatively new discipline in Croatian historiography. The scale of exploitation remains the main point of interest for scholars dealing with forest history. Nevertheless, recent scholarship has turned scholarly interest towards another question: Can exploitation (timber consumption) be the only criterion for the anthropization of forests? The present paper analyzes three travelogues from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and compares them with quantitative data originating from various historical sources. It shows how travelogues do not only offer a vivid description of a land and its inhabitants but can also be used as a valuable confirmation of historical conclusions based on quantitative historical data. Even more, travelogues may provide some specific data not available elsewhere. In this case, three travelogues (Atanazije Jurjević, Osman Aga of Timișoara/Temesvár, and Friedrich Wilhelm von Taube) give a broader understanding of the anthropization of forests in Slavonia during the early modern period.

Keywords: Slavonia, early modern period, frontier, travelogues, anthropization

Introduction

Slavonia is a region in Croatia well known for its large, predominantly oak forests.¹ Despite the large quantities of forests rich in their history, forest historiography in Slavonia is still in its infancy.² Due to several descriptions of Slavonia in the early

1 Historically, during the seventeenth century the name Slavonia changed its territorial scope. While in the Middle Ages it encompassed the territory between the Sutla River in the west and Požega in the east, during the seventeenth century the name Slavonia stretched to the east and started to be used also for the territory of Pakrac, Požega, and Syrmia Sanjak. The change could also be seen on the maps of that time, for example Joan (Johannes) Blaeu, *Regni Hungariae nova et exactissima delineatio*, 1664 (OSZK Térképtár, TR 7 080). In 1702, Slavonia and Syrmia were divided into Civil Slavonia and the Slavonian Military Frontier. In 1745, three Slavonian counties were established—Virovitica, Požega, and Syrmia Counties.

2 Even though Croatian historians and forestry experts have been writing about forest history for more than a hundred years, only in the last decades has it been recognized as a relevant historical

modern period as an unpopulated land, their vast forests could be described as primordial, and therefore Slavonia as a land of unconquered wilderness. This paper will show that the anthropization of Slavonian forests has other important aspects which change the final answer.

In the analysis of early modern Slavonian forest history, we should bear in mind the words of Emily K. Brock written about the ruined cities deep within the vast tropical forests of America and Asia:

“These remnants pose what Emmanuel Kreike has termed the ‘Palenque Paradox’ If wild forests are full of the vestiges of human activity, then there is no clear line between culture and nature, and no clear direction of environmental change. The dominant historical models of environmental change have all implied a cumulative and irreversible gradient from nature to culture, with nature the victim of human agency. But the history of Palenque and its forest challenges historians’ attempts to depict unilinear environmental change.”³

One could hardly agree more with Emily K. Brock that the history of forests is not just the history of deforestation. People cut down trees, but forests regrow because they are complex and dynamic systems. The history of forests in Slavonia provides excellent evidence for Brock’s statement. It also raises the question of how anthropized Slavonian forests were during the early modern era, considering that the region was rarely populated, but accepting the fact that it has been inhabited for thousands of years. Anthropization is usually defined as the conversion of open spaces, landscapes, and natural environments by human action. The primary goal of such conversion is the transformation or adaptation of the environment to meet the needs of humans. The history of forests is especially important because it shows that sometimes an area is anthropized even though it looks natural. This is exactly the case with Slavonian forests in the early modern period.

In the analysis of the anthropization of Slavonian forests, we should first find out what percentage of Slavonia was covered with forests before the Ottoman occupation. Because of the scarcity of historical documents, our possibilities for research are limited. Therefore, Péter Szabó’s 2005 book *Woodland and Forests in Medieval Hungary* is invaluable in answering this question. Szabó’s work includes Požega, Vuka (Valkó), Baranya, and Syrmia Counties. Even though his estimates are based on the sparse data available from that period, they match the facts we know about the demographic and economic history of Slavonia. Accepting Szabó’s data, it may

discipline. See: Skenderović and Župan ed., *Slavonske šume kroz povijest*; See also: Petrić, ed., *From the forest history*.

3 Brock, “New Patterns in Old Places,” 154.

be concluded that between the Rivers Ilova and Bosut, Slavonia was very woody at the end of the Middle Ages, but forests definitely did not cover more than 60 percent of its territory, while Syrmia County was less wooded, with forests covering between 21 and 40 percent of its territory.⁴

The question about the scale of the exploitation of forests in Slavonia during the early modern period (from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century) still needs to be answered. The Ottoman period is especially deficient. Croatian historians agree that at that time there was no increase in the exploitation of Slavonian forests. Moreover, Anđelko Vlašić states that the entire Slavonia was a “rarely inhabited area covered with dense and impassable forests.”⁵ Likewise, Nenad Moačanin describes Ottoman Slavonia as an island of arable land, situated around the settlements scattered throughout vast forests.⁶

It is interesting to compare the conclusions of Croatian historians with the discussion in Hungarian historiography about the Ottoman impact on Hungarian forests. According to Gábor Ágoston, Hungarian historians in the twentieth century, especially Gyula Szekfű, accused Ottomans of the destruction of the environment, going as far as to claim that the *puszta* [semi-desert] character of the Great Hungarian Plain and the lack of trees and water “are all due to the Turkish era, that is, are the consequences of the Turkish conquest.”⁷ Ágoston argues that this accusation is without a proper basis in historical sources:

“It is also clear that deforestation was not unique to Hungary and that its causes were similar to those observable elsewhere in Europe. Around 1500, Europe had substantially more forests and wooded areas than today. However, the growth in Europe’s population from about 1500 and the resulting expansion of agriculture led to forest clearings, whereas mining and smelting, war-related industries (cannon casting, saltpeter, and gunpowder production), fortress building, and the construction of ever-growing navies, all brought about by the so-called early-modern ‘gunpowder/military revolution,’ required substantially more fuelwood, charcoal, and timber, and resulted in deforestation.”⁸

As mentioned before, a similar discussion was not present among Croatian historians. They were aware of the relatively small impact of Ottomans on the Slavonian environment.

4 Szabó, *Woodland and Forests in Medieval Hungary*, 47–55.

5 Vlašić, “Šume kao izvor prehrane,” 119.

6 Moačanin, *Town and Country on the Middle*, 26.

7 Ágoston, “Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet,” 72.

8 Ágoston, “Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet,” 72–73.

After the Peace of Srijemski Karlovci (Karlóca, Karlowitz) (1699), the Habsburg Monarchy established its control over Slavonian territory and started its revitalization. The Peace of Srijemski Karlovci opened a new era in the exploitation of Slavonian forests. The number of historical documents from the eighteenth century is also much higher. It is on this basis that the earliest estimates of Croatian forestry experts for the percentage of forest-covered territories in Slavonia are made for the eighteenth century. According to those estimates, in the mid-eighteenth century, some 70 percent of Slavonia (between the Ilova and Bosut Rivers) was covered with forests.⁹ Comparing Szabó's data with the estimates for the mid-eighteenth century shows that in two hundred years the forest-covered territory in Slavonia actually expanded from less than 60 percent to 70 percent.

The reason could be a population decrease. In the period between the 1680s and the 1750s, several villages stood abandoned for more than 50 years, which led to the reforestation of certain anthropized areas. During this period, nature began to restore many places that had been anthropized.

But this did not last for long. The population of Slavonia started to increase already from the beginning of the eighteenth century, mostly due to the constant colonization of abandoned areas, which led to a new wave of anthropization of the wilderness. Some recent research, like for example that of Ante Grubišić, has shown that the exploitation of forests and their clearing started on a larger scale already in the first half of the eighteenth century, after the Habsburg reconquest of the Slavonian territory.¹⁰

Besides the question of timber consumption, we should also ask whether this kind of exploitation is the only criterion for the anthropization of forests. In addition to producing timber, forests served another important purpose in early modern Slavonia. Due to their rich oak forests, Slavonians have traditionally raised large quantities of pigs, feeding them in forests. Therefore, the researcher cannot avoid two related questions. First, what was the scale of pig raising? Second, what was the impact on forests of feeding pigs with acorns?

There are three significant travelogues from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries related to the history of forests in Slavonia. The oldest is by Atanazije Jurjević (Athanasius Georgiceus), imperial Habsburg interpreter and diplomat. His travelogue (i.e., report) from 1626, entitled *Relatione data all'imperatore dal signor Athanasio Georgiceo del viaggio fatto in Bosna l'anno 1626* (The report of Athanasio Georgiceo to the Emperor on a journey made in Bosnia in 1626), describes his travel

9 Klepac, "Hrastove šume u Slavoniji," 490.

10 Grubišić, "Šume Vukovarskog vlastelinstva u 18. st.," 147–92.

from Buda throughout Slavonia to Olovo in Bosnia.¹¹ Jurjević travelled to Bosnia as an imperial envoy with the mission to visit Bosnian Catholics. On his trip, he described towns, villages, and natural landmarks—among them Slavonian forests.

The second one is the travelogue of Osman Aga of Timișoara (Temesvár, Temeschwar) about his captivity and travels in the 1680s. Osman Aga was born in Timișoara, although his family was not originally from that town. It is very possible that Osman Aga was of South Slav origin because his father had moved to Timișoara from Belgrade (Nándorfehérvár).¹² As a young man Osman Aga joined the Ottoman military, thus continuing the family's military tradition. In early summer ("cherry season") of 1688, he was captured by Habsburg soldiers and spent the whole summer in captivity, moving from one town to another in Slavonia. In his travelogue, he describes many aspects of life in Slavonia, including some important details also about Slavonian forests.

The third travelogue is the well-known book *Description of the Kingdom of Slavonia and the Duchy of Syrmia* (*Historische und geographische Beschreibung des Königreiches Slavonien und des Herzogthumes Syrmien*) written by Friedrich Wilhelm von Taube and published in 1777. Taube was an Austrian administrative officer who worked from 1766 to 1776 as a court secretary in the Court's Commerce Council (*Hofcommerzienrath*). In 1776, Emperor Joseph II sent him on a political mission to Slavonia,¹³ which gave him the opportunity to get to know the region of Slavonia. On that occasion, Taube made notable observations about Slavonian forests.

The Ottoman conquest of Slavonia and its 'ecological footprint'

After the Battle of Mohács, Slavonian towns fell into the hands of the Ottomans one after another: in 1536 Đakovo (Diakovár), Brod (Slavonski Brod), and Cernik, in 1537 Požega (Pozsega), in 1544 Pakrac, and in 1552 Virovitica (Verőce). During the next almost 150 years, the whole region lived as part of the Ottoman Empire. As noted before, the main question about the environmental history of Slavonia during the Ottoman period is what the scale of exploitation of natural resources was during the Ottoman government. For comparison, Gábor Ágoston shows that the population of Hungary "unlike that of Western Europe, remained stagnant or increased only

11 The "report" is contained in the volume "Scritture riferite nei Congressi, Dalmazia Miscellanea, Volumen 3" of the archives of the Holy Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome. It was published already in 1885 by the Croatian historian Mijo Vjenceslav Batinić. István György Tóth published it once again with commentaries in 2003. See: Batinić, "Njekoliko priloga k bosanskoj crkvenoj poviesti," 117–22; Tóth, "Na putu kroz Slavoniju pod krinkom (1626)," 95–120.

12 Čaušević, transl., *Autobiografija Osman-age Temišvarskog*, 3.

13 Taube, *Historische und geographische Beschreibung*, Tom. I, II.

modestly thanks mainly to warfare and its impact,” and therefore that “domestic fuel consumption probably did not rise substantially.”¹⁴ On the other hand, the Hungarian literature on woodlands and forests “has named cattle and sheep breeding as the number one cause for deforestation in the Great Hungarian Plain, which, contrary to general belief, was covered amply by forests in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.”¹⁵ Having in mind this observation, it is necessary to start researching the ecological impact of the Ottoman government in Slavonia on the basis of demographic data and a general insight into agrarian activity.

Demographic trends in Slavonia were similar to those in Hungary. There have been several attempts to estimate the population of Slavonia during the Ottoman period. The first estimation comes from Josip Buturac in 1970. According to Buturac, the population of Slavonia (including Syrmia) had some 226,000 inhabitants (33 percent Catholics, 48 percent Muslims, 14 percent Orthodox, and 5 percent Protestants).¹⁶ After Buturac, Ive Mažuran published his population estimate in 1988. According to Mažuran, Slavonia in the 1680s had between 200,000 and 220,000 inhabitants (among them some 100,000 Muslims). Mažuran gives assessments for Slavonian towns: the biggest Slavonian city was Osijek with 15,000 inhabitants, while Požega, Vukovar, Brod, Virovitica, Đakovo, and Valpovo had 3,000 to 5,000 inhabitants.¹⁷ It seems there is no difference between Buturac’s and Mažuran’s estimates. However, Mažuran was considering only the territory of Slavonia and western Syrmia (between the Ilova and Bosut Rivers), while Buturac said that his estimate was about Slavonia and the entire Syrmia. In 1997, Austrian historian Karl Kaser also gave his estimate on the population size of Slavonia and the entire Syrmia. According to his calculations, at the end of the Ottoman government there were about 222,000 inhabitants living in Slavonia and Syrmia; of that number about 115,000 were Muslims, 72,000 Catholics, 33,000 Vlachs, and 2,000 Ugri.¹⁸

The last assessment of Slavonia during the Ottoman period is that of Nenad Moačanin, who however does not present specific numbers for the total population. Still, his conclusion that the density in rural areas was small (“maybe some 3 to 12 people per square kilometer”) is noteworthy.¹⁹ Literally, many villages stood alone as ‘islands’ surrounded by dense forests.

In fact, there is no doubt that population density increased from the 1550s to the 1680s due to the immigration of Muslims, together with Orthodox Vlachs

14 Ágoston, “Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet,” 73.

15 Ágoston, “Where Environmental and Frontier Studies Meet” 73.

16 Buturac, *Katolička Crkva u Slavoniji*, 54.

17 Mažuran, *Popis naselja i stanovništva*, 24.

18 Kaser, *Slobodan seljak i vojnik*, 220.

19 Moačanin, *Slavonija i Srijem*, 21.

and Rascians. But this influx did not change the general state of the rarely populated territory. Based on the assessments cited, we can calculate population density. Ottoman Slavonia (including Syrmia) between the Ilova, Sava, Drava, and Danube Rivers stretched over 16,500 square kilometers. Therefore, the population density of Ottoman Slavonia in the 1680s must have been between twelve and thirteen inhabitants per square kilometer. Compared to Europe, this was a relatively low density. Géza Pálffy, for example, demonstrates that at the beginning of the seventeenth century, population density in Italy was between 50 and 120, in the Netherlands 40, and in Austria 18 inhabitants per square kilometer.²⁰ Based on the assessments of population density and the size of towns, it is clear that these factors could not cause the large-scale deforestation or timber exploitation in Ottoman Slavonia.

Travelogues of Atanazije Jurjević and Osman Aga throughout Ottoman Slavonia

Travelogues of seventeenth century travelers in Slavonia give useful additional data about Ottoman Slavonia, its population, economic activity, and environmental impact.

In 1626, imperial envoy Atanazije Jurjević travelled to Slavonia on the main road that ran from Buda along the River Danube to Baranya, and then across the River Drava to Osijek (Eszék). He travelled in the company of a dozen Bosnian merchants in two carriages. Atanazije himself was disguised as a Bosnian merchant, for this was the safest way for him as a Habsburg envoy to avoid distressing and dangerous situations. From Osijek, Atanazije started to describe his travel through Slavonia. On the road leading from Osijek to Đakovo, he says that he and his Bosnian companions went through “very dangerous forests” (*caminassimo tra certi boschi molto pericolosi*). That trip through forests was according to Atanazije some four ‘*leghe*’ (league, a unit of length) long, which equals more than twenty kilometers.²¹

The known facts about the anthropization of the area between Osijek and Đakovo confirm that the road connecting them passed almost completely through forests. Looking at the Josephine military maps from the 1780s, it can be seen that those forests still existed at that time, some 150 years after Jurjević had passed through them. More precisely, the Josephine military maps show that the Osijek–Đakovo road ran in large forests named Dubrava, Vuka, and Kalina. This description is highly relevant because those forests do not exist anymore. They were cut down mostly in the nineteenth century.²²

20 Pálffy, *Povijest Mađarske*, 101.

21 Tóth, “Na putu kroz Slavoniju pod krinkom (1626),” 117.

22 See: Skenderović, “Upravljanje šumama đakovačkog biskupijskog vlastelinstva,” 657–75.

Jurjević's travelogue contains an important description of another Slavonian forest named *Svinjarski Lug*. After arriving in Slavonski Brod (in the Ottoman period simply called Brod), the imperial envoy continued his trip towards Slavonski Dubočac and Slavonski Kobaš. After Slavonski Dubočac, Jurčević and his travel companions entered the forest locals referred to as *Svinjarski Lug* (*chiamato in Slauo Suignarski Lughi*), meaning Swineherd Forest. Jurjević explains that the forest bears this name because it was full of pigs that were feeding on acorns. Jurjević also estimates that the *Svinjarski Lug* was more than one *leghe*, i.e., more than five kilometers long.²³

A thorough analysis of historical maps of that area enables us to track Jurjević's itinerary. This analysis shows that Jurjević actually travelled towards the confluence of the Vrbas and Sava Rivers near the village that at the time also bore the name *Svinjar*, i.e., Swineherd in English (today the village is called Davor). This analysis explains that Jurjević's *Svinjarski Lug* is actually a forest between Slavonskog Kobaša and Davora that still exists some twenty-five kilometers west of Slavonski Brod and is called Radinje.

Jurjević's description shows that in Ottoman times the area of Slavonia was still heavily wooded and sparsely populated. But the Ottoman conquest led to changes in the landscape. The shifting of borders modified the degree of centrality of settlements and the importance of some road connections. The main cities in Ottoman Slavonia were Osijek and Požega. Therefore, their road connections with Buda, Belgrade, and Sarajevo became the most important Slavonian roads. All this affected the level of anthropization in certain parts of Slavonia. Osijek was of special significance, which from then on gradually developed into a metropolis of Slavonia, thus the area around it was the most exposed to anthropization changes.

Equally interesting are the records of Osman Aga of Timișoara, who wrote about his captivity and travels in the 1680s. As explained before, in his travelogue Osman Aga also described some important details about Slavonian forests, of which his journey through the Garavica (also Garjevica) Forest is the most relevant. In 1688, as a prisoner, Osman Aga of Timișoara traveled through Garavica twice, giving a short but important record of that journey.

According to historical sources, the establishment of the new border between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire caused the most conspicuous changes in the border (frontier) area. The most striking example is that of the forest Garavica (Garjevica) in the medieval Križevci County. In the sixteenth century, the once rich, densely populated, and large Križevci County found itself on the path of the Ottoman invasion. In the 1540s, the border between the Ottomans and the Habsburg Monarchy was stopped in its territory. Thus, due to political circumstances

23 Tóth, "Na putu kroz Slavoniju pod krinkom (1626)," 118.

and wars, the medieval Križevci County was split, and in its center a large “no man’s land” was created. With the passage of time, the area of this “no man’s land” was undergoing natural reforestation.

The large Garavica (Garjevica) Forest situated on *Moslavačka gora* (Moslavina Hill) then expanded out of its borders and merged with other forests into a vast forest belt that stretched from the Sava across Moslavina all the way to the River Drava. Two Croatian historians—Hrvoje Petrić and Stanko Andrić—have recently written about this phenomenon. Petrić’s 2011 paper on the eco-history of the wider area of the Garić Manor in the seventeenth century emphasizes that in the seventeenth century the entire *Moslavačka gora* was called Garjevica, and that today the name refers to the forest that stretches around Garić. Petrić argues that the process of natural reforestation affected this area in the sixteenth century due to population displacement, but that it was re-inhabited in the seventeenth century, which led to a major change in the natural landscape due to the restored anthropization.²⁴

According to Stanko Andrić’s 2018 paper describing the area of Garavica (Garjevica), the border area in question was not inhabited in the seventeenth century and was in fact a “no man’s land”. That “no man’s land” was very large and was mostly covered with forests. For example, Andrić points out that in 1597 the Croatian-Slavonian Parliament mentioned in its minutes the large forests around Križevci that endangered the safety of that town.²⁵ The problem of toponyms and the question of how many forests there were in the area are still unresolved. According to Andrić, the toponym Garavica eventually assumed a double meaning: “[...]apart from the area of Moslavačka gora, it sometimes means some other neighboring areas; and in addition to a particular mountain or mountains, it also denotes a particular forest or wooded area.”²⁶

The topographic and military map of 1660 made by the Austrian military engineer and cartographer Martin Stier (1620–1699) *Mappa über die Wündische, Petrinianische und Banatische granitzen* (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Handschriftensammlung Cod. 8608, fol. 32) is well-known, showing that the forests merged into one vast belt from the Sava to the Drava River.²⁷ Stier’s map is not the only one that shows a vast forest belt. Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli’s schematic map of Slavonia from 1691 also reflects that there was a forest belt between the Sava and Drava Rivers (Fig. 1).²⁸ On this map, the forest belt bears the inscription “Verhakter Wald” (*Verhakt*

24 Petrić, “Prilozi poznavanju nekih aspekata ekohistorije šireg područja oko Garića,” 63–82.

25 Andrić, “Šuma Garavica i ‘ničija zemlja’ na slavonsko-turskom pograničju,” 99.

26 Andrić, “Šuma Garavica i ‘ničija zemlja’ na slavonsko-turskom pograničju,” 108.

27 Published in: Krmpotić, *Izvjestaji o utvrđivanju granica Hrvatskog Kraljevstva*, 43.

28 Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, Museo Marsili, vol. 50, p. 24 – Map was published in Hajdarhodžić, *Bosna, Hrvatska Hercegovina*, 76. Map was also published in: Kisari Balla, *Marsigli tábornok térképei / Le mappe del generale Marsigli*, 387, Nr. 128.

means ‘notched’ in German), not as the name of the forest but as an indication that there were obstacles for the enemy’s infantry and cavalry made of notched timber.

As a prisoner, Osman Aga of Timișoara passed through that forest belt that he referred to as Garavica twice, and briefly described what he saw:

“Since I did not escape, I marched [further] together with the Austrians to Požega, then to Sirač and Pakrac. Behind the places mentioned, there is the beginning of a large forest called Garavica, which separates Croatia and Bosnia (meaning the Bosnian pashalik). In order to [be able] to go through it, we needed a break of a few days. [During that time] capable guides were found among Croats and residents from nearby areas. [After a few days, the march began.] We moved along the carriage road and after two days of walking [managed] to break through the forest [so dense] that the sun or the sky did not appear to us for a moment. Arriving in Croatia, we first marched to a small town called Božjakovina.”²⁹

Osman Aga later passed through the Garavica Forest once more, this time in the opposite direction. He reports that the second passage also lasted for two days, after which he arrived in the vicinity of Podborje (present-day Daruvar).³⁰ Although the area was not previously known to Osman Aga, both these brief descriptions of the Garavica Forest are valuable. They briefly describe that between Božjakovina and Podborje there was a large uninhabited wooded area that separated Croatia from Ottoman Slavonia, which confirms Andrić’s thesis that it was a ‘no man’s land’. Osman Aga’s description also supports the thesis that the whole area of the ‘no man’s land’ was most often called Garavica or Garjevica.³¹

Finally, the example of Garavica reflects how the general political circumstances and wars affected the territory, especially the frontier area. This example is also relevant for the discussion in Hungarian historiography about the context of the frontier zones of Ottoman–Hungarian wars, where, as András Vadas and Péter Szabó point out, “in many cases the literature assumed total deforestation.”³²

29 Čaušević, transl., *Autobiografija Osman-age Temišvarskog*, 24.

30 Čaušević, transl., *Autobiografija Osman-age Temišvarskog*, 29–30.

31 Here we should also note the travelogue of Evliya Çelebi through Slavonia, Croatia, and Hungary in 1660s. Unfortunately, Çelebi’s travelogue is not copious with the facts about forests. The only important fact Çelebi mentions is the one during his travel to “Zrinyi Vilayet” (i.e., Croatia). On his way to “Zrinyi Vilayet” Çelebi heard that the border territory between the Sava and Drava Rivers is completely overgrown in the woods called “Kirintilik” (fallow). There is a possibility that the name “Kirintilik” is actually identical with “Verhackter Wald” from Marsigli’s schematic map. Çelebi, *Putopis: odlomci o jugoslavenskim zemljama*, 241–42.

32 Vadas and Szabó, “Not Seeing the Forest from the Trees,” 479.



Figure 1 Luigi Ferdinando Marsigli: schematic map of Slavonia from 1691.
(Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna)

Historical evidence, including Osman Aga's account, shows a completely opposite development in Slavonia. The creation of a 'no man's land' on the frontier led to the reforestation of the area.

Reforestation and deforestation in the eighteenth century

Natural reforestation that occurred due to the creation of a 'no man's land' on the frontier between Croatia and Slavonia (i.e., between the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire) represents one of the most interesting episodes in Croatian environmental history. Such a huge area of wooded territory, formed due to the withdrawal of people, is a unique example of reforestation. Reforestation can be observed also in other abandoned territories during the first decades after the 1699 Peace of Srijemski Karlovci.

The Great War of Vienna that started in 1683 brought dramatic changes in the number and ethno-confessional structure of the population of Slavonia. According to the first conscription of inhabitants of the Osijek, Požega, and Virovitica districts in 1688, there remained only 79 inhabited villages, while 452 were abandoned.³³ Therefore, Ive Mažuran estimates that Slavonia (with western Syrmia) in the early

33 Mažuran, *Popis naselja i stanovništva*, 40.

1690s had only some 40,000 inhabitants.³⁴ This is only 20 percent of the pre-war population of 220,000 inhabitants.

After the decisive battles of Slankamen (Szalánkemén) (16 August 1691) and Senta (Zenta) (11 September 1697), Habsburg control over Slavonia became permanent. It led to the stabilization of everyday life and encouraged many people to go back to their homes. At the same time, many refugees from Ottoman territories also decided to settle in Slavonia. Ive Mažuran estimates that already by the year 1698, the population of Slavonia had risen to some 70–80,000.³⁵ Naturally, this number was still far from the pre-war 220,000, but shows the trend of repopulation.

Estimates of Croatian forestry experts suggest that in the mid-eighteenth century most of Slavonia (between the Ilova and Bosut Rivers) was still covered with forests. Đuro Rauš points out: “Forests represented the main natural resource of Croatia and Slavonia. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, they covered over 70 percent of the total area. Those were mostly valuable forests, suitable for exploitation, among which old oak forests (150 to 300 years old) stood out.”³⁶ Dušan Klepac also states that “[a]t one time, Slavonia was rich in forests, which in 1750 occupied over 70 percent of the total area.”³⁷

Rauš and Klepac were forestry experts whose assessment of the afforestation of Slavonia in the eighteenth century was not questioned later. Such a high percentage of forested area may seem excessive at first glance, but Rauš and Klepac had excellent knowledge of natural resources in Slavonia. Historical expertise can only confirm their estimates. Due to the lack of people, natural restoration definitely increased the proportion of forested areas, and it is possible that it went as high as 70 percent of the entire Slavonia.

It is hard to give a conclusive answer to the question of when large-scale clear-cutting of forests began. In his 2018 paper, Ante Grubišić cites the example of the Vukovar Manor where large deforestation started already in the first half of the eighteenth century. According to Grubišić, in the 1730s forested areas covered 33.6 percent of the Vukovar Manor.³⁸ Comparing precise maps of the Vukovar Manor from 1733 and 1755, Grubišić concludes that many forested areas had already been cut down by that time. As a result of deforestation a few decades later, in the 1790s the forested area covered only 11 percent of the manor.³⁹ Still, the example of the

34 Mažuran, *Popis naselja i stanovništva*, 40.

35 Mažuran, *Popis naselja i stanovništva*, 42.

36 Rauš, “Šume Slavonije i Baranje,” 134.

37 Klepac, “Hrastove šume u Slavoniji,” 490.

38 Grubišić, “Šume Vukovarskog vlastelinstva u 18. stoljeću,” 169.

39 Grubišić, “Šume Vukovarskog vlastelinstva u 18. stoljeću,” 174.

Vukovar Manor does not evidence a predominant trend of deforestation for the entire Slavonia already in the first half of the eighteenth century. Other manors were in a much harder position, with many villages left abandoned for decades. Due to the long war and weak resettlement, some villages were still empty even seventy years after the war's end. For example, Punitovci and Dragotin, villages of the Manor of Đakovo, were recolonized only in 1757–1758 by Catholics from Bosnia. Also, only at that time did the bishop of Đakovo manage to establish or resettle three other villages—Josipovac (Vuka), Široko Polje, and Beketinci.⁴⁰ Even though the population started to recover already in the 1690s, the examples of villages abandoned for 70 years explain why Slavonia reached its maximum of forest-covered area (about 70 percent of the whole territory) only in the 1750s.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the number of inhabitants had increased dramatically. According to the 1785–1787 census, Syrmia County already had 82,261, Virovitica County 116,990, and Požega County 64,417 inhabitants. Altogether Civil Slavonia had almost 270,000 inhabitants in that period.⁴¹ Also, according to Johann Andreas Demian, some twelve years later (in 1799) the Slavonian Military Frontier had 172,098 inhabitants.⁴² Therefore, we can estimate that by the end of the eighteenth century Slavonia (including the entire Syrmia) had at least 450,000 inhabitants. It was a dramatic increase compared with the situation at the beginning of the eighteenth century, but also compared with the 220,000 inhabitants before the war.

Despite the population growth, in the 1770s Friedrich Wilhelm von Taube also talks about endless forests in Slavonia. According to Taube, if one excludes the Duchy of Syrmia and some other sections, all other parts of Slavonia can be described as one vast uninterrupted oak forest. Taube also assures the reader that one can hunt in the woods for days without encountering any village.⁴³ Forest owners (landlords) derived at that time the greatest economic benefit from charging for pig grazing. According to Taube, some landlords earned as much as several thousand forints a year from it.⁴⁴

Pig grazing as the main economic activity reveals the low level of all other possible forest uses. Taube is also highly critical of the way Slavonians managed forests. He reports that many trees were lying and rotting on the ground. He describes that shepherds and travelers would often light a fire next to a large tree, which would later

40 Pavičić, *Podrijetlo naselja i govora u Slavoniji*, 275.

41 Erceg, "Jozefinski popis stanovništva civilne Hrvatske i Slavonije (1785/87)," 2.

42 Demian, *Statistische Darstellung des Königreichs Ungarn und den dazu gehorigen Länder*, 442.

43 Taube, *Historische und geographische Beschreibung*, Tom. I, 13.

44 Taube, *Historische und geographische Beschreibung*, Tom. I, 14.

dry out and collapse. Taube also tells us that when the new path was cut through the forest, the felled trees were left there to rot. It seems that neither the landlords nor the peasants cared about the forest.⁴⁵

The most surprising of all is Taube's conclusion: "Whoever believes that Slavonian forests are filled with wild, edible animals is mistaken."⁴⁶ "The forests are teeming with tame, rather than wild animals. There are no deer at all; wild pigs are very rare..."⁴⁷ Therefore, if we accept Taube's claims, we have to conclude that in the 1770s Slavonia forests were no longer an area of unconquered wilderness. On the contrary, according to Taube, they were full of tame animals, predominantly domestic pigs.

Conclusion

The question about the level of anthropization in Slavonia in the early modern period seems to have a simple answer. Slavonia in the early modern period had a relatively small population and was covered with vast forests. Thus, at first glance, it might seem that Slavonia was predominantly an area of unconquered wilderness. But the travelogues of Atanazije Jurjević and the description given by Friedrich Wilhelm von Taube lead to a different view of Slavonian forests.

Jurjević's, Osman Aga's, and Taube's descriptions of Slavonian forests reflect an important shift that happened during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the older travelogues (Jurjević's and Osman Aga's), it is noticeable that travelers were impressed with Slavonian forests, with how large and "scary" they were. Still, Jurjević's and Taube's testimonies show that they were not scary for the local population. Already in 1626, Jurjević saw that the *Svinjarski Lug* Forest was full of domestic pigs, which shows that Slavonians used forests for their economic activities. Exactly 150 years later, Friedrich von Taube has the same impression that Slavonian forests are not filled with wild but with domestic animals—mostly with pigs. Therefore, the analysis of the three travelogues gives us a broader understanding of the relationship between natural resources, exploitation, and anthropization. They reveal the powerful impact people had on forests in Slavonia in the early modern period, despite the fact that the population was relatively sparse. In Taube's description, Slavonian forests are already completely in the service of man, emptied of beasts and full of domestic pigs brought in by the peasants. This conclusion points to the significance

45 Taube, *Historische und geographische Beschreibung*, Tom. I, 15.

46 "Wer da glaubet, dass die Slavonischen Wälder mit wilden essbaren Thieren angefüllt sind: der ist in einem grossen Irrthum." Taube, *Historische und geographische Beschreibung*, Tom. I, 15.

47 "Die Wälder wimmeln von zahmen, und nicht von wilden Thieren. Hirschen giebt es gar nicht: wild Schweine sind höchst selten..." Taube, *Historische und geographische Beschreibung*, Tom. I, 15.

of travelogues as historical sources, because in this case the rare and fragmented quantitative data at historians' disposal did not yield such valuable findings.

With rising population numbers, the level of anthropization was gradually increasing in Slavonia. This led to the first forest management laws in the second half of the eighteenth century and the next phase of exploitation.⁴⁸

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Styrian Forests as a Basis of Mining Industry during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times

Bernhard A. Reismann

Graz University of Technology, Technikerstraße 4 8010 Graz; bernhard.reismann@tugraz.at

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Abstract. At the beginning of the article the geographic determined differences between the forests of Upper- and Southern Styria are discussed. Based on the dislocation of the hammer mills, i.e., of the final production, from the thirteen century onwards for reasons of the supply with charcoal, the importance of the Styrian forests for the supply of mines, blast furnaces and hammer mills, for pit wood and charcoal is shown. The focus of the discussion is on the early modern period.

The regulatory interventions of the Styrian sovereign by forest consultations, the so-called “Waldberatungen” from the fifteenth century onwards soon led to the creation of dedication districts for the wood require and to the construction of large river rakes in the rivers Enns and Mur with attached charring sites. The ecological effects based on intensive logging from the seventeenth century onwards are described as well as the planned dedication of the Upper Styrian forests to precisely defined blast furnaces and hammer mills during the reign of Maria Theresia. The first scientifically based and targeted measures to protect forest and reforestation also began during this period. The nationalization of large forest areas for industrial purposes by Joseph II is also mentioned. The big changes, triggered by the industrialization during the 19th century, represent the end and outlook of the article. Due to the use of cheaper fossil coal, the management of the forests for the purpose of mining and iron industry was gradually abandoned from around 1860 onwards. The structural change ultimately led to large forests being owned by former industrialists who sold their factories to larger companies such as Österreichische Alpine Montangesellschaft (ÖAMG) as part of the general economic development and turned to forestry themselves, also shown by the example of the Mayr-Melnhof family.

Keywords: Forest history, mining, iron industry, Styria

Geographic and natural prerequisites

The province of Styria is considered the ‘Green Heart of Austria,’ because of its abundance in forests. Even at present, 61.6 per cent of the province’s area is covered with forest; in the districts of Upper Styria (Figure 1) these percentages are even higher, well over 70 per cent. In 2009, the front-runner was the district of Bruck an der Mur with 77.3 per cent forest cover.¹

1 <https://www.agrar.steiermark.at/cms/beitrag/11845987/100812147/>, requested on 1 10 2021.

The mountainous Oberland, with the eastern districts of Leoben and Bruck-Mürzzuschlag, extends in the south approximately to the town of Frohnleiten, 30 kilometers north of Graz. The western part of Upper Styria consists of the district of Liezen, subdivided into Salzkammergut, the Upper Enns Valley from Schladming to Gröbming, Mitterennstal and Gesäuse from the Admont Monastery to beyond the municipality of Hieflau, as well as the districts of Murtal (formerly Knittelfeld and Judenburg) and Murau.



Figure 1 Upper Styria on the so-called Homann map from around 1720 (Reismann collection)

After the river's narrow point of Mur at Badl near Peggau, the Styrian lowlands proper begin. Due to the urban central area of Graz with the Schöckl massif (and the spa resort St. Radegund, that used to be particularly popular in Hungary before 1918, where the child Béla Bartók composed his first musical piece) in the northeast, and the Plesch area near the monastery of Rein in the northwest, this fact is not immediately obvious geographically. However, there is a noticeable change in the climate and the weather, as the southern part of the country is largely influenced by the Pannonian climate.

These climatic conditions led to the formation of four different habitats in Styria. In the south, there is the 'habitat of oak forests', reaching up to an altitude of about 500 metres. Here, wine and maize ripen in abundance. Since the Stone Age, this part of the country has always been populated, during the Roman period very densely.

The adjacent 'habitat of beech forests' to the north is not quite extended. Loam, sand, and gravel are predominant, and a wide variety of arable crops or field crops, as well as six million fruit trees are grown, including peaches, apricots, pears, and especially apples.

In the northern parts of Western Styria, Eastern Styria, and Upper Styria, the 'habitat of coniferous trees' predominates. There are high precipitation rates and short vegetation seasons. Arable farming is declining in favour of pasture farming, grassland farming and, above all, forestry.

Finally, the 'habitat of the High Alps', by and large limited to the Hohe and Niedere Tauern as well as the Styrian - Lower Austrian Kalkalpen, reaches up to an altitude of around 2,000 metres; 200 days of frost and up to 1,200 millimetres of precipitation are not uncommon in this region. The most significant forests in Styria are also found in this habitat.²

From the twelfth century onwards, the Styrian mining industry and its pre-forms were able to draw on these enormous wood and forest resources. Mining and the production of salt in the Styrian Salzkammergut, as well as precious and non-ferrous metal mining, including smelting and, naturally, the mining of iron at the Styrian Erzberg and the numerous other, smaller iron deposits in Upper Styria, required the forests and the wood as a basis for wooden shelters and for lining the mines, but also as a supply with charcoal for the production of iron in the blast furnaces and further processing, as well as the final production in the various hammer mills of the country.

This article intends to reconcile the connections between the development of these economic sectors with the use of forests and their development. The description starts with the twelfth century and the increasing literacy, and then focuses mostly on the period of the Early Modern Period. A look at the changes in the nineteenth century, triggered by industrialization, concludes the presentation.

From the twelfth to the fourteenth century: The first upswing of the mining industry and the first consequences of the more difficult production of charcoal

Styrian mining experienced its first significant upswing during the twelfth century with the expansion of provincial rule. Duke Otakar II of Traungau was the most important figure in this development. In particular, he was able to step up the economic development of the land after Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa had granted him the regalia, meaning actual royal rights, before 1160. These regalia included the

2 Reismann, *Steiermark*, 6–10.

mining rights over silver, iron, and salt, the right to mint his own coins, and thus pursue an independent monetary policy, the right to confer and grant market rights and the right to establish toll stations and customs sites.

The entry of the Erzberg into Styrian, and thus Central European economic history is also closely connected with mining rights. In 1164, Otakar III guaranteed his new monastery foundations of Seiz/Žiće in present-day Slovenia and Vorau near Hartberg the annual purchase of twenty measures of iron in Leuben, i.e., from the Leobental Valley. This refers to the area just south of Vordernberg. Furthermore, Otakar's wife dedicated *mansum unum apud Leuben, ubi foditor ferrum*, meaning a peasant estate near Leoben, where iron was dug, to the monastery of Vorau.³ These mentions of iron mines around the Erzberg, which are close in time, allow the unambiguous conclusion that local ore mining and smelting entered its first phase of prosperity under Otakar III.

Admont Monastery, one of the most important landowners in Upper Styria, already owned an iron mine near the monastery on Mountain Plaberg when it was founded in 1074, as documented in 1130. The large monastery of St. Lambrecht, in turn, received several areas *cum salino et rudere, qui ariz dicitur...*⁴ with the donation of the Aflenz Valley and the Mariazell area by the Eppenstein family in 1103.

These iron ores were initially melted in small wind furnaces in the actual area where the ore was found. Between 1180 and 1250, they were moved from the mountains to the valleys, and the amount of iron produced in them increased by 250 per cent between 1227 and 1262. The reason was that the blowers of the smelting furnaces in the valley bottoms could be driven by water wheels. A higher air supply and taller furnaces made it possible to melt larger quantities. However, the larger furnaces also required more combustion material and, at the time, this was only made from charcoal.⁵

Parallel to this development, documents make increasingly more frequent mention of blacksmiths who processed the pig iron produced in the furnaces. Here, too, they were initially blacksmiths in the vicinity of Admont Monastery, including the first documented Styrian blacksmith named Otto.⁶ In 1150, a *Lanzo, faber de Swarzinbach* in Schwarzenbach near Trieben was mentioned, and in 1160, 1175, 1180 1184, 185, and 1186, further mentions of forges followed, with *Hermann fabro de Walhe* in *Tannebaz*, today's Donawitz near Leoben featuring in documents in 1186. It is noticeable that from about 1180 onwards, there are more frequent

3 Pirchegger, *Eisenwesen bis 1564*, 10, and Beck, *Die Geschichte des Eisens*, 751

4 Pirchegger, *Eisenwesen bis 1564*, 22–24.

5 Reismann, *Sozialgeschichte der steirischen Hammerarbeiter*, 5.

6 Valentinisch, *Das eisenverarbeitende Gewerbe*, 207–33, esp. 209.

notes of blacksmiths in the country and of the fact that the forges were no longer in the immediate vicinity of mining and smelting sites. It transpires that forges were located exactly where later there had been hammer mills.⁷

Looking for the reason for this development, it is difficult to avoid the question of where the supply of combustion material originated from. It is safe to assume that mining and smelting required so much wood from the immediate surroundings for mine wood and charcoal production that the further processing of iron had to be located to more distant places.

This development continued during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Away from the places where the pig iron was smelted, eventually, small regions developed, where further processing took place. The transport of the iron from the blast furnaces to the hammer mills was easy to manage by using a system of freight and counter freight in the form of food for miners and smelters. On the other hand, the individual hammer mills that soon sprang up throughout Upper Styria, were able to cover their charcoal requirements locally.

Such regions developed until about 1350 in the Rottemann-Triebsen area, between 1300 and 1350 in the Mur Valley around Murau, Obdach, and Judenburg, where there were also small iron deposits, and from about 1350 also around Knittelfeld, Leoben, and Kapfenberg and, somewhat earlier, at Mürzzuschlag in the Mürz Valley. North of the Erzberg, a separate hammer mill region developed on the Enns in the St. Gallen area.⁸

In the following, let us turn briefly to the salt works. As early as 1147, Duke Otakar III had given the monastery of Rein near Graz two salt pans in the Enns Valley near Mahorn and two estates in Mitterndorf. Mahorn refers to the Ahornberg peak near the town of Altaussee in the Styrian Salzkammergut region. Salt extraction in Salzkammergut was already in full swing at the time and probably underwent a significant technical modernization during Otakar's reign, leading to factory-like mining operations and the construction of pumping and sinking works for brine extraction. These technical feats were once again under the direction of the technically skilled Cistercian monks of Rein. It is documented that Abbot Gerlach from Rein gathered experience in 1146 about the technical installations of the spring brine catchments and boiling plants at the saltworks of Reichenhall near Salzburg. The Cistercians of the Harz region in present-day Germany had already obtained the relevant mining knowledge years before. This example is an excellent illustration of how the medieval 'technology transfer' by the Cistercian monks of Rein, laid down in 1129 by Leopold the Strong, the father of Otakar III, permanently changed and modernized forms of the Styrian economy in the twelfth century.⁹

7 Reismann, *Sozialgeschichte der steirischen Hammerarbeiter*, 3.

8 Reismann, *Sozialgeschichte der steirischen Hammerarbeiter*, 5 f.

9 Reismann, *Steiermark*, 59 f.

With regard to salt mining in the Styrian Salzkammergut, the early Habsburg Duke Albrecht I had already tried to expand production to the Gosau Valley in present-day Upper Austria and to oust the Hallein salt from Austria. The sovereign therefore invested in his operation on the Styrian side of the Pötschen Pass. Around 1300, the old salt pans, that had existed already in the twelfth century, were enlarged and moved from Altaussee to Bad Aussee, which had been granted market rights a short time earlier. This happened because the firewood supply at the old location was no longer sufficient. The larger pans required relatively less wood for salt production, and it was easier to take the wood to the new location by drifting. This is the time when skilled workers, the so-called *Hallinger*, started to gain strength and formed their own trade union. In 1334, there were 24 such Hallingers owning their own salt kilns and hereditary labour rights to the salt pans of the Styrian duke. The total revenue from the salt pans in the Styrian Salzkammergut increased fivefold between 1267 and 1335! After the precise regulation of the salt sales area in the last third of the 14th century, salt production in Ausseer Land continued to increase. This, on the other hand, led to an increase in wood consumption.¹⁰

The duke of Styria intervenes from the fifteenth century onwards to regulate trade

In 1425, the duke of Styria limited the number of *Hallingers* in Bad Aussee to sixteen, and finally, at the time of the reorganization of the Styrian iron industry, from 1448 onwards they were gradually eliminated because of their excessive power and influence. This development marked the beginning of the later Austrian salt monopoly. However, the supply of salt pans with sufficient charcoal still had to be regulated.

The upswing during the regency of Friederich III was also significant in the iron industry. In 1449, he issued his own iron ordinance which regulated all matters relating to the sale and taxation of iron, as well as the level of wages and the purchasing areas for livestock and victuals, which supplied the miners and smelters. These regulations came at the right time, for technological development had resulted in tremendous progress in the iron industry. It is in 1439 that the owners of the big furnaces driven by waterwheels, the *Radmeister* are first mentioned. The hammer mills became more modern and efficient and finally migrated from the Erzberg to the valleys of Upper Styria and further, as it had become impossible in the narrower area to provide the necessary combustion material, charcoal, and mine timber, and to cater for the large workforce and their families. In this context, rules had to guide

¹⁰ Mittermüller, *Das Montanwesen*, 89.

a massively expanded and eminently important economic factor. Soon everything in the country depended on the so-called *Bergsegen*, the ‘welfare of the mining industry’, ranging from the farmer who provided the food, the lumberjacks and charcoal burners who secured the combustion supply, to the carter and the innkeeper. If the iron industry flourished, the whole country lived well; if the iron industry was in crisis, the entire population suffered.¹¹

Maximilian, the successor to Friederich III, continued his father’s reforms. As early as 1495, he appointed Hans von Maltitz as the first and highest mining master of the five Lower Austrian provinces, to whom the individual mining judges were subordinated, and in 1499 another attempt was made to centrally regulate iron production and supply. A first order of forestry was also sought, since the forest and the charcoal obtained from it ensured the combustion material in the Styrian mining industry! As early as 1499, the first *Waldberaitung*, a special form of forest inspection, was carried out. In the course of this, in Upper Styria the ‘Black Forest’ and ‘High Forests’, the way the sovereign and private individuals designated the types of forests according to their use, were precisely mapped, and it was determined what type of wood should be used in each area.¹²

Closely connected with these reforms, however, and reinforced by the 1517 ‘mountain ordinance’, was a reorganization of the Styrian duke’s forestry regime. The duke now claimed most of the forests for himself, wherever they were located. This was understood to mean forests that were little or not at all burdened by peasant cultivation, i.e., forests in which the subjects did not obtain wood for the estate or their own domestic needs. This regulation particularly affected the immensely large woodlands and forests of the monasteries of Admont and Göss near Leoben. The beginnings of centrally regulated forestry in Styria are thus closely connected with mining and the mining industry.¹³

As a result of these developments, there was a need for bringing in the required charcoal, mine timber, and pit wood. Wood drifting down mountain streams and rivers was used for this purpose in Styrian forestry from the fourteenth century at the latest. It made it possible to transport wood from distant or impassable areas to places where there was an above-average demand. The oldest record of drifting in Styria is in the 1327 foundation charter of the monastery of Neuberg an der Mürz in the eastern part of Upper Styria (Fig. 2).¹⁴

11 Reismann, *Steiermark*, 100.

12 Reismann, *Steiermark*, 107.

13 Mittermüller, *Das Montanwesen*, 396.

14 Hafner, *Die Holztrift*, 583.



Figure 2 The Mürz rake at Krampen near Neuberg an der Mürz, built by the monastery of Neuberg an der Mürz, used until the 1950s (collection Reismann)

There were three regions where drifting mostly took place. Early on, it happened in Salzkammergut with its salt pans; from the early sixteenth century, with the expansion of the blast furnaces and smelting works and the fatigue of the nearby forests, the greater Eisenerz-Vordernberg area was added, and thirdly, the city of Graz entered as a customer. It had become a royal seat under Friedrich III and was therefore subject to significant growth. The main destination of the *Trift*, however, was the iron industry. In 1627, the nineteen Innerberg blast furnaces needed about 17,000 tons of charcoal annually, and the fourteen Vordernberg blast furnaces about 10,000 tons. In Innerberg, this amount increased to about 28,000 tons by 1784, while in Vordernberg to 23,000 tons.¹⁵

As early as the sixteenth century, the planning and construction of large timber transport systems began in Styria by order of the sovereign. This was carried out by the most experienced timber and enclosure masters in Central Europe. At the beginning, the foresters, most of whom were forest masters of the Styrian duke, usually only had to assess the necessity of such a construction, possibly supervise the construction, and settle the accounts. The construction of the first rake in the Mur in Leoben and a new rake on the Traun near Bad Aussee fall precisely into this phase.¹⁶

¹⁵ Roth, *Trift und Flösserei*, 47 f

¹⁶ Hafner, *Steiermarks Wald*, 179 and 182.

The Leoben Mur rake was used to remove and char the wood destined for the Vordernberg blast furnaces and was brought from the Upper Mur Valley along the drift path. In 1502, the first rake was built on the Enns in Hieflau to secure the Innerberg smelting works, and in 1517 Leoben received a second Mur rake. Specially appointed foresters had to control the forests dedicated to these rakes and ensure that they were managed as regularly as possible. As a result, several new blast furnaces were built, and iron production increased. This iron was sorely needed, because the ever-increasing Ottoman threat necessitated the production of more weapons.¹⁷

The salt pans in the Styrian Salzkammergut also consumed large quantities of wood. The first mention of the construction of rakes in the Styrian Salzkammergut dates from 1499, when Heinrich Wuest was sent from Hall in Tyrol to Aussee to investigate the matter. In 1502, he returned to Aussee with Dr. Fuxmagen and the foreman Hans Telhag from Kempten in Allgäu to build a rake. Where exactly this rake was built is as unclear as the question of which rakes and works were destroyed by a flood in 1505. The restoration of the rakes was carried out by the bailiff and the foreman of the salt pan in Hall in Tyrol.¹⁸

The construction of the first Mur rake in Leoben is closely related to the crisis in the supply of combustion material and charcoal for the Vordernberg blast furnaces around 1489. After the forests in the immediate vicinity had been practically hacked dry, the tradesmen and the owner of the blast furnaces were allowed to exchange a third of the iron they produced for provisions and charcoal. This in turn raised the cost price of the iron to the point of being uneconomical.¹⁹ However, it was not until 1499, in connection with the Styrian duke's *Waldberaitung*, i.e., forestry approval, that the large Mur rake was built in the Mur bend at about the level of today's railway station of Leoben, also according to the plan of the saltworks administrator Heinrich Wuest, who later rose to the position of forest master of the Styrian duke, and was one of the best-known haulage experts in the Alpine region around 1500. From then on, urgently needed coal wood could be transported from the side valleys as far as Weißkirchen near Judenburg, where there were large forest stocks belonging to the Styrian duke, to Leoben the 'Kohlländ' near the rake, where the charcoal was produced. In Weißkirchen itself, corresponding drifting huts and reamers were built as late as 1499.²⁰

17 Reismann, *Steiermark*, 107.

18 Hollwöger, *Aussee Land*, 71.

19 Pirchegger, *Eisenwesen bis 1564*, 50 ff.

20 Pirchegger, *Eisenwesen bis 1564*, 54.

The rake building in Leoben under the direction of the forest master Sigmund Paumgartner from Eisenerz was completed in 1501.²¹ It existed, together with a second one built before 1517,²² until the nineteenth century (Figs 3 and 4).

From the beginning, the highest authority regarding the maintenance of the Mur rakes, as well as the *Klaus- and Ries-works* at Weißkirchen was the Styrian forest master, who not only determined the quantities of wood to be felled and drifted, but also had to ensure that the drifting works were in good condition. The forest master also was the highest authority in forest management and control on behalf of the sovereign. His influence was so strong that the owners of the blast furnaces had to call him to inspect the forest before they began to cut a new forest they had acquired.

The *Waldberaitung* of the year 1499 also precisely defined the forests assigned to each iron production center of Upper Styria. Eisenerz, for example, in addition to the wood from the directly surrounding forests obtained wood from the forests of the Liesing Valley, the Tragöss Valley near Bruck an der Mur, and the Enns Valley from Gstatterboden to Landl and Wildalpen, i.e., within a radius of up to fifty kilometres.

No matter how well the forests had been regulated, many were in a deplorable state, particularly due to the temporary recurrence of fire clearing to grow grain, and because the predominant form of timber production was clear-cutting enormous areas. Poor forest management was the most important cause of the floods and inundations that subsequently occurred everywhere, which will be described later.

About drifting wood from the clear cuts, it should be noted that at the end of winter and the melting of the snow, coal wood was first drifted onto the upper Leobner rake, and when it was full, onto the lower one.²³

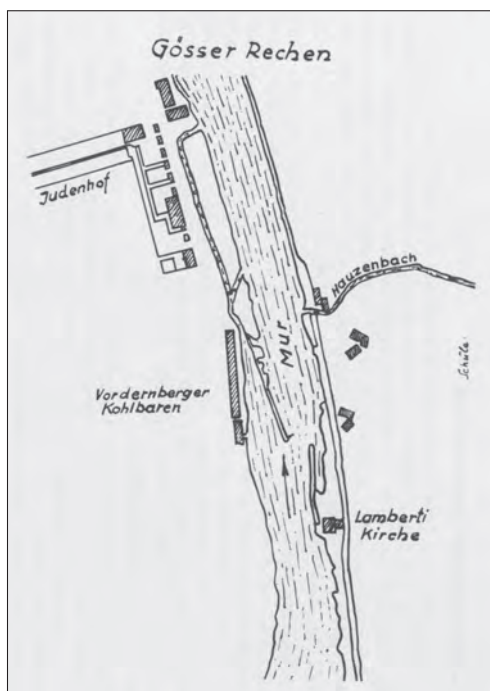


Figure 3 Plan of the Mur rake at Leoben Göss built in 1501 (from: Leobener Strauß)

21 Hafner, *Flößerei, Trift und Schifffahrt*, 82.

22 Pirchegger, *Eisenwesen bis 1564*, 55.

23 Pirchegger, *Eisenwesen bis 1564*, 56.



Figure 4 The remaining stone base of the Mur rake in Leoben Göss.

Photo taken by Bernhard Reismann, February 2012

In connection with the Styrian duke's 1501 and 1502 forest surveys, it was also decided to build the first Enns rake in Hieflau, for which wood was initially drifted from the almost inexhaustible forests of Admont Monastery.²⁴ The commission for the construction of this rake in Hieflau was appointed on 12 June 1502, consisting of Sigmund Paumgartner, the forest master in Eisenerz, and officials in Hallstatt, Aussee, Innerberg (Eisenerz), and Vordernberg. They decided on the river knee in Hieflau as the location of the rake building. It is not exactly known when the first rake in Hieflau was actually built, but an imperial letter of 26 September 1516 to the forester Hans Haug mentions that the rake on the Enns would be cleaned and finished before winter.²⁵ However, within a short time, charcoal from Hieflau was no longer sufficient to supply the Innerberg ironworks with combustion material and charcoal. Emperor Maximilian had already suggested building another, larger Enns rake in Großreifling to collect the drift wood from the Salza catchment area, and this decision again was confirmed in 1535 as a result of a commission of the Styrian duke. In 1538, the bailiff and the owners of the blast furnaces in Innerberg were informed by the government of Graz that it was their strong wish to build a rake on the Enns near Reifling, and that the wood and gravel belonging to Admont Monastery were needed for this purpose.²⁶ The rake on the Enns at Großreifling,

24 Pirchegger, *Eisenwesen bis 1564*, 55.

25 Hafner, *Steiermarks Wald*, 184.

26 StLA, LAA Antiquum, Gruppe XIII, Slipcase 237, booklet *Bau eines Rechens zu (Groß)Reifling 1538*.

however, was finally built on the basis of a commission in April 1565, followed by another one in June 1567, according to the plans of the ingenious Tyrolean hydraulic engineer Hans Gasteiger (1499–1577) (Fig. 5).²⁷



Figure 5 The rake at Großreifling in a depiction by Clobucchiarich from around 1820 (private ownership)

Gasteiger was active in hydraulic engineering from 1538 and was appointed to Vienna in 1554 to clear the Danube between Krems and Vienna of stone blocks and tree trunks. He was ennobled in 1561 and was commissioned to build the rake on the Enns at Großreifling in 1567 (Fig. 6).²⁸ The rake was probably largely completed by 1570. Situated in a bend of the Enns, the rake then stretched to a length of 571 metres from the right bank of the Enns in a wide arc towards its left bank. It consisted of 264 pillars, and by means of their own pulleys, called *Ganauf*, the wood drifted on the Enns could be pulled out of the water and stored on land for subsequent charring.²⁹

²⁷ Hafner, *Flößerei, Trift und Schifffahrt*, 83 f. and StLA, IÖ Hofkammer Sachabteilung, carton 53, booklet. 1, report, dated 12 December 1567, Reifling.

²⁸ Hafner, *Flößerei, Trift und Schifffahrt*, 84.

²⁹ Zitzenbacher, *Landeschronik*, 121 and Hafner, *Flößerei, Trift und Schifffahrt*, 86.

Ecological effects of overexploitation of the forest

The unregulated overexploitation of Upper Styrian forests during the Middle Ages and early modern times, quickly led to ecological problems. The absorptive capacity of the forest soil was lost, and this multiplied flood events along the rivers, especially at their lower reaches. It is noticeable that the early reports of floods up to about 1750 refer mainly to Upper Styria, meaning the parts of the country where the forest was massively logged for producing charcoal and for the steel industry. These floods were certainly felt along the Mur as well.

Around the year 1400, the Mur apparently began to run wild, which was visibly manifested in the shifting of the river. Around 1400, it still flowed directly through the present Abstall Basin (Abstaller Becken) in present-day Slovenia, south between Mureck and Bad Radkersburg. However, from about 1420 onwards, triggered by a landslide near Frattendorf/Vratja vas opposite Mureck, the Mur River began to shift further and further north and to increasingly widen its bed.³⁰ At the same time, extensive protection and regulation work was also started in the area. A definitive diversion of the Mur is mentioned, for example, in June 1446.³¹

From the second half of the sixteenth century, news of protective constructions and bank obstructions on the Mur in the Graz area is more frequent. A Mur flood in 1572 not only swept away the important Mur bridge in Frohnleiten, but also severely damaged the installed bank protections along the right bank of the Mur at Graz. Thus, it is known that, at least in the middle course of the Mur, appropriate bank protection structures were already in place around the middle of the sixteenth century. In the summer of 1634, the floods of the Mur damaged the large protective structures near and below the Karlau castle of the Styrian duke and emperor south of Graz, so that the castle and the duke's nearby animal garden were in great danger.³²



Figure 6 Funerary monument of Hans Gasteiger at the parish church of Landl near Großreifling, (Photo: Bernhard Reismann)

30 Wurzer, *35 Jahre Mur-Abkommen*, 11.

31 StLA, AUR, Urk. Nr. 6.034a, 9 June 1446, Vienna.

32 StLA, LAA Antiquum, Gruppe XIII, Slipcase 150, report, dated 19 September 1634.

Especially at Fernitz, south of Graz, the Mur was constantly raging. In the autumn of 1645 and the spring of 1646, when the peasants were already hard hit by the Thirty Years' War due to overhunting of game, hunting, and soldiers roaming around and begging, the land of the peasants in Neudorf and Thondorf in Fernitzboden south of Graz was affected by severe flooding. The two villages sought assistance from landlords, noblemen, and neighbours and wanted to do some work themselves. They arranged for the necessary carpenters to build a large defence wall and provided the material.³³

Early records of flood damage on the River Enns have survived only in a few cases, especially concerning the middle course of the river between Trautenfels-Neuhaus and the entrance to the Gesäuse, which later became overgrown. For the Haus and Gröbming area, on the other hand, situated on the upper reaches of the river in Styria, it is known that in February 1661, after severe flood damage in the course of 1660, the Salzburg diocese as the landlord requested the Salzburg administrator in Haus and Gröbming to submit a detailed report on the damage and requested a casual estimate of the repair costs.³⁴

The River Mürz, along whose course there were numerous blast furnaces and hammer mills, had the character of a torrent, especially in its upper region up to Neuberg. However, river damage with severe flooding consequences is only known in the middle course and from after 1550, which is probably due to the fact that significant forest areas in the Mürz catchment area were sacrificed to the more intensive and expanding mining and hammer industry from the sixteenth century onwards. The resulting reduced sponge capacity also contributed to the acceleration of water runoff in this region and, thus, to enormous flood peaks, the consequences of which soon appeared below Mürzzuschlag. In 1606, for example, the Neuberg Abbot Caspar informed the provincial parliament in Graz that a flood in August 1605 had ravaged the estates and properties two miles around the monastery, sweeping away houses, barns, and stables.³⁵

In 1643, the lord of Hohenwang near Langenwang, Christoph von Schärffenberg, reported to the provincial parliament in Graz that due to constant rainfall in the summer there had been such significant floods on the River Mürz that hammer mills, mills, bank protection structures, and lordship estates, as well as fish stocks in Langenwang and Kindberg had been destroyed or seriously affected. Schärffenberg was subsequently promised a relief contribution of 3,000 guilders for a period of three years, which was deducted from the tax he had to pay.³⁶

33 StLA, LAA Antiquum, Gruppe XIII, Slipcase 150, file from the year 1646, otherwise undated.

34 StLA, A. Haus und Gröbming, carton 33, booklet 102, report, dated 25 February 1661.

35 StLa, LAA Antiquum, Gruppe III, Slipcase 150, file from the year 1606, otherwise undated.

36 StLA, LAA Antiquum, Gruppe III, Slipcase 150, file from the year 1643, otherwise undated.

Scientific foundations and regulation of forestry under Maria Theresa

Forestry, which was first regulated in the interest of Styrian mining under Maximilian I shortly before 1500, was placed on a new, more modern basis under Maria Theresa from 1743 onwards, following a new forest survey in Upper Styria.

This forest inspection ruthlessly revealed the deplorable state of the Styrian forests. In addition to overexploitation traders practised for the production of charcoal in their own forests or in rented forests, the peasant forests were also found in a pitiful condition. The farmers of Upper Styria had to use the forests in several ways. On the one hand, they themselves also produced charcoal for the blast furnaces and hammer mills in the surrounding area, on the other hand, they had to use them as additional pasture for cattle. Driving of cattle and goats into the forests damaged the tree population, as did the production of chopped spruce branches for bedding in the stables by ‘*Schnaiteln*’, the special economic form of ‘*Brandwirtschaft*’, i.e., grow-

ing corn and barley on previously fire-cleared forest areas, over-felling in the interest of the mining industry and a practically unregulated rejuvenation of the forest.³⁷

But it was not only the farmers’ forests that showed signs of abuse. The forests of large landowners also suffered from the system of clear cutting, and also from some ancestral rights that the farmers enjoyed, such as the right to allow cattle to graze in the forests, the so-called ‘*Bluemsuech*’.

A further legal regulation was finally brought about by Maria Theresia’s new Forest Law passed in the Duchy of Styria in 1767 (Fig. 7), which was only superseded by the Imperial Forest Act of 1852. These Forest Regulations attempted to establish the regulated use of forests according to modern criteria and ordered regular investigations into forest excesses, which were to be

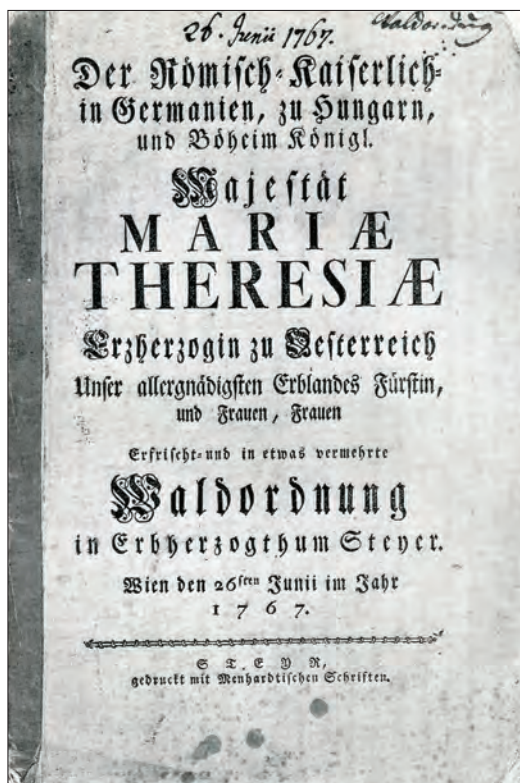


Figure 7 Front page of the Maria-Theresa’s “Waldordnung” from 1767, Steiermärkisches Landesarchiv (Photo: Franz Hafner)

37 Reismann, *Steiermark*, 155, and Hafner, *Steiermarks Wald*, 62 ff.

punished. For the second time after being targeted at the *Vollständige Waldordnung für das Herzogtum Steyr in 1695*—which was actually quite unsuccessful—measures for targeted reforestation were also laid down.

As early as 1755, a survey and inspection of the forests of Upper Styria was begun, which lasted for years and was summarized in 1767 in the so-called *Waldtomus*. In twenty-eight volumes, every forest in Upper Styria was precisely recorded with regard to its owner, its stock and condition and its possible use for the Styrian iron industry within the next hundred years. The property boundaries, forms of use and grazing rights in these forests and on the neighbouring mountain pastures were also noted.³⁸

Fossil coal instead of charcoal and the macroeconomic consequences

From the beginning of the eighteenth century, some attempts were made in the province of Styria to operate the ironworks with mineral coal, then called *Steinkohle* or 'hard coal'. However, unlike in the model country of industrialization, England, iron and coal deposits in Styria were spatially separated.

The Seegraben coalmine near Leoben, the oldest known deposit of fossil coal in Styria, was discovered as early as 1604 by James Camworth, an English-born Carinthian ironworker and watchmaker. However, a first attempt to mine this deposit in 1606 failed. Camworth is also said to have discovered coal deposits in the Kapfenberg area.³⁹

The Schwarzenberg princes, however, found and developed the coal deposit of Fohnsdorf near Zeltweg from 1718 onwards, followed a few years later by the Fürst tradesmen from Thörl near Aflenz with coal mining in Seegraben near Leoben, where coal had first been mined for a few years as early as 1606. Caspar von Lierwald, another mining contractor from Leoben, began coal mining at the neighbouring Münzenberg in 1726, and around 1770 mining began in the coal deposits in Western Styria, as well as near Graz. The mining entrepreneur Jgnaz von Reichenberg, in turn, successfully mined coal in the Mürztal from around 1770.⁴⁰

At first, however, these mines were mainly developed for the purpose of alum production, especially as the sale of fossil coal to the blast furnaces and hammer mills in the immediate vicinity was initially out of the question or, at best, was possible to

38 Hafner, *Steiermarks Wald*, 65–73.

39 StLA, OBA Leoben, Slipcase 128, file 1606 – from 10 June 1606, Application of the Chamber Councillor Hans Harrer zu Adelsbühel for the granting of a mining right to the coal above Leoben (this exciting file has not yet been appropriately scientifically processed).

40 Reismann, *Steiermark*, 162.

a limited extent. The traders' reservations about the high sulphur content of this coal and its alleged negative effects on the quality of their iron and steel products in the hammer mills initially had an extremely inhibiting effect. Charcoal was therefore given unconditional priority for firing. This only changed with the introduction of modern puddling technology in the smelters of Donawitz near Leoben, Kapfenberg, Krieglach, and Neuberg an der Mürz from the 1830s onwards, and with the planned construction of the Mürzzuschlag–Graz–Trieste railway line from 1842.⁴¹

Due to the overall economic development of the province of Styria, no stone was left unturned in this area in the forty years up to 1880.

The main reasons for this development were the headstart in England's industrialization, the ever-increasing momentum of the global market, which made English iron cheaper than Styrian iron in the port of Trieste, and finally a structural change in Styria itself, which started with the construction of the railway lines around 1840. The latter development led in a few years to the establishment of a subcontracting iron industry at the expense of the old hammer mills, and it made it necessary to switch from charcoal to fossil coal.

After the end of the first iron and steel crisis between 1862 and 1864, the *Innerberger Hauptgewerkschaft*, founded in 1625, was sold in 1866 for 14.5 million guilders to private investors around the *Österreichische Creditanstalt*, which had already begun to clean up outdated structures. Many obsolete hammer mills of the main union throughout the Enns Valley were immediately abandoned. Several other large mining companies at the same time merged to form the *St. Ägydi-Kindberger*, the *Neuberg-Mariazeller*, and the *Vordernberg-Köflacher Montanindustriegesellschaft*, which, after another crisis in the iron industry during the 1870s, were united with the help of French capital in 1881 to form the *Alpine-Montan-Gesellschaft* (ÖAMG). Other large private companies were also bought, including the important Friedauwerke in the Vordernberg area and the *Hüttenberger Eisenwerksgesellschaft* in Carinthia. The ÖAMG subsequently closed smaller operating sites. Small, private mining companies decided to give up from 1881 onwards, as they were no longer able to cope with the growing competition from the ÖAMG. In 1901, only five modern blast furnaces were still operating in the entire Styria, which by now were heated with coke instead of charcoal and supplied 350,000 tonnes of pig iron and steel annually, about seven times as much as all the Styrian iron and steel works together in 1850.⁴²

This restructuring of the Styrian coal and steel industry began around 1860 and intensified from around 1875 onwards. One of the consequences, in conjunction

41 Reismann, "Der Kohlenbergbau Urgental/Dürnberg bei Bruck."

42 Reismann, *Steiermark*, 226–28.

with the expansion of the railway network, was that the ÖAMG, which until then had almost entirely covered its needs with charcoal, now relied on mineral coal, therefore its large forest holdings were more of a burden than a bliss. Thus, in a few years, the ÖAMG sold no less than 104,159 hectares of forest property, of which 47,166 hectares went to the Ministry of Arable Farming in Vienna, about 17,800 hectares to Emperor Franz Josef himself for the '*Allerhöchsten Familienfonds*', and on 1 January 1889 no less than 26,459 hectares of forest landed in one fell swoop to the Province of Styria. These forests were located in the Enns Valley, in the so-called '*Gesäuse*' and near St. Gallen at the River Enns, and formed the basis of today's '*Steiermärkische Landesforste*'. Other institutions, companies, and individuals acquired further forest shares, and in 1979, VOEST Alpine, as the legal successor to the ÖAMG, owned no more than 3,109 hectares of forest in Styria.

The previous protoindustrial charcoal production was replaced by a timber industry with a reduction in the number of trees felled. However, this transition also meant a change from the previously predominant drifting to overland transport. This development was accelerated in Upper Styria by the construction of the Crown Prince Rudolf Railway (1875). As one of the consequences, the end of timber drifting and drift rakes was approaching.⁴³



Figure 8 The Enns rake at Hieflau in 1896 (collection Reismann)

43 Hafner, *Steiermarks Wald*, 300 ff.

Until about 1890, for example, the Hieflau rake was considered a special technical sight (Fig. 8). After that year, it was taken out of service due to the new economic conditions caused by the constantly declining demand for charcoal. No longer maintained, it suffered a devastating breach in 1906 due to an Enns flood, after which its superstructure was removed (Fig. 9).⁴⁴



Figure 9 The Enns rake at Hieflau in 1910, after its devastation in 1906 (collection Reismann)

In 1853, the rake of Großreifling on the River Enns was still described as the largest in the entire Habsburg Empire. However, when it fell victim to a flood in 1862, its restoration was not even considered due to the changing economic conditions.

The so-called *Gamsrechen*, a rake on the River Salza near Großreifling was used for drifting until 1898, although it had been severely damaged by a flood the year before. However, due to the construction of forest roads in the region and the change in the firing of blast furnaces, this rake was no longer necessary either.

The end point of the drift on the River Kainischtraun in the Styrian Salzkammergut for the salt works in Bad Aussee was formed by the Traxel rake, a catchment rake with a swell, sand grid, and rake bar. In 1888, it was 196 meters long and consisted of eleven ashlar pillars, two wooden yokes, and lifting gates. Its capacity was 14,900 cubic metres. After this rake had also been severely damaged by the Traun floods in 1897, the drift in the area of the River Kainischtraun was finally abandoned in 1901.⁴⁵

44 Hafner, *Steiermarks Wald*, 185.

45 Hafner, *Steiermarks Wald*, 195 f.

New large forest estates are emerging: The example of the Mayr-Melnhof family

Parallel to this development, another one was taking place: large private mining entrepreneurs such as the Mayr-Melnhof family in Donawitz near Leoben, who had already started to acquire forests around 1850 in order to cover their own needs of combustion material, invested in the acquisition of further forest property, land, and soil by selling their mining companies and industrial enterprises to the ÖAMG. In this way the Mayr-Melnhof family became probably the largest private forest owner in the country. The Schwarzenberg family in the Murau area was similar, and in a weakened form, also the Seßler family of tradesmen in the Mürztal, who acquired large forests in the Krieglach-Alpl area and in the Stanz Valley near Kindberg in the early years of the second half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁶ The economic rise of the Mayr-Melnhof family as an important member of the Styrian mining industry began with Franz Mayr junior, born in 1810 as the son of the Leoben innkeeper and entrepreneur Franz Mayr. He owned hammer mills near Bruck an der Mur and in 1830 acquired smaller mills in Leoben-Waasen and Kapfenberg, the latter from the estate of the owner Franz Michael Schragl.

Franz Mayr junior had completed courses at the Joanneum's Technical College in Graz and Vordernberg, and furthered his education on study trips through France and England, where he became acquainted with the modern puddling process.

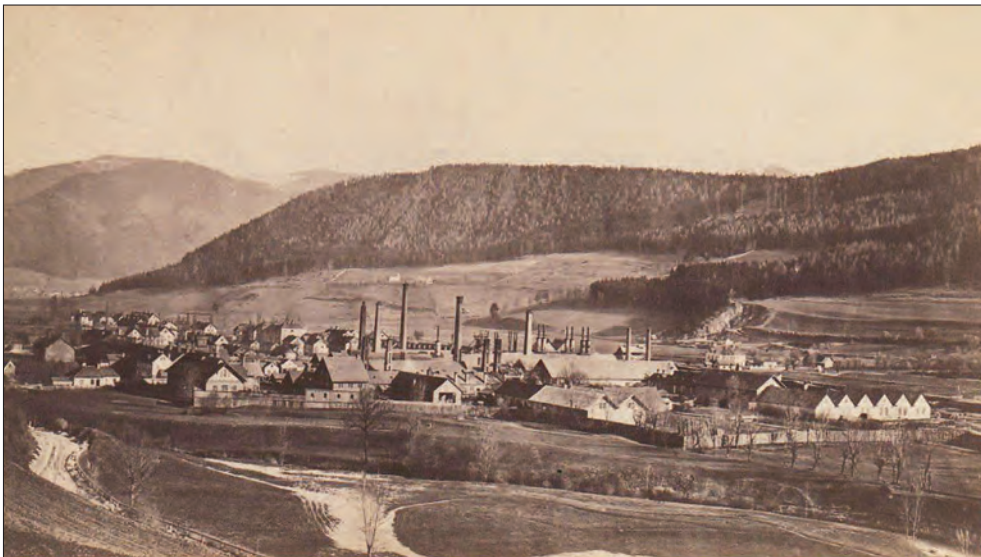


Figure 10 The Donawitz steel factory at Leoben-Donawitz, shortly after being sold from the Mayr-Melnhof family to the Innerberger Hauptgewerkschaft (collection Reismann)

⁴⁶ Reismann, *Steiermark*, 226–28.

Together with his father, in 1836 he built the *Franzenshütte* steelworks in Donawitz near Leoben in the place of an old hammer mill, where he wanted to introduce the puddling process. After producing perfect puddling iron in Kapfenberg, the same year, the puddling process was introduced in Donawitz. As early as 1843, the Donawitz company was extended by the new *Carolihütte*. In 1965, the Styrian historian Anton Adalbert Klein commented on these developments: “Thus, the Mayrian Foundation became the birthplace of the enormous Donawitz plant of today [...] The Kapfenberg plants continued to be the second focal point of their already respectable industrial complex” (Fig. 10).⁴⁷

Raised to the rank of baron in 1872 and awarded the title ‘von Melnhof’, Franz Mayr junior, who correctly interpreted the signs of the times and the overall economic development, sold his company in the same year to the *Innerberger Hauptgewerkschaft*, which was merged into the ÖAMG in 1881. The entire complex was sold for 5.25 million guilders at the best moment, because in May 1873, in the wake of the Vienna stock market crash, there was a global economic crisis that paralysed the iron and steel industry (Fig. 11).



Figure 11 Timber delivery by forest workers of the Mary-Melnhof company at Leoben Gössgraben, postcard from 1905 (collection Reismann)

⁴⁷ Klein, *Franz Mayr-Melnhof*, 5–10.

As early as 1872, the Mayr von Melnhof family made an enormously important purchase in the Frohnleiten area. They acquired the Pfannberg and Weyer estates from the Counts Lobkowitz. The Kogl estate in St. Georgen in Upper Austria was also purchased the same year. The family estate had grown to more than 6,000 hectares by 1872. In 1873 and 1874, properties in the municipalities of Pernegg and Rothleiten north of Frohnleiten, covering more than 1,500 hectares, were acquired, and timber farming was started in that area as well. In 1875, the first property in the province of Salzburg followed, which later came to Friedrich Mayr-Melnhof, the second son of Franz III, together with the Upper Austrian property. Between 1876 and 1887, further properties were acquired throughout Styria, totalling around 10,000 hectares. In 1888, he bought more than 10,300 hectares from the former property of the *Vordernberger Radmeister-Communität*. These forests were in a highly precarious condition, as they had been literally plundered to produce charcoal. They were subsequently reforested in a targeted manner.

Franz Mayr von Melnhof simultaneously invested in the purchase of large forests. Between 1872 and 1889, he acquired 35,000 hectares of land, 28,600 hectares of which was forest land, in addition to his already considerable forest holdings, which he had previously needed for his own supply of charcoal for his industrial companies. This property spread over the greater Leoben area and over the Gößgraben and the Gamsgraben to the south as far as the present-day city of Frohnleiten. There, shortly



Figure 12 Hunting lodge of the Mayr-Melnhof Family at the “Hochalm” near Leoben Göss, postcard from 1914 (collection Reismann)

before his death in 1889, he built a wood grinding mill and a sawmill in Wannersdorf near Frohnleiten, which later developed into an important cardboard factory.⁴⁸

Franz II Freiherr Mayr von Melnhof transferred a total estate of 34,783 hectares, mostly forest, to his son and heir, Franz III Freiherr Mayr von Melnhof. Then only smaller purchases followed. By 1899, the estate had reached the size of 35,591 hectares. Of these, no less than 14,067 hectares came from purchases by the *Innerberger Hauptgewerkschaft*, the predecessor of the ÖAMG founded in 1881 (Figure 12).

These economic developments in the Styrian forestry sector marked the end of a development process that had started in the twelfth century and was always closely connected to the overall economic and political development. For centuries the forests, especially of fast-growing coniferous wood, in Upper Styria supplied mine timber and charcoal for the Styrian mining industry.

However, the Styrian mining industry also had a huge impact on the management of forests and led to their plundering and near devastation. On a more positive note, it also led to the early central, regulatory intervention of the Styrian duke. And finally, it was the full-scale technological conversion of the Styrian iron industry in the nineteenth century that gave a new form of utilisation and management to the forests in Upper Styria and that Styria still forms the 'Green Heart of Austria'.

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Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf's Diplomatic Mission to Saint Petersburg in 1755

Olga Khavanova 

Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Leninskiy Prospekt 32a, Moscow 119334; khavanova@inslav.ru

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Abstract. Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf is first and foremost known as an outstanding Austrian economist who greatly contributed to the national reform of finances and administrative efficiency. The early years of his career were spent in the diplomatic service under the guidance and patronage of Count Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, who placed much hope in the ambitious young aristocrat. One of the significant episodes of Zinzendorf's diplomatic career was a mission to Russia in 1755. Its formal pretext was to convey the congratulations of the imperial couple to Empress Elizabeth I on the birth of the heir to the throne, Grand Duke Paul. At the same time, Zinzendorf was entrusted with a secret mission of learning more about the main vectors of Russian foreign policy, establishing more confidential relations with the rival groupings at the St. Petersburg court, and promoting closer joint action between Vienna, London, and St. Petersburg against Prussia in the inevitable continental war. The witty analytical mind and exceptional sociability of Zinzendorf allowed him to accomplish both missions brilliantly, the results of which he reported to Kaunitz. This paper considers both the official and unofficial activities of the imperial and Austrian envoy during his visit, the complications he faced, and the solutions he found during his two journeys to Russia in 1755 against the backdrop of Austrian-Russian relations in their heyday on the eve of the Seven Years' War.

Keywords: Austrian-Russian diplomatic relations, symbolic communication, Russian court, diplomatic dispatches

Count Ludwig Friedrich Julius von Zinzendorf (1721–1780), “the outstanding theoretical mind” of the Habsburg Monarchy, as Grete Klingenstein characterized him in a study on Mercantilism and Physiocracy,¹ is most widely known as having been a leading expert in finance, a councilor at the *Directorium in Publicis et Cameralibus* (Direction of Administration and Finance), and the head of the *Hofrechenkammer* (Court Audit Office).² Yet there was an episode in his career which is usually only briefly, if at all, mentioned in his biographies: a diplomatic mission to St. Petersburg

1 Klingenstein, “Between Mercantilism and Physiocracy,” 183.

2 See: Dickson, *Finance and Government*, vols 1–2.

in 1755 on the occasion of the birth of the heir to the Russian throne Grand Duke Paul (the future Paul I).³ Nevertheless, its significance for Austrian-Russian bilateral relations and the turbulent circumstances surrounding the visit reveal mechanisms of backstage diplomacy that make it deserving of particular study. This paper offers an account of the mission based on Zinzendorf's letters, dispatches, and comprehensive memoirs to State Chancellor Count Wenzel Anton Kaunitz (1711–1793), as well as reports of the imperial and Austrian ambassador to St. Petersburg Count Nicolaus Esterházy (1711–1764),⁴ the Russian and Austrian sovereigns' letter-exchange, ceremonial acts regarding the solemn audience at the Russian court, and *Wienerisches Diarium* reports. It strives to show Austrian-Russian relations as the communication between two dynasties, two courts, and two governments at a turning point in European diplomacy on the eve of the reversal of alliances, or the diplomatic revolution of 1756, and the role of Ludwig von Zinzendorf as a diplomat in action, promoting and securing bilateral relations.

Family and early career

In the age of confessionalization, the family of Zinzendorf, in common with many others in the Habsburg Lands, was split into Catholic and Protestant branches.⁵ Ludwig's great-grandfather Maximilian Erasmus sold his estates to Catholic relatives and moved to Nuremberg, where, on 23 September 1721, the future Austrian statesman was eventually born. The second marriage of Ludwig's father Friedrich Christian (1697–1756) was to Saxon Countess Christiana Sophia Callenberg, who introduced her husband to the court circles of Dresden. Ludwig's half-brother from this marriage was Count Karl von Zinzendorf (1739–1813), later governor of Trieste and a renowned diarist.⁶ After a rigorous home-based Pietist education, Ludwig's early socialization began at the age of 17 in the Saxon army. However, he soon moved to Lower Austria with the ambitious hope of obtaining a position in the government and building an administrative career. Logical steps towards this goal were his conversion to Catholicism and joining the freemasonry. Much later, in 1764, when Maria Theresa established the Order of St. Stephen to reward the achievements of civil servants, Ludwig von Zinzendorf was among those who applied for this sign of royal grace. From the following lines, it is explicitly clear that his conversion

3 See: *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias*, 4, 516.

4 On his biography see: Khavanova, "Madridtől Szentpétervárig."

5 Ludwig's uncle, his father's half-brother Nicolaus Ludwig (1700–1760), was a renowned theologist, bishop of the Moravian Church and missionary who preached in the Netherlands and in Pennsylvania in North America.

6 See: Klingenstein, Farber, and Trampus, eds. *Europäische Aufklärung zwischen Wien und Triest*.

involved an act of breaking up with his Protestant family and a symbolic reunion with his Catholic ancestors:

“I descend from a family which, as is well known, has rendered the most faithful service as members of the most noble Estates here in Austria for seven hundred years [...]; since loyalty to the souverain is to be regarded as the greatest adornment of the nobility, this loyalty is peculiar to my family in such a way that at the time when most of the noble families in the country took part in the troublesome religious unrest and put aside their most submissive devotion to the highest souverain, the names of some Zinzendorfs were once to be seen among them, a circumstance which I take the liberty of mentioning for the sake of it, because various of Your Majesty's most glorious ancestors have deigned to show my family the most gracious satisfaction about it.”⁷

In Vienna, Zinzendorf skillfully profited from his ability to make useful acquaintances. Soon he became acquainted with Count Johann Joseph von Khevenhüller (1706–1776), whose protection paved Ludwig's way to the suite of Emperor Francis upon his coronation in Frankfurt in 1745, and following whose advice he completed a year at the University of Leipzig in 1746 and then successfully applied to a minor position in the government of Lower Austria.⁸ He was a regular guest in the salon of Princess Maria Anna Esterházy (née Lunatti-Visconti, 1713–1782), the wife of Prince Paul Anton II (1711–1762),⁹ the army officer and future general whom Zinzendorf had met during his military service. Maria Anna introduced him in 1749 to the future state chancellor Count Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz,¹⁰ who by that time was an experienced diplomat with a wide perspective on international relations, administration, and economics. Dissatisfied with the outdated system of aristocratic patronage at the expense of promoting talent, he quickly recognized Zinzendorf as an inquiring mind and encouraged him to read and translate from English and French and form a broader European perspective about the latest economic thinking.¹¹ In 1750, Kaunitz was appointed ambassador to Paris and invited Ludwig, among other young trainees, to join him. Another member of the Kaunitz

7 Alleruntertänigstes Anlegen und Bitten Ludwig Friederich Julius Grafen und Herrn von Zinzendorf und Potterdorf [...] über allergnädigste Verleihung des Großkreuzes des zum erneuernden hohen Ordens Sti Stephani Regis Hungariae betreffend, s. d. et. l. MNL-OL P 1058. 29. cs., no. 86.

8 Adler, *Political Economy*, 23–25. In this biographical survey, he uses mainly *Die Selbstbiographie des Grafen und Herrn Ludwig Friederich Julius von Zinzendorf*, 46–54.

9 See: Kalmár, “Adalékok.”

10 Klingenstein, *Der Aufstieg des Hauses Kaunitz*.

11 Adler, *Political Economy*, 26.

circle was the future ambassador to Turin, St. Petersburg, Warsaw, and Paris, Count Florimund Mercy d'Argenteau (1727–1794). His years in France were used to integrate with the intellectual milieu, to become acquainted with the economy, finances, and army of the French monarchy, and for travel, observation, and writing. Having returned to Vienna with broadened horizons and experiences, he was employed at the *Directorium in Publicis et Cameralibus* and made his future career in the financial sphere. One notable digression in his career was his turbulent trip to Russia in 1755.

The birth of the Russian Grand Duke

St. Petersburg and Vienna signed their first treaty in 1726. This remained on paper for a long time and was limited to the presence of envoys and ambassadors at the friendly court, and did not lead either to an intensification of trade and economic ties, or to actual cooperation on the battlefield—for example, in the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748). The two continental empires are rightfully called ideal allies in historiography: they had no mutual territorial claims, but they had common enemies: the Ottoman Porte, and later also Prussia. Thanks to the alliance with Austria, Russia strengthened its position in Europe, while the Viennese court could count on Russian weapons in case of a new war.¹²

It was precisely the need for friendship with Russia that explains the forced consent of Maria Theresa—surrounded by enemies—to the formal recognition in 1742 of the imperial title of the Russian tsars. However, the following year the alliance did not stand the test caused by the scandal surrounding the envoy Marquis Antonio Botta d'Adorno (1688–1774), who allegedly supported the aristocratic conspiracy aimed at overthrowing Elizabeth, and in 1744 Vienna and St. Petersburg broke off allied relations. However, Vice-Chancellor Mikhail Illarionovics Vorontsov (1714–1767) advised the Empress thus:

“And although, most gracious Empress, Your Imperial Majesty is personally distressed by the evil intention and deeds of the nefarious Botta [...] In the common interest of your state, it is dangerous to allow this fall of the House of Austria to happen, considering that, given the changes in Europe are frequent, Russia may need it to fight off the Turkish invasions.”¹³

12 Steppan, *Akteure am fremden Hof*; Duchhardt, *Balance of Power und Pentarchie*.

13 “A copy of the opinion which the vice-chancellor Count Vorontsov submitted to Her Imperial Majesty in Kiev on 11 September 1744.” In *Arkhiv kniazia Vorontsova*, vol. 2, 73 (original in Russian).

In 1746, the two courts signed a new treaty directed against Prussia, supplementing it with secret articles on joint military operations against the Turks. In 1753, the provisions of these secret articles were confirmed by a new treaty.¹⁴

The Russian tsars and the House of Austria arranged only one intermarriage: in 1799, Archduke Joseph (1776–1847), the younger son of Emperor Francis II(I) and the Palatine of Hungary, married Grand Duchess Aleksandra (1783–1801), the daughter of Paul I. As the pair had no prospect of inheriting the throne, the bride was allowed to keep her Greek Orthodox religion. The marriage was tragically short-lived: Alexandra Pavlovna died of puerperal fever. Yet in the 'golden age' of their close cooperation, these confessionally incompatible dynasties succeeded in establishing their continuing spiritual kinship through godparenthood.

In January 1747, as Maria Theresa was expecting a baby, she and Francis I sent official letters to Empress Elizabeth with an invitation for her to be the godmother of their future child, an archduke, or archduchess.¹⁵ The invitation was accepted, and as the 'Hungaro-Bohemian queen' gave birth to her third son, Empress Elizabeth was notified that she had become the godmother of the newly born Peter Leopold Joseph Johann Anton, and that at the baptism she had been represented by Herzog Karl of Lorraine (1712–1780), the Emperor's younger brother.¹⁶ Johann Joseph Khevenhüller wrote in his diary that Empress Elizabeth had requested the special favor of giving the newly born archduke the name 'Peter' out of love and veneration for her father Peter the Great.¹⁷ Angela Stöckelle, however, was of the opinion that the idea of naming the future archduke Peter (and the future archduchess 'Elizabeth') came from the ambassador at the Saint Petersburg Court, Baron Johann Franz von Pretlack (1708–1767).¹⁸ After his birth, the archduke was regularly mentioned as 'Peter Leopold' in the Viennese court calendars and newspapers until the early 1760s, even if in 1753 Maria Theresa had changed her son's official name-day from June 20 to November 15. Between 1754 and 1762, it was only the Russian minister who greeted the archduke on the name-day of St. Peter and Paul.¹⁹ Later on, the archduke became known as Grand Duke of Tuscany Pietro Leopoldo, and gave up the name Peter when he was crowned emperor of the Holy Roman Empire in 1790.²⁰

14 *Sbornik traktatov i konventsii*, 146–78, 183–88; Nelipovich, *Soiuz dvuglavykh orlov*.

15 Letter of Emperor Francis I to Empress Elizabeth, Vienna, January 1747, AVP RI, Fond (Fund) 32, Opis (Inventory) 2, Delo (File) 143; Letter of Empress Maria Theresa to Empress Elizabeth, Vienna, January 1747, *ibid.*, Delo 144.

16 Letter of Emperor Francis I to Empress Elizabeth, Vienna, 5 May 1747, AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 2, Delo 145; Letter of Emperor Francis I to Grand Duke Peter, Vienna, 5 May 1747, *ibid.*, Delo 146.

17 *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias*, 2, 153.

18 Stöckelle, "Taufzeremoniell," 323–24.

19 Beck, "...aus besonderer Distinction für den russisch[en] kaj[serlichen] Hof", 124–25.

20 Wandruszka, *Leopold II – Erzherzog von Österreich*, 17.

Godparenthood had already become one of the forms of establishing family relations with European courts under Peter I, when in 1715, at the baptism of tsarevich Petr Petrovich (1715–1719) in St. Petersburg, foreign monarchs were represented by the tsar's favorite Aleksandr Danilovich Menshikov (1673–1729) and the Danish minister. The Russian court was of the opinion that due to their remoteness from the European capitals, it was enough—until the formal acceptance of the godparents arrived—to obtain the formal assurance of the foreign diplomat that their monarch would accept the honor.²¹ As the future heir to the Russian throne, Paul was born on 1 October (20 September) 1755,²² and the next day Count Franz Santi (1683–1758), *Ober-Zeremonienmeister* of the Russian Court, met with the imperial and Austrian ambassador Count Nikolaus Esterházy (1711–1764) and asked him to inform his sovereigns Maria Theresa and Francis I that they were (*post festum*) invited to be the godparents of the newly-born grand duke. The baptism took place on October 6 (September 25) in the palace chapel. Esterházy was not invited, and the godparents were symbolically represented by Empress Elizabeth herself.²³

The consent of the imperial couple to be the godparents had to be officially requested by sending an embassy. Wishing to organize this act with due solemnity, the Russian court first intended to send to Vienna a person whose ancestry and rank would somehow smooth over the awkwardness that had arisen. According to Esterházy, the choice was then first for Count Petr Borisovich Sheremetev (1713–1788), the son of Peter the Great's associate, General Boris Petrovich Sheremetev (1652–1719), and the son-in-law of the late Chancellor Prince Alexei Mikhailovich Cherkassky (1680–1742). However, it turned out that the chamberlain and general (promoted in rank a few weeks before the birth of the grand duke, probably in anticipation of the planned mission to Vienna) fell ill in Moscow and was unable to quickly recover and leave for Vienna.

It also turned out that among the Russian chamberlains (as Esterházy reported to Vienna), none were fluent in German or French except for Baron Karl Efimovich Sievers (1710–1774). He belonged to a branch of the Sievers family, which had fallen on hard times and owed its change in fortune to the favor of the young Princess Elizabeth (who at that time had almost no hope of the throne) to the young Karl prior to her accession. In 1745, on the eve of the election of Maria Theresa's spouse Francis of Lorraine, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, the Saxon Elector August III exercised

21 Ageeva, *Diplomaticeskii tseremonial imperatorskoi Rossii*, 697.

22 Hereafter dates according to the Julian calendar are given in brackets.

23 Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Rudolph Joseph von Colloredo, St. Petersburg, 8 October 1754. ÖStA, HHStA StAbt, Russland I, Kt. 36, fol. 101 r–v (original in German); Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 8 October 1754, Ibid., Russland II. Kt. 36, fol. 106 r–v (original in German).

his right of imperial vicariate and promoted Sievers to imperial baron. In addition, and probably to add importance to the embassy, the twenty-year-old Count Petr Aleksandrovich Buturlin (1734–1787), of ancient aristocratic pedigree and the future Russian ambassador to Madrid (1762–1763), was also included in the delegation.

Two weeks after the birth of the grand duke, Baron Sievers and Count Buturlin travelled to Vienna with the notification letters from Empress Elizabeth and Grand Duke Peter (the future Peter III) to Maria Theresa and Francis I.²⁴ The embassy arrived on 29 (18) December 1754, and on 5 January 1755 (25 December 1754) Karl Sievers solemnly presented the imperial couple with the notification letters. In accordance with the custom established by Maria Theresa, Sievers in the following days received audiences with all her children: first, with the senior archdukes (the future Emperor Joseph II was 13 years old, his brother Karl was nine, and Empress Elizabeth's godson Peter Leopold was seven), then with the five archduchesses, each of whom greeted him with a compliment, and finally with the babies Ferdinand and Johanna, who were held on harnesses by their nurses.²⁵ The farewell audience for Baron Sievers was given by Francis I and Maria Theresa on 26 (15) January, and by the archdukes and archduchesses the next day. In the evening, Russian Ambassador Heinrich Karl Count von Keyserling (1697–1764) invited court society to his residence in Palais Rofrano to celebrate the birth of Grand Duke Paul. Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf, already appointed extraordinary envoy to St. Petersburg, was present to demonstrate his respect for the allied court.²⁶

At the end of January 1755 in Vienna, the texts of congratulation letters to Empress Elizabeth and Grand Duke Peter were compiled: they contained expressions of joy on the birth of the heir and their consent to act as godparents. Maria Theresa assured her “sister and friend” that:

“I earnestly wish that the new-born Grand Duke, in the great future hope for which he was chosen, reaches a perfect age, and a new guarantee will establish the closest and most useful union that exists between both

24 Concept of the notification letter of Empress Elizabeth to Emperor Francis I, St. Petersburg, 25 September 1754, AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, 1754, Delo 1 (in Russian and Latin); concept of the notification letter of Grand Duke Peter to Emperor Francis and Empress Maria Theresa, St. Petersburg, 20 September 1754, *ibid*, Delo 3. See also: Instruction for Karl Sievers leaving for Vienna, Delo 8, fol. 20r (original in Russian).

25 Report of Baron Karl Sievers to Empress Elizabeth, Vienna, 8 January 1755 (28 December 1754), AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, 1754, Delo 8, fol. 117v (original in Russian). Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger writes that Maria Theresa considered the ceremonial appearances of her children to be an important element of early preparation for monarchic duties. See: Stollberg-Rilinger, *Maria Theresa*, 468–69.

26 ÖStA, HHStA OMeA ZA-Prot. 22 Zeremonialprotokoll, 1755–1756, fol. 12v–15.

monarchies, in the observance of which in eternal times, as much as it depends on me, I will not fail to help.”²⁷

Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf, chosen for this mission by Chancellor Kaunitz, prepared to set off for St. Petersburg in January or February. The Russian court rushed the emissary, expecting him to arrive in the first week of Lent and to stay longer in order to take part in the large-scale festivities and balls thereafter.²⁸ However, owing to muddy roads, Zinzendorf only reached the Russian capital on 31 (20) March 1755. Princess Tatiana Golitsyna wrote to her son in London:

“He has come here. I presume I shall see him at the Court this week. There is great fame for his beauty and dignity. He has come at such a time that there is no amusement here. Inasmuch as it is the third week of Lent. I hardly believe him to stay here till Easter.”²⁹

The days after his arrival, Zinzendorf visited Great Chancellor Count Alexei Petrovics Bestuzhev-Riumin ld. 9. I. (1693–1766) and Vice-Chancellor Count Mikhail Illarionovich Vorontsov; on 2 April, *Ober-Zeremonienmeister* Count Franz Santi; on 3 April, Cabinet-Secretary Count Adam Vasilievich Olsufiev (1721–1784); and on 5 April the Saxon Minister Johann Ferdinand August von Funk. The audience with the empress was scheduled for 9 April, but “due to an illness that he suffered” it was postponed to 27 (16) April 1755,³⁰ Palm Sunday (Julian calendar).

Mission completed

Georg Braungart, in a study on court rhetoric, described the fundamental difference between academic speech imbued with humanistic knowledge and designed to be the culmination of a festive event, and courtly-political speech, which gains

27 Maria Theresa's congratulation letter to Empress Elizabeth, Vienna, 29 January 1755. AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 2, Delo 175. See also: Francis I's congratulation letter to Empress Elizabeth, Vienna, 26 January 1755. AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 2, Delo 171; Francis I's congratulation letter to Grand Duke Peter, Vienna, 26 January 1755. AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 2, Delo 172; Maria Theresa's congratulation letter to Grand Duke Peter, Vienna, 27 January 1755. AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 2, Delo 173. All originals are in Latin.

28 Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Wenzel Anton Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 4 March 1755. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Russland II, Kt. 37, fol. 36v.

29 Letter of Tatiana Golitsyna to Alexandre Golitzyn, St. Petersburg, 5 April (25 March) 1755, “Iz semeinoi khroniki roda Golitsynykh,” 18 (original in Russian).

30 Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Rudolph Joseph Collaredo, St. Petersburg, 31 Martii 1755, ÖStA, HHStA StAbt, Russland I, Kt. 36, 1755, fol. 205r–v (original in German); Rescript to Heinrich Karl Count von Keyserling, St. Petersburg, 18 April 1755, AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, 1755, Delo 3, fol. 122r (original in German).

meaning only from the place to which it is assigned in the ceremonial context. Unlike humanistic speeches often published as brochures which commemorated the author and their intellectual deeds, speeches given at court often perished, having fulfilled their function of filling an intended “empty space” in a “form” as appropriate as possible.³¹ The solemn ceremony held on 27 April was designed as a court event, yet the speeches given and their symbolic messages were of such importance that the related texts were published in *Wienerisches Diarium*.³²

Ludwig von Zinzendorf was received in the Winter Palace on 27 April 1755 at around noon, where he had travelled in the ambassador's carriage drawn by six horses. The Empress was accompanied by the chancellor on her right-hand side, and the vice-chancellor on her left. In the presence of the most prominent members of court society, he handed to the chancellor four letters in Latin, which were from Francis I and from Maria Theresa to both Empress Elizabeth and Grand Duke Peter, soon after arrival. During the audience, Zinzendorf delivered three short speeches (*Harangues*), and received responses. His speech to Elizabeth I, the happy and proud grand-aunt, was in German, and the answer on behalf of the empress was given in Russian by Great Chancellor Bestuzhev-Riumin. The speech to Grand Duke Peter, as was the habit in communication with the young count, was delivered in French, and the answer in the same language was read by *Kammerjunker* (the *Wienerisches Diarium* called him “chamberlain”³³) Lev Aleksandrovich Naryshkin (1733–1799). Both orators carefully avoided the circumstance that the grand duke was not only a relative of Emperor Francis, but also—as Duke of Holstein-Gottorp—his vassal. The third speech to Grand Duchess Catherine (the future Catherine II) was also given in French. Inasmuch as none of the grand duchess's chamberlains possessed French, the response

31 Braungart, *Hofberedsamkeit*, 59.

32 “Aus dem Rußischen Reich,” *Wienerisches Diarium*, June 4, 1755, no. 46, Anhang. In a similar way, the newspaper published the orations delivered at the audience given to Baron Pretlack who arrived in St. Petersburg with the notification that Maria Theresa had given birth to Arch-Duchess Maria Amalia (1746–1804) (see: “Aus dem Rußischen Reich,” *Wienerisches Diarium*, June 4, 1746, no. 45, Anhang) and at the audience given to Baron Kettler who was sent to St. Petersburg with the notification that Elizabeth at the baptism of the newborn Archduke Leopold had been symbolically represented by the emperor's brother Karl von Lorraine (see: “Aus dem Rußischen Reich,” *Wienerisches Diarium*, July 15, 1747, no. 56, Anhang).

33 *Kammerjunker* (Chamber-page) was a position and rank at court in eighteenth-century Russia. In the Petrine *Table of Ranks*, this was the ninth rank, corresponding to that of titular council in government, or captain of infantry in the army. In 1737, *Kammerjunker* was elevated to the sixth rank, and in 1742 to the fifth the rank. There was no clear description of the associated duties; they mostly consisted of presence at court and fulfilling the commissions of the monarch. At the Vienna Court there was no *Kammerjunker* rank, and to adjust the Russian court rank system to that used in Vienna, both in the ceremonial minutes and in the periodicals Russian *Kammerjunker*s were usually mentioned as chamberlains.

was entrusted to a young noble from the suite of a grand-duke, *Kammerjunker* Vasily Efimovich Daragan (1735–?),³⁴ the nephew of Chief Hunter (*Oberjägermeister*) Count Alexei Rasumovsky (1709–1771), a former favorite of Empress Elizabeth.

The four letters delivered by Zinzendorf, and the six compliments given during the audience, were built around three main topics. First, each speaker paid tribute to Empress Elizabeth who was the true beneficiary of the event. Ludwig von Zinzendorf closed his compliment with the following words:

“I, who have the inestimable pleasure of conveying the congratulations of their majesties, count this day among the happiest of my life, inasmuch as I have an opportunity to bow down before such a glorious monarch and personally see with astonishment what the glorification of all Europe has already informed me of.”³⁵

It was the Russian sovereign who invited the Austrian imperial-royal couple to act as the godparents of her grandson, as Zinzendorf said when addressing the Grand-Duke,³⁶ and it was Elizabeth’s will to see an heir to the Russian throne, as the ambassador conveyed to the Grand Duchess.³⁷

Second, the letters and compliments extolled the godparent relationships as reciprocal endeavors of the dynasties and courts aimed at sustaining the alliance. As Chancellor Bestuzhev proclaimed in the name of Elizabeth:

“Her Majesty must consider such a dispatch as a further very estimable sign of the unchangeable friendship between the two most high Houses, and will not miss any opportunity to return the same to their majesties and to convince the House of Austria of the sincerity of her sentiments.”³⁸

Zinzendorf in the compliment to the Grand Duke exclaimed:

“[Their Majesties] are not less pleased by the preference given to them by the friendship of Her Imperial Majesty to be the godparents, and to have attained a new degree of exact connection with the Russian Imperial House.

34 For the texts of the compliments delivered at the solemn audience on 27 April in their original languages and in translations into Russian, see: AVP RI; Fond 32, Opis 1755, Delo 6. The original versions of the three compliments recited by Count Zinzendorf are also copied into one of the volumes of the private archive that Count Esterházy compiled during his stay in Russia (1753–1761), see: MNL-OL, P 218, vol. 13, 59–61.

35 AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, Delo 6, fol. 20v (original in German).

36 AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, Delo 6, fol. 29r (original in German).

37 AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, Delo 6, fol. 32 (original in German).

38 AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, Delo 6, fol. 27r (original in Russian). Noteworthy is that in the German translation in one place the word “Court” was translated to “House”; that is, the friendship was foreseen not (only) as being between the dynasties, but (also) between the courts.

Their desire is nothing so much as to strengthen, increase and perpetuate forever the bond by which these two realms are so happily united.”³⁹

The newly born Paul, the godchild of the Austrian Imperial couple, was thus the guarantee of stability of the Russian-Austrian alliance. The Grand Duchess in her answer to Zinzendorf expressed the following hope:

“His Imperial Highness cannot doubt that this prince, when he will follow in the footsteps of his ancestors after reaching a more mature age, and especially when he will fulfil the intentions and orders of the Empress of this monarchy, should not fail to contribute his utmost to the preservation of the happy union of the two empires.”⁴⁰

Third, evidence of the grand-ducal couple's fertility was presented as a guarantee of the perpetuation of the ruling houses' and their courts' friendship. The Habsburg-Lorraine House (as the House of Austria was called after Maria Theresa inherited the patrimony on the basis of Pragmatic Sanction in the female line) knew perfectly well that strength and wealth both in internal affairs and on the international stage depended on numerous healthy progeny. Addressing Catherine, Zinzendorf conveyed:

“Their Majesties fervently wish that the Almighty may preserve this first pledge of common prosperity, and they hope that you, Your Imperial Highness, will increase it by giving birth to other [princes and princesses] as support for the august throne of this power.”⁴¹

It is interesting that, as late as 1781, when the Grand Duke Paul and his wife Grand Duchess Maria (1759–1828) were travelling through the Austrian Lands, the pupils of the Theresian Academy in Vienna welcomed them with a poem, in which Russian-Austrian relations were presented as a chain of brotherly embraces between monarchs, from Peter the Great and Leopold I to Grand Duke Paul and Joseph II. In conclusion, it was hoped that one day Grand Dukes Alexander (1777–1825) and Constantine (1779–1831) would continue their friendship with the descendants of the Austrian emperor.⁴²

Imperative of reciprocity

Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger rightly points out that means of symbolic communication permit the disguise of actual disagreements and simulate consensus.⁴³ This is

39 AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, Delo 6, fol. 20 r–v (original in French).

40 AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, Delo 6, fol. 34 (original in French).

41 AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, Delo 6, fol. 21v (original in French).

42 *Freudebezeugung der k. k. vereinigten theresianisch-savoyischen Ritterakademie*.

43 Stollberg-Rilinger, “Symbolische Kommunikation,” 519.

true of mid-century Austrian–Russian relations; the two empires had become close allies despite being antipodes as regards their political cultures and court ceremonials, social composition, the origin of their elites, and their attitudes to their sovereign. Vienna needed Russia with its military potential to be turned against King of Prussia, and did its best to extinguish misunderstandings, satisfy claims, and recruit supporters of the Austrian vector of Russia's foreign policy among its statesmen and courtiers. Zinzendorf's mission to St. Petersburg was rich in ambivalent situations when he had to tamp down dissatisfaction or avoid dangerous faux pas.

In the first days of his visit, from talking to Saxon Minister Funk, Zinzendorf learned that Baron Sievers, alongside his official report (which was mainly built around expressions of joy concerning how the embassy had been received in Vienna) complained—through informal channels—to the Empress that Maria Theresa had not danced with him, and that he had not been invited to a ball given by Archduke Joseph.⁴⁴ After an investigation, Zinzendorf found out that Count Andrei Alexeevich Bestuzhev (1726–1768), the son of the great chancellor, had been in Vienna in early 1748 to convey congratulations on the occasion of the birth of Archduke Peter Leopold and had been honored by an invitation to a dance with junior arch-duchesses.⁴⁵ Yet court etiquette had changed since 1750,⁴⁶ and it was for this reason Baron Sievers had not received the same honor.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Zinzendorf also learned that the father of the young Buturlin was dissatisfied with the fact that his son had received no presents from the Vienna court, and considered it shameful to his dignity. The old Buturlin should have known that the head of the mission, Baron Sievers, had received a portrait of Emperor Francis, and a snuffbox and a ring richly decorated with brilliants from Maria Theresa.⁴⁸ Zinzendorf had to explain that presents were not obligatory in the case of extraordinary missions and especially not for their junior members, and that he himself had not received any presents from the court after his stay in Paris. He assured the Russian aristocrat that “[i]t was impossible to imagine that we would have wanted to miss the usual attentions to someone who arrives from Russia.”⁴⁹

44 Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Wenzel Anton Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 10 April 1755, ÖSta, HHStA, StAbt, Russland II, Kt. 37, Berichte April – Juni 1755, fol. 18r–v (original in German).

45 Dispatch of Count Andrei Bestuzhev-Riumin, Vienna, 5 May 1748, AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis. 1, 1748, Delo 6, fol. 34v.

46 ÖSta, HHStA OMeA ZA-Prot. 22 Zeremonialprotokoll, 1749–1750, fol. 401–408. Cf. Beck, “...aus besonderer Distinction für den russisch[en] kay[serlichen] Hof,” 119.

47 Cf. Liechtenhan, “Der russische Hof unter Elisabeth Petrovna.”

48 *Aus der Zeit Maria Theresias*, 4, 223–24.

49 Letter of Ludiwig Zinzendorf to Wenzel Anton Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 7 July 1755, ÖSta, HHStA, StAbt, Russland II, Kt. 37, fol. 29v (original in French).

Another observation of Stollberg-Rilinger is also true of a collision Zinzendorf faced on the eve of the audience at court: symbolic-ritual acts can make potentially divergent interpretations of a particular situation disappear behind a façade of consensus, and those who take part in a collective ritual may testify precisely by their personal participation that they accept the obligatory effects of the ritual, irrespective of what is going on in their mind, and without intentions and effects having been spelled out exactly.⁵⁰ The collision Zinzendorf faced was provoked by the ambivalent status of Grand Duke Peter, who was, on the one hand, the heir to the Russian throne, and on the other, as Herzog of Holstein, the vassal of the German Emperor.

In conversation with Funk, Zinzendorf and Esterházy were astonished with the statement of the Saxon minister that the ambassador was to bow one knee in a curtsy before the Empress, and to kiss the hand of the Grand Duke. In preparing for the mission, Zinzendorf had ordered a copy of the report sent to Vienna by Baron Friedrich Wilhelm Kettler (1718–1783), who had visited Russia in 1747 with the notification of the birth of Archduke Peter Leopold and that Elizabeth had been represented by the emperor's brother Karl of Lorraine (1712–1780). Referring to the report and finding there no indication of this inappropriate gesture, both Esterházy and Zinzendorf visited the Great Chancellor on 7 April and were assured again that kissing the Grand Duke's hand had been performed by other Austrian extraordinary envoys. The only explanation Esterházy could find for this demand was that Baron Sievers in Vienna had—on his own initiative—kissed the hand of Archduke Joseph. In his report to Vienna, Esterházy confessed:

“Now we must then leave it open whether the Grand Chancellor's assurance made in this way is true or not. We believe, however, that since Baron Sievers had kissed the hands of His Highness Archduke (even if he had done so himself), the *reciprocum praetendum* would be sought here, and consequently, in order to claim it, all kinds of means and ways would be involved.”⁵¹

A brilliant solution to this ceremonial collision was found by Grand Duke Peter: when Zinzendorf asked for the grace of kissing his hand, His Imperial Highness embraced the envoy in the most friendly manner and kissed him on the right cheek, eliminating the inconvenience that the emissary might have been forced to show humble obedience to the vassal of his sovereign.⁵² This let the ambassador conclude in the report to Count Kaunitz:

50 Stollberg-Rilinger, “Symbolische Kommunikation,” 519.

51 Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Wenzel Anton Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 10 April 1755, ÖStA, HHStA, StA, Russland II, Kt. 37, fol. 16r–v.

52 Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Wenzel Anton Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 29 April 1755, ÖStA, HHStA, StA, Russland II, Kt. 37, fol. 53 r–v.

“Your Excellence should also note that not only the Russian Empress and the Grand Ducal Highnesses received the Count of Zinzendorf with special grace, but that the ceremony was observed up to the Grand Ducal kiss on the hand as with a Royal Envoy Extraordinaire.”⁵³

Zinzendorf impressed court society with his independent behavior, free of self-effacing slavishness. Princess Tatiana Golitsyna wrote to her son Alexander:

“He was very handsome and richly dressed. Many people condemned him for being so bold. That means nothing else but the fact that we are all mostly timid. Though noble courage is not honored here.”⁵⁴

Networking and analytics

Alongside his official mission of celebrating the birth of the heir to the Russian throne, Ludwig von Zinzendorf, as Kaunitz’s trustee, had secret assignments: to investigate why cooperation between Ambassador Esterházy and Chancellor Bestuzhev had failed to the extent that it was affecting the sustainment of bilateral relations, and to obtain information about the Danish plans to exchange Holstein, the forthcoming election of the king in Poland, and tensions with the Porte that had arisen from the erection of a fortress in the so called New Serbia settlement.⁵⁵ In fact, Esterházy had fallen victim to the negative opinion of him formed by the chancellor’s brother Mikhail Petrovich Bestuzhev-Riumin years earlier in Dresden, where they had both diplomatically represented their courts in the middle of the 1740s.⁵⁶ The first months and years in the Russian capital had turned into a disaster for Esterházy, who had been demonstratively neglected by the chief of the Russian diplomatic service, who otherwise claimed to be the most devoted friend of the Vienna Court. Later, the chancellor would say to Zinzendorf that Their Majesties “should not consider him only as the well-intended minister of an ally, but as the Austrian minister at the Russian court.”⁵⁷

Zinzendorf’s primary informant became Johann Funk, who was well-versed in intrigue and a confidant of the great chancellor. After a short while, the count was almost as well, if not better, informed about the main protagonists at Court than Esterházy, and about the delicate balance between the increasingly isolated

53 Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Wenzel Anton Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 29 April 1755, ÖStA, HHStA, StA, Russland II, Kt. 37, fol. 54 r–v.

54 Letter of Tatiana Golitsyna to Alexandre Golitzyn, St. Petersburg, 29(18) April 1755, “Iz semeinnoi khroniki roda Golitsynykh,” 19.

55 “Die Selbstbiographie,” 62 f.

56 Shchepkin, *Russko-avstriiskii soiuz*, 150.

57 “Zinzendorfs ‘Mémoire sur la Russie, sur l’impératrice, sa cour et son gouvernement,” 685.

chancellor and the dominant party, and the actual strength of pro-Prussian sentiment and sympathy for the Vienna Court, as well as about trade, finances, and the army. His wittiness and personal charm won over Chancellor Bestuzhev and his secretary Dmitry Vasilievich Volkov (1727–1785); Vice-Chancellor Vorontsov; favorite Ivan Ivanovich Shuvalov (1727–1797) and his cousin, influential senator and quasi-first minister Peter Ivanovich Shuvalov (1711–1762); Cabinet-Secretary Adam Vasilievich Olsufiev; and General Georg Lieven (1696–1763), amongst many others.

After the official mission of delivering the congratulation letters was completed, Zinzendorf spent time visiting the influential courtiers and first dignitaries of the Russian state or travelling around the city's environs. Ambitious Petr Shuvalov gave a banquet which impressed the envoy: "[He] gave us a wonderful meal. The dessert was served in a newly finished grotto decorated with fountains."⁵⁸ Another day, Zinzendorf, accompanied by Shuvalov, visited the cadet corps: "I was surprised by the progress of this academy. They teach very well up to law [...] They are learning German and French."⁵⁹ Empress Elizabeth spent a longer while talking to him at court events: "She spoke to me with a touch of kindness that was truly delightful," he wrote to Kaunitz. Ambassador Esterházy also gave a masked ball: guests sitting around 20 tables were served oranges and refreshing drinks or walked in the garden under the sun of the white nights.

Zinzendorf's stay in St. Petersburg coincided with the final stage of the negotiations between Russia and Great Britain on the renewal of the subsidy conventions of 1747. To fix the final arrangements, the new British minister at the Russian Court, Sir Charles Williams (1708–1759), had arrived in Russia and entered into a secret deal with Zinzendorf. The idea was to leave Nikolaus Esterházy in complete ignorance of the negotiations with Bestuzhev in order to protect the ambassador's reputation in case of failure. During one of his regular talks in confidence with the great chancellor, Zinzendorf dropped the idea of offering generous regular payments to the key figures of the dominant party at court to secure their pro-Austrian orientation. The idea was supported by the otherwise cautious Bestuzhev, and Zinzendorf felt his mission to be complete. The project would end in early 1756 when news of the Anglo-Prussian alliance shocked both the Russian Court and Ambassador Esterházy, who would be unable to explain to Empress Elizabeth what was going on. At the time of his visit though, Zinzendorf could assure his patron in Vienna, Chancellor Kaunitz, that Prussia had no strong support in St. Petersburg, and that the Russian elite cherished and valued friendship with Vienna.

58 Letter of Ludwig von Zinzendorf to Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 29 May 1755, ÖStA, HHStA, SABt, Russland II, Kt. 37, fol. 15v (original in French).

59 Letter of Ludwig von Zinzendorf to Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 3 June 1755, ÖStA, HHStA, SABt, Russland II, Kt. 37, fol. 18r (original in French).

Disease and duty

The notoriously harsh climate of the Russian capital had always been more than a theme in early modern diplomatic correspondence. By the time Ludwig Zinzendorf arrived in St. Petersburg, Ambassador Esterházy was impatiently waiting for the end of his mission. Before coming to Russia, he had served as the ambassador to the Court of Madrid in 1751, and had nearly been taken to the grave by a severe and exhausting stomach disease which had prevented him from signing a treaty with Spain. After his early return with the mission aborted, Maria Theresa in 1753 suggested a deal to Esterházy: he was to go to the Russian Court and represent the Empire and the House of Austria for three years; after that he would be given an honorable position at the Court in Vienna. The three years were to end only in the autumn of 1756, but Esterházy, whose body was already afflicted with stomach cramps, hemorrhoids, and podagra, did not miss an opportunity to give a reminder of the urgency of recalling him back to Vienna via Carlsbad (with its healing mineral waters).⁶⁰ Esterházy's physical suffering touched the heart of Empress Elizabeth to such an extent that she placed her physicians Pavel Kondoidi (1710–1760) and Abraham Kaau-Boerhaave (1715–1758) at the diplomat's disposal and invited Esterházy to spend the summer months at her manor house in Strelna, near St. Petersburg, which had mineral springs nearby.

Upon his arrival in St. Petersburg, Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf was so tired and haggard with hemorrhoidal paroxysms, back pains, and spots on his feet that he was forced to request a postponement of the audience.⁶¹ Esterházy called Boerhaave, and the doctor, who was notoriously deaf, amazed Zinzendorf by communicating with patients via an assistant 'speaking' sign language. The continental climate, with its freezing cold nights in late March, ice thaw in April, and white nights when the sun did not go below the horizon in June, depressed rather than impressed the envoy, and he expected to leave Russia after the widely advertised solemn celebration of the birth of Grand Duke Paul, which Esterházy had already been preparing for months. Yet the celebration was postponed because of the sickness of Empress Elizabeth, and Zinzendorf—after a farewell audience with short harangues in the same manner as three months ago—left Russia for Vienna on 26 July 1755 via Sweden and Denmark, the northern countries whose economies and political systems he wanted to learn about through personal observation. During the farewell audience, he received the recredentials with the following lines:

60 Khavanova, "Telesnye nedugi i sluzhebnye obiazannosti."

61 Letter of Ludwig von Zinzendorf to Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 18 April 1755. ÖStA, HHStA, StAbt, Russland II, Kt. 37, fol. 9r–v (original in French).

"I have much esteemed both the former and the new experiences of Your friendship, and I am most anxious about this most intimate spiritual union with Your Imperial Majesty, of which and of my most sincere friendship to Your Majesty I have opened up to Count Zinzendorf, who by his laudable behaviour at my court has earned my special recommendation to Your Majesty."⁶²

In the meanwhile, Esterházy fell more severely ill again, and sent a courier to Kaunitz with a request to let him travel to Carlsbad owing to the persistent demands of the doctors, and to send Zinzendorf back to St. Petersburg to take over his functions at the Russian Court. The courier from Vienna was able to intercept Zinzendorf in Stockholm and deliver a decree dated 16 September ordering his immediate return to the Russian capital. Zinzendorf decided to make the journey shorter and travel by sea, and on 3 October 1755 informed Esterházy of this from Hamburg. To his greatest surprise, the envoy soon received a letter from the ambassador assuring him that his condition had improved and that there was no reason to return to Russia. The desperate Zinzendorf was haunted by doubts over whether he should wait for further instructions, or rush to the physically suffering Esterházy, despite his assurance that there was no longer any such need: "What would have been my despair, however, what excuse would I have had to say to myself, if [...] a new violent attack on Messier Esterhasi had caused some delay in business?"⁶³

Zinzendorf reappeared in St. Petersburg on 5 November, much to the surprise of the court. Meanwhile, Esterházy, who was feeling better again, tried to make his return as invisible to the public as possible, asking Chancellor Bestuzhev to arrange a passport for Zinzendorf:

"[...] to come here quietly from Kronstadt, and since his unexpected return would at the same time cause a great stir, I intend to accommodate him in my house, so that he can then start his return journey quietly from here in a few days' time, without presenting himself to anyone."⁶⁴

In those days, the ambassador was much preoccupied with the preparations for the two promised masked balls for the top court society and for the public of the imperial capital. He was proud of Empress Elizabeth's attendance and expected another solemn ceremony: one for the delivery of the Order of St. Andreas, the latter

62 Copy of the letter of Empress Elisabeth to Emperor Francis I, AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, 1755, Delo 1, fol. 1r–2v (original in Russian).

63 Letter of Ludwig von Zinzendorf to Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 11 November 1755, ÖSta, HHStA, StAbt, Russland II, Kt. 37, fol. 52v (original in French).

64 Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Aleksei Bestuzhev-Riumin, St. Petersburg, 20 (9) October 1755, AVP RI, Fond 32, Opis 1, 1755, Delo 5, fol. 66v (original in German).

which he attended together with Zinzendorf. (Esterházy became the last Austrian diplomat to receive this honorary decoration in the eighteenth century.) Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf finally left Russia in the last days of December 1755.

Balance sheet

The mission to St. Petersburg remained just an episode in the career of Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf. The large-scale reforms of the administration and finances conducted in the Habsburg lands in the early 1760s on the initiative of Kaunitz demonstrated the outstanding intellectual capacity and diverse experience of his trainee and confidant. Their letter exchange from 1755 testifies to their warm feelings towards one other, Zinzendorf's pride in the high esteem, and Kaunitz's trust in his younger colleague's potential. Later on, the latter found it appropriate to include into his biographical sketch lines from Kaunitz's letter: "I don't think I need to remind you that I am still your guarantor, but it is important for me to remind you that I love you."⁶⁵ In principle, Ludwig von Zinzendorf might have gone on with a diplomatic career, but, like many fellow aristocrats, he lacked the firm financial background which would have allowed him to make diplomacy his true vocation.⁶⁶ As to the possibility of returning to Russia in the character of the extraordinary and plenipotential ambassador, as Nikolaus Esterházy put it in one of the reports:

"The one who has already been here in a lesser character, when he then assumes a higher one, cannot easily obtain the necessary first great impression and reputation at the court here. [...] These observations and remarks would certainly not take place at another court, but here they may well deserve more attention."⁶⁷

The brief and extensive accounts of Zinzendorf's stay in Russia written for Kaunitz demonstrate his outstanding analytical capacity in terms of processing new information, his sociability, and his talent for winning over people. He correctly estimated the balance of power between the chancellor and the dominant party at Court, and he came to the conclusion that the key figures of the Russian government

65 "Die Selbstbiographie," 65 (original in French).

66 Kaunitz, who as early as 1751 envisaged that Ludwig von Zinzendorf—in a short while—might become an able minister ("un Ministre habile") and did not exclude the possibility of sending him to Turin (this position would be then filled by Florimund Mercy d'Argenteau), recognized that he had no possessions and would need financial support at the start. See: Letter of Kaunitz to Ignaz von Koch, Fontainebleau, 24 October 1751, in: *Correspondance Secrète*, 140.

67 Letter of Nikolaus Esterházy to Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz, St. Petersburg, 26 June 1756, MNL-OL-P 218, vol. 14, p. 77.

had no pro-Prussian sentiment and were often eager to be sustained or bribed by the Court of Vienna. On the eve of the Seven Years' War, Zinzendorf outlined the core problem the allied armies would face in joint warfare:

“In the present situation, this state could not sustain very long wars abroad, and all the powers which will need its alliance, which will want to make act in their favor these innumerable armies, must count that, without proportionate subsidies, it will be something beyond their forces.”⁶⁸

St. Petersburg and Vienna had been exchanging missions since 1746: first, when Francis of Lorraine was elected German Emperor (1746); second, on the birth of Archduke Peter Leopold (1747); and third, on the birth of Grand Duke Paul (1755). Each of the three were significant events in court life, and they were reflected in periodicals and left traces in correspondence and memoirs. In this respect, Zinzendorf's trip to Russia coincided with the zenith of the bilateral alliance, strengthened as it was by spiritual kinship via the mutual godparenthood of the ruling houses. As the envoy of the imperial ruling couple, he succeeded in representing the House of Austria as the principal ally of Russia, reduced the tension between Ambassador Esterházy and Chancellor Bestuzhev, and ensured tight Austrian–British–Russian cooperation in preparation for the coming war. It was not his fault that the approaching reversal of alliances in early 1756⁶⁹ would collapse the St. Petersburg–London axis of international policy. After 1755, as belligerent allies, and after 1762, with the dissolution of the alliance, the courts would maintain the tradition of mission-exchange, though the conditions of war and the aggravating contradictions would make such visits in the future much more modest.

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68 “Zinzendorfs ‘Mémoire sur la Russie, sur l’impératrice, sa cour et son gouvernement’”, 706.

69 See for example: Schilling, *Kaunitz und das Renversement des Alliances*.

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Enlightenment, Modernization, Professional Training

Count György Festetics's Role in Establishing Agricultural Higher Education in Hungary at the End of the Eighteenth Century*

György Kurucz

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Károli Gáspár University of Reformed Church in Hungary, 1088 Budapest, Reviczky u. 6, Hungary; kurucz.gyorgy@kre.hu

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Abstract. Western historical narratives of the Enlightenment tend to depict the eighteenth-century aristocracy as a unique promoter of overall progress, whereas Hungarian historiography is more inclined to appraise their role according to a deprecating approach based on the criticism of a traditional class system. However, it seems clear that a more balanced judgement of the Hungarian aristocracy should involve a complex analysis. In first place, it is to be decided whether erudite and financially well-off individuals existed, and if so, to what extent they were willing and capable of contributing to various forms of innovation, let alone social and cultural progress. For this reason, this paper is designed to focus on the activities of Count György Festetics, a Transdanubian Hungarian aristocrat who was educated in the *Theresianum*, an elite Viennese training institute, but whose career prospects were thwarted at the end of the eighteenth century on account of his involvement with the anti-Habsburg movement of Hungary's lesser nobility on the death of Emperor Joseph II. This analysis seems justifiable, because Festetics's decision to set up a farming college in Keszthely clearly shows his commitment to progress, aiming at the adaptation of modern methods as well as creating the institutional background for the dissemination of specialist knowledge among the various layers of contemporary society.

Keywords: Habsburg dynasty, Enlightenment, absolutism, Hungarian nobility, nationalism, *Theresianum*, Festetics family, English farming practices

Introduction

According to a somewhat exaggerated view, the Enlightenment is commonly thought of as a French intellectual affair for which the ground was laid by the English political revolution. For the English, there was no longer a collective authority which demanded submission, so they could turn their attention to practical matters and gradually excel

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in trade, farming, industry, and, of course, in sciences. Some historians even went as far as suggesting that the success of the British Isles should be attributed to ‘social amalgamation,’ or to the evolution of a ‘classless society,’ which implied rough political, economic, social and educational parity between citizens.¹ However, progress and innovative thinking on the continent were dependent either on monarchs assuming the role of ‘first servant of the state’ to promote the ‘common good,’ or on the various circles of *philosophes*. As for the latter, they could often not do without the support of the privileged layers of contemporary societies, acting as *patronnes* in the widest possible sense.² At the same time, the success rate of the policies of absolute monarchs committed to the service of the ‘common good’ was also dependent on the cooperation of the influential layers of a given society. Should a monarch fail to win them over, all their intentions were doomed to failure—just as Robert Townson (1762–1827), a contemporary English traveler, observed in his book on Joseph II’s (1780–1790) reign in Hungary.³

No wonder the influence of some individual members of the Hungarian aristocracy on economic, political, and cultural processes did not cease to be a core issue of contemporary national progress, as is reflected in a letter of 1816 by Dániel Berzsenyi (1776–1836)—a minor nobleman of low income—to Count György Festetics (1755–1819) of Keszthely. Berzsenyi compared Keszthely to the German city of Weimar, and the reference inevitably raises the question what prompted the ‘poor poet,’ as he commonly called himself, when addressing a man far above him in status and wealth, to liken a small town on the shores of Lake Balaton to a place as emblematic of European refinement and noble patronage as Weimar. The easiest solution would be to write it off as mere flattery of a ‘great man’ – one whom even his contemporary, the politically compromised writer Ferenc Kazinczy (1759–1831), released from prison fifteen years earlier, had chastised for his vanity. If, however, we weigh Berzsenyi’s thoughts along the lines expressed in the memoirs of Transylvanian nobleman Sándor Ujfalvy (1792–1866), who judged the count’s comportment from the perspective of the future of the nation, then it is upon the responsibility of an individual capable of acting on the basis of social privilege and financial position, or even the role undertaken by the Hungarian nobility in general, that one’s focus necessarily falls.⁴

1 Cannon, *Aristocratic Century*, 17–19; Hawthorn, *Enlightenment*, 10–13.

2 For a general view of contemporary nobilities on the Continent, see: Scott, *The European Nobilities*; Canning and Wellenreuther, *Britain and Germany Compared*.

3 “Arbitrary indeed was the government of Joseph; yet noone [sic] I think will question the goodness of his intentions, however they may disapprove his measures. How severe a mortification must it not have been to him, after passing so many sleepless nights in planning for the welfare of his people, to find nothing but discontent and dissatisfaction within their breasts...” Townson, *Travels in Hungary*, 145. On Joseph II’s personality and reign, see: Hajdu, *II. József igazgatási reformjai*; Beales, *Joseph II*; Reinalter, *Joseph II*.

4 Merényi, *Berzsenyi Dániel*, 59–60; Gyalui, *Mezőkövesdi Ujfalvy Sándor*, 217. For more on the

Not surprisingly, this is a controversy later generations would continue to debate. In 1889, for example, Independence Party member Lajos Mocsáry (1826–1916) would reflect on Béla Grünwald's (1839–1891) book *A régi Magyarország 1711–1824* [Old Hungary 1711–1824] of the previous year, now regarded as the first “critical analysis of feudal society and mentality,” in a separate volume of his own authorship.⁵ Entitled *A régi magyar nemes* [The old Hungarian nobleman], Mocsáry's book began with an introduction accusing Grünwald of having put into Hungarian an undeservedly and unjustifiably uncritical acceptance of the Habsburgs' absolutist system of governance. He writes:

“Béla Grünwald, who, since the publication of his book *A régi Magyarország* [Old Hungary 1711–1824], has been styled a mouthpiece for Hungarian democracy, has, in his work, treated the nation most harshly. Among the reasons for which the country finds itself in the present age in such a regrettable state, he cites as first and foremost the relationship between the foreign ruling house and its inherited provinces, among them Hungary; yet in elaborating upon this point, places the near-full burden of responsibility upon the nation. He finds excuses for the powers that rule over us, even portraying them as initiator in the trappings of progress, while casting blame upon the nation for its own backwardness. The constitutional liberty our nation has managed to keep alive in its breast under even the most grievous of circumstances he labels penury, praising instead the absolute monarchy that, having everywhere destroyed feudal constitutions, has created a state administration filled, as representative of the public good, with noble, ideal content. [...] The sons of this nation he denies all greater mental faculty, depicting contemporary generations as ignorant, uncultured, barren of ideas, incapable of grasping the fundamentals of politics, and both naive, and inexperienced in matters of public import.”⁶

The main question in the above debate—“if it is true that the absolute monarchy did more to promote progress and healthy national development than did the feudal constitution”—has remained (if not in such an explicit fashion) one of

Hungarian Jacobin movement and the activities of Ferenc Kazinczy and associates, see: Benda, *A magyar jakobinusok*. On the topic of Festetics's literary patronage, see the corresponding chapters in: Cséby, *A keszthelyi Helikon*.

5 Mocsáry, *A régi magyar nemes*. Lajos Mocsáry raised many a contemporary eyebrow with his 1855 piece of writing, *A magyar társasélet*, in which he opined that the forces of modernization and urbanization in Hungary might be strengthened through the active, public, scientific energies of the former noble classes, who possessed both the requisite culture and distinct national consciousness to do so. Béla Grünwald, as writer and Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Zólyom County, was a personage of some note in his time. For more on his activities, see: Kocsis, *A Felvidék*.

6 Mocsáry, *A régi magyar nemes*, 21.

the fundamental issues *vis-à-vis* Hungarian historiography as it strives to interpret developments in the eighteenth century. In the process, many have painted the Hungarian nobility—in a manner that is beyond simplistic—as a social and political barrier to progress; one which, clinging to the privileges it was accorded during the dark centuries of the Middle Ages, obstructed all service to the common good; and which, though incapable of bearing the burden of taxes necessary for the operation of a modern state, oppressed the peasantry on the basis of its prerogatives. This view is enhanced by some historians who, for example, juxtapose the policies of Queen Maria Theresa's (1740–1780) emblematic statesman and diplomat Chancellor Wenzel von Kaunitz (1711–1794) and the resistance of the Hungarian nobility to reformist ideas.⁷

The complementary element of this line of thought is that true progress resided with the Habsburg dynasty and its government, as only the person and politics of its ruling head, the true representative—by virtue of their absolute power—of the notion of statehood, might rise to obtain the status of being the single and legitimate embodiment of the common good and interest. In this oversimplified formulation, therefore, the original representative of all evil in the face of enlightened absolutism was the Hungarian nobility, which, by the late eighteenth century, had found itself unable to effect 'modern' responses to the challenges of centralized politics as practiced by the enlightened Habsburg monarchs; undertaking only what constituted the representation of its own provincial interests in the form of hidebound feudal nationalist projects.⁸

As to whether the Hungarian nobility were actually—to use Grünwald's phrasing—wholly “uncultured, barren of ideas, [and] incapable of grasping the fundamentals of politics,” there is plenty of room for doubt. Firstly, while nationalist theory

7 Szabó, *Kaunitz and Enlightened Absolutism*.

8 Since the 1970s, the principle influence on the concept of “feudal nationalism,” its connotations, and related problems has been the interpretation furnished by the influential historian Domokos Kosáry (1913–2007). For a more detailed reflection on Kosáry's views, see: Tarnai, “Magyar jakobinusok, bonapartisták,” 383–96. In 1990, Kosáry made concessions to the Hungarian nobility by exposing Joseph II's character traits, most of all his uncompromising “aggressiveness,” which undoubtedly contributed to the rejection of his enlightened reforms: Kosáry, *Újjáépítés*, 164–65. For an overview of Kosáry's interpretation of his stance on the issue of Hungary's economic, social and cultural development in the eighteenth century, see: Krász, “Kosáry Domokos,” 1442–47. For more on this particular set of issues and the dilemma of progress and historiographic interpretation of the era, see: Miskolczy, *A felvilágosodás és liberalizmus között*. Offering a critical survey in relation to Gyula Szekfű's (1883–1955) use of “feudal nationalism” as a category in post-1945 historiography is an essay by András Gergely, published in a collection of essays commemorating the birth of Ferenc Kazinczy: Gergely, “Kazinczy a történelemben,” 285–93.

and its collateral political and intellectual movements do not conform to the privileged, feudal structure of a given society, they do presume the emergence of a broadly based cultural, linguistic, and spiritual community and corresponding national identity. Beyond that, however, is the evidence provided by the processes that defined Hungary in final decades of the eighteenth century. When in 1790, following the death of Joseph II, the Diet of Hungary convened for the first time in more than two decades, deputies conspicuously focused their attention not only on the practice of constitutionality and protection of their privileged status, as had been the case in the past, but also on the advancement of Hungarian commercial and business interests, and even on the matter of the Hungarian language.⁹ The Hungarian nobility, in reaction to what had been considered the arbitrary practice of the Habsburg government, did not restrict its initiative to the political realm alone; rather, prompted by the arguments of the enlightened gentry and aristocracy, it went as far as to pass a resolution regarding regular preparatory work on the part of the Diet committees, signaling to the new ruler, Leopold II (1790–1792), that real change had begun in Hungary, and that he might well concede to having detected signs of the emergence of a new mentality.¹⁰ It is revealing, therefore, that for the government, that great representative of the ‘common good,’ discrediting the nobility’s movement via power politics and targeted communications became a priority objective. Agents with persuasive pens argued that it was only the ‘Hunnic barbarism’ of the Hungarians that hindered the ‘benevolent’ monarch from effectively advancing the matter of public well-being.¹¹

There can be little doubt that the reforms enacted by Queen Maria Theresa and Joseph II during the second half of the eighteenth century, with particular reference to the consistent regulation of the rights and obligations of the feudal peasantry with respect to their landlords, were of considerable socio-political significance, and that the institutional processes founded in relation to vocational education in medicine and other aspects of healthcare were of European standard.¹² It should not be forgotten, however, that with the exception of the Academy of Mining and Metallurgy

9 See the Diet of 1790, Articles 12–13, 16, and 67. For a most comprehensive evaluation of the procedures and issues tabled by the estates of Hungary throughout the eighteenth century, see: Szijártó M., *A diéta*. For a more recent study on the relationship between the Imperial Court and the Estates of Hungary with special regard to the nobility’s resistance to Joseph II’s policy, see: Szakály, “Managing a Composite Monarchy,” 205–20.

10 H. Balázs, *Hungary and the Habsburgs*, 312–17. For a concise analysis of the intellectual and political background to the era in Hungary, see: Barany, “Hoping against Hope,” 319–57.

11 Benda, “A magyar nemesi mozgalom,” 64–104. For more on the reign of Leopold II, heir to Joseph II, see: Peham, *Leopold II*. For an example of the infamously commissioned pamphlets, see: [Hoffmann], *Babel*; [Hoffmann], *Ninive*. For an analysis of the orientation of contemporary political pamphlets and treatises, see: Bíró, “A történelem mint politikai provokáció,” 3–28.

12 Szabo, *A magyarországi úrbérrendezés*; Krász, “A mesterség szolgálatában,” 1065–104.

of Banská Štiavnica (Selmezbánya, Schemnitz), which, subsequent to its inauguration in 1735, operated under the supervision of the Royal Hungarian Chamber, the central government founded no educational institutions with the potential to enhance the nation's economic performance.¹³ Furthermore, such campaign-like initiatives on the part of the government as did affect farming (e.g. the publication of pieces of work providing information on agricultural or veterinary practices) brought no measurable change of any kind.¹⁴ It is not of negligible import, therefore, that the Habsburg government, having in the years following the Diet of 1790 become embroiled in the latest European conflict against revolutionary France, continued to ignore the issue, and, for that matter, that the actual vocational educational groundwork in the matter of agricultural production, a sector responsible for the majority of state revenue, was in fact laid down by a highly cultured member of a Transdanubian aristocratic family, Count György Festetics, in the founding of an institution charged with transmitting knowledge about the modern principles of agribusiness and related practical knowledge.

To understand Festetics's unparalleled decision, the personal motivations behind it, and the elements that composed his vision for the future, one must consider both his family background and the events that marked the various stages of his life. The justifications for doing so are many and include not only the palpable influence that Grünwald's judgement—or the chief elements of it, as exposed by Mocsáry—continues to exert on perceptions today, but also, and not incidentally, the attitudes of contemporaries Berzsenyi and Ujfalvy. Certainly, the count's family background and financial position would have required no more of him than that—identifying in full with the politics of the central government and accepting the current state of affairs—he choose a life of leisure spent in private circles, colored from time to time by entertainments appropriate to his social status: balls, hunts, theatrical performances, gambling, or even the diversion of the *salonnières*.

Yet the count's life path, nourished by the spirit and ideals of the Enlightenment, diverged from the pattern set down by his family in a manner that must have seemed irregular to even his contemporaries, and that was necessarily attended by a measure of conflict. The paths to success pursued by various members of the Festetics family included options in both administration and the military, yet for Festetics recognition at the national and European level derived precisely from having broken with such traditions.

13 Mihalovits, "Az első bányatisztképző iskola," 5–24; Tárczy-Hornoch, "Mikoviny Sámuel," 25–42.

14 Dóczy, Wellmann, and Bakács, *A magyar gazdasági irodalom*, 98–185.

The status, education, and career prospects of young Festetics

The wealth and status of the Festetics family had its origins in the transactions of György Festetics's great grandfather, Pál Festetics (1639–1720), a veteran of the 1686 recapture of Buda, who expanded upon the family fortune partly through trade with Turkish prisoners in the service of the Batthyány family, and partly through serendipitous marriage.¹⁵ Of his three sons to reach adult age, two entered military service. Only the youngest, Kristóf Festetics (1696–1768), acceded to his father's desire that he undertake a career in administration, studying law at the University of Trnava (Nagyszombat) before accepting, by virtue of his experience in county administration and the meetings of the Diet, an appointment to the Hungarian Royal Council of the Governor-General in 1736. Eight years later, he would be found serving as a justice on the Court of Seven, a judicial body dealing primarily with cases of escheat.¹⁶ Unlike his predecessors, Kristóf had his own first-born son, Pál Festetics (1722–1782), educated not only in his home country, but also abroad. The chosen institution was the Protestant university in Leipzig, where he was accompanied and supervised by András Károly Bél (1717–1782), son of the culturally accomplished Lutheran pastor and teacher, Mátyás Bél (1684–1749). The intellectual atmosphere of the Saxon city in which the young Pál found himself is perhaps best reflected in the words of Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832), likewise a student of law in the city, who in his autobiography would later describe Leipzig as similar to Paris.¹⁷ It is not surprising, therefore, that the Festetics family library should have been expanded during the time of Pál's studies there with books purchased from Leipzig booksellers; in particular works by Montesquieu, Voltaire, John Locke, and other French, English, and (naturally) German authors of the Enlightenment.¹⁸

The career opportunities opened up to Pál Festetics through his education and legal training were indeed prodigious, and as an officer of the Royal Hungarian Chancery he would eventually become an indispensable advisor to the Habsburg sovereign, Queen Maria Theresa, in matters pertinent to Hungary, particularly as regarded his work toward the development of an urban decree that would regulate the situation of the peasantry against seigneurial excesses.¹⁹ In 1772, having become

15 For more on the early history of the Festetics family, see the relevant sections of: Szabó, *A herceg Festetics család története*. Pál Festetics participated in the siege of Buda in 1686 as an officer of Transdanubian Captain-in-Chief Count Ádám Batthyány (1662–1703). MNL OL Festetics Lt, Memorabilia, P 235 Box 117 fol. 40.

16 Kurucz, *Keszthely grófia*, 65–67.

17 “Da mir alle Hoffnung nach Göttingen abgeschnitten war, wendete ich nun meinen Blick nach Leipzig.” Goethe, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Book 6.

18 Kurucz, *Keszthely grófia*, 63.

19 Szabó, *A magyarországi úrbérrendezés*, 64–65.

Vice-Chairman of the Hungarian Court Chamber, the office which administrated Hungarian state finances, the Queen elevated him to the rank of count.²⁰ This success in administrative affairs Pál held up as an example to his own first-born son, György, a product of his marriage to Countess Julianna Bossányi (1735–1805), to whose education he dedicated considerable attention. Born in 1755, György Festetics was twelve years old when he was sent to the *Theresianum*, an elite Viennese academy for career administrators founded by Queen Maria Theresa in 1746, where, in addition to the traditional ancient classical languages and literature, he had the opportunity of mastering the fundamentals of law, state administration, feudal state finance, mathematics, statistics, geography, and even military studies, defense, and architecture.²¹ At the academy in Vienna, however, care had also been taken to incorporate into the curriculum a general course on agriculture—one that in his time was taught by Lajos Mitterpacher (1734–1814), a member of a family of Bilje (Croatia, Bellye) understewards, who would later—following the dissolution of the Jesuit Order—go on to teach agricultural studies at the university in Pest.²²

Festetics's interest in the vocations is reflected, among other things, in his juvenile library, which included, for example, both Adams Smith's classic *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* in its original English edition, and Part I of a German translation published at nearly the same time.²³ For an understanding of finances and economy in the world beyond the borders of the Habsburg Empire, Festetics turned primarily to source material in the French and German languages.²⁴ Within the count's private library, which he maintained independently from that of family, his 388-item catalogue on state administration reflected the influence

20 Nagy, *A Magyar Kamara 1686–1848*, 178–80; Czobor, *A Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum könyvtárának címjegyzéke*, vol. 6, 2–3.

21 Kurucz, *Keszthely grófja*, 76. For the importance of *Collegium Theresianum* concerning the prestige and status of young Hungarian aristocrats, see: Khavanova, “Official Policies and Parental Strategies,” 95–116; Kökényesi, “A tudomány és a nyilvánosság,” 35–68.

22 “Der Unterricht für einen adelichen Jüngling muss in dieser Wissenschaft so weit gehen, dass er die Wirtschaft seines Landgutes gründlich verstehe. Er muss in der Stand gesetzt werden, dass ersie zu betreiben, nach dem Umständen zu verbessern, seine Beamten und Untergeordneten zu übersehen, die Wirtschaftbücher, ihren Inhalt, oder, was er sonst höret, richtig zu beurtheilen wisse.” [Mitterpacher], *Entwurf der oekonomischen Kentnisse*, 7.

23 Smith, *Untersuchung der Natur und Ursachen*.

24 [Forbonnais], *Éléments du commerce*. This work covers factors influencing trade from antiquity until the eighteenth century, including the role of loans and fluctuations in exchange rates. Its pages have been marked by Festetics in numerous places. [Graslin], *Essai analitique*. Two other works from Festetics's early library merit mention here: [Durban], *Essais sur les Principes des finances.*; [Dutot], *Réflexions politiques.*; Mills, *Vollständiger Lehrbegriff*.

of Joseph von Sonnenfels (1732–1817).²⁵ From Karl Anton Martini's (1726–1800) textbooks in general and legal philosophy, Festetics would have absorbed the ideals of the classic thinkers in natural law, and would certainly have fallen under the influence of such authors as were frequently mentioned by his Viennese teacher—Grotius, Hobbes, Wolff, Thomasius, Pufendorf, and their followers—as well.²⁶ Both his library and his correspondence reveal Festetics as a man with a broad education in literature, a reader of works by Shakespeare, Fielding, Swift, Richardson, and Gibbon, the basis for which was largely laid down by his other instructor, Michael Denis (1729–1800).²⁷ It should not be forgotten, of course, that in addition to his own mother tongue, the young count also spoke, read, and wrote fluently in Latin, German, French, English, and Italian.

In the years following his return from Vienna, Festetics first served briefly as a financial administrator with the Royal Hungarian Chamber in Buda, then he was transferred to the Royal Council of Croatia in Zagreb, where he met Miklós Skerlec (1729–1799), the Banate Council member who, as a member of the trade committee created by the Diet of 1790–1791, would later draft elaborations articulating the adverse effects of Viennese court economic policy on developments in Hungary.²⁸ In opposition to his father's wishes, however, György Festetics soon turned his back on administrative work to join the hussar regiment of Count Ferenc Nádasdy (1708–1783), the Ban of Croatia. In an attempt to gain speedy promotion, he followed this with service in other regiments, including the Royal Hungarian BodyGuard.²⁹ In 1782, under pressure from his father and accepting his family's dynastic strategy, he took a wife, a decision clearly prompted by the rather serious debt in which the family found itself due to the ongoing expansion of the Festetics estate. Indeed, the count's father had threatened to disinherit him should he eschew the proposed marriage as the girl chosen for him, Countess Judit Sallér (1765–1829), came with a substantial dowry.³⁰

25 Sonnenfels, *Sätze aus der Polizey-, Handlung und Finanzwissenschaften*; Sonnenfels, *Grundsätze*; Sonnenfels, *Ueber die Liebe des Vaterlandes*; Sonnenfels, *Der Mann ohne Vorurtheil*.

26 Martini, *De lege naturali positiones.*; Martini, *De lege naturali exercitationes*. For an overview of Festetics's juvenile library, see: Kurucz, "Könyv és főnemesi műveltség," 93–108.

27 Compare the list of authors given: Pleticha, *Adel und Buch*, 80, 86–87; Kurucz, *Keszthely grófia*, 78–80.

28 For Skerlec's works in print, see: Skerlec, *Projectum Legum motivatum*; Berényi, *Skerlec Miklós báró művei*.

29 General Ferenc Nádasdy, Ban of Croatia, in a letter dated 27 July 1778, expressed joy at his regiment's gaining "such a worthy new member." MNL OL, Festetics Lt, P 246 Box 1 fol. 430. Kurucz, *Keszthely grófia*, 103–5, 118.

30 Festetics expressed his bitterness in a letter of 1782 written to his brother-in-law Count Ferenc Széchényi (1754–1820), as follows: "In meinem Vaters Hause, denket man an Reformen, der Necker französischer Finanz Minister wird zu Schande [...] Familie, Zukunft, diesen

As Festetics's hopes of military promotion crumbled, however, the young count felt compelled to identify with the efforts of the emerging Hungarian noble opposition to the planned general tax reforms of Joseph II—measures intended to restrict the constitutional privileges of the Hungarian nobility as well. At the same time, the country was beginning to be exhausted by the unsuccessful war against the Turks which also contributed to the growing disenchantment of the Hungarian public with the Emperor's policy. Although the new monarch convened the Diet of Hungary, the political mood in the country was quite distrustful regarding his intentions and certain members of the enlightened nobility and aristocracy contemplated dethroning the Habsburg dynasty and offering the Crown of Hungary to a prince of the House of Hannover. Pamphlets appeared treating the unlawful procedures of the Habsburgs at length and Baron Miklós Vay (1756–1824) went on a secret mission to discuss the conditions of the anticipated dynastic change in Hungary with Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger, in London.³¹ The country was in turmoil, and the officers of the Hungarian regiments also had high hopes about the possible decisions of the anticipated Diet in the summer of 1790. Festetics, lieutenant colonel of the Graeven hussar regiment, was ordered to march at the head of two squadrons to the capital in order to secure law and order during the sessions of the Diet. With the participation of his fellow officers, Festetics dispatched a high-profile petition to the Diet, essentially declaring the priority of the legislative power *vis-à-vis* the ruling dynasty in a manner that could potentially have served as a basis for the creation of an independent Hungarian military.³² The incoming Leopold II, however, in a shrewd sequence of plays, succeeded in isolating the nobility's aspirations, first placing Festetics under court martial proceedings with the clear intent of making an example of him, then—again out of consideration for the political situation—refraining from any actual act of retribution. Instead, the Hungarian officer was subjected to multiple reassignments until it became clear that his career in the Imperial and Royal Army had come to an impasse. In 1791, with the sovereign's approval, he left military service.³³

Enlightened ideals and the development of an educational program

Despite the enormous debt encumbering his estates and a private life that was far from ideal, Festetics did not refrain from commencing practical work on several large-scale

lehren Wörtern soll man ihn sauer werden lassen, sorget nicht Gott gleich für alle." MNL OL, Széchényi Lt, P 623 Box 25 fol. 413; Kurucz, *Keszthely grófja*, 106–9.

31 Benda, "A magyar jakobinus mozgalom," 108; H. Balázs, *Berzeviczy Gergely*, 152–55; Szakály, *Egy vállalkozó főnemes*, 111–33.

32 ÖStA Kriegsarchiv, HKR Akten, 1790/44/420 fol. 59–60.

33 Kurucz, *Keszthely grófja*, 135–36.

projects intended as services to the ‘common good.’ In the early 1790s, for example, despite his own Roman Catholic affiliation, he founded a Hungarian Reformed secondary school in the Somogy County town of Csurgó, while also sponsoring publication of the fictitious letters of Kelemen Mikes (1690–1761), an act that preserved for posterity the events of the exile of emblematic revolutionary leader Ferenc Rákóczi II (1676–1735).³⁴ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that his name crops up in relation to numerous other initiatives. With the aid of a man of letters, József Kármán (1769–1795), the physician Gáspár Pajor (1766–1840), and University of Pest aesthetics professor Lajos Schedius (1768–1847), Festetics lent his support to the publication of the periodical *Uránia*, a project intended by its authors to stir public discussion in matters of the Hungarian language in literature and science, offer a measure of practical knowledge, and promote the moral values necessary for social progress. From the relevant correspondence, it is clear that Festetics was also the ‘anonymous patriot’ behind the publication of its first volume, a result achieved via the director of his estates, János Nagyváthy (1755–1819), and his connections with the Freemasons.³⁵ At the same time, as regards the long-term plans now taking shape, including those related to the founding of a vocational institution of farming that would open at the end of the decade, there can be no doubt of a private motive either, as the practical need to run his estates on a daily basis had exposed a decided want of trained agricultural advisors and officers.³⁶

The most outstanding of the count’s life achievements, the agricultural school, founded in 1797 and opened following a lengthy period of preparation. He proceeded with due circumspection as regards its character, the content and structure of its curriculum, and the selection of instructors. Festetics understood the value of assessing the experiences of other institutions and, where suitable, adapting their teaching and organizational practices. Of decisive significance in this regard were the proposals of Viennese university professor and former Göttingen student Peter Jordan (1751–1817) concerning an array of potential subjects (e.g. agrochemistry) and the usefulness of each. Regarding the subjects Festetics himself wished to include in the curriculum, a brief hand-written compilation entitled *Entwurf eines Planes für den oekonomischen Unterricht*, presumably dating to 1794, is particularly revealing.³⁷ As the document is unsigned, the identity of its author can be surmised only indirectly. The handwriting

34 Kurucz, “Adósság, hitel, törlesztés,” 545–46; MNL OL Festetics Lt, Központi Birtokigazgatás [Central Estate Management] P 274 Box 245 fol. 13; Kostyál, “Kultsár István levele Festetics Györgyhez,” 475–76.

35 Kókay, “Kármán József és az Uránia,” 224–25; MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 6. fol. 371–72.

36 Csoma, “A »Közönséges Instructio...« szerepe,” 34–49; Lukács, “Nagyváthy János keszthelyi munkássága,” 55–70.

37 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 5 fol. 259–268.

suggests it was neither Nagyváthy, author of the first Hungarian-language agricultural textbook, nor Evangelical pastor and elementary farming school founder Sámuel Tessedik (1742–1820); rather, by comparison to the penmanship of a letter to Festetics dated 1 January 1799, its authorship can be attributed to Austrian agricultural expert Peter Jordan.³⁸ In terms of structure, *Entwurf* introduces each subject area by defining concepts and posing questions, then offering a brief exposition as to why a grasp of the material in question is important. Topics covered include, among other things, tillage, phytobiology, fertilization, soil typology, soil quality, and stock breeding. Fundamentally, however, *Entwurf* puts forward not a detailed syllabus with material organized into sequenced blocks, but a set of insights into the significance of each subject area—what specifically is to be gained from the study of, say, edaphology.

At the conceptual level, the project was shaped by the consultations of the director of his estates, János Nagyváthy, and later by the count himself, albeit via correspondence, with Sámuel Tessedik, the Lutheran pastor of Szarvas, who in 1791 had founded an elementary farming school for youth of common parentage.³⁹ In a letter dated 3 June 1795, Tessedik appended a description of the school in Szarvas, likely in response to a desire on Festetics's part to use the pastor's experiences as a point of departure for his own endeavors. Such a view would explain Festetics's known sponsorship of the studies of two young men at Tessedik's institution, though neither of the individuals in question, of whom Tessedik wrote in disparaging terms, would later play any part in events at Keszthely.⁴⁰

That Festetics exercised circumspection in his quest for models, however, there can be no doubt—a conclusion for which his correspondence with the Prague-born Viennese newspaper editor Johann Ferdinand von Schönfeld (1750–1821) stands as compelling evidence. It can be no coincidence, for example, that in 1796 Schönfeld, who did not speak Hungarian, launched in Vienna an agricultural journal written entirely in the Hungarian language, and indeed, the editor's correspondence with Festetics permits the conclusion that the count himself was behind its publication.⁴¹ In a letter dated 13 March 1797, Schönfeld recommended Ferenc Pethe (1762–1832) as a person whose “accumulated knowledge and national pride” made him unequivocally suited to a teaching position.⁴² Such incidents serve to demonstrate that when

38 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 15 fol. 1–1v, 11–11v.

39 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 8 fol. 381–382v.

40 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 6 fol. 67; MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 8 fol. 131–132v; MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 9 fol. 79.

41 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 10 fol. 156.

42 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 10 fol. 316.

it came to his intentions as founder, considerations of quality, professional standard, and personal commitment were regarded as of inseparable value. The choice of Pethe, however, merits particular attention in that Pethe came to Keszthely following several years' study in Western Europe that included, among other things, personal experience with agricultural practices in England. Incidentally, the first executive professor of the newly opened college in Keszthely was the Bohemian Karl Bulla (?-?), upon whose recommendation Festetics was to christen his institution 'the *Georgicon*' in reflection of both its patronage, and its academic character of farming.⁴³

Also of conceptual relevance is a letter dated 17 October 1799 from Festetics to Archduke Joseph (1776–1847), Palatine of Hungary and President of the Council of the Governor-General, in which Festetics refers to England's agricultural achievements as exemplary and exceeding those of any other European country; clear indication that Pethe's engagement in the project was, in fact, no arbitrary matter. As regards the documentation and dissemination of results achieved on the practical side of institutional operations, the count held the labors of Secretary Arthur Young (1741–1820) and Chairman Sir John Sinclair (1754–1835) of the Board of Agriculture as instructive, as he did the role played by the German agriculturist Albrecht Thaer (1752–1828), in ensuring a proper reception for Britain's achievements on the continent.⁴⁴ Thaer, incidentally, would later express admiration for the ten-course crop rotation system used on the *Georgicon*'s experimental farm, an innovation developed by Pethe from experiences gleaned in England and The Netherlands.⁴⁵ In assessing the readiness with which Hungary absorbed and adapted the latest developments in agricultural science, this point is not insignificant.

The development of a curriculum, on the other hand, took considerably more time, although, thanks to the labors of Karl Bulla and Ferenc Pethe, the contours of an initial '*oeconomicalis institutum*' had been drawn as early as 1797–98.⁴⁶ In it,

43 OSZK Kézirattár [Department of Manuscripts], Quart. Germ. 1240 fol. 2–3. Of Festetics's character traits several stories survived. Theresa Pulszky, *née* Walter (1819–1866), wrote in her memoirs as follows: "He was not only learned, but also very clever; of a powerfully satirical turn, directed against all the world, which he disguised under the mask of politeness, united with the semblance of such perfect humility, as to appear at times awkward. It was never to be made out whether he spoke in joke or in earnest." Pulszky, *Memoirs*, 133.

44 OSZK Kézirattár, Quart. Germ. 1240 fol. 79–84v. For more on the work of Young and Sinclair, see: Brunt, "Rehabilitating Arthur Young," 265–99; Mitchison, *Agricultural Sir John*. For Thaer's contribution to disseminating rational farming techniques, see: Körte, *Albrecht Thaer*; Klemm-Meyer, *Albrecht Daniel Thaer*.

45 Albrecht Thaer's letter to Festetics is dated 25 January 1801. MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 23 fol. 183–183v.

46 Karl Bulla's report to the *Directio* is dated 6 September 1797. MNL OL Festetics Lt, *Georgicon* alapításával kapcsolatos iratok [Documents on the Founding of the Georgicon], P 283 Box 13 fol. 82–86.

subjects were divided into three basic groups: general agriculture (*rustica*), mathematics and technology, and veterinary medicine.⁴⁷ First-year students were to begin with the study of horticulture, gardening, wildlands management, viticulture, and forestry. In the second year, they examined related “crafts and trades and the internal management of the same,” and in the third, estate management and law. Subjects included under the final year’s thematic headings included: 1. “Decrees of His Highness as pertain to farming”; 2. “Localities management”; and 3. “Guidelines for His Lordship’s officers.” In the study of practical matters, students received in-depth training in both architecture and the technical side of farm-building construction, with particular emphasis on arithmetic, accounting, and geometry. Interns, that is, full-time students, were additionally expected to gain an adequate mastery of drafting, a requirement to which a number of surviving examination drawings attest.⁴⁸

According to an examination plan dated 28 August 1803, several years into the school’s operation, students gave account of their understanding of each subject over a period of two days. At 7:30 a.m. on the first day, the Count’s three scholarship recipients were tested in ‘*oeconomia*’; in the hour to follow, the rest of the school’s external interns, that is, students who were supported by other patrons or covered their studies on their own. At 9:30 a.m. the three students then sat for an hour-long examination in geometry. A short break preceded the examination in botany, which lasted from 10:45 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. The final examinations for Day 1 were in “hydroengineering” at 2:00 p.m. and technology at 3:00 p.m. On Day 2, interns were tested in mathematics and business accounting, followed by practical questions as per an instruction by Nagyváthy.⁴⁹ It is important to note that the original version of the published hand-written document specifying all basic study requirements was personally read and countersigned by the count himself.⁵⁰

As regards the stock-breeding courses taught at the *Georgicon*, the sense is of a desire to impart practical principles and methods in a manner that was both rational and thorough, an approach that would have students delving into such topics as stabling and the use of crop rotation in producing quality fodder. Typifying this spirit was the production during the tenure of Ferenc Pethe of both perennial ryegrass (or “ray grass”), and white clover on the school’s experimental farm. A report on the ongoing development of the farm dated 4 February 1800 states for its planned

47 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Georgicon alapításával kapcsolatos iratok [Documents on the Founding of the Georgicon], P 283 Box 13 fol. 89–91.

48 Kurucz, *Keszthely grófja*, 212; OSZK Kézirattár Fol. Germ. 1460 fol. 2–3; MMgM Adattár. II. 1077.

49 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 35 fol. 601–602v.

50 OSZK Kézirattár, Quart. Hung. 3714, 8708.

thirty-two acres of pasture “a necessity of 130 measures each of red, white, and yellow clover seed, and an equal quantity of Ray gras [sic] seed.”⁵¹ Considerable time was also dedicated to such pursuits as the fattening of cows, milk production, and for sheep, the study of wool as a raw material. Key in this regard was the participation in instruction of Moravian-born Gyula Liebbald (1780–1846), chief veterinary surgeon for the Festetics estates and author of a specialist book on protecting sheep against sheep pox, which had garnered national attention.⁵² In evidence of both Festetics’s respect for Liebbald’s professionalism and the latter’s success as a veterinarian, Liebbald filled the position of director of the *Georgicon* at various times over the course of the school’s operation. As an instructor, he took advantage of his duties inoculating Count Festetics’s herds in order to provide a learning opportunity for his students.⁵³

Following Pethe’s departure in 1801, academic life at Keszthely continued to be shaped by professors educated at Western European Protestant institutions. Two key figures in particular, János Asbóth (1768–1823) and Károly György Rummy (1780–1847), had acquired their knowledge of farming from the lectures of Professor Johann Beckmann (1739–1811) at the University of Göttingen, an institution founded by the King of England and Elector of Hannover, George II (1727–1760).⁵⁴ Indeed, every applicant for Pethe’s vacated position listed a Göttingen education among his qualifications.⁵⁵ In 1806, Festetics instructed Asbóth to prepare a new curriculum, as a result of which the three initially defined categories—“Agricultural Subjects,” “Subjects Belonging to Mathematics,” and “Natural History and Veterinary Medicine”—were expanded to include hydraulics and hydroengineering under the second heading and chemistry under the third. Lectures lasted one hour per day for each subject, yielding a total of 18 hours of theoretical study per week.⁵⁶ In witness to the specifics of Asbóth’s lectures is an extant set of notes by full-time intern student Károly Zimányi (?–?), taken in Latin and dated 1805. The lecture in question

51 *Lolium perenne*, L. MNL OL Festetics Lt, Georgicon alapításával kapcsolatos iratok [Documents on the Founding of the Georgicon], P 283 Box 13 fol. 137; MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 19 fol. 314–315.

52 Liebbald, *Über die zweckgemässsste Methode*.

53 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Georgicon alapításával kapcsolatos iratok [Documents on the Founding of the Georgicon], P 283 Box 12 fol. 7.

54 For Hungary’s intellectual relations with the *Georgia Augusta*, see: Futaky, *Göttinga*. For Beckmann’s activities and oeuvre, see: Bayerl and Beckmann, *Johann Beckmann (1739–1811)*; For Asbóth’s education and career, see: Kurucz, “Göttingentől Keszthelyig,” 1031–60.

55 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 22 fol. 384–385.

56 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Georgicon alapításával kapcsolatos iratok [Documents on the Founding of the Georgicon], P 283 Box 4 (no foliation).

centered on the properties and uses of various vegetable oils, food processing and preservation, the uses of industrial plants, and basic minerology. The information presented relies largely on Beckmann's *Anleitung zur Technologie*, a work whose 1802 edition—one of several pre-dating the curriculum—featured in Festetics's own specialist library.⁵⁷ It may in any case be observed that both theoretical studies and practical training at Keszthely were combined and organized according to the principles applied at Göttingen, a conclusion Asbóth's own thematically differentiated examination tables plainly support.⁵⁸

Additions to the Keszthely library dating to the last decades of the eighteenth century and the specific acquisition of works published at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries allow for two important conclusions: that the collection was deliberately shaped along vocational lines; and that its development was closely related both to the official and conceptual reasons behind the *Georgicon*'s founding, and to the school's eventual operations. Supporting this supposition is the observation that acquisitions of the period included all works on natural science, medicine, agriculture, and technology written by the teachers at the *Georgia Augusta* in Göttingen. Accordingly, the orders submitted to Viennese book shops regularly featured the works of Johann Beckmann, and indeed, according to a "roster of Books procured from Vienna and placed in the Library" on 24 July 1800, it was at this time that both Volume 4 of Beckmann's *Beyträge zur Geschichte der Erfindungen*, published in Leipzig in 1799, and Volume 20 of *Physikalische ökonomische Bibliothek*, edited by Beckmann and released in Göttingen the same year, were acquired.⁵⁹ Naturally, by itself, the employment of instructors with qualifications from Western European educational hubs or, as seen previously, personal experience from a country on the cutting edge of Western agriculture would not have been sufficient to achieve any broader implementation of much-needed agricultural management principles, methods of cultivation, or technological best practices. To provide the necessary knowledge base and flow of information for an educational program of this scope and duration obviously required a comprehensive library of vocational literature; and given both the imperative nature of assembling one and what is known of the resulting collection of contemporary English agricultural literature within the Festetics library, it may be gathered both that the founder's efforts were highly targeted and that his mention in the letter to

57 OSZK Kézirattár Quart. Lat. 3916/1–2. Beckmann, *Anleitung zur Technologie*.

58 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 31 fol. 345; MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 65 fol. 167–170.

59 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 21 fol. 346. Krász, "Bibliofil főurak," 425–34.

the Palatine of two persons, Young and Sinclair, distinctly important to the communication of England's achievements, was by no means an accident.⁶⁰

The works of English specialist literature included in the Festetics library to serve as a model for the Hungarian adaptation of modern agricultural practices not only covered every conceivable field, but also served as a sort of survey of England's outstanding farming regions. Of particular note in this regard were the county surveys of the English Board of Agriculture, a series of volumes that—though not dealing with the peculiarities of local agricultural production in terms of thematic chapters—did include in each published volume explicit mention of the general editorial principles applied.⁶¹ Additionally, the Board wished to evaluate both its statistics, and the phenomena and processes its survey had identified according to criteria having to do with the general national economy; essentially, the idea was to illuminate the potential for “community growth and development.” The Board even undertook to compare recent scientific and practical findings to additional control experiments, an approach fully in line with that taken by other, similar European agricultural bodies.⁶²

In laying the groundwork for an institution of higher education Festetics grasped the need for looking beyond teachers with Western European experience and a solid professional library to the matter of travel abroad for the purposes of study and consultation. Though not mentioned in his letter to Palatine Joseph, it is clear that he viewed the notion of sending professors and students on academic tour as a key means of gathering experience. That the count never expressed this in explicit terms can be explained in part by his employment of individuals—Pethe and, later, Asbóth and Rummy—for whom this was already a reality, and in part with reference to his being banished from entering the imperial capital of Vienna in 1797 as a result of his open statement against the royal decree calling for an overall insurrection against Napoleon's troops. In this same vein, from the complications surrounding his founding of the Hungarian Reformed Secondary School in Csurgó, he may rightly have suspected that he was being watched.⁶³ If true, this would explain why Festetics's stewards and employees were known to have conducted major travels within the territory of the Monarchy for the purposes of business and study only after 1801, the year of Palatine Joseph's visit to Keszthely. The observation pertains, for

60 Kurucz, “Az »új mezőgazdaság« irodalma,” 32–44. For an analysis of how contemporary agricultural literature made its impact, see: Horn, “The Contribution of the Propagandist,” 313–29. For a brief biography of English writers on agriculture, see: Donaldson, *Agricultural Biography*.

61 Kent: *General View*, IV.

62 For a comprehensive survey of European agricultural bodies, with particular emphasis on the development of agricultural science in the German territories, see: Müller, *Akademie und Wirtschaft im 18. Jahrhundert*; Bödeker, “Economic Societies in Germany, 1760–1820,” 182–211.

63 Kurucz, *Keszthely grófia*, 175–79.

example, to Asbóth's extended trips in Hungary, Lower Austria, and Moravia in 1802 and 1806, and intern student Károly Fleckel's (?–?) circuit of multiple German states and Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg's (1771–1844) school in Switzerland in 1810.⁶⁴

In many instances, Festetics's plans for the development of a network of professional connections—his educational and communicational aims interpreted in their broadest sense—seem integrally linked to his experiences at the *Theresianum* in Vienna. In 1795, for example, Festetics's former professor Joseph von Sonnenfels (1732–1817) authored a proposal for the Habsburg Monarchy's newly instituted Studien-Revisions-Hofkommission, listing a number of fundamental principles and practical items for action toward the reform of the Habsburg education system. Citing several persons with significant scientific achievements to their names, as well the impressive results attained by Germany and England, the proposal in question sought to point out the sociocultural significance of the influence exerted by scientific institutions and personalities salutary to state and society. In the proposal, Sonnenfels underscored the idea of foreign study tours as a means of obtaining the sort of direct experience that would allow for the control and analysis of prior art, and even the elimination of attendant prejudices.⁶⁵

Beyond the questions of practical experience and literature, however, was the matter of international recognition and publicity, to which Festetics also gave due consideration. It speaks for itself, for example, that on 8 November 1801, János Asbóth, employed after Pethe, was elected corresponding member of the Göttingen Scientific Society in the wake of a petition submitted by one of his own former professors, Heinrich August Wrisberg (1739–1808).⁶⁶ This high-level recognition of the former Göttingen student likely served to strengthen Festetics, who consciously built on his connections with the school to promote the *Georgicon's* reputation. Asbóth sent the school a detailed description of the Keszthely institution under the title *Beschreibung des Georgikons, oder der Gräflich-Georg-Festeticschen Schule der Oeconomie zu Keszthely am Balaton im Szalader Comitate in Ungarn*, which professor Christian Gottlieb Heyne (1729–1812) subsequently published in the eminent review journal *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*, an act that greatly raised the *Georgicon's* profile abroad.⁶⁷ Festetics was subsequently granted the title of honorary

64 Kurucz, *Keszthely gróffa*, 234–35; MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 66 fol. 362–363.

65 “Reisen sind zur weiteren Ausbildung des jungen Mannes eben so nothwendig als nützlich. Sie erweitern die einmal gefaßten Begriffe, bereichern mit Kenntnissen, tilgen manches Vorurtheil, stärken die Kraft und Richtigkeit im Vergleichen und Prüfen, und üben und bewähren die Urtheilskraft.” ÖStA AVA SRHA Kart. 1. No. 1.

66 Göttingen, Archiv der Academie der Wissenschaften Pers. 12 Nr. 38.

67 *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* (1803) I. 745–49. At Festetics's instruction, copies of Asbóth's

member of the Society via a vote taken 1 August 1802 and notified by Professor Heyne in a letter dated the nineteenth of the same month.⁶⁸ Additional acknowledgements of the esteem in which Festetics was held within the Habsburg Monarchy included his elections to membership in the Imperial and Royal Agricultural Society in 1808 and to honorary membership in the Bavarian Agricultural Society in 1812.⁶⁹

Conclusions

In the contemporary Hungarian-language press, Festetics's aim of creating the foundation for a national higher education in agricultural science was repeatedly portrayed as the best means for raising the level of affluence of the Hungarian countryside to compare with that of England. The author of an article in the 14 September 1798 edition of *Magyar Hírmondó*, for example, concluded his own assessment of the character of rural England with the note: "Applying his kind industries to achieve for our rural areas that rare happiness that is enjoyed in England we have—György Festetics." It was for this precise reason, the article remarked, that while "the *Georgicon* was developed for the training of the count's stewards, others [might] also enter."⁷⁰

An undoubtedly unbiased description of the *Georgicon* and its founder, implying that Festetics could not be castigated for lacking vision ignorant or being "uncultured, barren of ideas" was given by English traveller Richard Bright (1789–1858). Born in Bristol, Bright was a highly educated physician who had traveled extensively in numerous European countries and whose arrival in Keszthely in the mid-1810s came with a letter of presentation from Count László Festetics (1785–1846), György Festetics's son in Vienna. Four years later, his travel experiences were published in

missive to Göttingen were made for the purposes of the Directio. MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 35 fol. 38v.

68 Göttingen, Archiv der Academie der Wissenschaften Pers. 12 Nr. 41; MNL OL Festetics Lt, Directorátusi Ügyiratok [Files of the Directorate], P 279 Box 30 fol. 514–514v. For the ornate certificate dated 9 August 1802 certifying Festetics's membership, see: MNL OL Festetics Lt, Festetics I. György [Letters to György Festetics], P 246 Box 1 fol. 3. The news item published in the Göttingen scientific journal: *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen* (1802) II. 1909.

69 MNL OL Festetics Lt, Memorabilia, P 235 Box 120 p. 581; MNL OL Festetics Lt, Memorabilia, P 235 Box 121 p. 57.

70 "Angliának ily ritka boldogságára iparkodik szíves igyekezettel juttatni vidékünket Hazánk' méltó Fija, M. Gróf Festetics György [...] Az említett Georgikon, különösen 's főképpenn, a' Gróf Úr tulajdon Tisztjeinek formáltatásokra állíttatott ugyan fel: mindazáltal, Hazánknak akármely részéből való más Ifjak is, kiknek a' Gazdaság fundamentomos megtanulásához kedvek 's hajlandóságok vagyon, ingyen halgathatják abban a Gazdasági tanításokat folyvást, és egyéb tudományokban való magok tökéli létesítésének rövidsége nélkül." *Magyar Hírmondó* II. no. 22 (1798) 338.

a volume of more than six hundred pages, occasionally offering a rather bleak picture of the state of the peasantry. Nevertheless, Bright unequivocally recalled the *Georgicon*'s founding aim as the advancement of Hungarian agriculture through the production of estate management experts and workers within the framework of higher and secondary education, respectively.⁷¹ Naturally, in the course of his visit, Bright had the occasion to speak at length not only with Festetics, but also with the school's various professors. Not surprisingly, his experiences coincide fully with the thoughts expressed several years earlier by János Asbóth, the former Göttingen student turned Keszthely professor who had done so much to promote the school's good name. As Asbóth had stated in his German-language description, the *Georgicon* hoped by its cultivation of experts to serve the economic interests of the country as a whole.⁷²

Bright's personal impressions of Festetics also seem to give a different picture to the common concept of the 'ignorant' Hungarian aristocrats, when recalling one of their conversations:

"This afternoon was likewise spent in conversation with the Graf, whose stores of information are unbounded, and who was better acquainted with the modern politics of our island than I was. I particularly remember his expressions of surprise, that in a country advanced in civilization as England is represented to be, so many capital punishments should be necessary, and that mere boys should frequently become victims of the law."⁷³

Given the above, there can be little doubt that Berzsenyi's phrasing, as indicated in the introduction to this study, was not born of empty flattery—that is, that the comparison to Weimar was a sincere one. To imagine the poet was motivated by petty calculations would be inconsistent with the sense of self-respect one discerns in his letters. Much more likely, therefore, is that he judged the count's activities as institutional founder and private patron, particularly with reference to the circumstances in Hungary during the period in question, as serving the process of strengthening and disseminating intellectual values, and, consequently, the count

71 "The object of this institution for promoting the theory and practice of agriculture, is to form useful and well instructed officers and accountants for the management of estates, from young men of superior class; and common workmen and overseers of particular branches, from the sons of the peasantry; and likewise to allow those who possess farm-lands an opportunity of obtaining such knowledge as may enable them to improve the agricultural interests of the country. Hence the students of the *Georgicon* (for so the institution is called) are divided into the pensioners of the Graf and the independent scholars." Bright, *Travels*, 361–62. For a biography, see: Bright, *Dr. Richard Bright*.

72 OSZK, Kézirattár, Fol. Germ. 1460 fol. 1.

73 Bright, *Travels*, 449.

himself as interpreting the cause of progress for Hungary exclusively within the broader European context.

In Berzsenyi's view, by operating his school in Keszthely according to the latest models and instituting a system of study tours, scholarships, and relationships with scientific societies, Festetics was working to incorporate the *Georgicon* into an immediate network of Western European connections. It was with reference to these things that the poet's otherwise somewhat dramatic remark gained deeper meaning, as in Berzsenyi's own words, the count in Keszthely had "laid the foundation stones of a glorious edifice, such as only the crumbling ruins of the Homeland might bury."⁷⁴

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Constructing a Periphery

Descriptions of Hungarian, Transylvanian, and Croatian Towns in Theater Periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire, 1760–1800

Raluca Muresan 

Sorbonne-Université, centre André Chastel, 2 rue Vivienne Paris 75002 France;
raluca.muresan@sorbonne-universite.fr

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Abstract. Based on the analysis of articles published in theater periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire, this study explores the enlightened cultural and symbolic geographies as reflected in the late eighteenth-century German theatrical press. Larry Wolff has shown that western travelers tend to locate the borders of civilized Europe in Habsburg lands situated east of Vienna, namely in Galicia and Hungary. If theatrical periodicals and travel memoirs by western travelers share a common interest in the frontiers of civilized Europe, the specific geography of civilization entails several contradictions in the two medias. Larry Wolff has shown that western travelers tend to locate the borders of civilized Europe in Habsburg lands situated east of Vienna, namely in Galicia and Hungary. By contrast, in theatrical journals based in the Holy Roman Empire, the borders of civilization seem to be concentrated south-eastwards, along the Ottoman frontier, namely in Hungary and in the countries of St. Stephen's Crown. The article seeks to elucidate variations by pointing to geographical and political factors, as well as to differences between these two literary genres. Unlike travel journals, theater periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire had to give a general overview of contemporary theater life, by pointing to the mobilities of itinerant theatrical, especially German, companies, and by documenting their repertoire. This article reveals how the specific construction of an imagined European periphery reflected by the periodicals is determined both by their networks of contributors and by the taste for exotic, namely Turkish subjects, in eighteenth-century dramas and operas. Hence, such philosophic geographies are shaped both by the origin, the language, the genre and by the major themes of such periodicals.

Keywords: philosophic geography, civilization, German theatrical journals, Hungary

He “disseminated good taste in these faraway regions.” This is how an article in August Ottokar Reichhard's *Theater-Kalender für 1781*, printed in Gotha, presented the arrival of theater impresario Josef Hülverding in Pest, Buda (Ofen),¹

1 During the eighteenth century, German, Hungarian, Latin, and Polish topographical names were all alternatively used according to the language of each text. Current topographical names are used in this article in order to facilitate reading. However, in quotations, town names are left in the original language of the quoted text.

Sibiu (Nagyszeben, Hermannstadt), Timișoara (Temesvár, Temeschwar), and Košice (Kassa, Kaschau).² Aside from a few exceptions, like Bratislava (Pozsony, Pressburg) or Fertőd (Esterhaus, Eszterháza),³ periodicals published in the Holy Roman Empire describe theatrical scenes in Hungary, Transylvania, and Croatia as distant and remote. For instance, the Berlin *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* in 1777 praised the introduction of regular plays in Sibiu, “on the model of other civilized countries,” thanks to Josef Hülverding.⁴ This article is an exact copy of the one published a few months earlier in the *Realzeitung der Wissenschaften, Künste und Commerzien* in Vienna.⁵ Similar assessments are found in Reichard’s *Theater-Kalender* in Gotha during the following years.⁶ In 1791, the same *Theater-Kalender* states that the establishment of Johann Weilhammer’s travelling company for three years in Zagreb (Zágráb, Agram) may be considered a “sign that Enlightenment and taste for the theater have no more strangers, even in Germany’s remotest regions.”⁷

These narratives unquestionably recall the imaginary map of *Civilization* drawn by eighteenth-century travel journals analyzed in Larry Wolff’s seminal book, *Inventing Eastern Europe on the Mind of Enlightenment*. The author reveals how the polarization of the European continent between the South and the North, inherited from the Renaissance, tended to be replaced by an opposition between the East and the West. While barbarism tends to be relocated eastwards, according to Wolff, “Poland and Russia would be mentally detached from Sweden and Denmark, as associated instead with Hungary and Bohemia, the Balkan lands of Ottoman Europe, and even the Crimea on the Black Sea.”⁸ In travel journals by western travelers, Habsburg territories located east of Vienna were often apprehended as borderlands of civilized Europe: Galicia, Hungary, Transylvania, and the Banat are mainly concerned, while some travelers tended to locate these shifting borders much closer to Vienna.⁹

2 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1781*, CLVIII: “Die Gesellschaft [...] macht sich durch Ausbreitung des guten Geschmacks in diesen entfernten Gegenden, verdient.”

3 The theater in Bratislava is described in the *Theater Kalender* in Gotha as “worthy of admiration”. Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1778*, 101. See also the next issue of the journal (1779, 109).

4 “Schreiben aus Hermannstadt”, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, 1778, 4, XLI, 10.10.1778, 658: “Er hat nach dem Beyspiele der übrigen gesitteten Länder die Posse gänzlich von dem Theater verbannt.”

5 “Schreiben aus Hermannstadt an Herrn R...t”, Rautenstrauch, Riedel, ed. *Realzeitung der Wissenschaften*, 1777, 610–11.

6 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1781*, CLVII.

7 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1791*, 250.

8 Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 4–5.

9 See Mozart’s travel notes from Bohemia. Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 8.

Travel memoirs, as well as theatrical and cultural periodicals, thus share a common interest in the frontiers of the civilized world. All these descriptions belong to the same enlightened cultural leaning for philosophic geography, namely, a willingness to define the European intellectual space by contrast, by inventing an intellectual “Other” meant to embody the precise opposite of European values.¹⁰ Yet, there is a significant difference in the specific geography of civilization drawn in German theatrical periodicals. While the semantics of remoteness recur in several articles concerning Hungary and the other lands of Saint Stephen’s crown, astonishingly, theatrical reviews about towns in the former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Russian Empire remain neutral; they focus on the presentation of itinerant theatrical troupes, of their repertoire, without attempting to hierarchize those cities according to any kind of philosophical geography.¹¹ Furthermore, an article on the history of German theater published in the Gotha *Theater-Kalender* in 1783 places Vienna, Prague, Munich, and Saint Petersburg on an equal footing: all of these capital-cities were supposed to have been emancipated during the previous decades from the “rule of barbarism” in order to become cradles of “good taste.”¹² News from Warsaw and Saint Petersburg was sometimes grouped within articles handling German theater, describing some smaller scenes in former Polish territories, such as Cracow, Lviv (Lemberg, Lwów), or Gdańsk (Danzig), and Vilnius (Vilnia, Wilno, Wilna). Compared to travel journals studied by Larry Wolff, the German theatrical press operated, thus, not only on an earlier model of Northern Europe’s civilized character, but also inscribed on this symbolic map some north-eastern regions.¹³ What would be the reason for this specific and early relocation of the civilized world’s peripheries south-eastwards, in the lands of the Hungarian crown? Did theatrical periodicals mobilize a specific set of criteria of their own in order to distinguish particular configurations of centers and peripheries of European theater?

Based on an analysis of articles published in more than thirty periodicals in the Holy Roman-Empire indexed by Wolfgang Bender, Siegfried Bushuven, and

10 Chappey et al., “Barbares, sauvages et civilisés,” 13.

11 On Lviv, see: Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1785*, 207–09 (on F.-A. Göttersdorf), 1794, 296–97, 1798, 246–47 (On Franz-Heinrich Bulla). See also [Unknown author], *Neues Theater-Journal für Deutschland*, Leipzig, no. 1 (1788): 85. Knigge, *Dramaturgische Blätter*, Hannover, 1788, 190 (Immoral play). Bertram, ed., *Annalen des Theaters*, Berlin, 1790/5, 102. On Cracow, see: Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1783*, 314–19 (List of Polish actors and dramas), 1782, 284–85 (Orcsewski’s will to establish a national theater), 1787, 192–94 (On of a German troop led by Schrottenstein).

12 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1783*, 101.

13 Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 5.

Michael Huesmann,¹⁴ this study explores enlightened cultural and symbolic geographies reflected in the late eighteenth-century theatrical press. Thus, the analysis does not focus on actual theatrical reviewing, but on the overview of geographical places mentioned in these sources. Therefore, almanacs largely prevail, as they deliver information on a wide range of theatrical companies all over Europe. Besides, several other types of periodicals are also used, such as yearbooks, calendars, and journals.¹⁵ My analysis focuses on the theatrical press outside Habsburg territories and makes comparisons with some journals and newspapers in Vienna, Hungary, and Poland. I thus contend that such philosophic geographies are shaped by the origin, language, and theme of the periodicals concerned.

An uneven knowledge of Hungarian and Polish theatrical life: practical reasons

The geographical origin of the periodicals included in this study is without any doubt a central factor that may explain variations in their assessment on the remote character of one region or another. News about the theatrical life in Central and Eastern Europe was most frequently published in Heinrich August Ottokar Reichard's almanacs in Gotha, the *Theater-Kalender* (1775–1799) and the *Theater-Journal für Deutschland* (1777–1780), as well as in Christoph Seipp's *Theater Wochenblatt für Salzburg* (1775–1776). A significant number of descriptions appeared also in Christian August Bertram's Berlin periodicals, the *Literatur- und Theater-Zeitung* (1778–1784), the *Ephemeriden der Literatur und des Theaters* (1785–1787), and the *Annalen des Theaters* (1788–1797). Some other journals in Leipzig, Frankfurt am Main, Mannheim, Hamburg, and Hannover delivered only scarce news on this topic. Most of the articles in this study were, thus, published in the Dutchy of Saxe-Gotha and in Prussia. From the end of the seventeenth century, interactions between Saxony and Poland in the field of theatrical activity were facilitated by the fact that the electors of Saxony, Frederik-August I (1670–1733) and Frederik-August II (1696–1763), were also kings of Poland—August II (1694–1733) and August III (1733–1763).

14 This comparative study was made possible thanks to the following theater bibliographical databases where these periodicals are indexed: Bender, Bushuven, and Huesmann, *Theaterperiodika des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Tome 1, vol. 2; tome 2, vol. 3; tome 3, vol. 3. My analysis is mainly based on the section "Theatergeschichte der Orte". Though extensive, estimations are not exhaustive, as some of the articles were classed according to the impresario's name, without taking into account their location. My inquiry implicitly shares the same chronological frame, going from 1750 to 1800, with the bibliographical work directed by Wolfgang Bender, Siegfried Bushuven, and Michael Huesmann.

15 Ulrich, "Almanacs as Sources," 155–56.

Later, the considerable territorial expansion of the Kingdom of Prussia at the expense of the former Polish Commonwealth (1772), as well as diplomatic ties between Frederik the Great and the Tsar Peter III, may also explain why periodicals published in Berlin, Gotha, and Leipzig did not describe Polish and Russian theaters as exotic and remote.

News from the German, French and Italian theaters in Saint Petersburg was frequent in Reichard's almanacs in Gotha from 1770 up to 1790, and occasionally in Berlin and Frankfurt periodicals (see Table 1). In turn, during the same period, the theaters in the newly conquered towns of Wrocław (Breslau) and Gdańsk (Danzig) were closely surveyed in Bertram's almanacs in Berlin, yet only scarcely featuring in other periodicals. These two towns received just as much attention in Berlin as theaters in Hamburg and Mannheim.¹⁶ Bertram's almanacs, as well as those of Reichard in Gotha, also attentively surveyed the theaters in Warsaw during the 1770s, but only occasionally during the following two decades.¹⁷ Several other towns in the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth were scarcely mentioned, like Poznań (Posen), Głogów (Glogau), and Szczecin (Stettin).¹⁸ Concerning Hungary, only Reichard's Gotha periodicals report frequent news, while those in Berlin recall Sibiu (1778), Bratislava, Fertőd, Pest (1779), and Buda (1792) only once.¹⁹ From 1777 onwards, most mentions in Gotha concern Bratislava, and also Buda from the 1790s. During those years, their mentions were similar in number to those of Tallinn (Reval), Riga, Regensburg, and Linz.

The regions and towns in Hungary and the other lands of St Stephen's Crown noted in these German periodicals are modelled on the routes taken by itinerant German actors, often close to the German Theater Reform movement. These actors were mainly visiting Bratislava, Sopron (Odenburg), Győr (Raab), Pest, and Buda. From there, two routes led towards Galicia and Transylvania, either northwards—through Košice—or southwards—through Timișoara.²⁰ These towns were but seldom included in foreign theater chronicles. As a consequence, the first mentions of Bratislava, Fertőd, and Pest are linked to the arrival of Carl Wahr (1745–1799), and the first mention of Zagreb was tied to the coming of Johann Weilhammer (1745–1788). Similarly, the first articles on Timișoara, Sibiu, and Košice are

16 Reichard mentions St Petersburg thirty-one times. Bertram mentions Wrocław twenty-one times, and Gdańsk seventeen times. Bender, Bushuven, and Huesmann, *Theaterperiodika des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Tome 1, 1001–9; Tome 2, 198, 1293–99; Tome 3, 1399–1407.

17 According to Bender, Bushuven, and Huesmann, both journals contained seven mentions of theatrical activity in Warsaw between 1775 and 1799.

18 Glogau: Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1799*, 228. Posen: [Unkown Author], *Rheinische Musen*, Mannheim, no. 2 (1794): 22. Stettin: Bertram, ed., *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, no. 5 (1782): 589–90.

19 Bertram, ed., *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* (october 1778): 658–59; (1779): 413–14 (article on Carl Wahr in Bratislava, Fertőd, Pest and Salzburg); no. 10 (1792): 84

20 Kádár-Pukánszky, *Geschichte des deutschen Theaters*, 17.

associated with the establishment of the theater companies of Benedict Dominic Anton Cremeri (1752–1795), Josef Hülverding (1730–1797), and Christoph Seipp (1747–1793). During the following years, Sibiu was systematically included in the Gotha *Theater-Kalender*.²¹ Astonishingly, Kronstadt, an important commercial town in Transylvania, frequently visited by the theatrical troupes based in Sibiu, is mentioned only once in Reichard's 1791 *Theater-Kalender*.²²

Some smaller towns in the Banat, like Pančevo (Pancsova, Pantschowa) and Zemun (Zimony, Semlin), come up in an article on Franz Josef Diwald playing in Transylvania and in the Banat from 1785 to 1789. The same impresario gives the first news of Eger and Nitra (Nyitra, Neutra) in 1792.²³ The first mentions of Karlovac (Károlyváros, Karlstadt), Levoča (Lőcse, Leutschau), Banská Štiavnica (Selmecbánya, Schemnitz), and Prešov (Eperjes, Eperies) in 1789–1791 are linked to a tour of the company of Barbara Göttersdorf, who used to play in Lviv, as well as to the activity of Heinrich Bulla's company heading from Pest/Buda towards Lviv.²⁴ Similarly, 1791 articles on Johann Christoph Kunz's group recall their tours in Győr, Trnava (Nagyszombat, Tyrnau), Novi Sad (Újvidék, Neusatz), and Petrovaradin (Pétervárad, Peterwardein), while in 1797, we are informed of their arrival in Bardejov, (Bártfa, Bartfeld).²⁵ Vác (Waitzen), Varaždin (Varasd, Warasdin), and Pécs (Fünfkirchen) each feature only once, during the tours of Gottlieb Stephanie and of Jakob Morelli in 1791, and later of a certain Schiller in 1792.²⁶

During the years 1797–1798, articles on the impresarios Philipp Berndt, Franz Xaver Rünner, Joseph Holzmann, and Johann August Stöger also talk of Sopron, and some other towns less frequently visited by German actors, like Szombathely, Gyöngyös, Miskolc, Debrecen, Oradea (Nagyvárad, Groswardein), Baia-Mare (Nagybánya, Frauenbach), Arad, Oravița (Oravicabánya, Orawitz), and Lugoj (Lugos, Lugosch).²⁷ No mention concerns Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvar, Klausenburg), the future headquarters of Hungarian actors and the seat of the Transylvanian *Gubernium* from 1790 onwards.

21 Hankiss and Berczeli, ed., *A Magyarországon megjelent színházi zsebkönyvek*, 453–57.

22 “Einige Bühnen in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen” see: Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1791*, 458.

23 Hankiss and Berczeli, ed., *A Magyarországon megjelent színházi zsebkönyvek bibliográfiája*, 454–56.

24 Hankiss and Berczeli, ed., *A Magyarországon megjelent színházi zsebkönyvek bibliográfiája*, 454–55.

25 “Einige Bühnen in Ungarn und Siebenbürgen” see: Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1791*, 257. “Etwas von einigen Theatern in Ungarn,” see: Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1797*, 318.

26 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1797*, 455. The impresario is named here Worelli.

27 “Etwas von einigen Theatern in Ungarn,” see: Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1797*, 318. Hankiss and Berczeli, ed., *A Magyarországon megjelent színházi zsebkönyvek bibliográfiája*, 457.

Men of a thousand faces, these impresarios were actors, playwrights, and critics. Some of them were also writing in theater journals, thus actively contributing to the dissemination of information about these regional scenes.²⁸ The construction of a permanent theater often resulted in regular news on their towns, when the building was possessed or visited by German actors, as was the case of the theater in Buda directed by Franz Heinrich Bulla.²⁹ We can recognize in these articles the overall appreciation of permanent theater architecture within the milieu of the German theater reform. Such constructions were meant to facilitate the settlement of itinerant actors at a time when itinerance was associated with low morals.

The numerous aristocratic private theaters in Hungary are rarely covered. Only the Esterházy's theaters at Eisenstadt (Kismarton) and Fertőd, as well as János Nepomuk Erdődy's opera in Bratislava are frequently described.³⁰ Prince Miklós Esterházy's theater in Eisenstadt and Fertőd represented perhaps the most dynamic theatrical and musical scene in Hungary in the 1770s.³¹ Both were frequented by the impresarios Carl Wahr, Josef Hülverding, and Christoph Seipp. There was scarce news, however, about the theater in Bischofsdorf (1788) and Hainburg (1791) belonging to Fülöp Batthyány,³² the one in Prešov (1788) held by noble dilettantes, and those of Antal Glassalkovich in Ivanka pri Dunaj (Iwanka an der Donau, Ivánka) and Bratislava.³³ Erdődy's private theater in Varaždin (Warasdin) is mentioned only in periodicals published in the Habsburg Monarchy.³⁴ Yet, those itinerant impresarios who used to send letters to these periodicals were alternatively performing in public and several other private theaters.³⁵

28 Czibula, "Zum Theaterwesen in Pressburg," 30–32. The author draws a connection between the establishment of Carl Wahr in Bratislava and the creation of a section for theater in *Preßburger Zeitung*, as well as between the arrival of Josef Hülferding in Sibiu and the grounding of a theater journal in town. See also Cesnaková-Michalcová, *Premeny divadla*, 24.

29 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1788*, 114; Knigge, *Dramaturgie Blätter*, no. 1 (1788): 15; Schmieder, *Allgemeines Theaterjournal* no. 2 (1792): 117–18. A large echo was given to this building, described in no less than three foreign journals.

30 Bertram, ed., *Ephemeriden der Literatur und des Theaters*, no. 1 (1785) 380–82. Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1786*, 187–88. See also (1787): 201–3; (1788): 195–98; (1789): 156–60; (1790): 129–30.

31 For a detailed study of this theater, see Staud, *Magyar kastélyszínházak*, vol. 3, 111–25.

32 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1788*, 198. See also (1791): 257–58.

33 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1787*, 203–5. The best study on this topic remains Staud, *Magyar kastélyszínházak*, vol. 3, 12, 23–24, 27.

34 [Korabinsky], *Allgemeine deutsche Theater Zeitung*, Presbourg, no. 1 (1798): 29; no. 2 (1799): 11–12.

35 Staud, *Magyar kastélyszínházak*, vol. 1, 13–18 (Felix Berner), 112 (Count János N. Erdődy's opera in Bratislava); vol. 2, 20 (Grassalkovich's theater in Gödöllő); vol. 3, 24–34 (Fülöp Batthyány's theater in Hainburg).

No article deals with dramas written in Hungarian, even though professional theatrical troupes were playing from 1790 onwards in Hungary, and from 1792 onwards in Transylvania. Croatian theater is also entirely ignored in these periodicals.³⁶ Only in the Hungarian press was the activity of Hungarian playing actors surveyed and encouraged. Local theater journals in Pest like the *Magyar teátrómi zseb-könyvetske* and the *Magyar Teátrómi Kalendárium*,³⁷ as well as general journals like the *Magyar Hírmondó*, *Pozsonyi Hírmondó*, *Mindenek Gyűjtemény*, and the *Ephemerides Budenses* contributed to another theatrical geography,³⁸ one that was entirely eluded by the theatrical journals in the Holy Roman Empire: László Kelemen's tour to Cegléd (Zieglét), Nagykőrös, and Kecskemét (1796), the transfer of some actors to Cluj-Napoca, the tours of the Transylvanian company to Jibău (Zsibó, Siben), Debrecen, and Oradea (Nagyvárad, Großwardein) (1798–1802, 1803–1807), then Târgu-Mureș (Marosvásárhely, Neumarkt) (1803–1807), and Pest (1807–1814).³⁹ Except for Oradea, and Arad (Arad), briefly pointed out by Reichard in 1797,⁴⁰ none of these towns appear in German theatrical journals. Several other towns that were from time-to-time hosting both German and Hungarian theater were also absent from the periodicals published in the Holy Roman Empire. This was in fact the case for Szekesfehérvár (Stuhlweißenburg),⁴¹ Baia-Mare,⁴² and Szeged.⁴³

By contrast, German, French, and Polish plays were all recorded in the articles dealing with theatrical activity in Warsaw,⁴⁴ even if Polish performances did not always receive positive reviews. Criticism of Polish actors is quite frequent, especially

36 Frangeš, *Geschichte der kroatischen Litteratur*, 110–20.

37 *Magyar teátrómi zseb-könyvetske az 1793-dik esztendőre*, Pest: Trattner, [1793?]; *Magyar teátrómi Kalendárium*, Pest: Trattner, 1795, *Magyar teátrómi zseb-könyvetske*, Pest, Trattner, 1795.

38 Váli, *A magyar színészet*, 86–87.

39 Ferenczi, *A kolozsvári színészet*, 106–14, 135–49, 191.

40 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1797*, 318.

41 Kállay, *A városi önkormányzat hatásköre Magyarországon*, 274–76. For the first theater construction, see MNL OL, C51, 1803, F16/17–19. On the censorship of drama, see MNL OL, C51, 1806, F5/5–6; 1807, F5/7.

42 MNL OL, C51, 1795, F6/74 (Wolfgang Stephan asks for the right to play in the former Jesuit refectory.).

43 MNL OL, C51, 1800, F5, 1802, F5.

44 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1775*, 175. See: (1776): 146, 254–55, 264–65; (1783): 298; Bertram, ed., *Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Theaters* (1776) 39, 63; Bertram, ed., *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* no. 5 (1782): 25–30; Bertram, *Annalen des Theaters*, no. 16 (1795): 3. Seipp (ed.), *Theaterwochenblatt für Salzburg*, 1 (1776): 272. [Unknown], *Rheinische Musen*, 3 (1795): 207. On French theater, see Reichard (ed.), *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1777*, 254.

in articles about the collaborations between Polish and German actors.⁴⁵ Polish theater had gained visibility since the founding of a National Theater under Stanislas August in 1765, where Polish, as well as German, Italian, and French shows were staged. During the same years, Christian August Bertram's *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung* in Berlin translated Polish poems by Jan Gawinsky from Kaliningrad (Königsberg, Królewiec) "in order to give an insight into the taste of Poles for this kind of poetry."⁴⁶ Whether criticized or praised, these articles show that Polish theater was well known in these periodicals. Even news about Cracow and Lviv handled some Polish plays: in 1782 and 1783, August Ottokar Reichard's *Theater Journal für Deutschland* records the activity of a Polish troupe and quotes its repertoire.⁴⁷

Some of the performances of Wojciech Bogusławski in Warsaw and Lviv are also recorded. After Warsaw (1783–1785), Bogusławski played alternatively in Vilnius (Wilno, Wilna) and Dubno from 1785 to 1790, visiting from time-to-time Hrodna (Grodno) and Lviv. Then he acted principally in Lviv (1794–1799) and Warsaw (1790–1794, 1799–1814). Only his stays in the latter two towns are documented in German periodicals. This demonstrates that reviews of Polish theater were also far from exhaustive. Not a word is there in these periodicals about several other towns hosting permanent or occasional Polish theatrical troupes, like Lublin, Kaunas (Kowno, Kauen), Polotsk (Połock, Polatsk, Polockas), Vitebsk (Witebsk, Vitebskas), Mogilev (Mahylow), Jytomyr (Żitomierz), Kiev, Kamianets-Podilskyi (Kamianec Podilskyi, Kamenyec-Podolski, Kamienec Podolski), Odessa, Liepāja (Lipawa, Liepoja, Libau), Jēglava (Mitau), and Kalisz (Kalisch).⁴⁸ Nor was any attention given either to the numerous theatrical halls installed in country houses from the 1770s onwards, as a consequence of the transfer of Polish theater in the aftermath of the partition of the former kingdom. No less than twenty private theatrical halls were in use in the former Polish territories.⁴⁹ In regard to these theaters,

45 Bertram, ed., *Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Theaters* (1776): 65 (Note stating that except for three actors in the Polish troupe who did not deserve to be qualified as such). Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1797*, 298–303 (Despising letter on Polish theater, where the language is presented as inscrutable for the author, while greeting the arrival of a German theatrical troop). Bertram, *Annalen des Theaters*, no. 17 (1796): 7–17 (article praising the appetite for the theater shown by the Polish aristocracy and qualified the skills of Polish actors and ballet dancers as almost perfect). [Unknown], *Rheinische Musen*, no. 2 (1794): 85.

46 Bertram, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, no. 5 (1782): 677–80: "damit Sein den Geschmack der Polen auch in dieser Art der Dichtkunst bemerken könnten".

47 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1782*, 284–85; (1783): 314–19.

48 Sivert, ed., *Dzieje teatru polskiego*, Tome II, 15–64. Klimowicz and Wołoszyńska, "Le théâtre en Pologne à l'âge des Lumières," 59.

49 Król-Kaczorowska, *Teatr dawnej Polski*, 26, 41–86. The author counts about twenty permanent theater halls installed in noble mansions: those of the Radziwiłł in Biała Podlaska (1750–1780),

the Polish press gave a slightly more detailed overview.⁵⁰ We discover in the *Gazeta Warszawska* [Gazette of Warsaw] and in the *Gazety pisane z Wilna* [Gazettes Written in Vilnius] the existence of theatrical shows in Poznań (1765), Slonin (Ślōnin) (1775), Siedlce (1777), Vilnius (1785–1786), Radomyśl (1786), Lublin (1786), and Lviv (1792–1798).⁵¹ Admittedly, news from the Polish theater was far from comprehensive, yet it was undoubtedly more varied and better appreciated than the news about Hungarian theater.

The geographies of theater towns appearing in the eighteenth-century press were, thus, mainly determined by the geographical origin and the language of the journals. Just as news from Hungary reflected the circulation of German actors, news from Warsaw and St Petersburg was sometimes grouped within descriptions of so-called “northern” scenes within articles handling German theater in the region. Nevertheless, we notice a certain interest in Polish theater, which may be explained by the ties between the Saxon, Prussian, and Polish theatrical milieus. In turn, aside from the notable exception of the imperial city, Habsburg lands are less present: even towns like Graz and Linz have relatively few mentions,⁵² and Galicia and Hungary even fewer. The lack of vocabulary hinting at a peripheral position in articles about the Galician capitals, Cracow, and Lviv may be due to the fact that they were linked, at least in the authors and readers’ minds, to the route to St Petersburg.

Niasvij (Nieśwież) (1748), Olyka (Ołyka) (1755), Sloutsk (Śluck) (1752–1762), Jovkva (Żółkiew) (1753), or Arkadia (1800); The Sapieha family had theaters in Roujany (Rużany) (1770–1784), Dereszyn (1796), and Zelva (Zelwa) (second half of the eighteenth century up to 1826); those of Onufry Morski in Bajkowce (Bajkowiec) (1782), on Jan Klemens Braniski in Białystok (1750–1808), of Potocki in Chervonohrad (Krystynopol) (1778), of Princess Elżbieta Czartoryska Lubomirska in Łańcut (1784), of the Leszczyński in Rydzyna (1770), of Michał Ogiński (1780–1781) in Slonim, of Stanislas Potocki in Tulchyn (Tulczyn) (1787–1803); those from the bishops’ palaces in Verkiai (1783–1792) and Kielce (1762).

50 See the journals *Monitor* (1765–1785), *Wiadomości Warszawskie* (1765–1774), *Gazeta Warszawska* (1774–1793), and *Gazety pisane z Warszawy*. Jackl, “Teatr i życie teatralne w gazetach,” 435.

51 Jackl, “Teatr i życie teatralne w gazetach,” 512, 547, 564–71, 574, 578–79. Mentions in Łuska, ed., *Gazeta Warszawska* 1775, no. 85; 1777; 1784, no. 1, Supl.; 1786 10 V, no. 37; 27 V no. 42; 7 VI, no. 45; 14 X, no. 82. Mentions in *Gazety pisane z Wilna*, 1785, 1786. For Lviv, see *Dziennik politycznych polityków* (1792–1798). Quoted after Got, *Das österreichische Theater in Lemberg*, 55–56, 63.

52 For instance, Graz counts for 1781–1790 only one mention in Hamburg, for 1791–1800 two in Gotha, one in Berlin, six in Mannheim; Linz for 1770–1780 one in Offenbach and another one in Salzburg; for 1781–1790 eight mentions in Gotha, one in Hamburg, for 1791–1800 four in Gotha, and two in Mannheim. Estimations based on the database of Bender, Bushuven, Huesmann, see footnote 14.

Enhancing exoticism by referring to the Ottoman proximity

Hungary was not only geographically further removed from Gotha and Berlin, but it was also associated with the route towards Constantinople. In fact, in eighteenth-century texts, every reference to the Ottoman Empire seemed to arouse a sense of exoticism. The field of the theater was particularly concerned with ideas of the exotic, as Turkish motifs were highly appreciated in the operas and dramas of the period. Even if they probably shared audiences, we should remember that travel journals and theatrical periodicals served different purposes. Therefore, unlike travel memoirs, theatrical periodicals used different criteria for qualifying exoticism. We will see here that the popularity of Turkish motifs in eighteenth century dramas can explain the specific concentration of the borders of civilization in the lands of the Hungarian Crown.

In travel journals, remoteness and strangeness are frequently linked to comments on inhabitants' attire, on the architecture of the settlements visited, or on the comfort provided by the conditions of travel. It was according to these criteria that western travelers labelled former Polish territories as exotic. One may recall the descriptions of Warsaw by Count Louis-Philippe de Ségur, who was astounded by the contrasts of "palaces and mean houses", or William Coxe's views of Poles, stating that "in their features, looks, customs, dress, and general appearance, [they] resemble Asiatics rather than Europeans."⁵³

Roads in Galicia were considered to be no better than those in Hungary. One may recall that William Coxe's travel journal, a central example to support Larry Wolff's argument, emphasizes the "impassable" roads, the low rate of urbanization and the "wretched" state of villages.⁵⁴ Yet, none of the theatrical reviewers addressing former Polish territories, and only a few theater critics describing the countries of the Hungarian Crown recall travel vagaries. About Sibiu, the Transylvanian capital, Seipp's *Theaterwochenblatt für Salzburg* (1776) argues that "if the town had not been so remote, the theater may have been profitable". Instead, "the weak theatrical troupes that go there [...], the inconveniences of the journey, and the public, [in other words] several hindrances make it impossible for a good actor to get there".⁵⁵ Concerning Timișoara and Košice, Seipp's article points out their inconvenient location in relation to the networks of theatrical troupes, as well as the absence of an important nobiliary theater nearby.⁵⁶

53 Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 20–29.

54 Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe*, 26.

55 Seipp, ed., *Theaterwochenblatt für Salzburg*, 188: "Die Stadt wäre schon dem Theater einträglich, wenn sie nicht gar zu abgelegen wäre. Die schlechte dahin kommende truppen, der Kofee [siedler Olivi Impressar], die Unbequemlichkeit der Reise, das Publikum, mehrere Hindernisse machen es fast unmöglich, daß nur Ein guter Akteur dahin kömmt."

56 Seipp, ed., *Theaterwochenblatt für Salzburg*, 188.

Chief-editor of a periodical in Salzburg in 1776–1778, correspondent of Reichard's *Theater-Kalender* in Gotha, and author of two travel journals, Christoph Seipp was not an ordinary author. Born in Worms and boasting multiple connections to the theatrical milieu of the Holy Roman Empire, he delivered first-hand information on the Habsburg Monarchy's eastern territories to several periodicals, as this was where he pursued part of his career. He was the only correspondent to describe the difficulties of local impresarios, and to emphasize the concerns caused by difficult travel conditions for itinerant theatrical troupes. Yet, Seipp's most precise descriptions are found in his travel memoirs, rather than in the theatrical journals. About the theater in Košice, he wrote in his *Reisebuch*:

"A good theatrical company will never come to Kaschau. Where would it come from? And where would it be heading for? For what reason would it undertake such a journey? In order to perform in front of Kaschau's inhabitants, at its own expense, art, taste, and purity? Time, place, and circumstances are against such a [magnificent] building in Kaschau."⁵⁷

Such criteria related to travel vagaries, the architecture, and the urbanization of the towns concerned are not entirely missing from German journal articles on theatrical life. Still, they do not seem as central as in the travel journals, even if they were undoubtedly serious problems for impresarios and actors.

By contrast, references to the Muslim religion of the Ottomans and to the Habsburg conquest are more frequent in these medias. In several descriptions, the diffusion of the enlightened reform of regular German theater is modelled on the map of Habsburg military victories against Ottoman possessions. From 1782 to 1784, the *Theater-Kalender* persistently published an article on the history of German theater each year where it claimed that Hülverding "successfully implemented German theater on the Turkish border."⁵⁸ Already in 1778, August Ottokar Reichard had referred twice to the Ottoman rule when describing the theater in Pest. In the *Theater-Kalender*, he asserted that the so-called *rondella* theater was installed in a former mosque, and in the *Theater-Journal für Deutschland*, he presented Carl Wahr's installation as the arrival of an "apostle of civilized theater" in a former "Turkish dominion."⁵⁹ Similar interpreta-

57 Seipp, *Reisen von Preßburg durch Mähren*, 155–56: "Eine gute Schauspielgesellschaft wird nie nach Kaschau kommen. Woher soll sie kommen? Wohin soll sie geyn? Zu welcher Absicht soll sie die Reise unternehmen? Un den Kaschauern, auf eigne Unkosten, Kunst, Geschmack und Reinheit zu zeigen? – Zeit, Ort und Umstände sind gegen ein solches Gebäude in Kaschau."

58 Reichard, ed., *Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1782*, 141: *An die Türkische Gränze hat Hülverding das deutsche Schauspiel, mit gutem Fortgang, fortgepflanzt*. The expression is also used in "Geschichte der deutschen Bühnen" published in the issues for 1782, 141–42 and 1784, 186.

59 Reichard, ed., *Theater-Journal für Deutschland*, 1778, 89–91: "Apostel der gesitteten Schaubühne."

tions later reappeared in the travel literature: Justus Wilhelm Christian Fischer's travel journal published in 1802 asserted that the building used to function as a Turkish bath.⁶⁰ Wahr's theater was, though, not installed in a former religious building or in a former bath, but rather in a fortified round tower built during the Ottoman rule. In the same articles, the author notes that the diversity of this theater's public was composed not only of noblemen from Hungary, Slavonia, and the Banat, but also from Walachia, as well as of Greek and Turkish merchants.⁶¹

As for Slavonia, an article published in the news section about foreign lands and various nations describes it as a region waiting to be civilized:

"The outer image of the Kingdom of Slavonia and of the principality of Sirmia is similar to the ancient German image drawn by Tacitus: *Terrra in universe aut fluvis horrida, aut paludibus foeda*: endless swamps and stumps, immense plane surfaces, forests without light, mountains just emerging from the chaos! In the meanwhile, Nature smiles here and there, waiting for help and development in order to achieve victory and abundance."⁶²

The fact that Hungary had a long frontier with the Ottoman Empire and that a significant part of the Kingdom had been an Ottoman possession was, thus, a central argument in German theatrical periodicals. Furthermore, describing Hungarian towns was an opportunity to communicate to the field an assumed real geographical description of motifs inspired by contemporary Turkish operas and plays. From the seventeenth century onwards, Tartar, Chinese, Indian, Ottoman or, in some rare cases, even African settings embodied imaginary lands that framed strange events unthinkable in a European context. Vaguely inspired by legends or historical events, the action of most of these plays was meant to enhance particular aspects and to define characters free from established moral constraints, manners, and customs. In these exotic geographical settings, Turkish subjects were not only particularly in vogue in Central Europe, but their interpretation was also peculiar. Instead of the image of a remote exotic land represented in French and Italian operas, the Ottoman Empire appeared in the Central European cultural imaginary both as a political rival and as a close form of exoticism.

60 Fischer, *Reisen durch Oesterreich*, 53.

61 Reichard, ed., *Theater-Kalender auf das Jahr 1778*, 101.

62 Bertram, ed., *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, no. 13 (1778): 194. *Briefe über einige Völkerschaften*. "Die äußere Anblick des Königsreichs Sklavonien und des Herzogthums Syrmien, gelicht dem Gemälde, das Tacitus vom alten Deutschland machte: *Terra in universum aut fluvis horrida, aut paludibus foeda*: Grundlose Sümpfe und Moräste, unübersehbare, flache Ebenen, Wälder die kein Licht durchbringt, Gebirge wie sie aus dem Chaos hervorgingen! Unterdessen lächelt die Natur, doch hie und da und wartet nur auf Hülfe und Bebauung, um in Seegen und Ueberfluß hervorzutreten."

More than thirty-five plays and operas on Turkish themes are recorded in German theater periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire.⁶³ Moreover, some of the settings of these works are described in detail, such as that of: “Mustapha und Zeangir” in the *Theaterchronik from Giesen* (Krieger) in 1772,⁶⁴ “Die Befreite Wien” in Klemm’s *Wienerische Dramaturgie* and in the *Bagatellen: Litteratur und Theater* in 1776,⁶⁵ “Bajazet und Tamerlan” in Reichard’s *Theater-Journal für Deutschland* in 1780,⁶⁶ and “Sklavonnier,”⁶⁷ “Sklavinnen,”⁶⁸ and “Tartarische Gesetz”⁶⁹ in Bertram’s *Litteratur und Theater-Zeitung*. Famous operas as Voltaire’s “Mahomet” translated into German by Johann Friedrich Löwen (1767),⁷⁰ Charles Simon Favart’s “The Three Sultanas or Soliman II.” (1761) and Mozart’s “Abduction from the Seraglio” (1781) are also repeatedly described in several journals, including the ones that contain descriptions of the Hungarian towns.

The chronology of the descriptions of Hungarian towns matches the publishing of developed critiques of plays and operas on Turkish subjects. In 1777, the German translation of Favart’s “The Three Sultanas or Soliman II”⁷¹ was published, and in 1778 and 1780 several of its performances were recorded in the *Litteratur- und Theater Zeitung*.⁷² 1782 marks the premiere of Mozart’s “Abduction from the Seraglio”, which was repeatedly and extensively reviewed in theatrical periodicals. The particular central European significance given to Turkish literary and artistic themes are present in several of these dramatical works, as noted by Thomas Betzwieser and Larry Wolff.⁷³ The imaginary of the conquest, ever present in the descriptions linking Hungarian towns to the former Ottoman presence, belongs to the same tendency of encouraging topics of slaves and battles in central European Turkish operas. Taste for the *Turquerie* and its specific Central European

63 Bender, Bushuven, and Huesmann, *Theaterperiodika des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Tome 1, vol. 2, 807–935; Tome 2, vol. 3, 1031–201; Tome 3, vol. 3, 1127–315.

64 *Theaterchronick*, Gießen, Krieger, 1772, 186–87.

65 Klemm, *Wienerische Dramaturgie* no. 1 (1776): 3–23. *Bagatellen. Litteratur und Theater*, Düsseldorf, no. 2 (1776): 90–92.

66 Reichard, *Theater Journal für Deutschland*, no. 14 (1780): 28–29.

67 Bertram, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, no. 2 (1779): 217, 219, 231

68 Bertram, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, no. 3 (1780): 168.

69 Bertram, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, no. 2 (1779): 514–15.

70 Klemm, *Wienerische Dramaturgie* no. 1 (1776): 142–52; Bertram, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, no. 1 (1778): 613. *Taschenbuch für Schauspieler und Schauspielliebhaber*, no. 1 (1779): 204–6.

71 Reichard, ed., *Theater-Journal für Deutschland* no. 2 (1777): 158.

72 Bertram, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, no. 1 (1778): 265, 269, 655–66. Bertram, *Litteratur- und Theater-Zeitung*, no. 3 (1780): 428–29.

73 Wolff, *Singing Turk*, 22; Betzwieser, *Exotismus und “Türkenoper,”* 190–200.

interpretations thus crucially impacted the philosophical representation of territories belonging to the Hungarian Crown.

Conclusion

Although they intended to give a complete overview of the contemporary theatrical culture of the continent, German theatrical periodicals in the Holy Roman Empire appear to provide only partial news of European theatrical life. While by 1770 Northern and North-Eastern countries had entered the geography of European enlightened theater, the frontiers of civilized Europe tended to be relocated eastwards, to the borders of the Ottoman Empire. The paper has shown that, in Gotha or Berlin, they see the expansion of the German theater in Hungary by referring to the Habsburg conquest of former Ottoman possessions. By doing so, these periodicals recall common themes of Turkish operas. On the contrary, they do not apply the same patronizing vocabulary in describing Galicia, even if operas on Russian enhancing exoticism themes did also exist⁷⁴. After all, German theaters had already been recorded in the former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and in Russia well before the entry of some of those lands under Prussian and Habsburg dominion. Besides, even Polish theater had been documented in these periodicals. Therefore, the vocabulary of the conquest appears only in theater reviews on Galicia published in journals in the Habsburg Monarchy. Ironically, it is a Hungarian journal—the *Neuer Kurier aus Ungarn von Kriegs- und Staatssachen*—that delivers an accurate example in 1789: “The construction of so many new houses, the transformation of the once so irregular fortresses in the most delightful promenades, rank Lviv amongst the most pleasant and lively capitals of the hereditary crownlands of the Monarchy. To this, one may add the entertainment assured by Bulla’s theater company recently arrived from Buda.”⁷⁵ From the perspective of those in Buda, Lviv may have appeared just as remote, as not only was it only recently integrated to the Monarchy, but it appeared as a destination for a theatrical troupe having initially played in Hungary. Centers and peripheries of European Civilization were thus constantly inflected by the location and type of the journal, by its network of contributors, and by its thematic content.

74 Russia was also represented as exotic in Hungarian and Galician theatres: a highly successful drama enhancing exoticism in Hungary at the turn of the century is a vernacular translation of the drama on Russian theme initially composed by Kotzebue for the theatre in Lviv in 1795, “Das Mädchen von Marienburg”. Czibula, “Politische Moden”, 188.

75 Moll, ed., *Der Neue Kurier aus Ungarn von Kriegs- und Staatssachen*, Pest, no. 69 (1789): 567–68. Quoted after Got, *Das Österreichische Theater in Lemberg*, 41–42.

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Table 1 Comparative account of towns mentioned from former Poland, Hungary, and Russia⁷⁶

Theater periodicals	
<p>Journals in Gotha</p> <p>Heinrich August Ottokar Reichard, ed., <i>Theater Kalender auf das Jahr 1781</i>, Gotha, Carl Wilhelm Ettinger, 1775–1799.</p> <p>Heinrich August Ottokar Reichard, ed., <i>Theater–Journal für Deutschland</i>, Gotha, Carl Wilhelm Ettinger, 1777–1780.</p>	Hungary and Lands of St. Stephen
	Former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth
	Russia and other north–eastern countries
<p>Journals in Berlin</p> <p>Bertram Christian August ed., <i>Beitrag zur Geschichte des deutschen Theaters</i>, Berlin, Birnstiel, no. 1, 1775.</p> <p>Bertram Christian August ed., <i>Literatur und Theater–Zeitung</i>, Berlin, chez Arnold Wewer, 1778–1784.</p> <p>Bertram Christian August ed., <i>Ephemeriden der Literatur und des Theaters</i>, Berlin, Friedrich Maurer, 1785–1787</p> <p>Bertram Christian August ed., <i>Annalen des Theaters</i>, Berlin, Maurer, 1788–1797.</p>	Hungary and Lands of St. Stephen
	Former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth
	Russia and Courland

⁷⁶ Though selective, the comparative account presented here gives an overview of the repartition of the mentions of towns studied in periodicals in different regions of the Holy Roman Empire.

Towns / decades							
Bratislava (1771–1780) 5 (1781–1790) 10 (1791–1800) 9	Fertőd (1771–1780) 5 (1781–1790) 5	Pest (1771–1780) 2 (1781–1790) 3 (1791–1800) 2	Buda (1781–1790) 4 (1791–1800) 9	Košice (1781–1790) 1 (1791–1800) 5	Sibiu (1771–1780) 1 (1781–1790) 9 (1791–1800) 4	Timișoara (1771–1780) – (1781–1790) 4 (1791–1800) 5	
Wrocław (1771–1780) 3 (1781–1790) 3 (1791–1800) 9	Warsaw (1771–1780) 5 (1781–1790) 1 (1791–1800) 1	Gdańsk (1771–1780) – (1781–1790) – (1791–1800) 2	Cracow (1771–1780) – (1781–1790) 3 (1791–1800) 1	Łviv (1771–1780) – (1781–1790) – (1791–1800) 2			
Petersburg (1771–80) 13 (1781–90) 18 (1791–1800) 1	Moscow (1771–80) 3 (1781–90) 3	Tallinn (1771–1780) 8 (1781–1790) 1 (1791–1800) 2	Riga (1771–1780) 7 (1781–1790) 13 (1791–1800) 8				
Bratislava –	Fertőd – (1781–1790) 1	Pest –	Buda (1791–1800) 1	Košice –	Sibiu (1771–1780) 1	Timișoara –	
Wrocław (1771–1780) 11 (1781–1790) 10 (1791–1800) –	Warsaw (1771–1780) 3 (1781–1790) 2 (1791–1800) 2	Gdańsk – (1781–1790) 17 (1791–1800) 2	Cracow –	Łviv – (1781–1790) 1 (1791–1800) –			
Petersburg – (1781–1790) 5 (1791–1800) 3	Moscow (1781–1790) 1	Reval (1771–1780) 1 (1781–1790) – (1791–1800) 1	Riga (1771–1780) 3 (1781–1790) 8				

Theater periodicals	
<p>Journals in Frankfurt, Offenbach, Mannheim & Stuttgart [Heinrich Gottlieb Schmieder] ed., Allgemeines Theaterjournal, Frankfurt: Pech, Mainz: Fischer, 1792, vol. 1–2. Bertram Christian August ed., Allgemeine Bibliothek für Schauspieler und Schauspielliebhaber, Frankfurt 1 1776. Taschenbuch für Schauspieler und Schauspielliebhaber, Offenbach Weiß, 1779. [Unkown author], Rheinische Musen, Mannheim, Neue Kunstverlag, 1794–1795, 2–4. Schiller Friedrich, ed., Rheinische Thalia, Mannheim, Schwan, 1785. Zeitung für Theater und andere schöne Künste, [Stuttgart], 1793 (1–2) – 1794 (3)</p>	Hungary and Lands of St. Stephen
	Former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth
	Russia and Courland
<p>Journal of Ch. Seipp in Salzburg Seipp Christoph Ludwig, ed., Theaterwochenblatt für Salzburg, Salzburg, Hof- und Akad. Waisenhausbuchdruckerey, 1775/76.</p>	Hungary and Lands of St. Stephen
	Former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth
	Russia and Courland
<p>Journals in Leipzig [Unkown author], Neues Theater–Journal für Deutschland, Leipzig, Carl Friedrich Schneidern, 1–2, 1788–1789. SCHMIDT Christian Heinrich, Chronologie des deutschen Theaters, [Leipzig], 1775.</p>	Hungary and Lands of St. Stephen
	Former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth
	Russia and Courland
<p>Journals in Hamburg [Unkown author], Hamburgisch– und Altonaische Theater–Zeitung: nebst Nachrichten von auswärtigen Bühnen. Altona, Bechtold, 1. 1798– 2.1798 Schmieder Heinrich Gottlieb ed., Journal für Theater und andere schöne Künste, Hamburg, Vollmer, 1797 vol. 1, n° 2. Schmieder Heinrich Gottlieb ed., Neues Journal für Theater und andere schöne Künste, Hamburg, 1798–1799.</p>	Hungary and Lands of St. Stephen
	Former Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth
	Russia and Courland

Towns / decades						
Bratislava –	Fertőd –	Pest – – (1791–1800) 4	Buda – – (1791–1800) 4	Košice	Sibiu –	Timișoara
Wrocław (1791–1800) 1	Warsaw (1791–1800) 3	Gdańsk (1791–1800) 2	Cracow –	Łviv –		
Petersburg (1771–1780) 1 (1781–1790) – (1791–1800) 3	Moscow –	Tallinn (1771–1780) 1 –	Riga (1791–1800) 6			
Bratislava 1	Fertőd 1	Pest 1	Buda 1	Košice 1	Sibiu 1	Timișoara 1
Wrocław 1	Warsaw 1	Danzig –	Cracow –	Lemberg –		
Petersburg 1	Moscow –	Tallinn –	Riga 1			
Bratislava –	Fertőd	Pest	Buda	Košice	Sibiu	Timișoara
Wrocław (1781–1790) 2	Warsaw	Gdańsk	Cracow	Łviv (1781–1790) 1		
Petersburg –	Moscow	Tallinn –	Riga			
Bratislava –	Fertőd	Pest –	Buda	Košice	Sibiu	Timișoara
Wrocław (1791–1800) 11	Warsaw	Gdańsk (1791–1800) 1	Cracow	Łviv –		
Petersburg – (1791–1800) 2	Moscow	Tallinn – (1791–1800) 1	Riga – (1791–1800) 1			



The Role of the Director and His Impact on the Dramaturgy of the Slovak National Theatre in the Interwar Period

Michal Ščepán 

Institute of Musicology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, 841 04 Bratislava, Dúbravská cesta 9,
Slovakia; michal.scepan@savba.sk

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Abstract. The most important cultural establishment in Slovakia, the Slovak National Theatre (SNT), was founded in 1920. The beginnings of this institution were extremely complicated because its activities were not managed by the state, but by a private company called the Cooperative of the Slovak National Theatre. This joint company was founded in 1919 and consisted of representatives of the then governing bodies, the Slovak intelligentsia, and representatives of banks and other associations. In the first two seasons, the Cooperative was dealing with operation issues, mostly with obtaining the financial resources needed. The complete artistic program was in the hands of the first director of the SNT, Bedřich Jeřábek (1920–1922). During this period, however, we cannot talk about the profiling of the dramaturgy of opera and operetta on the SNT stage. This period was followed by that of directors and private entrepreneurs Oskar Nedbal (1923–1930) and Antonín Drašar (1931–1938), who due to the financial incompetence of the Cooperative, took the management of the SNT fully into their own hands. Both directors, together with the heads of the opera ensembles, preferred modern and experimental dramaturgy, including the latest works of art. Whereas Drašar used a pragmatic approach to resolving the theatre's financial problems, for Nedbal caused the loss of his function and life.

This study deals with the comparison of the work and theatre management of individual directors in the interwar period, with an emphasis on opera and operetta dramaturgy.

Keywords: Slovak National Theatre, Cooperative of the Slovak National Theatre, Bratislava, opera, operetta, director

Introduction

The Slovak National Theatre (SNT) belongs to the most important cultural institutions in the country. Over its more than 100-year activity, the SNT has gone through several periods, influenced by numerous factors, especially political, social, and financial. In this sense, one of the most complicated was the interwar period, covering the years from the establishment of the institution in 1920 to its nationalization

in 1938.¹ First, it should be noted that the SNT was a private institution rather than a state-subsidized organization the way it is today. During its integration into Austria–Hungary, Slovakia did not have the conditions to develop its own national theatre on a professional basis. But everything changed after the Great War. In 1918, following the dissolution of the Austro–Hungarian Empire, the territory of Slovakia became part of a new country, which was again a multi-ethnic state, with Czechs and Slovaks as constituent peoples.

The idea of establishing a representative national theatre arose as early as May 1918, when the celebrations of the fiftieth jubilee of laying the foundation stone of the National Theatre in Prague were taking place, a ceremony attended by a Slovak delegation.² However, the establishment of the SNT could be considered the will of Slovak politicians more than a manifestation of some inner artistic need. For this reason, the SNT was neither Slovak nor national in its origins. One crucial feature is that its operations were not managed by the state but by a private joint venture company called the Cooperative of the Slovak National Theatre. It was established in November 1919 from representatives of the then governing bodies (the first chair of the Cooperative was the Minister with full powers for governing Slovakia Dr. Vavro Šrobár³), the Slovak intelligentsia, and representatives of other associations and institutions. The associate membership base was expanded by the purchase of shares offered to private companies, banks, factories, and several noble citizens.⁴ The Cooperative was subsequently granted a concession by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment in Prague for professional theatrical activity in the entire country, although most of its committee members had never had anything to do with theatrical operations.

A major initial problem was that although Bratislava became the capital of Slovakia, the proportion of Slovaks in the city's population was minimal at the time. From the times of the Austro–Hungarian Empire, the population of the city had been made up mainly of Germans, followed by Hungarians, and finally Slovaks (Table 1).⁵

After 1918, Slovaks from other parts of the country gradually came here for work, and the population of the new state increased also by the arrival of Czechs. One of the priorities of the new Czechoslovak government was to acquire the territory of the city of Pozsony/Pressburg/Prešporok, which became the capital of Slovakia in 1919. This

1 From 1 November 1938, the SNT was operated by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment of the Slovak state. After World War II, on 3 July 1945 it became a state entity by the Regulation of the Slovak National Council.

2 Podmaková, "Známe-neznáme začiatky Slovenského národného divadla," 54.

3 Maťašík, "Vavro Šrobár a vznik Slovenského národného divadla," 338–56.

4 Bokes, "Družstvo Slovenského národného divadla," 236–58.

5 Francová, "Obyvatelia – etnická, sociálna a konfesijná skladba," 22.

happened regardless of its inhabitants' preferences, who did not expect to become part of the new state and preferred to stay in Hungary or join Austria.⁶ The name was later changed to Bratislava and, besides its favorable location, one of the main reasons for choosing it as the capital was that there were enough buildings for the newly emerging institutions to move into. It was decided that the new national theatre would be resident and operate in a neo-renaissance building that had already served as a municipal theatre from 1886.⁷ Here, the SNT began its activities on March 1, 1920.

Table 1 According to annual censuses and the percentages.

Year	Total	Slovaks	Germans	Hungarians	Other
1850	42,238	17.9%	74.6%	7.4%	–
1880	48,006	15.6%	65.5%	15.6%	3.1%
1890	52,411	16.6%	59.9%	19.9%	3.5%
1900	61,537	16.2%	50.4%	30.5%	2.8%
1910	78,223	14.9%	41.9%	40.5%	2.6%

The main political maneuver was to eliminate the German and Hungarian languages and to replace them with Slovak culture. As the original inhabitants of the city perceived their birthplace as a natural multilingual organism, this governmental interference was unthinkable for them, and as a result they boycotted the new theatre. Their needs were fulfilled mainly by performances of Hungarian and German theatre companies. In the municipal theatre, the SNT and the Hungarian and German troupes each performed for four months of a season.⁸ During the Hungarian and German periods, the SNT had to move to Košice at the other end of the country, where they operated in accordance with the theatrical concession.⁹

Jeřábek's directorship

Slovak amateur theatre, no matter how developed and branched it was territorially, could not become the basis of professional theatre. Although many amateur ensembles reached a high artistic level,¹⁰ the career of a professional artist met with

6 Provazník, "Dejiny Bratislavy od roku 1918–1945," 328–34.

7 For theatrical practice in nineteenth-century Pressburg, see Laslavíková, *Mestské divadlo v Prešporku na sklonku 19. storočia*, 79–128.

8 Cesnaková-Michalcová, *Premeny divadla: inonárodné divadlá na Slovensku do roku 1918*, 111–112.

9 The alternation of different companies in the same theatre was also typical of local theatrical practice even before 1918.

10 Among the most prolific ensembles, there was the choral and theatrical association called Slovenský spevokol [the Slovak Choir], established in 1872 in Martin, northern Slovakia.

misunderstanding and moral prejudice.¹¹ In addition, they were lacking other necessary prerequisites, such as a residential building, organizational capacity, or a balanced repertoire (caused mainly by the lack of original plays and operas). Therefore, the Cooperative decided to engage and commission the East Bohemian Theatre Company, headed by director and private entrepreneur Bedřich Jeřábek.¹² His theatre company consisting of three ensembles for drama, opera, and operetta, arrived in Slovakia with a complete repertoire. The company employed 234 people: there were 20 opera and 30 drama soloists, a choir of 30 singers, four members in the ballet group, and 49 musicians in the orchestra. In addition, several technicians, and an administrative and other auxiliary staff helped their work.

The main objective at this stage was to attract a wider circle of audience. For this purpose, operas and operettas were most suitable, because musical theatre had a long tradition in the city.¹³ Although the repertoire was naturally performed in Czech, for the smaller language barrier than in the case of prose, German and Hungarian inhabitants began to gradually attend the shows, even though tickets cost 30 per cent more compared to those of foreign companies.

In the opening season, Jeřábek premiered 22 operas and 20 operettas in total, which is not a negligible number in the four months when the theatre was running.¹⁴ Although not all of the pieces had an exceptionally high artistic value, but they were all based on current trends in the Czech cities where Jeřábek had previously been active. For this reason, he struggled with the objections voiced by representatives of the Slovak national life, pointing to the absence of the Slovak language on stage as well as to the inappropriate presence of operettas in the national theatre's repertoire.¹⁵ Besides works by Czech authors, such as *Maharadžův miláček* [The Maharaja's Sweetheart] by the lesser known composer Emilian Starý, or *Polenblut* [Polish Blood] by Oskar Nedbal, among others, they staged Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers* [Orpheus in the Underworld], *Daphnis et Chloé* [Daphnis and Chloe], Kálmán's *Die Csárdásfürstin* [Csárdás Princess] and *Ein Herbstmanöver* [Autumn Maneuvers], Strauss's *Tausend und eine Nacht* [Thousand and One Nights], and Fall's *Die Rose von Stambul* [Rose of Stambul].

One of the reasons for Jeřábek's appointment was that he owned the complete theatrical equipment (props, scenery, and wardrobe) for the operation of the

11 Bánová, "Repertoár slovenského ochotníckeho divadla v rokoch 1900–1914," 171.

12 Lajcha, *Dokumenty SND 1 (1920–1938)*, 7–25.

13 Laslavíková, "Opera a opereta v Prešporku na sklonku 19. storočia."

14 All the information about the premières and the repeats comes from the following publication: Blahová-Martišová and Jaborník, *Súpis repertoáru Slovenského národného divadla 1920–2010*, 15–259.

15 Bokesová, "O cestách vývoja operety v Bratislave," 238.

theatre. As was soon confirmed, he did not come to build a representative Slovak opera or drama theatre but only tried to keep the theatre running according to the contractual conditions. As the Cooperative was established as a private company, state financial support was partial. The budget of the SNT predicted relied on revenues, the sale of shares, and mainly subventions provided by the state, the county, and the city. In addition to wages, energy bills and rents, the entertainment tax paid to the municipality represented another significant expense.

Already after the opening season, Jeřábek pointed out that despite subsidies and various public contributions, the SNT did not manage to generate enough funds. During the next 1920–1921 season, the deficit was further increased by the Cooperative's decision to buy Jeřábek's complete equipment, contract most of his artists, and build a residential flat building.

From the 1921–1922 season, in this unstable situation, the SNT committee decided to divide the management of the theatre and engage Jeřábek only as the administrative director. The conductor Milan Zuna, on the other hand, was appointed artistic director of the opera ensemble. His three-year tenure is considered as the founding period of the SNT opera on its path to professionalization. He inherited a repertoire which could not change much, consisting of Czech opera represented by major works, such as Smetana's *Libuše*, *Hubička* [The Kiss], *Tajemství* [The Secret], *Dalibor*, *Braniboři v Čechách* [The Brandenburgers in Bohemia], *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride], Dvořák's *Čert a Káča* [The Devil and Kate], *Rusalka*, and *Jakobín* [The Jacobin], and Fibich's *Šárka*, along with French and Italian operas, including Halévy's *La Juive* [The Jewess], Bizet's *Carmen*, Massenet's *Werther*, Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Puccini's *La bohème*, and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* [Clowns]. Nevertheless, despite the Cooperation's demands, he significantly reduced the number of premieres, focusing more on quality and the artistic criteria of individual performances.¹⁶ Works such as Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Tchaikovsky's *Eugen Onegin* were only occasionally staged, but Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and Janáček's *Káťa Kabanová* can be considered valuable dramaturgical contributions during his directorship.

Through Šrobár's negotiations, the 1920–1921 season was finally extended to six months in favour of the SNT. To maintain this trend, there were attempts to buy the theatre building from the city into state ownership, which, however, failed.¹⁷ In September 1921, Vavro Šrobár was appointed as minister of education, and the chair of the Cooperative remained vacant. The full responsibility thus stayed in the hands of deputy vice chairs. On the other hand, Šrobár's appointment improved the acquisition and the amount of state subventions on which the entire operation of the

16 Földváriová, "Hlavné umelecké projekty v opere SND do roku 1939," 23.

17 Maťašík, *Vznik a prvé roky Slovenského národného divadla*, 43.

SNT still depended. The position of the SNT in the theatre building was constantly improving and from the 1921–1922 season it was extended from six to eight months at its disposal. Nevertheless, the situation in the drama section was still very poor. Most of the repertoire was played in Czech, because of a shortage of Slovak plays, translations, and actors. The worst aspect was attendance, which was still very low.

At Jeřábek's initiative, the second drama ensemble was formed with better promotion, education, and the consolidation of national awareness in the Slovak countryside in mind, as well as with the purpose of hiring potential new actors from the ranks of amateurs. Several talented persons, who later formed the professional core of the SNT drama ensemble,¹⁸ appeared for the auditions. Thus, in August 1921, the Rural Drama Company of the SNT was established. The activity of this touring ensemble, generally known as *Marška* (according to the German word *Marschkompanie*), consisting of almost 20 members did not last long: after more than 250 performances in Slovak towns and villages, its mission ended in June 1922. There were several reasons for that, ranging from the poor performance of some actors to the absence of their own facilities, but mainly due to the lack of finances.

The situation in the SNT was getting worse and after persistent financial problems and several conflicts with the Cooperative, at the end of April 1922 Jeřábek was forced to leave the theatre for good. Unfortunately, despite his entrepreneur experience, it seems that he was unable to manage the theatre at the level required. In addition, he failed to understand its main mission. Representatives of the Cooperation were also naïve to think that the Slovak National Theatre would arise from the Czech ensemble.

Nedbal's directorship

After Jeřábek's departure, the head of the drama ensemble Josef Hurt followed him as director for the 1922–1923 season, but this arrangement was only temporary. With the decrease of subventions (caused mainly by the departure of Vavro Šrobár from the post of minister of education), the Cooperative came under strong pressure. The solution was to appoint a new director, which the Cooperative did by inviting Oskar Nedbal. As long as the Cooperative was only a representative control body, the complete management of the SNT was passed into the hands of this prominent Czech composer, conductor, and private entrepreneur.¹⁹ When Nedbal took up the post in August 1923, he undertook to fulfil one main task: to Slovakize the theatre to the

18 The actors who emerged from these casting auditions were e.g., Ján Borodáč, Oľga Országhová, Jozef Kello, Andrej Bagar, and others.

19 Lajcha, *Dokumenty SND 1 (1920–1938)*, 40–99.

largest possible extent, while preserving a multi-ethnic Bratislava audience by introducing ballets to replace the unsuitable operettas, which due to public invectives had started to slowly disappear from the repertoire already under Jeřábek's directorship.

However, the genre of the operetta did not disappear completely from the repertoire, but unlike his predecessor, Nedbal selected only high quality, well-trying works. An operetta composer himself, he did his best to keep the genre on the SNT stage. From his 1923 appointment onward, he focused on staging classical operettas, which were artistically fully effective and followed the concept of operas, and which, consequently, required opera singers and a large symphonic orchestra. From among the tried-and-true works, including Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* [The Bat] and *Der Zigeunerbaron* [Gypsy Baron], Hervé's *Mamzelle Nitouche*, Offenbach's *Orphée aux enfers* [Orpheus in the Underworld], and Schubert-Bert's *Das Dreimäderlhaus* [House of the Three Girls]. Nedbal's own works, including *Polenblut* [Polish Blood] and *Die Winzerbraut* [The Vineyard Bride], and two fashionable revue operettas, Zdeněk Folprecht's *Z Prešporka do Bratislavy* [From Pressburg to Bratislava] and Josef Odcházal's *Z Bratislavy do Šanghaja* [From Bratislava to Shanghai], also featured in the repertoire. The shows were always executed at high artistic standards, which followed from Nedbal's circumspection in choosing the conductors and the singers. In choreography and direction, the ballet master Achille Viscusi also participated in staging operettas.²⁰ Despite all the positive developments, however, under Nedbal's directorship, no more than three operetta premières and a maximum of 15 repeats took place in a year, although the agreement with the Cooperative was to have 15 opera premieres a year.

With the arrival of Oskar Nedbal, the successful era of Milan Zuna as the head of the opera ensemble came to an end. After his departure, his successors were Pavel Dedeček and Bedřich Holeček. However, Nedbal was still a decisive figure in the profiling of the opera ensemble. In addition to managing the theatre, he staged and conducted operas himself. Bratislava attracted him, and he felt the city's great potential. On the other hand, he was also aware of its potential and limitations in the field of dramaturgy. From the end of the nineteenth century, competing German and Hungarian theatre companies had performed mostly popular Italian, French, and German titles such as *Rigoletto*, *La traviata*, *Carmen* or *Les contes d'Hoffmann* [The Tales of Hoffmann]. Wagner's operas occasionally appeared in the 1920s. Of the possible Czech titles, they were interested only in Smetana's *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride] and *Libuše*, Dvořák's *Rusalka*, and Janáček's *Jenůfa/Její pastorkyňa* [Jenůfa/Her Stepdaughter].

Although in the 1920s Slovaks and Czechs together already constituted almost half the city's population, because of their jobs they had practically no time for going to

20 Martišová-Blahová, *Slovenské národné divadlo 1920–1995*, 44.

the theatre and were not even interested in it. Moreover, the theatre remained a distant dream for most, which few could afford. In addition, most residents left the city for the weekends and travelled home to their families. In this situation, Nedbal as director realized that the Czechoslovak audience in itself would not maintain a theatrical operation, therefore he still had to focus on the German and Hungarian speaking citizens, who were not interested in drama, but regularly attended musical theatre. Under these complicated conditions, Nedbal tried to assert his artistic orientation in creating a truly modern operatic repertoire.²¹ He avoided conducting popular Italian and French operas, leaving them to other conductors in the theatre or to guest artists. He focused on presenting Czech operas at a high level and was the first to stage a complete cycle of Smetana's operas. Although the audience did not show much interest in some of the titles, critics enthusiastically praised the excellent quality of their performance and his suggestive and temperamental personal contribution.²²

In his next seasons, Nedbal moved from the Czech classics Smetana and Dvořák to contemporary composers, such as Josef Bohuslav Foerster's *Debora*, Karel Boleslav Jirák's *Apolonius z Tyany* [Apollonius of Tyana], and Nedbal's own single operatic work *Sedlák Jakub* [Jakub the Peasant] and Vítězslav Novák's fairy-tale opera *Lucerna* [The Lantern]. The opening of *Lucerna* took place in March 1928 under the lead of Nedbal and "was overall much more heartfelt in its mood and performances than the Prague one, which seemed cold by comparison." Therefore, the audience received it "with unprecedented enthusiasm."²³

After performing Wagner's romantic operas, including *Der fliegende Holländer* [The Flying Dutchman] and *Lohengrin*, Nedbal turned to the post-Wagnerian line of German music represented by works, such as Karl Goldmark's *Die Königin von Saba* [The Queen of Sheba] and Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier* [The Knight of the Rose].

The introduction of Slovak opera on the SNT stage can be described as a key feature of the entire Nedbal era. This is marked by the milestone date of April 28, 1926, when *Kováč Wieland* [Wayland the Smith] by Ján Levoslav Bella had its debut. The opera in three acts on a German libretto by Oskar Schlemm, based on an original libretto draft by Richard Wagner, was composed during the 1880s and 1890s and the premiere took place with the personal participation of its 83-year-old author. Although it was originally written in German under the title *Wieland der Schmied*, the poet Vladimir Roy translated the libretto into Slovak. Nevertheless, the literary basis of the opera ensured that the performance did not escape the attention of

21 For the main sources of Nedbal's artistic activities in the SNT, see Földváriová, "Východiská bratislavskej dramaturgie Oskara Nedbala," 109–20.

22 Blahynka, "Oskar Nedbal a predpoklady modernej opernej dramaturgie v SND," 40.

23 Křupková, "From Prague to Vienna via Bratislava," 171.

German reviewers, who rated it highly, thereby fulfilling Nedbal's goal of attracting German audiences to the theatre.²⁴ Two years later, on April 1, 1928, another Slovak piece entitled *Detvan* by Viliam Figuš-Bystrý opened under the lead of Oskar Nedbal.

As the director, Nedbal considered it necessary for the host artists to be active in the theatre, especially composers conducting their own works. At his invitation, Pietro Mascagni conducted his *Cavalleria rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* [Clowns] on February 20, 1925. At the rehearsal, after the ceremonial welcome, Mascagni said that he was honored to substitute for the famous artist and conductor Oskar Nedbal, whose great artistic overview was visible in the activities of the SNT opera scene, and Bratislava should be grateful that an artist of such qualities and such a resounding name was heading its theatre.²⁵ A similarly valuable event was the presence of Richard Strauss, who conducted his *Elektra* and *Der Rosenkavalier* [The Knight of the Rose] here on January 9 and 11, 1929.

For Nedbal, it was also important to introduce the theatre abroad. During his tenure, the SNT opera ensemble made the first historical trip to Madrid and Barcelona (1924) and gave significant performances in Vienna (1925, 1929) and Prague (1925, 1930).²⁶ When performing abroad, Nedbal reaped great success, which ensured him respect from the German and Hungarian audiences in Bratislava. On the other hand, the trip to Spain tarnished his reputation in nationally oriented circles, who blamed him for his business intentions. He also preferred musical theatre to drama, which was another critical point in their eyes. It might seem that Nedbal was very popular and almost untouchable in Bratislava, but he also had a wide group of biased opponents. One of his main rivals was Dobroslav Orel, who, in addition to founding and heading the Department of Musicology at Comenius University, played an important role in the cultural development of the city.²⁷

When assuming his position, he was immediately faced with technical problems to solve, such as the modernization of the stage and the purchase of a circular horizon and lighting equipment. These adjustments were expensive, not to mention the cost of wages, accommodation, and travel, because the ensembles performed in Košice during the German and Hungarian periods in the municipal theatre. During the five seasons of his directorship, Nedbal faced similar financial problems as his predecessor Bedřich Jeřábek: despite the artistically valuable performances, at the end of almost every season the theatre was in the red.

24 Lengová, "Opera Kováč Wieland Jána Levoslava Bellu v ohlasoch kritiky," 31–47.

25 Anon., "Pietro Mascagni a náš divadelný orchester," 4.

26 Fisher, "Opera v Bratislave v rokoch 1920–1959," 165.

27 Janek, *Dobroslav Orel*, 26–36.

Jiříkovský's directorship

In 1928, Oskar Nedbal resigned as director and his financial responsibilities were taken over by Václav Jiříkovský.²⁸ However, Nedbal stayed at the opera as a conductor along with Zdeněk Folprecht and Josef Vincourek. As a conductor, he had a penchant for nineteenth century opera, but as a director, he made sure that contemporary works were included in the SNT opera repertoire.

From August 1928, at the invitation of his uncle, Karel Nedbal took over the post of head of the opera ensemble, which had become vacant after the 1927 departure of Bedřich Holeček. His ten-year tenure (1928–1938) at the SNT opera could be considered as the most remarkable period in its entire history.²⁹ Karel Nedbal brought to Bratislava his rich experience that he gained working for Czech theatres. He was open to current opera trends, which was a perfect match for his uncle's ideas and vision.

In this sense, the performance of Korsakov's *Golden Cockerel* in 1928 was one of the first signs of the progressive tendencies that were fully realized by staging such contemporary works as Prokofiev's *The Love for Three Oranges*, Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District* (staged under the title *Russian Lady Macbeth*), or Zemlinsky's *Der Kreidekreis* [The Chalk Circle]. On the other hand, the classic opuses of Impressionism (Debussy, Ravel, and de Falla), Neoclassicism (Stravinsky and Hindemith), or the Viennese School (Schönberg and Berg), and their successors were completely ignored.³⁰ The opening nights of contemporary works were considered important social events often with the participation of the composer himself, and attended by large foreign delegations. The high quality of the performances, in addition to Nedbal's musical component, was ensured by the collaboration with the stage director Viktor Šulc and the visual artist František Tröster. They were based mainly on the idea of symbolic theatre at the expense of illustrating, using subtle light effects as a stage-creating element and a revolving stage. Operas by lesser known contemporary authors were also performed, for example *Il Dibuk* [The Dybbuk] by Lodovico Rocca, *Chirurgie* [The Surgery] by Pierre-Octave Ferroud, or *La drumul mare* [On the Highway] by the Romanian composer Constantin Nottara. Through these performances, Bratislava reached the metropolitan level of theatres in such cities as Vienna or Prague. Since no other Slovak operas were composed during the 1930s, the only choice Nedbal had was staging the cantata *Svätopluk* by Alexander Moyzes and renewed premieres of Bella's *Kováč Wieland* [Wayland the Smith] and Figuš-Bystrý's *Detvan*.

28 Lajcha, *Dokumenty SND 1 (1920–1938)*, 79–88.

29 Blaho, "Cesty k slovenskej opere," 293.

30 Mojžišová, "Súdobá operná tvorba v repertoári Slovenského národného divadla 1920–1938," 375.

In addition to the afore-mentioned popular pieces by Dvořák and Smetana, Nedbal regularly conducted other Czech operas by living authors of various generations, in particular Jaroslav Krička's *Hipolyta* [Hippolyta], Otakar Ostrčil's *Poupě* [The Bud], Rudolf Karel's *Smrt Kmotřička* [Godmother Death], Jaromír Weinberger's *Švanda dudák* [Schwanda the Bagpiper], and Josef Bohuslav Foerster's *Jessika* [Jessica]. Along with Janáček's *Příhody lišky Bystroušky* [The Cunning Little Vixen], *Káťa Kabanová*, and *Z mrtvého domu* [From the House of the Dead], his *Jenůfa/Její pastorkyňa* [Jenůfa/Her Stepdaughter] had the most performances.

Despite Nedbal's personal dislike of verismo operas, the repertoire included Puccini's most popular works *Tosca*, *Madame Butterfly*, *La bohème*, and *Turandot*, Verdi's musical dramas represented by *Simone Boccanegra*, *Falstaff*, and *Don Carlos*, as well as other Italian bel canto operas, such as Rossini's *William Tell* and *Il barbiere di Siviglia* [The Barber of Seville]. After Wagner's *Das Rheingold* [The Rhinegold], *Tristan und Isolde* [Tristan and Isolde], and *Parsifal*, pieces by German composers such as Albert Lortzing's *Zar und Zimmermann* [Tsar and Carpenter], Herman Goetz's *Der Widerspänstigen Zähmung* [The Taming of the Shrew], Peter Cornelius's *Der Barbier von Bagdad* [The Barber of Baghdad], and of course Richard Strauss's *Elektra*, *Salome*, *Ariadne auf Naxos* [Ariadne on Naxos], and *Der Rosenkavalier* [The Knight of the Rose] were performed. Of the older authors, space was also given to Christoph Willibald Gluck and his *Orfeo ed Euridice* [Orpheus and Eurydice] and Ludwig van Beethoven's only opera *Fidelio*.

French opera was represented in all genres from *opéra comique* with Auber's *Fra Diavolo*, through *grand opéra* and Meyerbeer's *Robert le diable* [Robert the Devil], Halévy's *La Juive* [The Jewess] to Massenet's *Thais*, Gounod's *Faust*, Bizet's *Les pêcheurs de perles* [The Pearl Fishers] as examples of *opéra lyrique*. Russian opera was rarer but Mussorgsky's *The Fair at Sorochyntsi* was regularly on the program. Bedřich Smetana and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had a special place in Karel Nedbal's dramaturgy. Like his uncle, Karel Nedbal put on stage all of Smetana's operas during his activities at the SNT. In the case of Mozart, *Die Zauberflöte* [The Magic Flute], *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* [The Abduction from the Seraglio], *Le nozze di Figaro* [The Marriage of Figaro], *Così fan tutte* [All Women Do It], and *Don Giovanni* were staged one after the other. However, not all operas in this rich program attracted a full house and were economically successful. However, Nedbal enjoyed his uncle's strong support, and later also that of his successor.

Oskar Nedbal's second directorship

After a year of Jiříkovský heading the theatre, Oskar Nedbal returned to the position of economic director. During the 1929–1930 season, which turned out to be his last

one, a second stage, the so-called Folk Theatre was opened, whose task was to stage drama and operettas. The Folk Theatre did not make the desired profit and was closed by Nedbal's successor in the spring of 1931. Throughout his time in the theatre, Nedbal was fighting financial problems, and he did not succeed in the Slovakization of the theatre, either. For this reason, he was under constant fire. Although as a manager he did not do anything wrong and did not pursue any personal gain, which was confirmed by a financial audit as well, he could not put up with the pressure and probably took his own life by suicide on the Christmas Eve of 1930.

Drašar's directorship

After the sudden death of Oskar Nedbal, the Cooperation in agreement with Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment, commissioned Karel Nedbal with the management of the SNT. Although Nedbal was well acquainted with the artistic and economic situation in the theatre, his directorship was only temporary. After the 1930–1931 season, he was succeeded by an entrepreneur Antonín Drašar, who on behalf of the Cooperation, took over the complete management of the SNT based on a concession he received in August 1931.³¹ The Ministry assumed that Drašar, an entrepreneur with many years of experience, would be able to solve the long-term economic problems of the SNT, an area where the Cooperative had failed. The Slovak cultural sphere was not enthusiastic about this decision, because it was clear that the financial problems would be compensated for by interventions in the theatre's artistic direction. The rumours about Drašar's inability to manage the national representative institution were partially justified.

At this time, already ten months of the annual program in the municipal theatre building were given to the Slovaks, while the German and the Hungarian language minorities used it for one month each. Operetta had an exclusive position, outweighing both opera and drama. Despite previous objections about the unsuitability of this genre on the SNT stage from several nationalistically oriented critics and the cultural public, in terms of the number of premières and repeats, the time of Drašar's directorship was a golden age of the operetta in the entire interwar period.³² Unlike Nedbal, Drašar had a strong preference for operettas, which was witnessed by his previous activities in other Czech theatres. Immediately after his appointment, he engaged the operetta ensemble which he brought along from his previous place of work in Olomouc, and which was to replace Nedbal's ballet ensemble. The new director mostly preferred Berlin revue operettas, namely Ralph Benatzky and his *Adieu Mimi, Meine*

31 Lajcha, *Dokumenty SND I (1920–1938)*, 102–58.

32 Moyzes, "Opereta v prvej polovici sezóny 1933–34," 7.

Schwester und ich [My Sister and I], *Das kleine Café* [The Little Cafe], *Der König mit Regenschirm* [The King with the Umbrella], and *Im weissen Rössl* [The White Horse Inn], Jean Gilbert's *Die keusche Susanne* [Chaste Susanne], or Robert Stolz's *Pepina*. It is no secret that Drašar favored Hungarian operettas, for which he received lucrative royalties. Thus, titles like Nicholas Brodsky's *Szökik az asszony* [The Runaway Girl], *Az első tavasz* [The First Spring], *A kék lámpás* [The Blue Lantern], or Paul Abraham's *Die Blume von Hawaii* [The Flower of Hawaii], *Victoria und ihr Husar* [Victoria and her Hussar], *Ball im Savoy* [Ball at the Savoy] were also very frequently staged.

Of Viennese operettas, the repertoire included Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus* [The Bat] and *Der Zigeunerbaron* [Gypsy Baron], Franz Lehár's works that had surprisingly been ignored by the previous directors, including *Paganini*, which was the first operetta ever staged in Slovak, *Giuditta*, *Frasquita*, *Der Zarewitsch* [The Tsarevich], *Die lustige Witwe* [The Merry Widow], *Der Graf von Luxemburg* [The Count of Luxembourg], *Das Land des Lächelns* [The Land of Smiles], Emmerich Kálmán's *Die Zirkusprinzessin* [Circus Princess], *Gräfin Mariza* [Countess Maritza], and Carl Millöcker's *Der Bettelstudent* [Beggar Student]. Of contemporary operettas, Rudolf Frimml's *Rose Marie* [Rose-Mary], *Ninon* [The Firefly], Jára Beneš's *Z pekla štěstí* [Dead Lucky], *Ztracená varta* [Godforsaken], and *U svatého Antoníčka* [At Saint Anthony] were staged. The first operettas by Slovak authors, such as Ján Móry's *Zimný románik* [Winter Story], *La Vallière*,³³ or Gejza Dusík's *Tisíc metrov lásky* [A Thousand Metres of Love], and *Keď rozkvitne máj* [When May Bursts into Blossom],³⁴ also appeared on the stage of the SNT.

Drašar's operettas project was well-planned and, as it soon turned out, his primary objective was not education or the establishment of a good ensemble with the prerequisites for continuous development, nor staging operettas in order to gain funds for running the SNT. Instead, he was interested in theatre entrepreneurship. This could be seen especially after his 1932 appointment as art advisor of the Modern Operetta in Prague, when the interactions between these two institutions became livelier, to the extent that they exchanged soloists and choir members, rehearsed the same repertoire, and shared equipment, especially the property of the SNT. These entrepreneurial activities could not escape the attention of Drašar's opponents and led to massive campaigns and multiple attacks against his person in newspapers and public protests. However, Drašar was a very different director from Oskar Nedbal: he was a hard-headed businessman and an adamant pragmatist, who did not lose perspective and withstood the enormous pressure he was under. Even though he made some concessions, they always served his interests, as in the case of Hungarian operettas gradually performed in Slovak translation.

33 Bárdiová, "Ján Móry a bratislavské inscenácie jeho operiet v prvej polovici 20. storočia," 117–40.

34 Ursínyová, *Cesty operety*, 68–70.

On the other hand, Drašar's activity had its advantages. For example, he divided the drama section into a separate Czech and Slovak ensemble. Because in his era it was typical that everybody, including dancers, musicians and conductors, had to perform in all genres, many young singers and actors were given the opportunity to start their artistic careers in the theatre, but they could also sing mainly operetta roles and occasionally in opera as well. In addition, mainly thanks to the profit gained from staging operettas, as it was previously said, Nedbal could implement an experimental dramaturgy, introducing contemporary and lesser known operas that were financially risky, and often turned out to be making a loss because of low attendance.

Košice and the Cooperative of the East Slovak National Theatre

The situation was similar in eastern Slovakia. Like in Bratislava, Košice, the second largest Slovak city with almost 45,000 predominantly Hungarian inhabitants, did not have the Czech-Slovak audience to ensure a full house in the city's theatre building throughout the season. It was initially shared between the Hungarian and German language theatre companies and the SNT, which opened its first 1920–1921 season in Košice in August 1920. The ensembles travelled to Košice for long-term stays, especially in the summer months, and the first opera the SNT staged in its premiere season was *Libuše* by Bedřich Smetana.

However, such a system of rotation within one season did not have a positive effect on attendance and thus on overall profits, nor did it provide the need for a permanent theatre. For this reason, in 1924, the independent Cooperative of the East Slovak National Theatre was formed, whose directors were Josef Hurt (1924–1926), Otto Alfieri (1926–1928), Otakar Novák (1928–1929), and Karel Želenský (1929–1930).³⁵ Their contracts were signed for a period of three years, but none of these persons managed to complete or extend their term.

Josef Hurt directed the East Slovak National Theatre for two years, and in his first season, only operettas were on the program. He decided to perform opera with the head conductor of the opera ensemble Juraj Viliam Schöffer only in the second season, when Smetana's *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride], Gounod's *Faust*, Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, and Halévy's *La Juive* [The Jewess] were staged. During Alfieri's tenure as director, only one opera, *The Tales of Hoffmann* by Jacques Offenbach was performed.

Otakar Novák, like Oskar Nedbal, did not do the financial management of the theatre as a private institution. In the same way as Nedbal, he also chose the most

35 Chmelko, "Budovanie slovenského divadla v Košiciach," 10–13.

radical solution, ending his life by suicide. The ambition of Karel Želenský, who was assisted in management by his son Drahoš Želenský, was to raise the quality of the theatre and opera with a more demanding repertoire, but he remained in his position for only one season. At this moment, the East Slovak National Theatre, which was a more Czech than Slovak institution because all the musical-dramatic works were performed in Czech and by mostly Czech actors and singers, *de facto* ended. During the 1930–1937 period, Košice had to make do only with tours of the SNT, but the then director Antonín Drašar imported more ‘merchandise’ than art. The solution to the question of the theatre itself was to be the establishment of the so-called SNT Branch, which was eventually founded in 1937. As before, operettas and operas, such as Verdi’s *La traviata* or Smetana’s *Prodaná nevěsta* [The Bartered Bride] were not staged in Slovak.

Conclusion

The trend set by Drašar was to continue in the 1938–1939 season. In the opera, the plan was to stage Monteverdi’s *L’incoronazione di Poppea* [The Coronation of Poppea] and Richard Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* [The Master-Singers of Nuremberg] as Nedbal’s bold ambitions. However, this did not happen, as the situation in the SNT suddenly changed after the Munich Agreement. In October 1938, Drašar was accused of embezzlement and was arrested at the behest of the public prosecutor’s office. On his release he had to leave Slovakia immediately. This was also the case for most Czech artists, including Karel Nedbal, who were fired from the theatre in the first months of the 1938–1939 season. As for Košice, after the First Vienna Award, this city became part of Hungary, and Slovak theatre ceased to exist for several years.

After these infamous political events, when the Czechoslovak Republic gradually disappeared from the map of Europe, a remarkable era of the Slovak National Theatre came to an end. Despite all its successes and failures, the leading personalities of the time, such as Bedřich Jeřábek, Milan Zuna, Oskar and Karol Nedbal, and Antonín Drašar, will always be remembered as important contributors to its history.³⁶

36 This article is the outcome of the implementation of the *Personality and Work in the History of Musical Culture of the 18th–20th Centuries in Slovakia* (No. 2/0116/20) project supported by the Scientific Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic and the Slovak Academy of Sciences, Bratislava, Institute of Musicology of the SAS, 2020–2023.

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An American Investor in the Theatre Industry of Budapest

Ben Blumenthal (1883–1967): A Personal and Professional Biography

Gyöngyi Heltai 

Vietnam National University, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, (VNU-USSH), 336 Nguyễn Trãi Str., Thanh Xuân Dist., Hanoi, Vietnam; heltaigy@hotmail.com

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Abstract. In the interwar period, an American theatre and film entrepreneur had a determinant impact on the private theatre sector of Budapest. Ben Blumenthal (1883–1967) ran the *Vígszínház* (Comedy Theatre) in 1920–1926 and owned its building in 1920–1949. In addition, Blumenthal financed the operation of the *Fővárosi Operettszínház* (Budapest Operetta Theatre) in 1922–1926. Although from a global perspective, Blumenthal does not belong to the group of legendary US theatre or movie producers, in the context of Hungarian theatre culture, he was the most influential mediator in Hungarian–American cultural relations. The study aims to piece together the undiscovered elements of Blumenthal’s personal and professional biography and to discuss how his activities were evaluated from the American and the Hungarian perspectives.

Special emphasis will be given to the US and Hungarian entertainment press: Blumenthal’s interviews on his Hungarian theatres, articles on Blumenthal’s position in the transnational producers’ hierarchy, and representation of the *Vígszínház* in the US entertainment press. The aim is to assess the significance of Blumenthal’s Budapest business activities within his entire career.

Keywords: theatre managers’ biography, Hungarian–American cultural relations, *Vígszínház*–Paramount cooperation, transnational theatre history, US entertainment press

In the interwar period, several Hungarian playwrights and actors rose to important positions in the cosmopolitan theatre and film industry. While we know about the international careers of Ferenc Molnár, Menyhért Lengyel, and Marika Rökk, the managers, producers, and agents coordinating the cultural transfers of Hungarian creative artists are mainly forgotten. There were, however, several important aspects of Hungarian–American cultural relations where the study of the theatre managers’ transcultural activity can be justified, especially because the principal aim of Hungarian cultural diplomacy in the interwar period was to spread cultural propaganda, more

precisely, the promotion of Hungarian cultural supremacy abroad. The paper discusses the role of a US theatre and film entrepreneur who had a unique impact on the commercial theatre life of Budapest. Ben Blumenthal ran the *Vígszínház* (Comedy Theatre) in 1920–1926, the *Fővárosi Operettszínház* (Budapest Operetta Theatre) in 1922–1926, and owned the building of the *Vígszínház* in 1920–1950 (?). Blumenthal's closest Hungarian associate was Imre Roboz, who thanks to his US film and theatre connections, became a leading figure in the interwar commercial theatre sector. Roboz served as vice-president (1921–1931) and later as president of the Budapest Theatre Managers' Association (1932–1938). After 1926, he ran the *Vígszínház* himself but maintained a close professional relationship with the owner of the building. Both Blumenthal and Roboz were mediators who initiated active and mutually useful Hungarian–American theatre and film relations. When examining this transatlantic link by exploiting the *Vígszínház* archive, my previous research papers have mostly focused on the target Hungarian culture and examined Imre Roboz's activity and motives.¹ This paper, in turn, will concentrate on Ben Blumenthal's incomplete biography and his position within the global and local entertainment business hierarchy. Special emphasis will be given to the American and Hungarian entertainment press. I intend to sketch the cultural and political frameworks where Blumenthal played a role. By presenting and contextualizing the limited information available about the periods of his long career in transatlantic commercial entertainment, I hope to explain the different dynamics of his evaluation in the Hungarian and US public sphere.

Research context

Following the anti-commercial bias in theatre history, the activity of theatre managers and producers has recently become a popular research topic.² These personalities are often examined from the perspective of transnational, connected, or global history. The theatre and film history books and papers I will refer to have all examined some aspects of my actual research. For determining the influences that appear to have formed Blumenthal's vision of a private theatre's operation, we have an abundance of studies, as American theatre history has often dealt with economic aspects of producing a show.³ My review of the Broadway management techniques starts at the point

1 Heltai, "Az »idegen nyelvű beszélőfilm« szerepe a pesti magánszínházak válságában"; Heltai, "A világháború kitörésének hatása a pesti színházi ipar nemzetközi kapcsolatrendszerére"; Heltai, "Die Krisenlindernde Rolle des internationalen Beziehungssystems"; Heltai, "A politikai beavatkozás szintjei"; Heltai, "Színházi »átállítás«"; Heltai, "Roboz Imre és a Vígszínház nemzetközi kapcsolatrendszere az 1930-as években"; Heltai, "Transznacionális hatások a Fővárosi Operettszínház korai korszakában (1921–1926)"; Heltai, "Az épület hagyománya – a hagyomány épülete."

2 MacDonald, ed., *The Palgrave Handbook of Musical Theatre Producers*; Balme, *The globalization of theatre 1870–1930*.

3 Poggi, *Theatre in America: The Impact of Economic Forces*.

when “like the new industrial capitalists, these men [the managers] attempted, with varying degrees of success, to create networks of business entertainment that integrate all aspects of the industry into an expansive, unified system of production, distribution, exhibition, and reception.”⁴ The development of different theatre business models in the US meant a transition from the “resident stock repertory company” to the “combination system.” This model-change was stimulated by the recognized profitability of the star system and of the combination shows, originating in New York and traveling along major railroad routes, “the Road.” Because of industrialization in the commercial theatre, the combination company developed into the standard producing unit and the “long-run” became the principal goal of a show. The Theatrical Syndicate, that monopolized theatre booking, represented structural centralization. This business environment created tough rivalry among producers and managers. We may suppose that this background influenced Blumenthal when in 1920 he entered the Budapest private theatre sector. However, the interpretation of the theatre in Hungary entailed different, not primarily economic concepts, such as regarding the theatre as a tool of nation-building and cultural self-expression.⁵

Another research direction pertinent for my topic is the phenomenon that Broadway producers and entrepreneurs who founded Hollywood often came from immigrant Jewish families. Stewart Lane discusses the background of the most important Jewish entrepreneurs who prepared the expansion of the Broadway theatre district in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Lane notes that Charles Frohman “ran six New York theatres and controlled numerous others around the country as well as some in London. [...] The Shubert Brothers, Sam, Jacob, and Lee, were also Jewish immigrants who came to the United States with their parents in the late nineteenth century.”⁶ This cultural and ethnic background was typical of the founders of the Hollywood studio system, Adolph Zukor, Louis Mayer, Samuel Goldwyn, and the Warner Brothers. Adolph Zukor, the future president of Paramount emigrated from the territory of Hungary and played a non-negligible role in connecting the Jewish Ben Blumenthal to Budapest. Imre Roboz’s professional career and personal fate were also determined by his Jewish roots. Blumenthal’s closest collaborator was the president of the Budapest Theatre Directors’ Association in 1932–1938, but the anti-Jewish laws introduced in Hungary deprived him and several of his colleagues of their positions and gradually excluded them from the theatrical life.⁷

4 Bigsby, *The Cambridge History of American Theatre*, 160.

5 Heltai, “...ott tanult meg a pesti ember magyarul nevetni és magyarul sírni”; Heltai, “Népszínház a nemzetépítésben.”

6 Lane, *Jews on Broadway*, 22.

7 Heltai, “Színházi »átállítás«”, Heltai, “A politikai beavatkozás szintjei.”

Another aspect of Blumenthal's biography is related to Robert W. McLaughlin's book that discusses the economic interaction between Broadway and Hollywood, the theatre, and the film industry. McLaughlin examines the impact of the motion picture industry on theatre shows as a process that started as a rivalry, only to develop into a network of economic ties. The turning point was the recognition of mutual advantages. For example, owning the film rights of a play meant several extra financial possibilities for a theatre manager or producer. Hollywood was also "looking eagerly toward the theatre and expecting it to deliver future film properties and many companies have entered into extended financial arrangements with Broadway producers."⁸ Both Blumenthal and Roboz employed these practices, as they owned the US film rights of the plays that had premiered in the *Vígszínház* and aspired to sell these theatrical goods to Hollywood companies. They knew the rules of the game as both had started their careers in the transnational export-import of silent films.⁹

During and after World War I, Blumenthal's companies (Export and Import Company, Hamilton Theatrical Corporation) were closely related to the Famous Players-Lasky (later Paramount). In the early 1920s, the Paramount Corporation became a global player, with studios in New York, Hollywood, London, and Bombay, and opening offices in several cities of the world, including Budapest. Desley Deacon's article '*Films as Foreign Offices*': *Transnationalism at Paramount in the Twenties and Early Thirties* reveals that some Hollywood producers were not exclusively motivated by generating profit. For example, Walter Wanger, Paramount's New York-based general manager of production in the 1920s and early 1930s had ideological goals, like promoting cosmopolitanism by films. Wanger, who came from the intellectual elite, had the ambition to reconcile making a profit "with the production of greater world knowledge, world acquaintanceship, and hence, world peace."¹⁰ He supported films with a documentary component, setting them in foreign locales, and "by developing a cosmopolitan style that was not identifiable as American, French, German, or British, though it borrowed elements from each of these."¹¹ Deacon argues that Wanger saw the film as a potential tool for achieving universal peace after World War I. Did Ben Blumenthal have this intellectual ambition in his Budapest activities or was his motivation purely profit-oriented?

In any case, Blumenthal's reception in the Hungarian public sphere reacted—positively or negatively—to the growing transatlantic influence of US mass culture. Victoria de Grazia analyzes "The American Challenge to European Cinemas, 1920–1960" and emphasizes the influence of US production methods: "During the

8 McLaughlin, *Broadway and Hollywood: A History of Economic Interaction*, 6.

9 Heltai, "Roboz Imre és a Vígszínház nemzetközi kapcsolattrendszere."

10 Deacon, "Films as foreign offices," 143.

11 Deacon, "Films as foreign offices," 143.

1920s and 1930s, America's movie industry offered an entirely new paradigm for organizing cultural production on industrial lines: what Fordism was to global car manufacturing, the Hollywood studio system was to promoting a mass-produced, internationally marketed cultural commodity."¹² The reactions to Blumenthal's appearance in the Hungarian private theatre sector demonstrated both the political and the cultural opposition to this cultural imperialism and the counter-arguments that interpreted US influence as a necessary precondition for modernization.

The book that directly inspired my research is Marlis Schweitzer's, *Transatlantic Broadway. The Infrastructural Politics of Global Performance*.¹³ It examines the Broadway managers' activity as a representation of the globalization of popular entertainment in the first decades of the twentieth century. Schweitzer shows how the entertainment producers used the new technologies (ocean liners, telegrams, and wireless telegraphy) to operate their transnational export-import networks, and specialized in buying and selling theatrical and film goods. Ben Blumenthal was a typical representative of these business activities. The entertainment press interpreted his regular transatlantic business trips as an exemplary practice for spreading US influence and culture.

Budapest theatres under Ben Blumenthal's management

Although the professionalization and specialization of theatres in Hungary happened only at the end of the nineteenth century, Budapest became an exporter of theatrical goods surprisingly quickly. Imre Kálmán and Ferenc Lehár raised the Austro-Hungarian operetta to international status. Between 1896 and 1907, five private theatres were built, among them the *Vígszínház*, whose modern building, designed by Ferdinand Fellner and Hermann Helmer, imitated Parisian models and demonstrated the newly acquired metropolitan character of the Hungarian capital. Operating as a resident stock repertory company, the *Vígszínház* soon gained a leading position. From its opening in 1896 to 1920, a Hungarian entrepreneur, Gábor Faludi, owned, operated, and managed the theatre. The repertoire consisted mainly of import comedies by Bisson, Duval, Hennequin, and Valabrégue. Young Hungarian writers and journalists who translated these French boulevard comedies soon mastered the Parisian dramaturgical techniques and started to produce successful local plays. The unexpected international careers of the so-called in-house playwrights of the *Vígszínház* (for example, Ferenc Molnár and Menyhért Lengyel) were mainly due to a theatre agent, Sándor Marton, who established his copyright firm in 1910 and continued as one of the closest business partners of the *Vígszínház*.

12 Grazia, "Mass Culture and Sovereignty," 56.

13 Schweitzer, *Transatlantic Broadway*.

In the wake of the political crises following the World War I (the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Hungarian Soviet Republic, and the Trianon Treaty), the theatre and film industry in Hungary was in deep financial trouble, and Gábor Faludi decided to sell his theatre to an American entrepreneur. At the time, Ben Blumenthal worked for the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation as a sales representative and was one of the negotiators in the talks with former employees of UFA (*Universum Film-Aktien Gesellschaft*), which led to the founding of a German–American film company, the European Film Alliance, that “helped the expansion of the Paramount Publix Corporation in Central and Eastern Europe.”¹⁴ By purchasing the *Vígszínház*, then financing the operation of an operetta theatre (*Fővárosi Operettszínház*) in the Hungarian capital, Blumenthal most probably wanted to put together a theatre trust, an organizational form typical of Broadway.

In 1922, Blumenthal opened a new operetta theatre (*Fővárosi Operettszínház*) in a city with a population of 930,000, where the number of regular theatregoers on weekdays was 8,000, and on weekends about 16,000. Among the thirteen theatres in operation in 1923, three were devoted to operetta: *Király Színház* (King’s Theatre), *Városi Színház* (Municipal Theatre), and *Blaha Lujza Színház* (Blaha Lujza Theatre), meaning that the genre was a vital element of the local mass culture. The first archival source about Blumenthal’s planned investment in operetta was a letter dated 22 August 1920, only two months after the Treaty of Trianon was signed on 4 June 1920.¹⁵ This tragic background could explain that despite the almost unlimited financial resources provided by Blumenthal for rebuilding the former music hall to a modern operetta theatre, it took a year and a half to obtain all the necessary permits from the state and municipal authorities for the opening. Blumenthal’s leaseholder company (*Fővárosi Színház Ltd.*) was established by Imre Roboz on 29 September 1921. The owner of the music-hall building was a bank *Folyószámla Leszámítoló Bank Ltd.* (Current Account Calculation Bank Ltd.) that leased its property for ten years. The contract stipulated that the *Fővárosi Színház Ltd.* (Municipal Theatre Ltd.) should pay ten percent of its revenue as a leasing fee. Although Blumenthal’s name did not appear on the petitions submitted by the leaseholder company (*Fővárosi Színház Ltd.*) to the government and municipal authorities, the probable cause of the rejection was the foreign producer. The debates about the new operetta theatre reached the sessions of Parliament.¹⁶

The appearance of a US investor in the Budapest private theatre scene seemed useful for financial reasons, but frightening from the perspective of homogeneous national art production. As no other Budapest theatre was foreign-owned,

14 Horak, “Rin-Tin-Tin in Berlin,” 53.

15 OSZK SZT Irattár 374.

16 *Nemzetgyűlési Napló*. 11 January 1923, 190.

Blumenthal, a Jewish American who viewed theatre as commercial entertainment, had to face many attacks from Hungarian politicians and intellectuals who considered theatre as art or as a nation-building tool.

Business relations between Imre Roboz and Ben Blumenthal

During the entire Blumenthal era, Imre Roboz was the managing director of the two theatres, as Blumenthal lived abroad and sent his instructions from New York or London. After examining the archive of the *Vígszínház*, it appears that in this relationship, Roboz was a loyal, well-paid but strictly controlled employee. Roboz received such peremptory telegrams from the owner: “Send Mrs. Blumenthal Paris balance monies immediately Blumenthal.”¹⁷ or “How much have you transferred Paris – Blumenthal.”¹⁸ Even so, Roboz proved indispensable for Blumenthal because of his well-established ties to the Hungarian elite. Blumenthal correctly assumed that Roboz would be able to organize a meeting for the Mayor of New York with the Hungarian Prime minister:

“My dear Roboz, His Honor, the Mayor of New York City, who is a close friend of mine, will be in Budapest shortly after taking his cure at Carlsbad. When he arrives, I wish you would get in touch with him, explaining who you are and arrange for an appointment for Count Bethlen to meet him.”¹⁹

Blumenthal would quite often ask Roboz to host his friends traveling through Budapest:

“My dear Roboz, I take pleasure in recommending to your courtesy Dr. Charles H. May, who is my dear friend and America’s leading eye specialist. He is taking a trip through Europe and is making a short stay in Budapest. Would appreciate very much anything you can do to make his stay agreeable.”²⁰

Though in an interview Blumenthal described Roboz as his friend, the archive reveals a more formal relationship.²¹ Blumenthal required quick and perfect service and in case he did not get it, his tone turned threatening, as it did in 1931, when Roboz was unable to obtain a loan for the *Vígszínház* in the context of a financial

17 OSZK SZT Irattár 374, *Ben Blumenthal to Imre Roboz*, 20 May 1930.

18 OSZK SZT Irattár 374, *Ben Blumenthal to Imre Roboz*, 2 August 1930.

19 OSZK SZT Irattár 374, *Ben Blumenthal to Imre Roboz*, 3 August 1931.

20 OSZK SZT Irattár 374, *Ben Blumenthal to Imre Roboz*, 20 June 1932.

21 *Magyarország*, 24 Feb 1924, 6. The translation of the Hungarian language articles is by the author.

and bank crisis in Hungary. Blumenthal reproached Roboz for the failure in a rather impolite letter:

“I have received a cable from Ike today stating that you were unable to do anything concerning a loan in Budapest. I do not think you tried very hard. I don’t know why not, but that is my impression. If you can’t give me any good answer why a bank should not loan any money on the *Vígszínház*, considering the fixed income there and that it has no indebtedness, then there must be something wrong.”²²

Roboz’s situation was delicate because he had to be a mediator between very different operational practices and aesthetic tastes. The Hungarian managing director was grateful for the financial stability provided by the US investor who increased the international prestige of the two theatres by inviting renowned US entertainment professionals. Occasionally, Blumenthal would encourage cultural transfers, for example, the staging of a Broadway-style revue in 1924. Directed by the New York-based choreographer Jack Haskell, *Hello America!* was the first Hungarian–American theatrical co-production. Other theatres in Budapest could not afford such an expensive experiment: “The venture was financed by Ben Blumenthal and the production cost 40,000 Dollars—a fabulous amount in that country.”²³ However, despite its one hundred performances, *Hello America!* was not profitable. The huge financial loss convinced Blumenthal that the Broadway business model (huge investment followed by a long run) was not applicable in Budapest. Therefore, in 1926, he stopped financing the Budapest Operetta Theatre and handed over the leasing of the *Vígszínház* to Roboz, while retaining ownership of the theatre building.

When the talkies appeared around 1930, Ben Blumenthal already seemed less active at the Paramount Pictures, but the long-term American relations of the *Vígszínház* must have contributed to the fact that Imre Roboz was chosen as the manager of the planned Paramount studio in Budapest and the coordinator of the Hungarian language Paramount movies. Although Roboz was active and resourceful in this assignment, the Paramount studio in Budapest was not realized. After 1932, the main forms of the Hungarian–American theatre cooperation were organizing invitations for Hungarian actors and playwrights to work for Hollywood and marketing Hungarian plays for Hollywood studios.

Following the short presentation of Blumenthal’s active participation in the Budapest private theatre sector, I will piece together his biography from the information I have found. I aim to determine his position in the international

22 OSZK SZT Irattár 374, *Ben Blumenthal to Imre Roboz*, 3 April 1931.

23 *Variety*, 11 March 1925, 3.

entertainment management hierarchy and assess the importance of his Hungarian connections within this context.

Fragments of Blumenthal's biography

Ben Blumenthal does not feature in the Internet Broadway Database, and the Internet Movie Database mentions him only as the presenter of *Othello* (1922), directed by Dimitri Buchowetzki. However, other sources like the US entertainment press, the Hungarian press, and film history books can help to recreate some elements of his biography.

Ben Blumenthal was born in New York on 22 June 1883. He rarely spoke about himself. The most detailed interview about his family background and early years was published in a Hungarian newspaper in 1924. At the peak of his career at the time, he was managing the two most prestigious private theatres in Budapest. His position may explain the laudatory tone of the lead paragraph: "He has theatres in New York, Berlin, and Budapest. In Berlin, he has built up a whole film city. [...] Decides the fate of billions of dollars in a matter of minutes. A man of action, 40 years old, strong and sober."²⁴ Speaking about his childhood, Blumenthal emphasized the extreme poverty of his family, which was the reason why he started to work when he was twelve. He pictured himself as a self-made man who financed his high school education, wanted to become a lawyer, but then decided to "seek my fortune in foreign lands. [...] I travelled to China, India, and Australia. I also visited Europe. [...] I traded in diamonds, bought pearls from pearl fishermen, loaded Japanese silk in bales on ships, and in India traded spices and ivory for gold."²⁵ Returning to New York, he recognized the economic value of film and became involved with equal intensity in the film and theatre business. Blumenthal explained that although Americans felt a strong antipathy towards the Central Powers, he decided to look at the film professionals in these countries as potential business partners. "Immediately after the armistice, I came to Europe, where I concluded contracts with about seventy percent of the distinguished writers and composers of the Central Powers, which gave me the right to dispose of their works in America."²⁶

Blumenthal was one of the first entrepreneurs to discover the capital deficit of the Central European film industry. "I founded the EFA [Europäische Film-Allianz] in Berlin, which I merged with United Play, my big company in New York. From the merger of EFA and United Play, I later formed the Hamilton Company in New York, to which I transferred some of EFA's finest directors and actors, and which has

24 *Magyarország*, 24 February 1924, 6.

25 *Magyarország*, 24 February 1924, 6.

26 *Magyarország*, 24 February 1924, 6.

recently been merged into the world's largest film corporation, Famous Players."²⁷ He emphasized that his theatre and film business were interconnected: "In addition to my American theatres and film companies, I have a theatre in Berlin, the Scala, and two in Budapest, the *Vígszínház* and the Budapest Operetta Theatre."²⁸ The profile of his Berlin *Scala Variety Theatre* was the closest to Blumenthal's taste and *Ars Poetica*:

"We must distract people from politics, from problems, from hopeless realities, and entertain them! I may be condemned for what I am about to say, but I will say it: film, and especially the theatre, is not meant to torment the spectator with thought and deep philosophical theories, but above all to amuse those who escape for a few hours from their worries and the uncertainties of the day."²⁹

In interwar Hungary, this interpretation of theatre was not generally accepted.

The Blumenthal family network

In the interview, Ben Blumenthal did not mention his "family network," although both his brothers and his nephew occupied important positions in the cosmopolitan entertainment trade. William Blumenthal directed the London Office of Ben's Export and Import Film Company Inc. His other brother Ike (Isaac) was more directly linked to Paramount than Ben. During his career, Ike was Famous Players' European manager, director of the Parufamet board (a distribution company owned by UFA, MGM, and Paramount), became Paramount's general manager for Germany and Central Europe, and finally head of the Joinville studio in France. Ike's son Richard/Dick Blumenthal also built an important Paramount career as assistant first to Robert T. Kane, general manager of European production, then assistant to Melville A. Shauer. Noticeably, the Blumenthal brothers all participated in the transatlantic entertainment trade and supposedly helped each other in their European and Central European business ventures. Both Ike and Dick were involved in *Vígszínház* projects and maintained correspondence with Imre Roboz during and after the period when Adolph Zukor came to Hungary in April 1930, and nominated Roboz general production executive of his planned new film studio in Budapest.³⁰

27 *Magyarország*, 24 February 1924, 6.

28 *Magyarország*, 24 February 1924, 6.

29 *Magyarország*, 24 February 1924, 6.

30 "Robert T. Kane, general manager of our Paris studios, is now establishing subsidiary offices in the theatrically important European capitals for the purpose of securing acting, writing and directorial talent for Paramount's multi-lingual productions. Local agents have already been appointed for Budapest and Warsaw. In the former city E. Roboz is general production executive, and Tibor Hegedűs the casting director." *Paramount Around the World*, 10 October 1930, 24.

Imre Roboz's career was linked to his family network, whose members were also specialized in the movie and theatre business. Roboz's uncle, Mór Ungerleider, who was the owner of the *Projectograph filmgyártó és -forgalmazó, mozgófénykép-gépgyár* (Projectograph film producer and distributor, motion picture camera factory), provided his nephew with several opportunities to learn the procedures of transnational film trade. Ungerleider financed filmmaking and distribution and owned cinemas. Imre Roboz's brother, Aladár Roboz, was director of *Korona Film* (Corona Film), then representative of *Sacha Film*. In 1923, he became the leaseholder of the *Terézkörúti Színpad* (Teréz Boulevard Theatre). Roboz's brother-in-law, Lajos Földes, directed the *Paramount Filmforgalmi Rt.* (Paramount Film Distributor Ltd).

Ben Blumenthal rarely mentioned his English wife, Mildred Hannah Chandler. We do not know about her contribution (if any) to her husband's business activity. Blumenthal's only daughter Barbara was born on 13 February 1907 in Shanghai, demonstrating that Blumenthal had a border-crossing lifestyle. By the 1920s Blumenthal's family achieved a high social status in the USA, as reflected by the fact that in 1931 the *New York Times* published an article on Barbara's engagement to an English aristocrat, Captain Hon. George Charles Spencer.³¹

Ben Blumenthal's professional activities represented in the press, 1914–1930

For the pre-1914 period, I found only one interview where Imre Roboz specifies Blumenthal's transatlantic business activities: "Our friendship dates back to the pre-war days when we had intense business connections through his film industry relations. We brought the first American films to Budapest and that's where our acquaintance and later friendship started."³² During the World War I, several articles in the mainstream US entertainment press already described Blumenthal as a notable businessman who introduced new export-import practices in the film industry. In 1917, the *Moving Picture World* informed its readers that Blumenthal was back on American soil after his fourth trip since the European war had started. The journalist added that Blumenthal had branch offices in large cities of Europe, and his firm was sending representatives to Mexico, Argentine, and Brazil. "Mr. Blumenthal is now negotiating for the complete outputs of several American manufacturers, and the Export and Import Film Company is ready to market individual productions in Europe as well."³³ The *Motion Picture News* reported in its 6 October 1917

31 *The New York Times*, 7 May 1931, 29.

32 *8 Órai Újság*, 15 October 1920, 5.

33 *The Moving Picture World*, 28 April 1917, 626.

issue that Blumenthal had spent several years studying foreign exchange conditions. In January 1918, the paper informed the readers about the deal that Blumenthal and president of J. Frank Brocjliss Inc. Sidney Garrett had completed about the marketing of the Selig-Polyscope production in all foreign countries, except for Great Britain.³⁴

After the Russian revolution, Blumenthal's Export and Import Film Company acquired foreign rights to Russian art productions. In 1918, *The Moving Picture World* reported that Blumenthal was making active preparations for an aggressive campaign in European film centres, as he believed that "for the next few years America will be called upon to supply the greater part of the demand for films in Europe."³⁵ By then Blumenthal was working for US domination in the transnational export-import film market. He realized in time that after the World War I, the former silent film producing centres like Berlin, Vienna, and Budapest would be unable to continue their earlier high-quality production, so there were new business opportunities for US entrepreneurs with solid capital like himself and Zukor. The latter's Famous Players Film Company was formed in 1912, and in 1916, it merged with Jesse L. Lasky's Feature Play Company along with several subsidiary companies, becoming known as the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation. Blumenthal's firms were related to this company. In 1919, Blumenthal proudly advertised the results of his Export and Import Film Co. Inc.: "An American motion picture Exporting Organization that has won exceptional standing throughout the world because of a strict policy of »always delivering the goods«."³⁶ Film in this context was not understood as art, but rather as a commodity whose aim was to entertain.

Blumenthal's ambition at the time was to control the world exhibition rights of successful movies. His transatlantic sails, often reported in the press, illustrated the importance of modern traffic and communication tools in this type of business, where acquiring quick information and having transnational network connections is advantageous and valuable. As in the pre-war period, Blumenthal traded with Nordisk Film, a Danish entertainment company, it was reasonable that in 1919 "a great deal of Mr. Blumenthal's time during his stay abroad was spent in Copenhagen, and it was from that port that he sailed. Mr. Blumenthal brought back with him to the States a tremendous amount of data of almost incalculable value to the export trade."³⁷ A book that analyses the history of Nordisk Film reveals the financial dimensions of Blumenthal's activity:

34 *Motion Picture News*, 12 January 1918, 228.

35 *The Moving Picture World*, 16 March 1918, 1499.

36 *Wid's Year Book*, 296.

37 *The Moving Picture World*, 26 July 1919, 564.

“At the end of 1919 DAFCO had bought: 305 Triangle feature films, 126 Triangle one-act films, 168 Keystone films, 12 Chaplin films, 100 long Metro films, 7 feature films from Sweden, 156 Famous Players film, 52 Kardinal films, 35 comedies, 1 Joan of Arc film. [...] The films were purchased by Ben Blumenthal who, together with his partner Samuel Rachman, ran Hamilton Theatrical Corporation, a company owned by the American company Famous Players. The price of the 962 films was 3,705.689, 75 kroner of which Nordisk and UFA would each pay half.”³⁸

The intensity of Blumenthal’s transatlantic trade activity is shown by the fact that in 1919 he spent fifty weeks traveling in Europe to import European super-productions to the US.

At the end of 1920, Blumenthal widened his business profile by employing talents from Central Europe and offering them to Famous Players. In a letter addressed to Adolph Zukor, he explained the advantages of engaging the Polish actress Pola Negri and the German filmmaker Ernst Lubitsch: “We think this will be a great benefit both to the Hamilton Company and Famous by him [Ernst Lubitsch] working with American stars in American picture.”³⁹ To develop further his Central European links, Blumenthal was active in forming EFA, a partnership between several leading German filmmakers and the Hamilton Theatrical Corporation on a fifty-fifty basis with the American company Famous Players-Lasky. The geographic expansion of Blumenthal’s business activities can be followed from the press: “The Export and Import Film Company, Inc., announces it has opened an office in London for the transaction of business for the United Kingdom and Continent in charge of William Blumenthal, brother of Ben Blumenthal, president of the concern.”⁴⁰ Blumenthal defended the freedom of the transatlantic film trade in both directions when the Motion Picture Directors Association and the Actors Equity demanded an embargo on German-made motion picture productions and protested against “foreign invasion.” Blumenthal explained the financial advantages of the cooperation with European professionals: “American capital is being enlisted in the productions of features to be manufactured in Germany because of the known fact that on account of a smaller labour and material cost, pictures can be produced for about one-half of the amount spent in this country.”⁴¹ Some articles attest that by the mid-1920s Blumenthal had acquired a high social position in the US cosmopolitan entertainment elite. For example, one critic said,

38 Thorsen, *Nordisk Film Kompagni 1906–1924*, 13.

39 Margaret Herrick Library, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. *Ben Blumenthal to Adolph Zukor*, 30 June 1922.

40 *Exhibitor’s Trade Review*, 10 February 1923, 553.

41 *Exhibitors Herald*, 7 May 1921, 39.

“Ben Blumenthal, who, in conjunction with David P. Howells will present the Shakespearean screen classic, *Othello*, at the Criterion Theatre beginning February 25, gave a preview of this continental spectacle to a selected company of friends. Word famous stage and screen artists attended as did the leading dramatic and motion picture critics of the metropolitan papers.”⁴²

However, after 1925 there seem to be fewer articles on Blumenthal's film business accomplishments. In connection with the manager's Hungarian business interests, the *Variety* reported on a conflict with the *Vígszínház*. “The controversy between Ben Blumenthal and the actors here has assumed serious proportions since neither side has acceded to the demands of the other. The actors claim Blumenthal plans to keep many of them out of work by reducing the size of the companies which play his theatres, while Blumenthal counters with the statement the economic condition makes a reduction of expenses imperative.”⁴³ The main cause of this disagreement was the different theatre operation models in the US (combination system) and in Hungary (stock repertory company). In the latter, the contracts ensured actors' salaries for a whole theatrical season, while in the combination system, the manager guaranteed the income of the cast only for the run of a show. The US press did not consider it important to announce that in 1926 Blumenthal stopped running his theatres in Hungary.

Following a long interruption, the next piece of information on Blumenthal that I found was from 1933. *The Film Daily* reported that “Ben Blumenthal resumes activity.”⁴⁴ His return to the US film export-import market could be the consequence of the unstable political situation in Germany, where Blumenthal had business interests. As Fabian Riedel notes in his doctoral thesis, Blumenthal was one of the Jewish businessmen who in 1919 had funded the *Scala*, a modern variety theatre.⁴⁵ The others who participated in the operation of this successful venue were the cinema professional Karl Wolffsohn, the banker Jules Marx, the aircraft industrialist Anton Fokker, and the fashion entrepreneur Ernst Strelitz. Riedel remarks that the second variety theatre of the same business circle, the 3,000 seat *Plaza*, that opened in 1929, was less successful because of the world economic crisis. These venues pursued a transnational business strategy. “From 1930 the Scala and Plaza group operated further theatres in Hamburg, Leipzig, Mannheim, Dortmund, and Rotterdam. The high point of the company's success came in the summer of 1931 with the founding

42 *Moving Picture World*, 3 March 1923, 41.

43 *Variety*, 12 August 1925, 3.

44 *The Film Daily*, 4 Nov 1933, 1.

45 Riedel, *Karl Wolffsohn*.

of an international booking association for world-famous artists in partnership with the UFA and leading variety theatres in Paris and London.”⁴⁶ Blumenthal’s precise role in the operation of the Berlin variety theatres cannot be identified.

Ben Blumenthal’s professional and personal activities represented in the press, 1930–1955

For the 1930s, the info related to Blumenthal’s biography comes predominantly from the Hungarian press. We can read about Blumenthal’s family life, his hobbies, his frequent visits to Budapest. This press interest is somewhat surprising as after 1926 Blumenthal no longer financed the operation of any theatre in Budapest, and did not actively participate in the local theatre industry. However, thanks to the public image built around him earlier, by the 1930s he had become “our American,” a celebrity. In the 1920s, the tone of the Hungarian press toward him was less flattering, and journalists often questioned Blumenthal’s business actions. It was Imre Roboz’s task to deny in the press the recurring reports about Blumenthal’s plans to extend or to sell his interests in Hungary. In 1921, Roboz had to deny the rumour that Blumenthal had planned to establish a theatre trust in Budapest, declaring “we have no intention of buying the theatres listed, either collectively or individually.”⁴⁷ Another frequent allegation was Blumenthal’s suspected intention to get rid of his Hungarian business interests. The *8 Órai Újság* (The Eight-Hour Newspaper) reported in 1924 that Blumenthal came to Budapest to place the *Vígszínház* in the hands of Hungarian entrepreneurs. Roboz denied again: “Not a word of this is true.”⁴⁸ The constant public attention indicates Blumenthal’s rising celebrity status. Contrary to the USA, in Hungary not only the entertainment press but also the daily papers covered his life events, like his accident in Marienbad: “A car traveling at 120 kilometres an hour hit a tree in a U-turn, overturning and seriously injuring all its occupants. Blumenthal, his wife, and daughter were immediately taken to a hospital in Marienbad.”⁴⁹

Blumenthal’s visits to Budapest in 1924 were related to an American-style revue production in his Budapest Operetta Theatre. The story can be followed through the press; on 14 August 1924, Blumenthal arrived in Budapest from Carlsbad and on 23 November he came again with a Broadway choreographer and sixteen English girls contracted for the *Halló, Amerika!* revue. When the run of the show proved shorter than expected, the *8 Órai Újság* wrote on 26 April 1925: “Ben Blumenthal

46 Riedel, *Karl Wolffsohn*.

47 *8 Órai Újság*, 8 September 1921, 5.

48 *8 Órai Újság*, 8 February 1924, 7.

49 *8 Órai Újság*, 21 July 1924, 8.

arrives in Budapest on Monday and it depends on his decision whether a new play will be performed this year and whether an operetta or revue will be performed.”⁵⁰ When because of the financial loss, Blumenthal decided to cut down the personnel of his theatres, the public mood turned against him. The newspaper reported that “the plan not only caused unrest in the actors’ world but has also provoked criticism from all who see theatres not just as businesses but as cultural institutions.”⁵¹ News about Blumenthal seemed interesting even for Hungarians living in the USA. The *Amerikai Magyar Népszava* (American Hungarian People’s Voice) wrote about a deal in 1936 when Blumenthal almost sold the *Vígszínház* building to Nova Industrial and Transport Ltd.⁵² The price should have been 700,000 pengős, but the Hungarian National Bank did not give its consent to the transaction, so the building remained Blumenthal’s property until nationalization in 1949 or 1950. Concerning the reason for selling the *Vígszínház*, the social column (*Intim Pista*) of the *Színházi Élet* (Theatre Life) stated that Blumenthal wanted to liquidate his European interests. The motivation of the planned transaction must have been the uncertain European political situation, but the journalist preferred a fairy-tale story.

“The dollars he received in Paris and Berlin, the pengős he collected in Budapest, he gives to his daughter, Barbara Blumenthal, who as you remember, married a few years ago an English nobleman. [...] The estate is being extended, a new wing is being added to the castle and a magnificent golf course is being built in a section of the ancient park.”⁵³

The Blumenthal family’s connection to the English aristocracy was an attractive topic for readers.⁵⁴

In 1937 news about the selling of the *Vígszínház* building reappeared again, but then the artistic director of the *Vígszínház*, Dániel Jób gave an atypical, sobering answer to the journalist’s question: “Blumenthal—it is common knowledge—would like to sell it, but there are no serious offers.”⁵⁵ Another concern about Blumenthal could be his legal conflict with Paramount Pictures, Inc, that filed a suit in 1939 in

50 8 *Órai Újság*, 26 April 1925, 11.

51 8 *Órai Újság*, 26 June 1925, 7.

52 *Amerikai Magyar Népszava*, 9 October 1936, 2.

53 *Színházi Élet*, 27 September 1936, 20.

54 The *Magyarország* (Hungary), in 1936 gave a detailed description of Barbara Blumenthal’s affection for Hungary. ‘Lady George Spencer, daughter of Ben Blumenthal, is hosting a 300-person Hungarian ball in England. [...] Lady Spencer knows the Hungarian capital well and speaks Hungarian fluently, a language she acquired as a girl. The English lady is the daughter of Ben Blumenthal, owner of the *Vígszínház*. She married a few years ago. Her husband is also related to the English court.’ *Magyarország*, 13 November 1936, 8.

55 *Az Est*, 10 March 1937, 10.

the N.Y. Supreme Court “seeking to restrain Ben Blumenthal from prosecuting an action for an undisclosed amount against it in England for alleged breach of a contract in connection with the sale of Paramount-controlled theatres there.”⁵⁶ It was probably a brave rather than a wise gesture to start a legal fight with the globally powerful film company. In 1939, the Hungarian theatre context was similarly alarming, full of forced administrative changes: the anti-Jewish laws gradually excluded Imre Roboz from theatrical life.⁵⁷ The owner of the *Vígszínház* building tried to help his long-time renter and associate. According to a periodical, “Blumenthal [...] has repeatedly stated that he will not rent the building to anyone but Imre Roboz.”⁵⁸ We do not know about Blumenthal’s whereabouts during the war, but *The Film Daily Year Book* of 1942 listed him and his Export and Import Company among the importers and exporters in New York. As during the World War II, the film trade was reduced to products of the ally countries, Blumenthal surely could not work on a global scale. The *Vígszínház* was heavily damaged during the war. As the building was still Blumenthal’s property, he came to Hungary at least three times in the interim period leading to the communist rule. (Despite the threatening political climate, Roboz did not leave Budapest during the war and was killed in 1945 in mysterious circumstances.) Although the political elite had changed, the new authorities were ready to negotiate with Blumenthal about the rebuilding of the theatre. The *Demokrácia* (Democracy) periodical informed its readers that the Hungarian Prime Minister, Lajos Dinnyés, held talks with Blumenthal, who also met with several government officials.⁵⁹ In an interview, the Prime Minister said: “The peace treaty prescribes to us how the damage of foreign citizens should be repaired and the competent ministry will do its best to find a solution.”⁶⁰ Blumenthal proposed obtaining a US loan for the reconstruction, whose cost was estimated at ten million forints, but this cooperation failed.

One of Blumenthal’s post-war Budapest visits was documented in Valerie Pascal’s memoir *The Disciple and His Devil: Gabriel Pascal George Bernard Shaw*. The text below shows that Blumenthal continued his earlier border crossing lifestyle and still considered himself a mediator between Hungarian and US mass culture. Pascal, whose original name was Valéria Hoecker, and in her Hungarian films in the 1940s used the name Valéria Hídvéghy, was a beautiful actress. She describes her meeting with Blumenthal in the Bristol bar at the end of 1946 as follows.

“And there was Ben Blumenthal, a thin, smallish, elderly man, smoking a big cigar. He had throat trouble and spoke only in a whisper, which

56 *The Motion Picture Daily*, 16 January 1939, 9.

57 Heltai, „Színházi „átállítás.”

58 *Pécsi Napló*, 1 August 1939, 6.

59 *Színház*, 7 October 1947, 15.

60 *Színház*, 7 October 1947, 15.

didn't seem strange, for in those days everyone whispered in Budapest. [...] Blumenthal looked at me with interest, and we talked about his theatre. He said he was leaving for London the next morning. »Then back to New York«, he added. [...] I was aware of Ben's eyes studying my face. »You are very interesting«, he said. »I am sure you could make a success in Hollywood«. He asked me to get some of my photographs to him so that he could take them when he left the next morning. Three days later, an airmail letter arrived from London. Ben wrote that it was his honest opinion that I could have a career and that he had already spoken about me to Alexander Korda and Gabriel Pascal, both famous producers in England and both of Hungarian origin.”⁶¹

Blumenthal's export idea was partially successful. Valéria left Hungary and married Gabriel Pascal.

Blumenthal's post-war Budapest visits were covered in a more politicized tone in the USA. In May 1947, the *Variety* informed its readers about the fate of the *Vígszínház*.

“Ben Blumenthal, New Yorker known in European theatre operating and management fields flies home May 5 after inspection trip covering his continental properties. He started this trip in March. While there, Blumenthal talked with Hungarian government ministries about his 1,400-seat legit house, the *Vígszínház*. Once the city's playhouse, it was severely damaged in the fight for liberation of Budapest. Blumenthal estimates damages at \$800,000 of which Hungarian government is obligated to pay him two-thirds as a United Nations national under terms of peace treaty if and when pact goes into effect. [...] Blumenthal's two 3,000-seaters in Berlin, Plaza, and Scala, are still in operation. He would like to sell out, but there's no present way of changing foreign payments back into dollars for export.”⁶²

The next *Variety* article lamented the consequences of the regime change in Hungary, and its tone already anticipated the Cold War rhetoric:

“Budapest's most renowned legit theatre, the *Vígszínház* (Gaiety Theatre), where Ferenc Molnar's plays started on their world tours of success, will be reopened this month as the Theatre of the Hungarian People's Army, it was officially announced here. Announcement thus put to an end one of the highest traditions of the Hungarian legit world, transforming into a Communist house of propaganda the theatre which once was a synonym

61 Pascal, *The Disciple and His Devil*, 13.

62 *Variety*, 7 May 1947, 23.

to Budapest cosmopolitanism from the early 1900s through the end of the '30s. [...] It was the theatre of the liberal intelligentsia and middle class, its opening nights were always events of the season, and its actors and actresses were always the most beloved stars of Budapest. [...] Blumenthal visited Budapest several times during the early post-war years to make a deal with the government for compensation and the rebuilding of the theatre. Each time he left empty-handed.”⁶³

It was probably difficult for Blumenthal to understand that his commercial theatre philosophy would no longer be accepted in the new state-owned and controlled theatre structure.

Residing in New York, Blumenthal maintained connections with some Hungarian professionals who had business interests in the pre-war Budapest entertainment sector. Immediately before the communist takeover, a satirical article appeared in a Budapest paper on Blumenthal's alleged death: “On Sunday evening the theatre circles were surprised to learn that Ben Blumenthal, the well-known American entrepreneur, and owner of the *Vígszínház* building, had died suddenly. [...] Blumenthal's legal adviser in Budapest and old friend, Dr. Sándor Kovács, found it inconceivable that he had not been notified of the death and sent a telegram to the theatrical publisher Aladár Roboz in New York, asking for information about the case.

“[...] At dawn on Wednesday, Dr. Sándor Kovács received the following telegram from Aladár Roboz: »I have just spoken to Ben Blumenthal. He is surprised at the news of his death.« [...] This morning, another telegram was delivered by the Post Office to a friend in Budapest. The telegram was sent by the American entrepreneur himself, who had been declared dead by the radio news. »I have received a telegram of condolence. Thank you very much until I can thank you in person in Budapest in early May. Ben«.”⁶⁴

However, it seems most likely that Blumenthal never came to Hungary again. Paradoxically, this fake news somewhat predicted Blumenthal's death for the Hungarian theatre as in the early Cold War period there were no active channels for Hungarian–American theatre relations.⁶⁵ However, in the Hungarian emigrants' circles, Blumenthal maintained his Hungarian connections as Menyhért Lengyel's 1955 diary entry shows:

“While having lunch with Krémer at the Lambs Club, I see a familiar man (he hasn't changed much) come up to me: Ben Blumenthal. In 1920,

63 *Variety*, 18 December 1951, 12.

64 *Világ*, 31 March 1949, 5.

65 Heltai, “A politikai beavatkozás szintjei.”

he had met Ica Lenkeffy on the train, and as a result bought the *Vígszínház* in Budapest, making Ica's husband, Imre Roboz, the director. During the siege of Budapest, Roboz was shot dead in the street by the Arrow Cross as he was emerging from hiding. The *Vígszínház* was bombed and then restored. Now it is called the *Katona Theatre*.⁶⁶

Further archival research in the US could reveal more about Blumenthal's later activity before his death on 5 April 1967, in New York.

Ben Blumenthal's representation in the US entertainment press

How were Blumenthal's transnational activities evaluated from the perspective of US mass culture? When he appeared for the first time in the public sphere during WW1, the tone was laudatory, although he was new to the US film business. An article published in the *Moving Picture World* served as an introduction:

"When the list of big men who make and have made film history is finally written, there will be one man near the top who up to this minute is very little or not at all known. That man who first showed Europe how to exploit pictures on a big scale, who first conceived the chain idea of a theatre for the film."⁶⁷

In the long run, Blumenthal did not become part of film history, like Zukor, but during and after the World War I, his ambition to trade with film rights globally was generally acknowledged. Blumenthal was portrayed as an ambassador of the US film industry "He is known in every motion picture center from England to Russia as »The Film Yankee«".⁶⁸ Blumenthal's cautious marketing and import techniques, his focus on the audience's taste were also represented as exemplary:

"He never undertakes to import a picture until its statistical foreign popularity is established, and he has made a thorough investigation of its American possibilities. By an exhaustive study of the American public, he has evolved a system of accurately judging the foreign producers, and gauging the financial future for them here. The business is run precisely like a great commercial importing house, and there is consequently practically no waste."⁶⁹

66 Lengyel, *Életem könyve*, 427.

67 *Moving Picture World*, 30 June 1917, 2131.

68 *Moving Picture World*, 28 April 1917, 626.

69 *Motion Picture News*, September–October 1917, 2018.

The industrialization of entertainment was the objective on Broadway and in Hollywood, and in the early 1920s, Blumenthal was presented as a pioneer of this trend in the US entertainment press.

Blumenthal's theatre investments in Europe were introduced as successful examples of the transatlantic expansion. The *Exhibitor's Trade Review* depicted him as someone who virtually owns a city. "Boss of Buda Pest. And if you think that means nothing. You come over. To Buda Pest. And see the liveliest city in Europe. Not barring Paris."⁷⁰ The *Vígszínház* was described as a valuable property on the global level: "Buda Pest Blumenthal does not own—but is the owner of the most beautiful theatres in Europe. With possibly one exception. *The Vígszínház*. Which in English means *The Comedy*. It seats 1800. And is a magnificent place. If it was located on Broadway, near 42nd street—and golly that place seems far away from here—it would be worth about five million. For the ground alone."⁷¹ In 1925, *The Film Daily* praises Blumenthal for breaking down the isolation of foreign products in America. In reality, he worked for a two-way cultural transfer, and as a result, some of the German filmmakers he engaged, like Ernst Lubitsch became influential creative artists in Hollywood. To a certain degree, Blumenthal upheld Wanger's objective for promoting cosmopolitanism by movies. *The Film Daily* cited his opinion coincidentally when Blumenthal expressed his hope that the affiliation between UFA and Universal "will be able to produce pictures to the taste of the American market and still have something different in them which will appeal to the American public."⁷²

In sum, the 1917–1925 period was the golden age of Blumenthal's positive reception in the US entertainment press. He was complimented as an innovator in transatlantic film export-import techniques, and his investments in the private theatre sector of Budapest and Berlin were also honored. However, concerning the subsequent stages of Blumenthal's career, we can only find scattered information and even fewer evaluations. As sound technology changed the film industry, Ben's brother Ike, and his nephew Dick became more renowned managers in the USA.

Ben Blumenthal's reception in Hungary

In Hungary, Blumenthal's reception had changing dynamics. When he arrived in 1920, in the public sphere many saw him as a threat to the local culture. The daily *Szózat* (Appeal) warned the government that Blumenthal's "Jewish trust company

70 *The Film Daily*, 10 July 1922, 1–3.

71 *The Film Daily*, 10 July 1922, 1–3.

72 *The Film Daily*, 25 November 1925.

would hinder the development of Hungarian Christian art.”⁷³ This was a typical argumentation in the post-Trianon era, indicating that even theatre shows were regarded as tools in the cultural struggle. However, Ferenc Herczeg, the famous novelist stressed a different perspective:

“Mr. Blumenthal is a leading figure of a global theatre firm. He came to Budapest and has started a business here because Budapest is considered one of the world’s art centres. Since he has a theatre in Budapest, the Hungarian stage-production is constantly reviewed [in the USA] and the royalties of Hungarian playwrights are paid in US dollars, and when these royalties are exchanged into Hungarian koronas that comes to a considerable sum.”⁷⁴

These examples indicate the two conflicting discourses about Blumenthal’s role in the period of his arrival in Hungary: an openly hostile one that rejected him as a foreigner and a Jew, who would make a harmful cultural impact. The more permissive voice in the public sphere was articulated by the cosmopolitan elite. Some of its members tried to convince the public about the advantages of the transatlantic entertainment business relations that Blumenthal would be able to build for the exportation of Hungarian theatrical goods. As soon as Blumenthal bought the *Vígszínház*, reporters immediately realized the export potential in this business deal. “It is certain that this venture will attract attention from across the ocean to Budapest.”⁷⁵ This prediction came true. Due to mediators like Blumenthal, between 1930 and 1943, twenty Hollywood movies were adaptations of Hungarian plays.⁷⁶ The export potential was especially important when after the Treaty of Trianon, Hungarian cultural politics started to promote Hungarian cultural supremacy. Meanwhile, the counter-arguments emphasized that in transatlantic cooperation the Hungarian side would always play a subordinate role, because of the financial inequality of the partners.

“Dollars, Swiss francs, sterling, lire are pouring into the country, and however welcome it is that foreign capital will bear fruit here, we must beware of becoming an exploited colony of foreign currency.”⁷⁷

Surprisingly, the Hungarian press offered character sketches of Blumenthal. Jenő Faludi depicted the American manager as “a perfect gentleman, who is also a great businessman.”⁷⁸ His qualities that are considered typically American are idealized:

73 *Szózat*, 28 February 1922, 5.

74 *Új Idők*, 9 July 1922, 28.

75 *8 Órai Újság*, 12 October 1920, 5.

76 Pór, *De Budapest à Hollywood*, 13–14.

77 *8 Órai Újság*, 13 October 1920, 4.

78 *8 Órai Újság*, 14 October 1920, 4.

“Totally American. His perception is unbelievably quick; he understands everything at once and processes everything in no time. His opinions are sudden, and yet they are not superficial, but of the most vivid judgement. His theatrical sense is such that when he sees a performance, although he does not know a single letter in Hungarian, he understands the play and can judge its qualities as well as the actor.”⁷⁹

In the circles of the cosmopolitan artists' elite, Blumenthal was popular, and for the press he embodied the “polite other” who constantly helped the Hungarian cause abroad.

“If there are unpleasant strangers, there are very pleasant ones, and Ben Blumenthal is one of them. He is a likable, kind, gentle, and clever gentleman: a man who knows his trade and is not a businessman but a real enthusiast, who does not want to collect our orphan koronas here, but wants to work for Hungarian culture, because he loves Budapest and is impressed by the talent and knowledge that is manifested on and around the Hungarian stage.”⁸⁰

In the 1930s, Blumenthal was depicted as a social celebrity, whose simple appearance in the Hungarian capital deserved a column in a paper: “Blumenthal visits us at least twice a year, not for business but simply to spend a few pleasant days with friends. Young and splendidly dressed, he walked along the Dunakorzó on his first evening, where everyone greeted him warmly.”⁸¹ In this period, he was most often portrayed as a family man. “Ben Blumenthal is devoted to his only daughter, adores his two little grandchildren, and does his utmost to make them feel at home in their splendid home.”⁸² Despite his withdrawal as an investor from the Budapest theatre industry, the papers showed an interest in the details of his cosmopolitan lifestyle. For example, he reported in an interview: “From Budapest, I’m leaving in a week to return to Paris where my wife is waiting for me. From Paris, I’m going to London to meet my daughter and son-in-law, and I’ll be back in America in about six weeks for a longer stay.”⁸³ Budapest was his only base in Central Europe.

Following the news that Blumenthal had sold the *Vígszínház* (after all, the Hungarian National Bank did not approve the deal), in 1936, the *Színházi Élet* (Theatre Life) published a kind of “farewell article,” describing the manager’s attraction to Budapest and the position he obtained in the local cosmopolitan elite. “He did indeed

79 8 Órai Újság, 14 October 1920, 4.

80 8 Órai Újság, 8 July 1923, 9.

81 Színházi Élet, 4 August 1935, 28.

82 Színházi Élet, 27 September 1936, 20.

83 Pesti Napló, 22 February 1935, 14.

have ten minutes to spend discussing the situation with his tenant and his legal adviser. Then he stayed here for three weeks—as a private person. He met his friends, played golf on the Svábhegy, played bridge with his friends.”⁸⁴ He was even given the nickname “Blem” by Andor Miklós and Ferenc Molnár. The greatest service attributed to him was his role in developing the Hungarian–American cultural transfers. “In fifteen years, he has attracted hundreds and hundreds of distinguished foreigners to Budapest. [...] He was the one to persuade Gilbert Miller to visit the Danube city, about which very little was known in the American »top four hundred« after the Great War.”⁸⁵

The above-mentioned Gilbert Miller (1884–1969) was another important mediator between the Budapest and the Broadway stages whose name was often mentioned in the entertainment press of the interwar period.⁸⁶ However, Miller did not own or finance any theatres in Hungary. Instead, he regularly bought the stage rights of Hungarian plays for New York performances. Overall, for the private theatre sector of Budapest, Blumenthal’s long-term influence as an investor was more decisive.

Although the political climate changed considerably after 1945, the press welcomed Blumenthal as an old acquaintance: “He has arrived and he is excited to be here. He visited all his favourite places and was happy to see that since he was last visiting, we have been developing and rebuilding in all areas.”⁸⁷ In the interim 1945–1949 period, despite the anticapitalistic rhetoric of the era, Blumenthal was called “a keen friend of the capital.” However, following the communist takeover and the nationalization of theatres all that Blumenthal represented was fiercely attacked as bourgeois and reactionary. Blumenthal’s name and his role in the interwar private theatre life of Budapest vanished from Hungarian cultural memory and theatre history for decades. The *Vígszínház*, Blumenthal’s main field of activity in Budapest, became such a strong brand on the cosmopolitan entertainment market that the communist authorities felt obliged to change the name of the theatre to the Theatre of the People’s Army.

Conclusion

Although Ben Blumenthal had temporary fame in the USA as an inventor of new practices in the transatlantic film trade, he could not join the group of legendary

84 *Színházi Élet*, 27 September 1936, 20.

85 *Színházi Élet*, 27 September 1936, 20.

86 Sári Fedák, the famous Hungarian star, who frequently toured the USA, emphasized Miller’s positive impact on Hungarian–American theatre relations: “I think Miller is the first director in New York. It is a big deal because there are several good ones. He is courageous, entrepreneurial, looking for the new, the strange, and the interesting, and what is most wonderful about him is that he loves Budapest.” *Színházi Élet*, 16 December 1923, 16.

87 *Demokrácia*, 28 September 1947, 4.

cosmopolitan entertainment businessmen who created and maintained the global influence of US mass culture. In contrast, on the local level, in the Hungarian for-profit theatre field his influence was unprecedented, as he was the only foreign investor to own an elegant theatre building and operate two prestigious theatres in Budapest. Blumenthal's other specialty was his atypical business socialization: as he started his activities in Europe, he understood both the European and the US cultural contexts. Even after returning to the USA in 1917, Berlin, Paris, London, and Budapest remained his bases. His frequent transatlantic sails to Europe substantiate that he valued the long visits in these cities. Blumenthal's perspective was transatlantic viewed from both sides of the ocean.

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Entertainment on the Ruins of Berlin

The Spadoni Agency and the *Palast Varieté*, 1945–1947

Dániel Molnár 

Independent researcher; danielmolnarpd@gmail.com

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Abstract. The study introduces the brief history of *Palast – Das Variété der 3000* (today *Friedrichstadt-Palast*) in Berlin. Founded by Marion Spadoni, the daughter of the renowned Berliner impresario Paul Spadoni, it opened in August 1945 and produced new shows every month continuing the city's *Großvariété* tradition. Her shows had to meet the expectations of the audience as well as those of the Soviet authorities while bounded by the lack of materials, infrastructure, and staff. Being a private enterprise in the Soviet Occupation Zone, two years later she was accused of collaboration, and her business was expropriated. As the venue—despite its significance—is still often overlooked by theater historians, a foundational research is necessary comparing and synthesizing various primary sources. The Spadoni Agency's documentation was destroyed in 1944, however, a fragment still exists in the *Stadtmuseum Berlin* and the *Landesarchiv Berlin*; as well as the fonds of the *Magistrat der Stadt Berlin*, Marion Spadoni's unpublished memoirs in different versions, and the reviews and press articles related to the house. The current management of the *Palast* attempts to establish a new narrative of the venue's origin, claiming Max Reinhardt and Erik Charell as its founding fathers. The present study shows that this narrative is far from the reality: Spadoni's establishment was not even rhetorically related to the former defining creative talents residing in the house, but to the heritage of the three *Großvariétés* destroyed during the war: the *Plaza*, the *Scala* and the *Wintergarten*.

Keywords: variété, revue, entertainment, *Friedrichstadt-Palast*, post-war, theater, Berlin

Hardly three months after the capitulation of Berlin, a new entertainment venue opened in the destroyed city: the *Palast Variété* (1945–1947; today: *Friedrichstadt-Palast*). Its creators, the Spadoni family, managed to set up and operate a theater whose cultural relevance at the time seems to have been greater than indicated by the cultural and theater literature of the post-war era.¹ The only study about this enterprise is a short essay by Angelika Ret, who during her employment in the

1 E.g. Schivelbusch, *Vor dem Vorhang* does not mention it at all; current works only mention the *Palast* at best, e.g. Preuß, *Theater im ost-wespolitischen Umwelt*, 59.

Stadtmuseum Berlin had a chance to work with primary sources; but it lacks an analytical aspect, the confrontation and synthesis with other source types and a cultural contextualization.² The *Friedrichstadt-Palast*'s own literature is biased regarding the period: writers did not have access to the most important sources and had to serve the former GDR's cultural narratives. More recent works published in the past thirty years have adapted these distorted conclusions.³ The current management of the venue dates the venue's origin from the 1920s: in 2015, a sculpture was erected in front of the house named "The memorial to the founding fathers of the *Friedrichstadt-Palast*"⁴ commemorating Max Reinhardt,⁵ Erik Charell,⁶ and Hans Poelzig.⁷ Following this logic, in 2019 the management launched an extensive campaign promoting the "100 years' stage jubilee" of the house. This study is fundamental in confronting the current narrative and the role of the claimed forefathers with the venue's actual sources. In parallel, it sheds some light on the so far mostly overlooked cultural phenomenon of variety entertainment and its significance in Berlin after 1945.⁸

Sources

The history of the Spadoni Agency began in 1918. Paul Spadoni (1870–1952) was a renowned Berlin-born strongman juggler (*Kraftjongleur*) at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁹ After ending his active performing career due to a war injury, he opened his office in downtown Berlin. By that time, directors and managers were

2 Ret, *Variété und Wärmehalle*.

3 Even a recent PhD dissertation is blurring the *Palast-Variété* with the *Friedrichstadt-Palast*. See Machals, "Extravaganza."

4 *Das Denkzeichen für die Gründungsväter des Friedrichstadt-Palastes, Friedrichstraße 107, Berlin-Mitte*

5 Max Reinhardt (1873–1943): director, theater entrepreneur. One of the most prominent German directors in the twentieth century. In 1920, he established the Salzburg Festival with Hofmannstahl's *Everyman* (*Jedermann*). Head of *Großes Schauspielhaus* from 1919 to 1924.

6 Erik Charell (1894–1974): assistant of Max Reinhardt, who made a career in staging revues and operettas in the 1920s. He took over the artistic direction of the *Großes Schauspielhaus* in 1924. Being Jewish and homosexual, he left Germany in 1932.

7 Hans Poelzig (1869–1936): architect, chairman of the German Association of Craftsmen (*Deutscher Werkbund*). During 1918–1919 he renovated the *Großes Schauspielhaus*.

8 The history of entertainment business requires compiling very small fragments of information—each of them will be referenced. I am currently unable to publish pictures from public collections due to financial and copyright issues; nevertheless, I will reference them in footnotes. English translations are by the author, unless indicated otherwise.

9 His born name was Krause; he chose Spadoni as a stage name.

unable to keep track of the latest (and best) acts on the continent, thus, the agents' role was becoming more and more prominent in the business.¹⁰ Agents were professionals who travelled, discovered, and sometimes put together acts; they knew their whereabouts and contacts, tracking and keeping records of their past and upcoming engagements.¹¹ Spadoni very soon became a renowned agent; when the 1922 Treaty of Rapallo opened diplomatic relations between the German Republic and Soviet Russia, Anatoly Lunacharsky invited him to launch the new state circuses in Moscow.¹²



Figures 1–2 Paul Spadoni's advertisement from the 1920s

Spadoni logo on the *Palast*—playbills from 1945. Digital reconstructions by the author.

The agency was always keen on featuring its home city in its brand.¹³ Paul Spadoni's office between 1936 and 1944 at the *Neustädtische Kirchstraße* was a particularly symbolic location: its window was overlooking the *Wintergarten*,¹⁴ one of the city's famous *Großvarietés*. These were variety venues with 2,500–3,000 seats in their auditorium and presenting a new show each month. In the 1930s, Berlin had

- 10 "The agent is a necessary evil [...] The agent is the counsel for both the artist and the director, in other words for two parties who are not always in agreement." Jaerell, Joh. "Agenten/Agents/Agents." *Das Organ der Varieté – Welt*, 1 December 1935, no. 16, 2–6.
- 11 See the large filing office and archives: *Paul Spadoni – The world's theatrical exchange* SMB Paul Spadoni.
- 12 The opening program of the First State Circus of Moscow featured Paul Spadoni as its "house agency" (*Hausagentur*). *Moskau Erster Staatszirkus, Das Programm* 28 October 1923, no. 1125, 13. cf. MS1 232–235.
- 13 In his advertisement from the 1920s, Paul Spadoni was walking through the whole globe with a suitcase but kept Berlin in the title; likewise, his daughter, Marion Spadoni named her enterprise Berlin Touring Company (*Berliner Gastspielunternehmen*).
- 14 Beim Agenten, *Die Deutsche Artistik* 22 March 1936, no. 12, 31. When the *Wintergarten* was destroyed on 21 June 1944, so was Spadoni's office and his documentation. A single document survived referring to the agency's earnings in 1928. LAB A Rep. 342 – 02 Nr. 46620 Spadoni Künstleragentur—Fragebogen Amtsgericht B—Mitte 27 February 1928.

three such theaters: the *Wintergarten* (1887–1944), the *Scala* (1920–1944) and the *Plaza* (1929–1944). These were the most prestigious venues for artists: performing there for a month meant that their act was first class;¹⁵ and the only way to appear in the show was being recommended by a prominent agent, such as Spadoni. These mass entertainment theaters reached a representative status during the *NS-Zeit*; to the point that the *Plaza* and the *Scala* were taken over by the *Kraft durch Freude* organization,¹⁶ and occasionally even Adolf Hitler attended their shows. Their significance increased during the war—serving as a distraction and keeping the illusion of normality.¹⁷ All three were destroyed in the bombing. In March 1944, the entire documentation of the Reich Theater Chamber’s department for artistry (*Reichstheaterkammer Fachschaft Artistik*, RTK FA) was also lost in a fire.

Paul Spadoni was planning to publish a biographical book in 1947, but only excerpts were released in a professional journal;¹⁸ its complete manuscript is probably lost. Only a short biography was written thirty years after his death.¹⁹ His second daughter, Marion Spadoni (Marinka Krause, 1905–1998) was also an artist; she started her career as an equestrienne (*Kunstreiterin*), then became a successful magician.²⁰ Her bequest is deposited in the *Stadtmuseum Berlin*. In the spring of 1994, she wrote her memoirs in two books.²¹ The first one introduces her family history, and the second covers her management of the *Palast-Variété* between 1945 and 1947. Both are unpublished manuscripts; she produced different versions and edits while searching for a publisher. Three of the copies are in the *Friedrichstadt-Palast* today (with most of the original documents and press cutouts);²² one is deposited in

15 Some of the former performers could still ring a bell for circus enthusiasts: the clown Grock, the Rivels group comic acrobats (allegedly their act was put together in the *Scala*), or the 3 Codonas aerial acrobats whose act redefined their genre.

16 “Strength through Joy” It was a part of the national labor organization promoting ideology and organizing leisure and tourism. After 1939, its profile changed to front and military entertainment.

17 “The *Wintergarten* is one of the enterprises that must be maintained at all costs.” Antrag auf UK—Stellung durch Austausch für Heinrich Speziali gegen Franz Haydowski, 27 April 1943 BARCH R55/10360.

18 Linden, Hermann. “Paul Spadoni – Ein Artistenleben.” *Variété* October 1947, no. 10, 6.

19 Groth, *Die starken Männer*, 95–99.

20 A magician colleague remembered her in a professional journal. Maldino, Fred. Marion Spadoni. In *Magicol* May 1999, no. 131, 18–20. In German: Erinnerung an Marion Spadoni. *Magie* July–August 1998, 372–74. Another short portrait is Cartens, Höver and von Ow, *Frauen an der Spree*, 82–83.

21 Titled “Circus Dynastie Renz Schumann – Paul Spadoni vom Weltstar zur Weltumspannenden Agentur” and “Palast Gross – Varietee im Haus am Circus 1. Kaleidoskop”.

22 The former management had plans to publish them in 1996. To my knowledge, these are to be deposited in the *Stadtmuseum*.

the *Stadtmuseum*,²³ and another copy is in the possession of Dr. Bernhard Römhild, her former doctor. The latter is identical with the *Friedrichstadt-Palast* copy.²⁴ As this is the longest version of the manuscript, it will serve as the basis of my references.²⁵

The manuscript gives a unique insight into the Spadoni theater management in the ruined city. However, she hardly mentions her and her family's activity during Nazi rule.²⁶ She writes in a very diplomatic way about the emigration of Erik Charell or about the "non-Aryan" Jules Marx, the former manager of the *Scala*; while she was clearly close to them and must have known about the political pressure on them. (She also decided not to disclose any information about her private relationships.) Even though the Spadonis were neither Nazis, nor members of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), after 1933 they managed to keep their position. After introducing the racial laws, they were likely to have less competition in their business;²⁷ although the pool of employable artists was reduced as well. Paul Spadoni remained close to the RTK FA, which sent a big bouquet of flowers for the jubilee of his agency,²⁸ asked him to be one of the organizers of the 1939 *Variétéball*,²⁹ and commemorated his birthday in their official journal.³⁰ Marion Spadoni had been touring Europe with her artist company since 1928; appearing in the *Großvarietés* of Berlin from time to time.³¹ During the war, she led several *Wehrmacht-Tournees* entertaining German soldiers behind the Eastern Front.³² All her acts were booked by her father. She attempted to obtain a *Großvarieté*—license during the *NS-Zeit* but not being a party member, her request was denied.³³ In 1945, after twenty years of touring and performing, she was almost forty years old and she must have thought that it was time to finish her active performing career and make a transition to management.

23 Until recently, this version has been restricted for research.

24 MS "Arzt Komplet 1–2."

25 I am using the page count of the folder, because due to the numerous editing versions, sometimes three different page numbers are marked.

26 Cf. with the evaluation of the memoirs of circus director Paula Busch, Eifert, *Unternehmerinnen im Nationalsozialismus*, 117–41.

27 In addition, by the end of 1935, managers were not allowed to contract foreign performers unless they were represented by a German agent. Rundschau/Revue/Review – Berlin, *Das Organ der Variété – Welt* 27 October 1935, no. 11, 11.

28 Zwanzig Jahre Weltagentur Spadoni, *Die Deutsche Artistik* 7 August 1938, no. 32, 7.

29 Der Variétéball 1939, *Die Deutsche Artistik* 29 January 1939, no. 5, 2.

30 Paul Spadoni – 70 Jahre, *Artisten – Welt* 9 October 1940, no. 19, 10.

31 *Scala*: August 1933; *Plaza*: May 1938, May 1939.

32 See *Artisten – Welt* December 1940 – July 1943.

33 Marion Spadoni an den Henschel – Verlag GmbH, 31 May 1994 MS "Buch 3" One of her touring companies at the Eastern Front was also named *Frontbühne I – Großvarieté*. See *Artisten – Welt* 9 September 1941, no. 17, 82.

A fragment of both Spadoni's bequests can be found in the *Stadtmuseum Berlin documenta artistica*—alongside with the posters and playbills not just regarding the *Palast* but also the three preceding *Großvarietés*.³⁴ Local and federal archives keep records and documents of the era: based on the fonds of the local government, we can reveal more about the administrative and official side of the enterprise. The fonds of the *Friedrichstadt-Palast* have recently become available for research: they have few documents from the period but include the non-commercial photo albums³⁵ of the 1947 shows. Reviews, articles (and after 1947, the professional press such as *Das Programm*) will also contribute to the analysis—providing information and reflecting on certain events. Only after conflicting and synthesizing different kinds of sources can we attempt to place the theater's traditions in Berlin's cultural life and find the reasons behind its existence and fall.



Figure 3 Marion Spadoni in the playbill of the *Palast*, April 1947. From the author's collection.

Licensing and opening the *Palast*

After the capitulation in May 1945, Berlin had about half of its former population and 600,000 buildings were destroyed.³⁶ The Soviet occupation meant a *tabula rasa* in cultural life: performing licenses had to be issued anew by the cultural department of the Soviet *Kommandantura* (*Kulturabteilung der Zentralkommandantur*).³⁷ On 16 May 1945, the new municipal authority, the *Magistrat der Stadt Berlin*, was established; followed by the Chamber of Artists (*Kammer der Kunstschaffenden*) on 6 June 1945, by the order of the Soviet *Kommandantura*. After 25 July 1945, turning to the Cultural Office of the *Magistrat* (*Amt für Volksbildung*) was the first step of applying for performing licenses; they forwarded those eligible to the *Kommandantura*,

34 Luckily, the museum acquired the bequest of the artist and circus memorabilia collector Julius Markschiess-van Trix.

35 Before video tapes, photo albums were compiled to “record” a particular show and, just like recordings, these were not published.

36 Krenn, *Chronik*, 9.

37 Before 1933, performing licenses were issued by the city's Police Commissioner (*Polizeipräsident*). After 1933, licensing was taken over by the Goebbels – led Propaganda Ministry, which delegated the task to the RTK FA.

where the decision was made.³⁸ The license obtained only permitted the activity of the performer: for the performance itself, a further license was necessary from the *Kommandantura's* censorship office. Prior to the show, this second license had to be submitted to the *Magistrat* of the district where the performance was to take place, with the complete text of the show attached.

The first session of the *Magistrat* deemed the *Titania-Palast* cinema a suitable theater for variety shows.³⁹ At the same time, the Spadonis received the approval of the Soviet *Kommandantura* to open a new variety venue in the former *Großes Schauspielhaus*. The earliest surviving document of this agreement was issued on 11 June: a power of attorney granted to father and daughter, directing all military and civilian offices to help them establish a venue.⁴⁰ In her memoirs, she writes:

“With the procurement of the Russian *Kommandantura*, [I] managed to get the building material (because the German offices at the moment do not have any available) and now the remaining repair work is already taking place. It was the *Kommandantura's* condition of delivering the materials that the venue should be opened as a *Großvarieté*. [...] until today by the commission of the Cultural Office I had non-negligible expenses for sets and costumes, because the opening should happen soon. I am in any case eager to open the venue in a usable condition in two or three weeks and spare no work and expense to achieve this goal.”⁴¹

The day of the opening was determined by the “authorities”—as Marion Spadoni referred to the Soviet *Kommandantura*.⁴² The opening was a priority for the Soviets, but the originally planned date (within a month) proved unrealistic. The building authority (*Baupolizei*) gave consent for the house to be opened two months later,

38 Schriftwechsel des Magistrats mit der Alliierten Kommandantur 20 July 1945, LAB C Rep. 120 Nr. 14. 13. cf. Erteilung von Lizenzen für Veranstaltungen auf dem Gebiet der Musik, des Theaters und der Artistik issued by Major Mossjakoff, 17 October 1946 LAB C Rep. 120 Nr. 1226. The orders were published in *Das Programm*, 12 Januar 1947, 4.

39 Konstituierende Sitzung des Präsidial – Ausschusses der Kammer der Kunstschaffenden Berlin, 6 June 1945 LAB C Rep. 120 Nr. 83. 15. A month later, the Magistrate took over several other theaters of the city. See The decision of taking the theaters into municipal control, 17 July 1945. In *Berlin – Quellen*, 498.

40 Vollmacht issued by Bezirksamt Mitte, Amt für Volksbildung, 11 Juni 1945 LAB C Rep. 031-01-02 Nr. 1215a. Copies of this document can also be found in the memoirs of Marion Spadoni. This refers to a contract signed by the Spadonis. In her application dated in July, she mentions she has been working on the house already for a month.

41 Antrag von Marion Spadoni auf Erteilung der Spielerlaubnis für des Grossvarietés „Kolosseum“, 1 July 1945 LAB C Rep. 031-01-02 Nr. 1215a She asked the Dresdner Bank to release 50,000 RM from her account covering the costs.

42 Marion Spadoni's letter to the Dresdner Bank, 9 July 1945 SMB Fotoarchiv Marion Spadoni.

following the necessary security and renovation work.⁴³ In another letter, Spadoni claimed that the *Magistrat* did not issue her papers in time, so she had to trust the power of attorney issued to her earlier.⁴⁴ She received a certificate of approval from the city after the opening, which was valid until the end of 1945, on the following conditions: securing 30,000 *Reichsmark* (RM) as a deposit; regular payment of workers and reporting in advance if they planned to raise ticket prices. In case she should lose the right of disposal over the theater, or if circumstances should arise that would preclude granting the license, it could be immediately cancelled.⁴⁵

It is hardly possible to trace back the informal discussions between the Spadonis and the *Kommandantura* about opening a *Großvarieté* among the ruins. As a prominent professional, Paul Spadoni was present in the first cultural meetings of the new city assembly, and her daughter had ambitions of managing a *Großvarieté*. Marion Spadoni claimed that she obtained the license because of her father's activity in the first Soviet circuses, which the Soviets "did not forget";⁴⁶ but this is unlikely. It was a priority for the Soviet military administration to relaunch the city's cultural life, and Paul Spadoni's extensive professional network seemed to be a guarantee that he could organize regular performances on short notice.⁴⁷ The reason behind prioritizing variety in particular might have been because its productions did not require any language skills, and the genres of the elite culture could hardly have entertained a foreign army.⁴⁸

The building: the *Großes Schauspielhaus*

Spadoni was committed to opening her venue in a particular building: in the former *Großes Schauspielhaus* in the Soviet Occupation Zone. In the 1920s, it was the home of Erik Charell's and Max Reinhardt's productions. Prior to that, Albert Schumann's circus had performed there between 1899 and 1918. Schumann was Marion Spadoni's great uncle, and as a child she spent much time at the circus.

43 An das Bau – Amt Berlin – Mitte, 21 July 1945 MS "Original – Das erste Jahr Palast."

44 Kammer der Kunstschaffenden an Marion Spadoni, 5 August 1945 MS "Originale."

45 Zulassungsurkunde von Magistrat der Stadt Berlin, 31 August 1945 SMB Fotoarchiv Marion Spadoni cf. Lizenz Nr. 2 von Major Mossjakoff 8 July 1946 MS "Zum vorzeigen" The original Soviet license from 1945 might have been lost. According to the memoir, Lizenz Nr. 1. was saved for the *Staatsoper*, MS2, 10. The *Staatsoper* (*Staatskapelle*) indeed gave its opening concert on 23 August, eight days after the *Palast* opened; however, several theaters had opened earlier, including the *Städtische Oper* on 15 June.

46 MS "Original – Das erste Jahr Palast," 22.

47 When the war was over, artists came to his house looking for work. MS2, 15.

48 As Spadoni put it: "Heavy plays and sophisticated music were not for soldiers, and certainly not for rubble women." MS2, 14. She was considering whether to display the seating plan and the price list in Russian as well. MS2, 141.

Aside from their emotional connection, in 1945 this was the only suitable building that could host a *Großvarieté*. The location (*Am Zirkus 1*) was perfect: just like its predecessors, it was within walking distance of a railway station in the city center (*Bahnhof Friedrichstraße*, not very far from the ruins of the *Wintergarten*) where several suburban and other transport lines met. Nevertheless, in the first couple of months, public transport services were extremely limited.

The theater was hit by thirty-six bombs.⁴⁹ Max Reinhardt's famous revolving stage was completely destroyed and the roof was open to the sky; making the house playable again required a great effort.⁵⁰ As a temporary solution, "the iron curtain was straightened, [and] an iron frame was erected on it to hold the lights and later the curtain."⁵¹ To make it stand still, it was walled up from the back. This meant only a depth of one meter was left of the original stage, which had to be extended towards the auditorium. The supplement made the final stage six meters deep and eighteen meters wide; still it was a rather wide podium. The complete internal communication system (lights, loudspeakers, telephones, etc.) was missing: children helped during the shows, running back and forth.⁵² The infrastructure determined the nature of productions.

"It was very important that every act should be in the right place [...] because there was no backstage, which is necessary for a smooth run. [...] On a stage which is only six meters deep, every centimeter was needed."⁵³

"There were no curtains. Backdrops, as well as any scenery, were "conspicuous for their absence". The iron stage curtain, now our backdrop, was covered with fabric, then painted with blue paint, the only color we could find. Stars were cut out and were shining on it as decoration. [...] Only the absolutely necessary lights were installed."⁵⁴

They were unable to complete the roof before the opening, and the theater was still a construction site.⁵⁵ Progress was delayed by the lack of materials and bureau-

49 See the photos LAB F Rep. 290-06-06; 219–21 Friedrichstadtpalast Mitte, 1945.

50 "The former dressing rooms were covered in meters of sawdust, saturated with blood and water, and teeming with worms." MS2, 100.

51 Spiel vor dem eisernen Vorhang, *Der Abend* 14 April 1947 cf. Die Rückseite, *Revue* 17 April 1947 cf. with a drawing of the backstage: Im Nervenzentrum des Palast. (Cutout from an unidentified paper) SMB Bequest of Marion Spadoni.

52 MS2, 27. Light signaling was the key communication method in large houses during the shows.

53 MS2, 48.

54 MS2, 26.

55 "Building and repair work were constant during the two years when I was in the house." MS2, 171. Raining made parts of the auditorium wet on the opening night; still, the audience stayed for the show with umbrellas. MS2, 30.

cracy; the official curfew limited the working hours.⁵⁶ Due to the lack of paper, the management could not print posters. Distributing flyers was generally banned, so employees were asked to “forget” the advertisements in the city.⁵⁷ On the opening night, the house had about 130 employees; up to that point, all the staff and even the construction companies had been working on trust.⁵⁸ The *Palast* was not financially supported by any authority, its income came from ticket sales and from the so-called ‘income on the side’ (*Nebeneinnahme*; the buffet, playbill, toilets, etc.). Marion Spadoni’s business model was based on three rules she had learned from Erik Charell and Jules Marx:

- “1. Do not spare on the performance;
2. The venue must be large;
3. The rent should be so low that its income on the side should cover it.”⁵⁹

By 1946, the monthly rent of the *Palast* had reached 12,000 RM a month,⁶⁰ and by that time she had started making money. She received a significant extra sum by leasing the venue for sports events.⁶¹ According to a statement Spadoni made in 1947, she had invested about 300,000 RM into the theater and paid 2,500,000 RM in taxes to the city.⁶²

The creative team

In the beginning, Spadoni did not have a professional team to work with.⁶³ Nevertheless, by the middle of 1946, she had managed to assemble a group of established professionals. The technical head of the venue was Curt Röder, who had been working in the house for twenty years,⁶⁴ just like the stage manager Karl Rosenbaum.

56 “An approval for every sack of cement, every brick, every roll of tar paper [...] every worker [...] for paper, for printing [...]” MS2, 19.

57 MS2, 35. By the middle of 1946, the first graphic posters appeared on the advertising pillars. Kostenausstellung von Reklame – Agentur K. E. Goerz, 27 August 1946 SMB Fotoarchiv Marion Spadoni.

58 MS2, 34.

59 She added one more condition: “As long as neither Hitler nor Stalin come in between.” MS1, 276.

60 2. Pacht – Vertrag zwischen Marion Spadoni und die Deutsches National – Theater AG, 12 December 1946 SMB Spadoni – Nachlass.

61 “Every sports event was held in the *Palast*.” MS2, 214. This meant mostly box matches, see the numerous cutouts in SMB Spadoni – Nachlass. According to her contract, in this case the landlord received quarter of her income. 1. Pacht – Vertrag, 28 November 1945 SMB Fotoarchiv Marion Spadoni.

62 “Palast” so und anders, *Telegraf* 10 October 1947.

63 “Almost the whole crew was new and [...] they came from different professions.” MS2, 26.

64 Theaterhasen jenseits der Rampe, *Telegraf* 4 July 1946.

In December 1945, Paul Seltenhammer joined the team as the head of design—he had been working with Marion Spadoni in her first touring revue in 1928 and designed most of the *Palast's* revue scenes.⁶⁵ Ralph Zürn took over the musical lead and the conductor's position from Paul Böhm in March 1946, because of his affinity for jazz, which the audience demanded.⁶⁶

Various skills and professions are necessary to create shows. However, in the beginning they had to do with Spadoni's improvised sets and costumes and Max Reinhardt's old carpenter (who installed the 3,000 chairs).⁶⁷ Even if the traditional professional know-how was available, due to the lack of materials, they needed to demonstrate various skills.⁶⁸ Sets and costumes were mostly improvised, using the materials available on the black market (sometimes in exchange for Spadoni's jewelry)⁶⁹ or even *Wehrmacht* supplies. For example, the costumes of the *Fata Morgana* dance scene were made of umbrella silk.⁷⁰ (Ideally, the audience did not recognize the original materials in the show because that would have broken the illusion.) When the show choir was re-established, fifty to sixty new dance costumes were needed each month. To help the production team, Spadoni cooperated with sewing schools, finally moving the tailor's shop of the Berlin Fashion School (*Textil und Modeschule der Stadt Berlin*) to the *Palast*.⁷¹ The first proper sets were four giant masks laminated onto waste in the February 1946 show, and finding a box of feathers led to the North American indigenous cultures-themed *Indianola* scene.⁷²

The shows and their marketing

Although the *Palast* did not have any competition in the city, the positioning and marketing of the venue was important from the beginning. Rather than claiming to create something new or unseen, the shows and the marketing relied on the local

65 Only one scene of the July 1946 show was designed by Wolf Leder, a frequent designer of the *Großvarietés* in the 1930s. Later, he became an employee and the main designer of the *Friedrichstadt-Palast* for almost fifty years.

66 MS2, 109.

67 MS "Original übergang 1946 Fata Morgana" 70. About the role of the crafting industry in revue productions, see Perault, *Une approche ethnologique du costume de spectacle*.

68 The house used to have a prop and costume collection (*Fundus*), which "had been relocated in the last year of the war. In response to many inquiries, I always had to answer that none of the old employees knew where it had been moved." MS2, 105. An inquiry: Letter to Max Lipscher, 21 November 1945 MS "Originale für beide Bücher."

69 MS2, 113.

70 "A huge pile of molton sheets saved the Christmas – scene." MS2, 113.

71 Wir besuchen Marion Spadoni, *Berlins Modenblatt* March 1947, 26.

72 MS "Vom ersten Ballet bis Ende," 122.

representative *Großvarieté* traditions. From its first show, the theater was advertised as the *Haus der 3000*, similarly to the former *Plaza* (*Theater der 3000*, used between January 1934 and February 1938). “The leading variety” (*Das führende Varieté*) line on the *Palast* playbill had been a permanent slogan of the *Wintergarten* (introduced in July 1933). The *Palast* was positioned as its successor, advertising itself as the most prestigious variety venue in Germany. The disclaimer which lets the management make occasional changes in the program, the self-advertisements, and even the cloakroom information in the playbills were taken over verbatim from the playbills of the *Scala*.⁷³ Using such well-known speech patterns probably provided a sense of continuity in public consciousness.

In the second half of the 1930s, the Berliner *Großvarietés* had a similar show structure. Shows were produced monthly, with each featuring thirteen or fourteen individual acts of different kinds (*Nummernprogramm*) with one intermission in the middle. These productions were often untitled and were referred to by the month (e.g., *Oktober Programm*) or by the leading act (*Zugnummer*). Acts were usually produced by the artists themselves.⁷⁴ The key was to arrange them in the right order—not just aesthetically, but in such a way that the necessary transitions (installing and dismantling sets and other requisites) for each act were smooth and flawless. Spadoni’s first playbill warned that her show would not follow the old practice of featuring only weaker acts in the beginning and in the end. This practice was developed on the audience’s behavior:

“The doors of a *Variété* cannot be simply closed at the beginning of the performance, as you do in a concert hall or opera house. In the *Variété*, visitors want to come and go casually; it may be annoying for the guests who arrive on time or stay until the end; and it is no less unpleasant for the artists appearing in the first and last acts.”⁷⁵

Artists did not favor the first or the last spots. Therefore, shows usually opened and ended with the orchestra playing, and after the overture, the master of ceremonies occasionally welcomed the audience, thereby making the first, in fact, the third. However, this show structure had completely disappeared by the second half of the 1930s. The aforementioned warning paragraph about this practice was used by the *Scala* from 1923 to November 1933 (when their playbills changed to an A5 format), and this warning may not always have had the same relevance over these ten years.

73 “Führend in der Programm – Gestaltung! Zeitgemäß in der Preis – Gestaltung!” *Scala Programm* October 1932, “Garderoben – Ablage – In 7 Minuten [...]” *Scala Programm* May 1932.

74 Sometimes with the cooperation of an agent.

75 According to an aphorism, “every variety show should actually begin with the second act and end with the penultimate.” *Die erste Nummer*, *Die Deutsche Artistik* 14 November 1937, no. 46, 3.

Spadoni—maybe unconsciously—used the pattern that originated from her youth and the beginning of her professional career. From her first *Palast* show to the last, she had on average fifteen acts in a show, split into two parts by an intermission. Each part was opened with a musical piece played by the orchestra and finished with a very effective finale. Because of the curfew, shows had to start as early as 17:30.



Figure 4 Palast-playbill from March 1946. From the author's collection.

The Spadonis put together twenty-seven *Nummernprogramm*.⁷⁶ All of Marion's acts were represented by her father's agency, which established a new office in the *Palast*. But finding quality acts for each month was not easy in a ruined and occupied country. In the first months, they had to rely on the acts at hand: Edith Crockers' closing bear act in the first shows was easy to find, since Crockers and her bears were seeking refuge in the house two months before the opening. In October, the Jewish Carl Schwarz performed again his mirror-act (*Die zerbrochene Spiegel*), celebrating his 50th stage jubilee. He was the former (and current) president of the reassembled professional organization of German artists, the *Internationale Artisten-Loge*.⁷⁷ Dance acts were essential and not very demanding in terms of costumes and scenery. The very first one in the first show which opened the venue was the Borry Trio,

⁷⁶ According to the playbills of SMB *documenta artistica*.

⁷⁷ From 1947, its official journal (*Das Programm*) was published again; picking up the numbering after their last issue in 1935.

performing “Russian whirlwind dances”. Nevertheless, in the first period, large dance scenes were lacking: instead, mostly solos and duos were performed using classical music and the new original choreographies of Sabine Reß⁷⁸ each month. Soviet authorities did not favor Western themes,⁷⁹ but tap dancing and cowboy acts were not banned. Artists from outside Berlin were allowed to travel to the city only after 18 January 1946; but it was still uncertain if they would arrive in time.⁸⁰

“The »3 Arabellas«, who recently performed in the *Palast-Variété* for a month, and afterwards were engaged in *Monte Carlo am Zoo* in Berlin’s British sector [...] are now obliged to [perform] in the »Orangerie« located in the American sector, between 1st and 15th July. For this last engagement, their performing license has been rejected with a notice that performances which are not based in Berlin [...] require a permit from the cultural committee, and the manager who engages an external act like this has to apply for approval five or six weeks before the beginning of the engagement. [...] it seems strange why an act which has already appeared in the British and the Russian sectors should need approval from the American sector.”⁸¹

Such circumstances made it very difficult to plan shows ahead. Despite the negative feelings many developed towards Germany during the war, numerous foreign artists looking for work contacted Spadoni.⁸² Meanwhile, the management tried to keep up the appearance of a world class program mostly by contracting acts that, because of the racial laws, had not been staged for many years (Ralph Zürn’s jazz orchestra;⁸³ Black artists of the “20 Original Suaheli”;⁸⁴ Zimmermann’s Great Midget Revue, etc.).⁸⁵ Still, Paul Spadoni had to rearrange the acrobatic act of the “5 Simontis” (from the October 1946 show), who with repainted wigs, a different

78 Sabine Reß (or Röss, 1904–1985): German dancer, choreographer. Her troupe appeared regularly in the *Großvariétés* of Berlin during the 1930s. Between 1947 and 1951 she was the ballet master of the *Komische Oper Berlin*.

79 “The Majors did not agree with Western tastes.” MS2, 121.

80 The 24th session of the four allied *Kommandanturas* decided on several reforms in the city. This included which theater and musical venues were allowed to operate. Performers, who were at the moment in an occupied zone, were free to travel to Berlin but they were subject to the approval by the Allied *Kommandantura*. *Identitätskarten für Berlin, Neue Zeit*, 20 January 1946, no. 14, 1. See also MS2, 160.

81 Heinz Fuss (P. S. Marvally)’s letter to the *Magistrat*, 27 June 1947 LAB C Rep. 120 Nr. 1675.

82 Agenturen, *Das Programm* March 1947, no. 1736, 15.

83 Jazz was banned from radios since 1935. Verbot des Niggerjazz im Rundfunk, *Die Deutsche Artistik* 20 October 1935, no. 7, 2.

84 September 1946: The performances of Black people – regardless of their nationality – were banned on 28 March 1941. See Neger und Negermischlinge, *Artisten – Welt* 9 September 1941, no. 17, 19.

85 November 1946.

backdrop and new music appeared in the May 1947 show as a new act under the name of the “6 Glinseretis”.⁸⁶ The shows might not have been first class productions but they were likely to be the best to have been produced under such circumstances.

Marion Spadoni's idea of shows was based on Eduard Duisberg's *Scala*-style, the so-called *Variété – Revue*; a mixture of acts and spectacular revue scenes.⁸⁷

“My idea did not come through Charell, who rarely hired a variety act for his revue, but through the *Scala Berlin*. Eduard Duisberg, the last director of the *Scala* had spent years learning the craft of shows in my father's agency, and in 1934 successfully took over my idea of dressing the artists and presenting them in a suitable frame story.”⁸⁸

Marion Spadoni produced two touring revues in this style: in 1928 *Aus alter Zeit ins Tempo von heute* [From old times to the pace of today] and in 1933 *Eine Frau reist um die Welt* [A woman travels around the world]. The *Scala* presented its first *Etwas verrückt* [Something crazy] show in January 1934. Her claim might be legit, as Duisberg had earlier been closely involved with the Spadonis.⁸⁹

The *Palast-Ballett* first appeared in the playbills in March 1946⁹⁰ (scenery and costume designed by Seltenhammer)—creating the revue element of the *Variété-Revue*. Male roles were performed and danced by female dancers, because most young men were dead, handicapped, or prisoners of war.⁹¹ The casting for the house ballet received much publicity and had numerous applicants. Aside from the dreams of fame, such work was less demanding than being a *Trümmerfrau* [rubble woman]. The ballet master had the final word; the main criteria were dancing skills and the shape of the ladies' legs.⁹² Sixteen girls were selected for the troupe.⁹³ Their dance scenes were generally

86 MS2, 163.

87 Vom Variété zur Revue, *Artisten – Welt* 9 December 1942, no. 23, 4–5.

88 Marion Spadoni an Alexander Iljinski, Intendant des Friedrichstad-Palastes, 14 November 1994, MS “Presse” cf. MS2, 153. The press of the *Palast* sometimes also compared her shows to Charell's. See Wie einst bei Charell, *Telegraf* 5 March 1947.

89 “As Jules Marx, the manager of the *Scala Berlin* had to emigrate, asked Spadoni [...] on his advice to whom he could entrust the theater, thinking that every Nazi spat would soon pass. So Paul Spadoni recommended his employee Eduard Duisberg [...]” MS1, 286. Duisberg was already an NSDAP member at the time. For the discrimination and removal of the “non-aryan” manager Jules Marx see Riedel, *Und abends in die Scala!*, 123–72. Parallel to this, Marion Spadoni was contracted by the *Scala* as an act of the August 1933 show.

90 According to the memoir, the house ballet first appeared in the August jubilee show. MS2, 105.

91 See the photos: LAB C Rep. 727 Nr. 168: 833/13, 833/27. This drag element made the shows similar to the Japanese Takarazuka Revue's all female cast productions.

92 Wer ist geeignet?, *Telegraf* 27 February 1947.

93 *Palast* playbill, May 1947.

based on cultural or national themes ([La] *Nuit parisienne*, *Bella Cubana*, *Pusztá*, *Venezianische Vision*, *Frühling in Hellas*, *Im spanischen Hafen*, etc.).

Spadoni employed local choreographers in a rotation system⁹⁴ and often invited soloists of the *Berliner Staatsoper*.⁹⁵ This method and the use of characteristic national themes intended to avoid repetition and provide a certain novelty each month. From January 1946, another old *Scala* invention appeared in the *Palast* shows: the number girl (*Fräulein Nummer*).⁹⁶ Overall, the shows met with a huge demand: weekend shows became so popular that it was necessary to insert an afternoon performance on Saturday as well.⁹⁷

Beside the regular monthly shows, Marion Spadoni put on primarily text-based holiday specials for children.⁹⁸

This idea originated from the *Plaza* managed by the German state-operated leisure organization *Kraft durch Freude*: from September 1939, they produced shows based on fairy tales, serving educative and propaganda purposes, teaching “what every German child must know.”⁹⁹

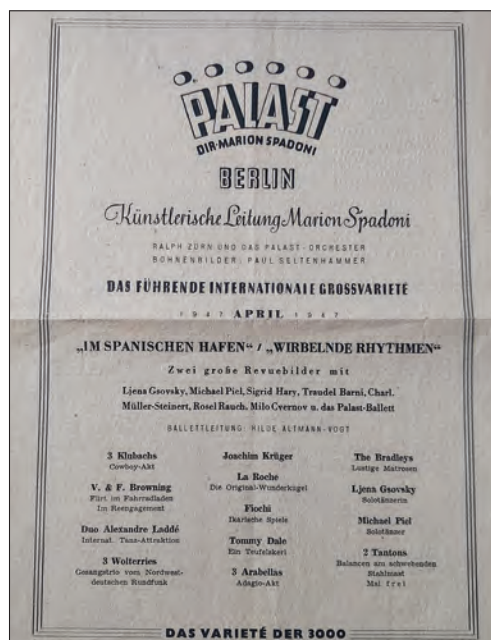


Figure 5 *Palast*-advertisement in *Das Programm*. 8 April 1947. Nr. 1736 p. 18. From the author's collection.

94 MS2, 122.

95 The very successful *Indianola* was choreographed by Frank Pal (František Karhánek), a dancer at the *Berliner Staatsoper*, who was very happy to make money in another venue. Hoggard, *Married to Dance*, 122.

96 A minor “role” in variety shows; a woman who enters between acts carrying a sign displaying the upcoming act (or its number) according to the program. Similar to ring girls in boxing, her entrée was frequently used to fill the gap between scene changes. Allegedly, the *Scala* was the first in Berlin to introduce this role instead of a mechanical display. Um den Varietéstil, *Artisten* – *Welt* 9 October 1941, no. 19, 3.

97 *Palast* playbill, April 1946. Sunday performances used to be the ones when people from the suburbs came to town to see the show. *Die erste Nummer*, *Die Deutsche Artistik* 28 November 1937, no. 48, 9–10.

98 She produced four fairy tale shows. In her memoirs she mentions that after the first, one child “urgently begged for new fairy tales. For many, these were the first fairy tales they have seen in their young lives.” MS2, 75.

99 *Plaza* playbill, September 1939.

Censorship

Licenses in the Soviet sector were issued on condition that performances had to be censored first, making sure they did not contain any Nazi propaganda or anti-Soviet sentiments. The censorship was focusing mainly on written text,¹⁰⁰ although this was not the main element of variety shows.

“On every first day of the month, when we changed the program, the show was harshly censored. In the early afternoon, the show ran before a Russian military commission, without an audience.¹⁰¹ [...] It was very difficult for the artists to perform in the large empty auditorium without the encouraging applause. [...] [Nevertheless,] this gave me the opportunity to go through the show and introduce changes and cuts.”¹⁰²

Censorship worked on two levels: first, the commission censored the plans of the show, and a day before the opening, the performance was given in front of the commission. This second round of control relied on personal opinions rather than clear guidelines. In regular practice, decorative work and stage sets are usually finalized long before the opening night. However, this method of control sometimes requested major last-minute changes. This meant that the entire creative team and their staff had to be present to redesign and execute the necessary changes in a few hours.¹⁰³ The stylized bar scene was censored in the finale of the August 1947 show (*Alt – Berlin*) because it was deemed “immoral and spoil the youth.”¹⁰⁴ Spadoni suspected that the real problem was that the names of liquors (not even the bottles!) were displayed, which was considered to be demoralizing for soldiers. During an earlier performance, a drunken Soviet soldier was sick on the officers sitting in front of him. After this incident, the *Kommandantura* did not allow the house to sell stalls (*Parkett*) tickets to soldiers. They were only allowed to buy tickets in the upper circles, so as to be less exposed to the audience in case there was an incident of this type. In addition, the bar scene was given a further criticism:

100 The first show had an acceptance ceremony a day before the opening night. The text—prose and song—had to be submitted beforehand and all of the artists had to be present, otherwise the performance was not allowed to happen. Bezirksamt Berlin-Mitte Amt für Volksbildung to the Palast, 10 August 1945. In photocopy: MS2, 21.

101 The performers’ contract included the condition of working for free. See Josef Flohr’s contract with the Palast, 12 November 1946. SMB Spadoni – Nachlass.

102 MS2, 48.

103 MS2, 111.

104 MS2, 115. See the bar scene’s original and final designs with and without the bar LAB C Rep. 727 Nr. 168: 874/4, 831/2.

“the Major continued: »In Russia many dancers—one woman. In Germany, many women—only one dancer.«¹⁰⁵ It was on me to explain to him why the boys were made out of papier-mâché in the next revue scene, in the same way as the saxophones.”

“At the end of the performance, [the Major] said: »Woman alone sit at table—immoral«. ¹⁰⁶ Now I understood [...] a woman does not go out alone. Four young men had to be found with tuxedos by the evening in a hurry.”¹⁰⁷

After this case, Spadoni decided to submit the sketches in advance to minimize the need for major changes at the last minute. For the next show, Seltenhammer designed an idyllic Russian rural scene, but it was rejected to control the representation of Russian culture. Anything that might be interpreted as challenging Soviet hegemony was banned.¹⁰⁸ The Russian officers’ general attitude towards the local audience was rather suspicious: since Berliners created shows (mostly) for Berliners, the *Kommandantura* worried about a possible conspiracy and their misjudgments led to more fear from the gathered locals.

“For a change, instead of the number girl, I had a clown display the next comic act: he held the number seven high into the air with his feet. He was not allowed to enter the stage anymore. I thought that the striped clown costume displayed some undesirable flag. But after a lot of inquiries, I learned that the reason for the annoyance I caused was that the number seven is a hidden swastika. [...] [On another occasion] one dancer wore only a small pair of trousers. There wasn’t any place on his shorts for big decorations. Following the lines [seams] there was the embroidery of a tinsel motif, a kind of butterfly. After gazing at the motif for a while through opera glasses, the officers’ faces darkened. On the shorts, they recognized Hitler’s emblem.”¹⁰⁹

“Despite their addiction to doubt, which was more like an obsession, the commission was often mistaken about the Berliners’ mood. Despite distrustful searching, forbidding, and censoring, in the evening they watched

105 The memoir quotes the Major’s lines in broken German: “In Russland viele Tänzer – eine Frau. In Deutschland viele Frauen, nur ein Tänzer.”

106 “Frau allein, Tisch sitzen, unmoralisch.”

107 MS2, 119.

108 Spadoni mentions an escape artist, whose act was to unleash himself from the bondage of audience members. After freeing himself from the knots of two Soviet soldiers, his act was banned. MS2, 164.

109 MS2, 49. See the “evil 7”: Paul Seltenhammer: *Faschingstanz* (Februar 1946) SMB Bequest of Marion Spadoni.

in horror the effect [the performance had] on the audience, which was very surprising for them [Soviet leaders]. Only a Berliner could understand these outbursts of emotions [...] The words, sounds, and images were so harmless that there was nothing to ban by any stretch of the imagination.”¹¹⁰

Spadoni mentions a case when the complete censoring process missed something—perhaps due to their cultural ignorance: on the opening night, the refrain of the song *Berlin kommt wieder* (Berlin will return) generated “frenetic rousing applause through the house”.¹¹¹ The song was banned immediately and Spadoni had to pay a fine of 5,000 RM.¹¹² This was the only occasion when such a measure was taken.

From Spadoni’s perspective, the *Palast* was a private institution of entertainment. Being the *de facto* rulers of that part of the city, the Soviet *Kommandantura*, on the other hand, considered the theater as theirs. Its symbolic expression was taking over the highlighted seats, then the theater itself – without payment.

“The big central box was constantly requisitioned by the Russian *Kommandantura* [...] it was the state box, which Hitler had installed [...]”¹¹³

“Once a year the theater was requisitioned by the Russian General staff for their big political assembly. [From] soldiers of the army [to] high officers like Zhukov were present.”¹¹⁴

Due to its size and having Soviet and Berliner leaders as regulars, the *Palast* soon became a representative venue of the city (Spadoni herself also emphasized this through several channels), which led to its political use and extortion. The Communist and Socialist Parties also demanded the *Palast* for their assemblies—and Spadoni had to pay for the lighting and other costs.¹¹⁵

“Around the end of 1946, came the surprising order to propagate the Communist Party. [...] For a couple of months, I specially commissioned the repertoire of the conferencier so that the tendentious sayings should be short and mild. Since the text was witty, the audience endured. But it was too harmless to the ears of the commanders. That’s why they imposed one of their men on me.”¹¹⁶

110 MS2, 130.

111 MS2, 130.

112 The sum was used in favor of the home comers. 5,000 RM Strafe zugunsten der Heimkehrer, *Berliner Zeitung* 5 November 1946, also *Neue Zeit* 6 November 1946.

113 MS2, 53.

114 MS2, 65.

115 MS2, 68. See also *Betriebe wollen Einheit, Nacht – Expreß* 16 March 1946, no. 64.

116 MS2, 145.

Introducing a conferencier was the easiest way to convey political propaganda in non-text based genres.¹¹⁷ The comedian assigned to Spadoni was Harry Heinz Neumann, whose explicit direct propaganda for the Communist Party led to a scandal on 3 October 1946: he was booed and had to leave the stage.¹¹⁸ Soviet soldiers were there to control the audience, which was not interested in political propaganda in a variety show.

Leading a representative house, Marion Spadoni was keen on charity: she gave money to various causes.¹¹⁹ During the extremely cold winter of 1946–1947 (*Hungerwinter*), she offered the *Palast* to the city as a public warming place (*Wärmehalle*) during the day, providing a slice of bread or some soup to its guests.¹²⁰ While several other theaters (*Neue Scala*, *Kabarett der Komiker*, etc.) had to close due to the lack of coal,¹²¹ this move secured the continuous operation of her venue. The jubilee show of the *Palast* on 18 August 1946 was under the patronage of the mayor of Berlin, and its income was offered for charity.¹²² By that time, Marion Spadoni became an acknowledged member of the local cultural life. She was invited to the discussions of the *Magistrat*¹²³ and the mayor's wife baked a cake for her birthday.¹²⁴ She was planning long-term: before her contract for the building expired, a second one was arranged from December 1946 to November 1957¹²⁵ and started lobbying through the *Artisten-Loge* to extend her license for performances as well until then.¹²⁶

The expropriation of the *Palast*

On 31 July 1947, major newspapers published that “as has now become known”, Marion Spadoni had been connected to the *Kraft durch Freude* organization, and the

117 The first conferencier of the *Palast* was Curt Ackermann (voice actor, the regular German voice of Cary Grant) in February 1946. His text was written by Robert T. Odeman – a gay actor and writer prosecuted by the Nazis.

118 Akrobat – nicht schön! *Telegraf* 12 October 1946, no. 158; Oktobersturm im “Palast” – *Variété*, *Spandauer Volksblatt* 5 October 1946, no. 102.

119 See the bills in SMB Fotoarchiv Marion Spadoni.

120 Marion Spadoni to the mayor of Berlin-Mitte, 16 January 1947. In photocopy: MS2, 86.

121 Die Kohlennot, *Das Programm* March 1947, no. 1733, 8.

122 The mayor's letter of thanks: Quittung, 21 August 1946 SMB Fotoarchiv Marion Spadoni.

123 Dr. Werner's invitations for the *Künstlerischen Beirat*, 21 October 1946; 1 March 1947, MS “Originale für beide Bücher”

124 MS2, 187.

125 2. Pacht – Vertrag zwischen Marion Spadoni und die Deutsches Nationaltheater AG, 12 December 1946, SMB Spadoni – Nachlass.

126 Alfred Puchs's (president of the *Internationale Artisten-Loge*) letter to Major Ausländer, 17 July 1947, LAB C Rep. 120 Nr. 1675.

Soviet *Kommandantura* withdrew her license from 1 September. (In papers based in the Soviet sector, the articles were almost word for word the same.)¹²⁷ Both Spadoni and Walter May, leader of the Cultural Office of the *Magistrat* learned this news from the papers. May was shocked because he had just extended her license two days earlier.¹²⁸ The *Magistrat*, being merely an administrative office, soon announced that her license was invalidated. She claimed that the basis of allegations against her was cleared already in 1945, before she took over the *Palast*.

“Worried about the newspaper article, I went to see the Russian political officer Major Ausländer to explain to him that these allegations were by no means based on truth. The Wehrmacht tours—yes, I did them. But this had been in every questionnaire I filled out. On top of that, I asked before I took the great responsibility for the bombed house and for all those who wanted to help me with the reconstruction whether this could interfere in any way with my work. Two years ago, Major Mossjakoff replied to me: This is by no means an obstacle. The Major’s reply suddenly came in impeccable laconic German: Well, then the accusations are just not true—and the Wehrmacht tours are interfering now.”¹²⁹

From 10 August, the Spadonis were not allowed to enter the *Palast* anymore. Her belongings (sets, costumes, office supplies, typewriters, music instruments, etc.) stayed in the *Palast*, and so did her father’s office. The question of these objects and her investments in the house remained open for months. The decision was made by the *Kommandantura*, but the German offices were to deal with the consequences. The *Magistrat* claimed it was unclear what belonged to the Spadonis and what to the house itself.¹³⁰ The same problem occurred regarding her non-tangible properties: the branding elements of the house (the name, logo, etc.) or the shows, which were in the making. The *Magistrat*—trying to distance itself from this affair—gave a rather cynical answer: they could not say anything due to their “ignorance of legal practices”.¹³¹ Marion Spadoni sued the owner of the building (*Deutsches National – Theater AG*), which was already taken over by the *Treuhandverwaltung*, the

127 “Palast-Varieté” wird Lizenz entzogen, *Berliner Zeitung* 1 August 1947, 6; Lizenzentzug im “Palast,” *Neue Zeit* 1 August 1947, 3; Die Lizenz von Marion Spadoni entzogen, *Neues Deutschland* 1 August 1947, 4. Marion Spadoni Lizenz entzogen, *Tagespost Potsdam* 2 Aug 1947, etc.

128 DEFA und Palast, *Der Tagesspiegel* 23 September 1947, no. 222.

129 MS2, 217.

130 Eine Ergänzung, *Der Tagesspiegel* 7 September 1947, no. 209.

131 Unklares Recht – Klare Tendenz, *Der Tagesspiegel* 4 September 1947, no. 206. The key articles published by *Der Tagesspiegel* were reprinted in the journal of the Hamburg-based Variety, Theater, Cabaret and Circus Manager’s Organisation. See *Variété*, October 1947, no. 10, 3.

organization responsible for expropriations.¹³² As for the accusations, they were soon proved false.¹³³ She was to be the subject of a denazification purge but “[that] trial never happened because there was nothing to be cleared.”¹³⁴

In February 1948, the parties settled.¹³⁵ They agreed that as long as Spadoni did not have a license, the contract between them was suspended and the *Deutsches National – Theater AG* had the right to lease the theater to someone else. She would be returned all the objects which she had brought in; all the objects which she had bought or paid for during her managing time; and all of the objects which belonged to her parents, and the rest stayed in the house. The new management of the house expressed a wish to rent a couple of items from Spadoni’s belongings. She had to agree not to claim her investments in the house. This unbalanced settlement depended on one condition: Marion Spadoni had to publish a statement in *Der Tagesspiegel* and in the *Telegraf* (based in the American and British sectors) about the settlement, highlighting that it was written “according to German legal principles.”¹³⁶ This settlement clearly favored the venue and the communist interest behind it; still, the return of at least some of the assets allowed her to continue the show.

Parallel to revoking Spadoni’s license, a new license was issued to her Russian translator, Nicola Lupo and Adolf Fischer from the newly established state film studio.¹³⁷ Lupo was an artist himself, who was touring with his quick-change act all over the continent, appearing three times in the *Wintergarten* (and booked at least

132 German Trusteeship of Sequestered and Confiscated Property in the Soviet Occupation Sector of the City of Berlin (*Deutsche Treuhandverwaltung des sequestrierten und beschlagnahmten Vermögens im Sowjetischen Besatzungssektor der Stadt Berlin*).

133 “We have a letter in which an unsolicited Berlin artist explains that the tense relationship between the Propaganda Ministry and Ms. Spadoni had finally led to the Ministry advising to every artist not to work with her. The letter also confirms that the Wehrmacht-commission of the *Kraft durch Freude* was maintained with a low level of cooperation in the framework of »work obligations« [*Arbeitsverpflichtungen*]”. Kreislauf der Erklärungen, *Der Tagesspiegel* 20 September 1947, no. 220. Another letter of proof denied her alleged activity in Riga: Eidesstattliche Erklärung von Karlis Peterson, 19 August 1947, MS2, 237.

134 MS2, 219. Paul Spadoni was also accused of being a member of the NSDAP in 1945, by another impresario Alexander Schenk, but the Chamber of Artists unanimously defended him. After the expropriation of the *Palast*, Schenk accused Marion Spadoni too but his claims were never taken seriously. It is mentioned about Schenk that he was engaged to Marion Spadoni a few years earlier. See Paul Spadoni’s denazification folder, LAB C Rep. 031-01-02, Nr. 1215a.

135 Vergleich, 4 February 1948, MS “Originale für beide Bücher.”

136 “Damit ist zwischen den Vertragspartnern eine deutsche Rechtsgrundsätzen entsprechende, abschliessende Vereinbarung getroffen worden.” Vergleich, 4 February 1948, SMB Spadoni – Nachlass.

137 He was the production leader of the DEFA; appointed only to oversee the transition from Spadoni to Lupo.

once by Spadoni in the 1930s).¹³⁸ After taking over the venue, he removed Marion Spadoni's name from the *Palast* logo, replacing it first with a stripe, later by his own name. Spadoni sued for the unauthorized use of her intangible property and won. As a result, the house was renamed and rebranded as the *Friedrichstadt-Palast* from November 1947.¹³⁹ Lupo was managing the *Friedrichstadt-Palast* until 1954;¹⁴⁰ credited as co-founder (*Mitbegründer*) on the fifth jubilee of the house in 1952.¹⁴¹

Marion Spadoni tried to get another theater in Berlin, but the Western powers did not want to involve themselves in this matter and thereby to further deepen the gap between them and the Soviets. After the expropriation, the American Theater and Music Department offered her to stage "The Shoe Gala", a charity show in the *Titania-Palast* (in the American sector).¹⁴² She received a supporting statement from the British authorities to move to Cologne and a provisional permit for her shows in the *Williamsbau* theater.¹⁴³ She kept using her trademark, *Palast-Berlin*, as if they were having only a guest performance in Cologne from April 1948.¹⁴⁴ During her stay, she attempted several times to obtain a managing position in a Berlin venue, but did not succeed.¹⁴⁵ Just like many other entertainment enterprises, she lost all her money in the currency reform in September.¹⁴⁶ In 1949, the Spadoni family moved to Rome. In 1994, Only Marion Spadoni returned to Berlin at the age of 89, and a year later she was given the title "Honorary member of the *Friedrichstadt-Palast*."

138 Stadtpark – Variété Kassel, *Die Deutsche Artistik* 6 November 1938, no. 45, 34.

139 Neuer Name für den Palast, *Der Kurier* 18 October 1947. The defendants were referring to the Soviet authority, as they kept it according to the "instruction and command" of the *Kommandantura*. Abschrift der Sw. Zentralkommandantur an die Lizenzträger des Friedrichstadt – Palast, 20 December 1947, MS "Originale für beide Bücher". The press of the Soviet sector diplomatically gave business differences (*"geschäftliche Differenzen"*) as a reason for renaming.

140 Since he did not have an agency behind him, he had to advertise for acts: "expecting offers from agencies and first-class artists," *Das Programm*, 8 September 1947, no. 1746, 2.

141 5 Jahre Friedrichstadt – Palast, *Das Programm*, 10 August 1952, no. 8, 17.

142 The event was organised by the American Women's Club of Berlin in order to buy 1300 pairs of shoes for elementary school students. Germans were only allowed as personal guests of the participants. Artists appeared only in the second half of the show. Program of The Shoe Gala, 27 November 1947, SMB Spadoni – Nachlass.

143 Provisional Permit for Marion Spadoni, 30 March 1948, SMB Spadoni – Nachlass.

144 Wilhelmsbau/Köln unter Gastspielführung, *Das Programm* February 1948, no. 1755, 7.

145 Wasserthal Hauptreferent an das Finanzamt für Liegenschaften, 14 January 1948, MS "Originale für beide Bücher." Der Oberbürgermeister von Gross – Berlin an Marion Spadoni, 21 April 1949, MS "Originale für beide Bücher." Letter from John Bitter (Office of Military Government, Berlin Sector, Theater and Music Section) 14 June 1948, SMB Spadoni – Nachlass.

146 Steuer und Lizenz im Lichte der Währungsreform, *Das Organ der Variété – Welt* 18 June 1948, no. 6, 3. Nach dem Tage X, *Variété* July 1948, 3.

Aftermath

There are several reasons for Marion Spadoni's removal, which had nothing to do with her shows, as critics on both sides always praised her productions.¹⁴⁷ However, the *Palast-Variété* was the only private theater in Berlin's Soviet zone. By the middle of 1947, the group of the future system's preferred ("trusted") persons had already crystallized: when Walter Felsentein moved into the former *Metropol-Theater*, his license was handed over in a ceremonial manner in front of the press.¹⁴⁸ According to Spadoni's memoirs, two months before the affair she was approached by the Soviets to cooperate with their secret service, but she refused.¹⁴⁹

Another issue was the change of priorities of the Soviet *Kommandantura* compared to two years earlier: by 1947, establishing their ideological control over dramatic and representative venues was important as they started moving towards separation.¹⁵⁰ The *Palast* building was involved in the plan to rearrange Berlin's theater scene (in the Soviet Occupation Zone). The *Volksbühne* theater organization was re-established in January 1947,¹⁵¹ and the newly licensed managers, Alfred Lindemann and Heinz W. Litte, were in need of a venue. The *Colosseum* cinema was chosen as a temporary home, since their theater on *Karl-Liebknecht-Platz* (today *Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz*) was expected to be completed only in 1949. The company of the *Metropol-Theater* resided in that cinema from 1945, but because the Soviet military administration prioritized the *Volksbühne*, the *Metropol* had to leave.¹⁵² By August 1947, this question evolved into a major exchange between companies and buildings,¹⁵³ and from November the *Metropol* (led by Anton Maria Rabenalt) was supposed to move into the *Palast*. The Western press questioned this decision, since Rabenalt did not go through the denazification process, and had been an active film director during the *NS-Zeit*—while a seemingly similar involvement was the reason to revoke Spadoni's license.¹⁵⁴ Rabenalt announced that the opening piece in the new venue would be *The Grand Duchess of Gerolstein* by Offenbach and promised to follow the traditions of Erik Charell.¹⁵⁵

147 Das ist Großstadtvariété, *Der Sozialdemokrat* 5 Juli 1947.

148 "Komische Oper" in Berlin, *Neues Deutschland*, 7 June 1947, 5.

149 MS2, 198–202.

150 Volksbühne oder Parteitheater?, *Der Tagesspiegel* 22 August 1947.

151 See Weigert, *Vier Lizenzen zur Umerziehung*.

152 Unklares Recht – Klare Tendenz, *Der Tagesspiegel*, 4 September 1947, no. 206.

153 The company of the *Metropol* moves out of the *Colosseum* cinema, which the *Volksbühne* shall take over; and the *Prater*, where the *Volksbühne* was already playing shall be taken over by Rudolf Platte. As the reporter joked: "It is easier to solve a crossword than the convoluted situation that the Light Muse got us into." Operetten wie Sand am Meer, *Berliner Zeitung*, 13 August 1947, 3.

154 Unklares Recht – Klare Tendenz, *Der Tagesspiegel* 4 September 1947, no. 206.

155 In den Fußtapfen Charells, *Berliner Zeitung* 23 August 1947, 3.

Changing the venue's profile was quite distressing for the artists since the number of their possible workplaces was highly limited.¹⁵⁶ Also, the *Colosseum* cinema was significantly smaller than the *Palast* (in fact, every other playable venue in the city was significantly smaller) and because of its low ceiling, it was not suitable for aerial acts, which appeared in almost every production. Spadoni (still hoping to get the *Palast* back) stated that moving would reduce the significance of the house to a local level.¹⁵⁷ Nevertheless, it was unlikely that next to the city's other five opera and operetta venues, the *Metropol* would attract 3,000 spectators each day.¹⁵⁸ To fill the gap of the *Palast*, "a new permanent house with at least two thousand places in the downtown" was under consideration.¹⁵⁹ Three days after this news, it was announced that the *Palast* did not have to move before the end of the year.¹⁶⁰ The building authorities inspected the theater, but they did not find it suitable for an operetta theater; only assemblies, variety shows and box matches were allowed. Their report noted that "under regular circumstances the reconstruction [as operetta theater] would take at least one and a half years."¹⁶¹ Only in May 1948, was it decided that the *Palast* would remain a variety,¹⁶² and a year later the house was reconstructed to serve further as a representative venue.¹⁶³

Although *Großvarietés* were very closely involved with Nazi organizations from the second half of the 1930s, neither their concept nor their shows were stigmatized after 1945.¹⁶⁴ Instead, the *Palast* as a completely new *Großvarieté* became a representative theater both professionally and politically just like its predecessors (due to the circumstances, on a local scale). Positioning the new venue as such meant continuity and commemoration of the destroyed city's former *Weltstadt* (cosmopolitan city) image, and its shows provided an escape from everyday life among the ruins. The continuity of this *Großvarieté* tradition was not guaranteed: Marion Spadoni's personal ambitions and efforts made that happen by rapidly reconstructing and operating the former *Großes Schauspielhaus*. Spadoni's establishment was not related at all, not even rhetorically, to the former defining creative talents residing in the house, neither Charell nor Reinhardt. Their managing period does not

156 Krise um "Palast" beendet, *Das Programm* 24 August 1947, Nr. 1745, 5.

157 Unklares Recht – Klare Tendenz, *Der Tagesspiegel* 4 September 1947, no. 206. The Soviets were also aware of the fact that Spadoni would have not moved the *Palast* anywhere else, unlike Lupo.

158 DEFA und *Palast*, *Der Tagesspiegel* 23 September 1947, no. 222.

159 "Palast" – Varieté zieht um, *Berliner Zeitung* 5 October 1947, 6.

160 "Palast" im Oktober, *Neue Zeit* 8 October 1947, 2.

161 "Palast" nicht Operettentheater, *Berliner Zeitung* 21 October 1947, 6.

162 Friedrichstadt – *Palast* bleibt Varieté, *Das Programm* 8 May 1948, 5.

163 Was sich Reinhardt nicht träumen ließ, *Die Welt* 25 August 1949.

164 Unlike in Budapest; See Molnár, *Vörös csillagok*.

belong to the history of the *Friedrichstadt-Palast*, but to the history of the former *Großes Schauspielhaus* building.¹⁶⁵ The *Palast's* history begins with Marion Spadoni in 1945, who possessed the necessary symbolic and financial capital (earning it also, but not exclusively during the *NS-Zeit*) to run such a house and created the *Palast-Variété* from scratch. Her ambitions met with a cultural need and support from the Soviet Military Administration. However, this support led to the politically motivated extortion of the venue and, as political priorities changed, to the removal of the Spadonis. The *Palast's* size and condition prevented any other use than a variety and kept its representative status in the GDR as well.

Today, through many changes in style and managements, the *Palast* is a memento of Berlin's rich and distinguished *Großvariété* culture and traditions. It is rather disappointing to see the current leadership ignoring its own history and the memory of its real founders in the name of PR considerations:¹⁶⁶ while Reinhardt and Charell, who have hardly anything to do with the *Friedrichstadt-Palast* are celebrated in front of the house as "founders", Marion Spadoni is resting in an unmarked mass grave in *Friedhof Steglitz*.

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Figure 6 Marion Spadoni's resting place in *Friedhof Steglitz*. Photo by the author.

165 The building was closed in 1980 and destroyed in 1985. The new building of the *Friedrichstadt-Palast* was opened in 1984 at *Friedrichstraße* 107.

166 Ironically, only the word *Palast* is emphasized nowadays of the brand name, as it is easier to pronounce for foreigners.

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Musical Theatre as an Object of Transnational Political Exchange

The Case of Isaac Dunayevsky's Operettas in Czechoslovakia*

Vojtěch Frank 

Charles University, Faculty of Arts, nám. Jana Palacha 1/2, 116 38 Prague 1, Czech Republic;
vojtech.frank@ff.cuni.cz

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Abstract. The paper focuses on the ways Czech-language theatres in Czechoslovakia were dealing with the obligatory presence of Soviet operetta titles in their repertoire, dating from about 1950 to 1989. The reform of Czech musical theatre began right after World War II. In search of the right, nationalized form of operetta, Czech theatre organs soon understood that the example must be drawn from the hegemonic Soviet culture. In the Soviet discourse, mainly Isaac Dunayevsky's operettas were considered masterpieces, and Czech theatre politicians were soon paying their attention to them. After some initial difficulties in obtaining material for the operettas, Dunayevsky's pieces entered Czech theatre and stayed on the repertoire to the beginning of the 1960s. After the Warsaw Pact Invasion in 1968, Soviet operettas re-entered the theatres' repertoire; however, their reception and staging circumstances were much more complicated. The paper focuses on the main tendencies in staging Dunayevsky's operettas in Czechoslovakia, the political and cultural background of productions, and the various ways of presenting it in Czech society and culture. The cultural and historical microprocesses analysed may then throw light on a wider range of historical and cultural phenomena, including cultural transfers and relations between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, the discrepancies between the official and unofficial discourse, as well as the role of popular musical theatre in a socialist society.

Keywords: operetta, socialist culture, cultural transfer, Soviet music, Czechoslovak history, Czechoslovak culture, Isaac Dunayevsky

When Soviet operetta came to Czechoslovakia in the early 1950s, it was Isaac Dunayevsky's name that was heard the most frequently in connection with it. The import of Soviet operettas was due to political changes starting in 1945. The ongoing

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nationalization of theatres strongly affected operetta houses that had been heavily dependent on private income from commercially successful productions. As early as October 1945, the Musical Theatre in Karlín, Prague, saw a new version of Rudolf Friml's *Král tuláků* [The Vagabond King] under the direction of the communist theatricalian and composer Emil František Burian. His idea to make operetta less commercial and more dramatic and political failed to succeed with the audience, however, critical response from the progressive side of the press was enthusiastic.¹ Another experiment followed in October 1945, with director Alfred Radok's *Veselá vdova?* [Merry Widow?] in the Theatre of the Fifth of May in Prague meeting similar critical and popular responses. The first Soviet operetta in a Czech theatre was Boris Alexandrov's *Svatba v Malinovce* [Wedding in Malinovka], staged in Tyl's Theatre in Prague in 1946. The piece and its performance were allegedly too dependent on Viennese models to mark a turning point in the history of operetta in Czechoslovakia.² Nevertheless, starting in the 1950s, it became one of the most frequently produced and reprised Soviet operettas in Czechoslovakia.

The ongoing nationalization of culture took a rapid leap forward after the Communist *coup d'état* in February 1948. Operetta was one of the main topics of discussion in the newly formed Theatre and Dramaturgical Council, a centralized organ of organizational and ideological control over theatres. In 1949 discussions, some members of the Council recommended the dissolution of old operetta troupes as a way to raise the quality of operetta productions; even though this plan had never been put into practise, the question of operetta did not vanish. The main task was to find a new repertoire. If the first years of the Communist transformation of theatre culture in Czechoslovakia marked a dogmatic rhetoric and simple solutions, the new shift in the cultural policy in 1952 rejected the former development and, in an attempt to make culture pay for itself, allowed a repertoire diversification of theatres.³ In the new programme for operetta theatres, Soviet as well as contemporary Czech plays, classic operettas and opera buffas had to be present. This strategy in fact reflected the state in the Soviet Union where operetta houses produced a variety of titles, including commercially successful neo-Viennese operettas. Soviet cultural politics after World War II largely promoted the birth of new Soviet operettas that would overcome Western cosmopolitan influences. And, indeed, many new pieces did arise, including some of the most successful operettas by Isaac Dunayevsky and the new rising star Yuri Milyutin. State politics agitated for an original repertoire; indeed, the new pieces did enjoy popular success (especially Dunayevsky's *Volny veter* [Free Wind]).⁴

1 Bár, *Od operety k muzikálu*, 30–31.

2 Šulc, *Česká operetní kronika*, 387.

3 Bár, *Od operety k muzikálu*, 54–55.

4 Tomoff, "Of Gypsy Barons and Power of Love," 37–38.

In search of Dunayevsky's Czechoslovak image

In the Czech context, the import of Soviet operettas was a significant matter of political changes of culture. Soviet pieces had to serve as an example for the new Czechoslovak operetta theatre. This high attention given to Soviet theatre import, in fact, resulted in difficulties in obtaining the desired repertoire material. The exclusive agency for dealing with international theatre contacts and acquisition was the Czechoslovak Theatre and Literary Agency (ČDLJ), a part of the Theatre and Dramaturgical Council, which functioned under the Ministry of Education and Enlightenment. However, there was also another organization that was managing specifically Czechoslovak–Soviet relations, including the theatre ones: the Union of Czechoslovak–Soviet Friendship (SČSP). Formally a voluntary organization established in 1948, it held a strong political influence since it was founded by the almighty ideological figure and Minister of Education and Enlightenment Zdeněk Nejedlý (1948–1953), and by 1949 it had already incorporated about one million members.⁵ According to sources, the duplicity of the theatre exchange agency was causing some troubles in obtaining the required Soviet materials. Since it was considered a subject of great importance, two organizations oversaw it. Ironically, this fact meant that the actual inflow of Soviet material was not as active and fast as desired. The ČDLJ decided to use its authority to put an end to the chaotic situation and, at the beginning of 1950, they asked the Union to step back from their agency activities in favour of the ČDLJ. The SČSP now had to only oversee ‘ideological matters.’⁶ As an effect of these negotiations, it was only around 1951 that Soviet operettas began to be performed regularly on all the main Czech operetta stages, both in the centre and on the peripheries. At the time, the name of Isaac Dunayevsky was not unknown to the Czech audience. His songs (especially from the movies *Vesolye rebyata* [Jolly Fellows], 1934, and *Deti kapitana Granta* [The Children of Captain Grant], 1936) were played during the 1930s by famous Czechoslovak jazz orchestras such as Melody Boys with the famous conductor and singer Rudolf Antonín Dvorský, whose music publishing house was also the first to release Czech editions of Dunayevsky's songs.⁷ Dvorský's manner of performing the songs was in the vein of contemporary Czechoslovak popular music, mixing light swing rhythms and arrangements with clear harmonic and melodic structures of urban folklore. Thus, Dunayevsky's music became associated with contemporary Czechoslovak jazz and popular music. After World War II, Dvorský became an unwanted figure for the new

5 Knapík, *Únor a kultura*, 166.

6 Divadelní ústav, MB 682. Zpráva o činnosti Čs. divadelního a literárního jednatelství v r. 1950: Plán divadelní sekce SČSP na rok 1950. [Report of activity of ČDLJ in 1950: Plan of the theatre section for 1950], 1951.

7 Müller, R. A. *Dvorský*, 30, 32.

political establishment.⁸ The paradigm of popular music quickly changed, and jazz was seen as a sign of the bourgeois West. Similarly, in the Soviet Union, the post-war discourse heavily depended on nationalist, anti-cosmopolitan, and antisemitic narratives. However, this period also saw the premiere of Dunayevsky's most famous, in musical terms highly cosmopolitan operetta *Volny veter* [Free Wind], 1947, and the import of his operettas to Czechoslovakia began four years later.

Volny veter, an operetta written by Dunayevsky in 1947, marked a significant event in Soviet operetta history. It became a certain point of reference for Soviet and foreign writers when referencing Soviet operetta as a genre. Upon its premiere, *Volny veter* was a big success with spectators, but the critical response was rather mixed. The operetta was nominated for the Stalin Prize for Opera but did not actually receive it: the reason was an extensive discussion in the prize committee whether it was appropriate to give such a high reward for an operetta that was influenced by 'Western' musical styles and "had nothing Russian about it".⁹ The operetta was "a huge success" (in the composer's words)¹⁰ with the audience, however, it took some ten years before it was appreciated by critics and experts.¹¹ Yet, Dunayevsky was overall an authoritative figure in Soviet popular music, composer of many appreciated patriotic songs, a People's Artist (1950), and winner of two Stalin prizes (1941, 1951). The choice of Czech theatre organizers to import Dunayevsky's operettas was perfectly reasonable in the given context.

Following official discussions about the fate of Czech operetta in the early 1950s, the Musical Theatre in Karlín, Prague, was chosen to set the exemplary position and function for other operetta houses in the country.¹² However, it was the Nusle Theatre Na Fidlovačce, Prague, where the first production of a Dunayevsky operetta took place. Premiered on the 1 March 1951, Prague's *Dobrý vítr do plachet* (a variant title of *Volný vítr*) was highly praised by critics as a "principal turnaround"¹³ in theatre policy.

Other theatres soon followed the Prague example, and during the next two years, *Volný vítr* opened in České Budějovice, Ostrava, Brno, Olomouc, Jihlava, and Opava.¹⁴ The popularity of the piece in Czechoslovakia continued towards the end

8 Müller, R. A. *Dvorský*, 50. For a more detailed and critical view on this phenomenon, see: Želinský, "The Music of the Dying Class."

9 Frolova-Walker, *Stalin's Music Prize*, 192.

10 Dunayevsky and Raynl, *Pochtovy roman*, 62–63.

11 See Alexeyev, *Istoriya russkoy sovetskoy muzyki*. vol. 4, 66.

12 Bár, *Od operety k muzikálu*, 55.

13 Feldstein, "Cílevědomým prováděním divadelní politiky k úspěchům našeho divadla."

14 The year 1952 also saw a peculiar production in Kladno of what was probably an operetta adaptation of Ivan Pyryev's 1949 film *Kubanskí kazáci* [Kuban Cossacks] with Dunayevsky's score, under the new title *Tomorrow*.

of the 1950s: theatres in Kladno and Pilsen presented it, and in 1960, Czechoslovak Radio recorded a radio production with a star cast from the Musical Theatre in Karlín under the baton of the famous Czech conductor and operetta composer Vlastislav Antonín Vipler. Since as the only official radio station in the country,¹⁵ Czechoslovak Radio had the widest coverage of households, it is highly likely that the radio version reached hundreds of thousands of listeners.

The initial perception, as complicated as it was in the Soviet Union, became even more complex in the Czechoslovak context. When the new production was about to open in České Budějovice in April 1951, some authoritative figures raised their voice against it, claiming that the play was “ideologically harmful, even [...] tabloid”.¹⁶ Reportedly, negotiations about the piece took almost a year, and *Volný vítr* would finally be staged in České Budějovice only the next February.¹⁷ The central organ (in this case the Theatre and Dramaturgical Council) repeatedly claimed that its role was not to directly dictate the dramaturgy of theatres, but rather to ideologically oversee the theatres’ own repertory initiatives. In the case of the České Budějovice *Volný vítr*, the Council had to intervene and prevent the cancellation efforts of the theatre organizers. It was, after all, the famous Soviet operetta that was at stake.

This case also shows how unclear the authoritative discourse could be in that period. Theatres were trying to meet several ideological demands from the centre, but it was not always clear what exactly they were. If an authoritative figure invited theatres to fight bourgeois and cosmopolitan tendencies in operettas, the theatres could easily find those tendencies even in Soviet pieces. After all, as shown above, there was a similar discussion surrounding *Volny veter* in the Soviet Union. The anti-cosmopolitan discourse also affected the material of Czech-language productions of *Volny veter*. Taking a closer look at the material of Czech productions, we can see several interventions that indicate cautious treatment, or even censorship.¹⁸

The syncopated song of Foma and Filipp had already been criticised in the Soviet journal *Sovetskoye iskusstvo* by the musicologist David Rabinovich saying:

“In [...] *Volny veter* there is also a song [...] with a refrain which has absolutely unintelligible lyrics [...] or similarly absurd (mildly speaking)

15 Knapík et al., *Průvodce kulturním děním*, 215–17

16 “[...] hra je ideologicky závadná, dokonce prý »bulvární«.” Feldstein, “Cílevědomým prováděním divadelní politiky k úspěchům našeho divadla,” 266.

17 Archiv Jihočeského divadla, *Volný vítr*. Online archive entry.

18 The material I analysed is the radio production, which is the only surviving audial material of the Czech version of the operetta. Along with the official copy of Czech libretto from the 1950s, that I had access to, it creates a vivid image of the adaptation.

couplets about uncle Pryg. The operetta contains [...] a lot of dirtiness [*poshlost*] [sic!] so typical of the old operetta!”¹⁹

In the Czechoslovak radio production, this problematic number was re-instrumented for voices and the accordion, and the syncopation was significantly reduced. This is not the only case of such treatment in Czech productions, with the *Chastushki Yashki* [Chastushkas of Yashka] in *Belaya akatsiya* [Bílý akát, White Acacia] re-instrumented in the exact same manner. The conductor of both Czech radio productions, Vlastislav Antonín Vipler, is unlikely to have been the one to come up with these changes since as a composer of operettas he was known for thorough-composed orchestral scores.

There was another problematic number. The quartet in the Seventh Heaven pub has two parts: a waltz and a foxtrot, and is sung by positive characters in the operetta. In the Czechoslovak recording, the first waltz part is left untouched; the number, however, ends right after this part. This must have been due to an intervention by the censors, since the foxtrot lyrics are absent in all available copies of the Czech-language libretto.

The shifts in Czechoslovak production are symptomatic. The production team was attempting to make the operetta more suitable to what Czechoslovak culture perceived as Soviet at this time. If the Soviet piece of art had to serve as a role-model, it had to do so by fulfilling as many criteria of socialist realism as possible. The hegemonic role of the Soviet Union, especially its dominant Russian culture, also played a role in the interventions. The accordion serves as a very clearly readable musical sign of Russianness, but the foxtrot does not, therefore it was cut out. The “publisher’s note to the director” placed on the title page of the agency copy of the libretto of *Volný vítr* says that the love story of Marko (Janko) and Stella must under no circumstances become more important in the production than the main revolutionary narrative.²⁰ Such cautious behaviour in the case of a Soviet operetta is even more paradoxical if we consider that operettas influenced by neo-Viennese jazz were still enjoying considerable popularity in the Soviet Union, while in the early period of Czechoslovak communism they were erased from the repertoire with great verve.

The story of Dunayevsky’s operettas in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s continued with another successful row of premieres. While his 1950 operetta *Syn klouna* [Son of the Clown] had to wait for its Czechoslovak premiere until the late 1970s, his 1955

19 “Но в том же Вольном ветре есть [...] песенка с совершенно нечленораздельным припевом [...] или столь же бессмысленные, чтобы не сказать хуже, куплеты про дядю Прыга. [...] в оперетте немало пошлости – родимые пятна старой оперетты!” Rabinovich, “Operetta–pamphlet.”

20 Divadelní ústav, B 1061. Dobrý vítr. Libretto copy, 1951.

swan song *Belaya akatsiya*²¹ arrived much earlier. In 1957, three theatres put on the Czech version, and during the first years of the next decade, three other operetta houses followed. A radio version was recorded already in 1957, and the Prague production of the same year was broadcast by Czechoslovak Television.

The operetta was praised by the composer Jiří Válek, who saw it as an example of a realistic operetta combining current topics and tasteful comedy.²² *Belaya akatsiya* was written in a different context than *Volny veter*. It is the story of a young girl from Odessa who chooses a career as a telegraphist over singing in theatre. The storyline contains two negative characters: the spoiled bourgeois girl Larissa, and the effeminate junk dealer Yasha, not very typical characters of a socialist-realist piece, whose musical characteristics lean toward salon music and jazz. In his review of the first Moscow production, jazz musician Leonid Utyosov expresses his warm feelings toward the imagination of the operetta of his own hometown of Odessa. The city was once a famous cosmopolitan centre on the shore of the Black Sea with a specific culture and a large Jewish minority, but in the later discourse of the 1930s and 1940s, Odessa was associated mainly with its naval forces and with important revolutionary and war battles. *Belaya akatsiya* shows a certain shift in discourse about the city. While the naval theme remains important, the story also shows Odessa as a cultural centre and, in a certain meta-narrative, as the home of an important operetta house. What Utyosov rightly depicted was the presence of mocked 'pre-revolution' Odessa characters (Larissa and Yasha), who were re-entering the discourse of imagining Odessa.²³ The 1957 Soviet film adaptation of the operetta uses explicit signs of Jewishness in connection with Yasha in a carnivalesque scene on a boat. The caricature-like portrait insinuates the presence of the cultural Other, reflecting the antisemitic moods in the post-war Soviet Union.²⁴

For the Czech audience, the image of Odessa was not as clearly culturally defined as for the Soviet audience. There are other signs that appear significant in Czech productions. The score used for the 1957 Czech recording contains several arrangements and changes. The most important intervention is that the jazzy Larissa song in the third act is cut out, while Yasha's *chastushkas* on the orchestra's boat is rearranged: the orchestral accompaniment is replaced by a solo accordion. There is also an added instrumental number for the accordion, strongly reminiscent of traditional Russian *protyazhnaya* (long) songs. The dramaturgical role of these arrangements is not clear; the changes appear to be culturally and politically significant. The

21 Dunayevsky died on the 25th of July, 1955, and left the operetta partly unfinished. The material was completed by the composer Kirill Molchanov.

22 Válek, "Opereta našich dnů."

23 Utyosov, "Belaya akaciya: vmesto recenzii."

24 Further reading: Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union*, 209–47.

Czech crew decided to eliminate the only jazz number in the operetta and to underline the Russianness of other numbers by using a typically Russian instrument, the accordion. Those interventions recall the similar treatment of *Volný vítr*, adjusting the original nature of Dunayevsky's operettas to the Czechoslovak image of Soviet culture, which is specifically national and free from Western influences.

Thus, some strategies of Czech theatrical agents during the first period of staging Soviet operettas in Czechoslovakia can be interpreted as censorship interventions, which were mainly affecting the musical material of the pieces. As Gaby Thomson-Wohlgemuth describes in her book on translated literature in the GDR, censors were looking for a certain scheme of motifs that were allowed in socialist realist works of art. Among the positive motifs, we find work ethos and active involvement, while negative elements, such as escapism, and sentimental or kitschy expressions, were not desirable in socialist pieces, but they were allowed in the passages describing non-socialist societies.²⁵ What Dunayevsky (and also Milyutin) often did was to use jazz music, which is associated with non-socialist culture, for describing positive characters. Therefore, in the early Czechoslovak communist dogmatic culture, those defective features had to be eliminated. The strategies changed over the following decades and, in many cases, adaptation rather than cancellation would be the tool that Czech theatres applied when dealing with Soviet pieces.

Infamous comebacks of Dunayevsky's operettas

The Stalinist period of Czech communism definitively ended at the beginning of the 1960s. During the following decade of relative liberalization, Czech musical theatres began to focus on the musical repertoire imported from Western countries. Soviet operetta went virtually absent on Czech stages, although in 1963, the largest Czech recording company Supraphon released Dunayevsky's profile album with predominantly film songs. In the second half of the decade, the boom of (Broadway) musicals in Czechoslovakia led to the establishment of the specific Czech type of musical closely connected to the period's popular music, and to the newly established cabaret and popular music oriented 'theatres of small forms'. The period of liberalization ended in August 1968, when the armies of the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia. This resulted in twenty years of so-called 'normalization', a period of stagnation and the restoration of strict Soviet hegemony.

Political consolidation strongly affected culture, and theatre repertoires were once again designed by centralized ideological schemata. According to the new state-recommended repertoire model, at least one Soviet play had to be premiered

25 Thomson-Wohlgemuth, *Translation Under State Control*, 125–26.

each season.²⁶ Theatres were in charge of their choices, but those had to be approved by numerous supervisory and censorship authorities. The role of the press also became rather formative, establishing a normative discourse that was reproduced as ideologically authoritative.

The presence of Soviet pieces was ensured also by establishing theatre festivals, such as the Festival of Soviet Drama, with the obligatory participation of professional theatres. The brochure of the 1974 Festival of Soviet Drama accentuates the spontaneity of theatres' participation, creating thereby an ideological discourse of voluntary consent with authoritative cultural measures.²⁷ This strategy of authoritative discourse stressing the spontaneity of subordinate cultural agents is one of the main features of the contemporary press.

The first Soviet operettas, and now also musicals, began to appear on stage three years after the Warsaw Pact invasion. The 1970s and 1980s were the period when Soviet operetta was even more of a political matter. The productions were often linked to official celebrations, and the critical discourse was, in comparison to the 1950s, far less analytical and more straightforwardly appreciative of the simple fact that the production was of Soviet origin.

The nature of transformations of theatres after 1968 can be shown through the example of the Musical Theatre in Karlín. In 1970, Jindřich Janda, a former singer and a member of the troupe, was appointed by 'superior organs' as its new director replacing Ludvík Žáček, who stood against the Soviet invasion.²⁸ A loyal cadre, Janda started to apply normalization politics in the theatre. In 1971, he was the first theatre director to sign a bilateral contract with a theatre in a befriended country: and he chose no less than the famous Moscow Theatre of Operetta.²⁹ The contract included an agreement on hosting troupes and exchanging pieces. During the first year of the contract, he invited the chief director of the Moscow Operetta, Georgy Ansimov, to produce a new Soviet musical in Prague, Andrei Eshpai's *Sedmé nebe* [Seventh Heaven]. This was a direct manifestation of the newly reestablished Soviet cultural hegemony in Czechoslovakia, even more so because its main narrative revolved around the heroism of Soviet soldiers.

The audience response was negative. During the productions of *Sedmé nebe* in 1971, the auditorium was often reported to be empty, and the theatre had to organize bus tours from the peripheries of the country to fill the theatre. The production was the first practical manifestation of the newly established transnational

26 Crhová, *Sklenka vína u Jarina*, 47–48.

27 Martínek, *Festival sovětské dramatické tvorby v ČSSR 1974*.

28 Janda, *Hudba-divadlo-život*, 121.

29 Bár, *Hudební divadlo Karlín*, 149.

agreement of cooperation and exchange between the Musical Theatre in Karlín and the Moscow Theatre of Operetta. When the Czech troupe toured Moscow with the same production, audience responses were enthusiastic.³⁰ This contrast in reception originated in the cultural and political differences of the two countries: simply put, while Soviets did not have any (or a very little) knowledge of their armies occupying Czechoslovakia, in Czechoslovakia, Soviet culture was primarily associated with the occupation.

In this atmosphere, Dunayevsky's operettas started to re-appear on stage. Krušnohorské Theatre in Teplice, in particular, was very active putting on *Volný vítr* in 1972 and the year after an unlikely choice of the 1937 sovkhos operetta *Zolotaya dolina* under the title of *Poklad Zlatého údolí* [Treasure of the Golden Valley]. In a 1974 review, a critic observed that a year after its first night, the auditorium was still full of people who were predominantly from the younger generations.³¹ It is hard to believe, but since the production was politically important (produced on the occasion of the 56th anniversary of the October Revolution, it was a Czech premiere of the operetta, and large staging forces were engaged in its production), the press was probably ordered to create as flattering an image as possible. The Teplice theatre returned to Dunayevsky in 1976, staging another rarity: his penultimate operetta *Syn klauna* (1950), while the same year, the Moravian Theatre Olomouc decided to put on the NEP operetta *Zhenikhi* under the title of *Ženichové* [Grooms]. However, if we move away from the interesting repertoire choices, these productions failed to resonate with a wider audience or in general discourse, which was perhaps partly due to the peripheric location of the theatres. In contrast, two productions in the centres, namely in Prague and Brno, in the 1970s and 1980s respectively, attracted much more attention.

In 1974, the Musical Theatre in Nusle, Prague saw a premiere of *Bílý akát*. The operetta returned to the theatre after 17 years in a whole new staging and with a new orchestral arrangement. It was produced on the occasion of the Festival of Soviet Drama and the Month of Czechoslovak–Soviet Friendship.³² At the time, the Nusle Theatre was a part of the largest Czech musical theatre in Karlín. Thus, the production was an important political act, focusing on many political narratives around it. An important narrative surrounding the new production was the one of ‘friendship’—Musical Theatre in Karlín and Nusle had hosted in Odessa three years earlier, and now they decided to put on a renowned Odessa operetta as an homage to the city. There was also a television version made and broadcast by Czechoslovak Television the following year.

30 Vašák and Macků, *Z operety do operety*, 146–47; Bár, *Od operety k muzikálu*, 228–29.

31 mV, “Svědectví solidnosti.”

32 *Bílý akát* [theatre programme].

The 1974 *Bílý akát* is specific in several aspects. From a staging point of view, it deviates from the monumental realist tradition of the 1950s. The stage design resembled the naïve style of the Czech children's book illustrator Adolf Born, thus moving away from realistic approaches. A major change was made regarding the orchestration of Dunayevsky's score. The conductor and arranger Vladimír Raška created a new sound using big band sounds and a period drum kit stylization. He also composed a new overture—a medley of melodies from the operetta. As a result, the score resembled mainstream pop singers and bands that filled Czechoslovak television prime time during normalization. The overall staging was in the vein of contemporary Czech TV productions. It was also free from many signs and allusions of Russianness, which characterized the first Czech production in the 1950s. Now, after 1968, the crew clearly attempted to make the operetta more accessible to Czech audiences.

These changes form part of the process of actualization, irony, alienation, and in general, abandonment of the realistic and documentary principles of the 1950s 'realistic' productions. It does not say as much about the production itself as about the context. The attitude towards Russian culture was cold after 1968, and it was not desirable to make direct associations or visual presentations of Russianness; it was more desirable to make the piece speak in the vernacular language. The Communist Party was consolidating its position through consensual acts of everyday life, consumption, etc.³³ The 'normal' in 'normalization' to some extent eliminated the ceremonial and revolutionary pathos of early Czechoslovak communism. As a part of this tendency, the operetta production comes out as timeless, as was the era itself: 'timelessness' was one of the main signs of normalization, an era of stagnation in which people tended to turn their attention from political participation to private matters.³⁴ However, there was still a political ritual behind operetta production: *Bílý akát* was staged on the occasion of the Festival of Soviet Theatre, thus fulfilling political demands, showing the loyalty of Czechoslovak culture to the Soviet hegemon.

Ten years later, something different happened in Brno. At the time, the theatre scene in Brno was famous for its relative independence from centralized cultural politics. Even when it came to Soviet operetta, the State Theatre in Brno would rarely stage such pieces after 1968. During the 1970s, they only produced three Soviet musicals, and only in 1985 did a Soviet operetta come to Brno under extraordinary circumstances.

Volný vítr was chosen to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Brno's liberation by the Red Army. The production with a new translation by the director Petr Pospíšil

33 Kolář and Pullmann, *Co byla normalizace*, 42–44.

34 Pehe, *Velvet Retro*, 88.

also marked the 85th anniversary of Dunayevsky's birth and the 30th anniversary of the composer's death. This very last production of an operetta by Dunayevsky in Czechia saw only 17 nights, but its importance lies elsewhere.

The operetta was chosen to represent the theatre on the occasion of large-scale anniversary celebrations with a visiting international political delegation.³⁵ The delegation included the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Milouš Jakeš, several other secretaries and high officials of the party, as well as numerous guests from friendly countries, including the widow of Marshal Malinovsky, Raisa Malinovskaya. During the intermission, the guests met the cast and crew.

According to a recent source, the new staging of *Volný vítr* represented an "adverse reminiscence of recent years,³⁶ especially with the production being openly declared as part of party propaganda and ideology."³⁷ According to reports, the production emphasized the dramatic nature of the text, putting its operetta characteristics aside.³⁸ This approach was supported by the monumental and static, yet multi-layered stage design by Jan Dušek. Although the operetta only had 17 repeats in Brno,³⁹ it was praised by the press: one reviewer stated that this production should provide an impulse for Brno theatre to put on Soviet pieces more regularly.⁴⁰ This appeal turned out to be unsuccessful, and the theatre would not produce any other Soviet musical or operetta after *Volný vítr*. The discrepancy between the symbolic political role of the production, which clearly led to its lack of popularity, and its stage qualities is apparent and leads to questions about the production team's motivations.

The analysis of the two productions in Prague and Brno show two alternative ways of staging Soviet operetta in Czechoslovakia after 1968: one is using slight irony and taking a distance from realism, which characterized the Czech popular production in the period, while the other takes a serious artistic stand that seeks for possible deeper meanings and actualizes the genre not dissimilarly to the 1950s productions. However, whichever route the theatres took, Soviet operettas did not stand a chance to receive the same audience response as during the first period of the import. Perhaps one of the main instruments engaged in correcting this situation was the press.

35 ČTK, "Brno oslavuje výročí osvobození."

36 Meaning the 1968 invasion and following political consolidation.

37 "*Volný vítr* [...] se stal pro mnohé neblahým připomenutím nedávných let, zvláště když se inscenace otevřeně proklamovala jako součást stranické propagandy a ideologie." Zachárník and Drlík, *Ve službách operety*, 101–2.

38 Pečman, "Dunajevského Volný vítr."

39 In comparison, the 1986 *Kiss Me Kate* production, although reportedly not very successful in Brno, had 47 repeats.

40 jf, "Návrat k Dunajevskému."

During the era of normalization, the role of the press was vital in shaping public thinking. After 1968, the press functioned in a very specific way regarding censorship and ideological control. There was no preliminary censorship, but personal shifts in leading positions after 1968 would ensure politically loyal press crews. The new reporters were obliged to undergo ideological training that prepared them for the desirable type of journalism.⁴¹ Across various areas, journalists were using a unified authoritative language that was heavily repeated on various structural levels. As Alexei Yurchak points out, this citational language was strengthening the authority of the official discourse.⁴²

However, with the end of the 1980s approaching, the stagnating ‘hypernormalized’ language of the official discourse with its empty automatisms opened the road for new readings. Theatre agents were allowed more space to manoeuvre within the established cultural-political discourse and to bring new interpretations into established rituals. In November 1986, the Musical Theatre in Karlín premiered *Cikáni jdou do nebe* [Gypsies Are Found near Heaven], a musical sensation based on the eponymous 1975 Soviet movie based on Maxim Gorky’s short story *Makar Chudra*. The musical has been staged regularly throughout the country ever since. In the programme of the original production, there is a brief note: “On the occasion of the Month of Czechoslovak–Soviet friendship”.⁴³ The production did meet the political demand for one Soviet piece per season, but the producers’ strategy was to present a Soviet production that did not explicitly represent its Soviet origin or relation to the so-called ‘Soviet reality’. This strategy proved successful but also symptomatic of the last years of the authoritative regime in Czechoslovakia. The social and cultural loosening was changing the face of Czechoslovak culture, but the regime was still affirming itself by rituals that were increasingly apart from their original content.⁴⁴

Echoes of Dunayevsky after the Velvet Revolution

The story of Dunayevsky’s operettas in Czechia did not end after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Although in the 1990s Czech society tried to dissociate itself from its previous communist past, in 1999, Czech Television decided to broadcast the normalization TV series *Třicet případů majora Zemana* [Thirty Cases of Major Zeman], a symbol of police propaganda in the previous regime. This resulted in an

41 Klimeš, *Doporučeno nezveřejňovat*, 80–83, 105–7.

42 Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 49–50.

43 “K měsíci československo-sovětského přátelství.” *Cikáni jdou do nebe*.

44 See for example: Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, 93–98.

explosive discussion and backlash mainly from the liberal press.⁴⁵ However, other TV shows and films from the normalization era, while not so directly ideological, had been re-screened even prior to this debate. One such case was a 1997 rescreening of the TV version of *Bílý akát*. The broadcast was a part of the *Ze zlatého fondu* [From the Golden Fund] series. The narrative of the “golden fund” is significant in the context of nostalgia that was emerging in post-socialist countries around this time. The notion of tradition was important in this approach, a tradition of well-crafted state funded TV series and films from the socialist era. These pieces of art, which necessarily offer an idealized image of the period, tended to overshadow the viewers’ own not so positive experiences of the past.⁴⁶ Perhaps in the case of *Bílý akát*, the viewers’ positive nostalgic approach was not so strong given that, even at the time when the film was released, Soviet operettas did not enjoy popular success, while many Czechoslovak TV shows and films did. Interestingly enough, despite all this, Czech Television decided to re-screen the operetta again in 2011, which provoked the music critic Boris Klepal to write an outraged entry on his blog about the dull nature of the piece and people’s incomprehensible yearning for normalization culture.⁴⁷ In his entry, he uses elitist narratives against people’s nostalgia, which he perceives in a strict political sense—an approach that is often used by contemporary Czech media discourse.

Probably the last time Dunayevsky’s operetta music was present in Czechia was in 2019, when the J. K. Tyl Theatre in Pilsen organized an operetta concert in collaboration with the M. Vodyanoy Academic Theatre of Musical Comedy in Odessa. The concert entitled *Bílý akát* contained three numbers from Dunayevsky’s last operetta of the same name, i.e., the *Song about Odessa*, the *Song of White Acacia*, and the *Song about the Sea* (originally *Tonya’s Song on the Boat*). It was organized in the cooperation of the two theatres and was held twice: in September 2019 in Odessa, and in October in Pilsen. Overall, it resembled cultural events of ‘friendship’ in the previous regime, representing the official image of fruitful transcultural exchange between befriended nations. Some of the Czech organizers ironically distanced themselves, referring to its anachronistic nature and cultural distance towards the Ukrainian guests’ allegedly more conservative and uncritical approach to their own Soviet past.

This case illustrates how differently post-socialist countries deal with their culture in the former communist era. While the official Czech narrative tends to keep a critical distance from the past, in Russia and in some other post-Soviet countries Dunayevsky’s operettas are still regularly performed. Whether the cultural transfer of the operettas to Czechoslovakia was bound to be a failure from

45 Pehe, *Velvet Retro*, 70–72.

46 Pehe, *Velvet Retro*, 73–75.

47 Klepal, “Isaak O. Dunajevskij: Bílý akát.”

the very beginning or distancing was due to the country's political and cultural development is not an easy question to answer. In any case, the presence of Soviet operettas was due to the political situation and showed the influence of Soviet culture's desired image in Czechoslovakia. Dunayevsky's operettas gained a certain symbolic status that was changing with time. First they served as an example of a fresh socialist musical comedy to be followed by Czech composers and playwrights, then in the 1970s and 1980s, it turned into a symbol of the old and the old-fashioned, while also attracting negative or mocking emotions from people affected by the Warsaw Pact invasion; finally, after the Velvet Revolution, it was just something obscure that invoked days long gone by, that could be approached with nostalgia, mockery, or disgust.

The story of Dunayevsky's operettas in Czechoslovakia also shows how important the official discourse was to shape the desired image of a certain cultural phenomenon in serving the official ideology. In addition, as we have seen, there were several mechanisms of treating the material of the operettas to shape the ideological message of the pieces. While in the 1950s, Dunayevsky's operettas were often arranged to fit the general definition of 'Russianness' (e.g., by eliminating jazz music from the scores) and to match certain dogmatic ideas of socialist realism, during the later period, theatre producers approached the operettas with irony, alienation, or using clever staging perhaps in order to make the productions more accessible for audiences (knowing about the more or less enforced political motivations behind it). The strategies described may show the transforming nature of cultural relations between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, reaching from worship and gratitude to fulfilling political tasks with an undercurrent of distance. It needs to be added that cultural relations manifested themselves in various ways in the different cultural, social, and political subcultures of Czechoslovak society.

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A Comparative History of Local Resilience?

On the ERC Consolidator Grant Project ‘Negotiating Post-Imperial Transitions: from Remobilization to Nation-State Consolidation (Nepostrans)’*

Gábor Egry 

Institute of Political History, H-1114 Budapest, Villányi út 11–13; egrygabor@phistory.hu

Abstract. The classic accounts of the history of the Habsburg Empire emphasized the importance of the conflict of nationalities and alleged that national oppression was the root cause of the Empire's dissolution in 1918. Based on new results, however, the Nepostrans ERC project has raised two important issues: caution against the idea of all-pervasive nationalisms, and the perspective that the disappearance of Austria–Hungary was not a clear and sharp break and that continuities were just as important as ruptures. Built on concepts like ‘phantom boundaries’ (*Phantomgrenzen*) and New Imperial History, the focus of the Nepostrans ERC project is a dual one. The first aspect centers on the transformation of imperial society, governance, and institutions that emerged due to the war effort, and the second on the transition out of the imperial framework as the key consequence of the latter, with special attention given to social and institutional consequences and the enabling of new state-building efforts at a local level. The fundamental issues addressed by the project—running from 2018 to 2023—are the various relations between statehood and society at the local and regional levels that are examined in nine cases: Tyrol, Hradec Králové (Königrätz), southern Banat, Znojmo (Znaim), Prekmurje (Muravidék), Rijeka (Fiume), Kolomiya (Kolomea), Baia Mare (Nagybánya), and the outskirts of Budapest. The cases were primarily selected to represent typical variations in the social and political configuration during investigated period, 1917–1930.

Keywords: Austria–Hungary, Habsburg Empire, state, society, transition, continuity, regional level, local level, *histoire croisée*

Genesis and inspirations

The history of the Habsburg Empire has become a hotbed of historiographic invention in the last two decades. The classic accounts of its history emphasized the importance of the conflict of nationalities and alleged national oppression as the root cause of the empire's dissolution in 1918. This older historiography often claimed that the idea of

* The full title of the Nepostrans project is ‘Negotiating post-imperial transitions: from remobilization to nation-state consolidation. A comparative study of local and regional transitions in post-Habsburg East and Central Europe, 1917–1930 (Nepostrans).’

empire was beyond salvation from the moment nationalism emerged as the dominant political idea on the territory of the Habsburg realm. This interpretation was no different regarding the classic historiography applied to dualist Hungary.¹ Most recent works—whose intellectual origins their authors usually connect with István Deák's *Beyond Nationalism*, a study of the Habsburg officer corps and its dynastic rather than national allegiance—have turned against this classical view: a historiographic response which has retrospectively been labelled 'revisionist'.² Inspired also by the sociology of ethnicity,³ and the decidedly anti-nationalist stances of these historians, the revisionist school's focus was not imperial or state-level nationalist politics, but the various interactions between nationalist politics and society at different spatial levels.

Based on these new results, these historians have raised two important issues, both informing the design of the Nepostrans ERC project. First, they have recommended caution in the application of the idea of all-pervasive nationalisms which corrupted the imperial state organism to such an extent that the Habsburg Empire collapsed under its own weight when faced with new political movements whose victory was "inevitable". Instead, historians of the revisionist school point out the prevalence and strength of non-national identifications—the ability of the state to maneuver around and use nation-centered politics for its own purposes (e.g., when crafting parliamentary majorities) and to use examples from other nation-states for projects of imperial reform and renewal.⁴ Second, the disappearance of Austria-Hungary was not as clear and sharp a break as has been portrayed in the historiographies of its successor states. Not only were most of the successor states multi-ethnic in character—just like the Habsburg Empire—but former imperial bureaucrats, their expertise, and practices were very often co-opted by nominally post-imperial governments. As a result, the post-imperial successor states carried over numerous imperial laws and bureaucratic-administrative traditions, and relied precisely on the politics of ethnic discrimination which classical historiography accused the Monarchy of.⁵ Thus, from the contemporary revisionist perspective in Habsburg Studies, continuities were just as important as ruptures.⁶

1 For a polemic expression of this classic view, see Evans, "Remembering the Fall of the Habsburg Monarchy." See also: Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations*.

2 Deák, *Beyond Nationalism*; Berecz, "Recepciótörténeti széljegyzet Tara Zahra tanulmányához."

3 Brubaker and Cooper, "Beyond 'Identity';" and Brubaker et al., *Nationalist Politics and Everyday Ethnicity*.

4 Deák, *Forging a Multinational State*; Becker, "The Administrative Apparatus under Reconstruction."

5 Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*; Gyáni, ed., *The Creation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy*; Varga, "The Two Faces of the Hungarian Empire."

6 A very recent example is: Reill, *The Fiume Crisis*. See also: Ordasi, "Dominique Reill's the Fiume Crisis"; Ordasi, "The Fiume Crisis."

Probably the most important change in perspective brought about by these revisionist works was scaling down the analysis and trying to discern social processes and phenomena through and with the help of localized case studies. These reinterpretations were not only confined to the works of American and British revisionist historians in Habsburg Studies. Concepts like ‘phantom boundaries’ (*Phantomgrenzen*) emerged in German-language historiography and were tested and proven by the examination of long-lasting continuities in social attitudes and institutions in successor states, putting both former Habsburg and non-Habsburg regions into focus and comparison. At a more local level, the development of inter-ethnic Jewish–Czech–German relations in Prague was analyzed by mobilizing a huge wealth of source material on one (albeit large) urban municipality, revealing everyday patterns of interactions which were embedded in certain institutional milieux at a sub-state spatial level.⁷

Another important recent historiographic development that helped frame the work of Nepostrans was New Imperial History. Its proponents⁸ contend that the usual differentiation between modern maritime and colonial empires on the one hand and continental empires on the other that grew out of medieval and early modern dynastic conglomerates is misleading. Continental composite empires modernized relatively quickly, learned from the practice of modern states, and the core of their imperial practices was not dissimilar to that of nineteenth-century maritime colonial powers. Most importantly they define empire—again relying on (historical) sociology—through three key characteristics of imperial rule, equally important for both types. First, asymmetric rule, i.e., the imperial center ruled over peripheries or provinces not through uniform institutions and laws but rather through legal-institutional pluralism and differentiation. Second, imperial rule was often mediated through and shared by local elites who were co-opted by the center. Finally, the spaces of an empire were connected and integrated not only through infrastructure, but also through imperial personalities who accumulated specific knowledge that was applied to the goals of an empire and who were equally capable of acting as the representatives of that empire in different provinces.⁹

Built on these insights, and capitalizing on the conceptual tools offered by these historiographic trends, the focus of Nepostrans is a dual one. The first aspect centers

7 Hirschhausen et al., eds., *Phantomgrenzen*; Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen*.

8 Hirschhausen, “New Imperial History?,” Leonhard and von Hirschhausen, *Empires und Nationalstaaten*; Leonhard and von Hirschhausen, eds., *Comparing Empires*; Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*.

9 See von Hirschhausen, “New Imperial History?” From this perspective, dualist Hungary was closer to an empire than is usually assumed. See: Egry, “Regional Elites, Nationalist Politics, Local Accommodations.”

on the transformation of imperial society, governance, and institutions induced by the war effort, and, second, on the transition out of the imperial framework as the key consequence of the latter, with special attention given to social and institutional consequences and the enabling of new state-building efforts at a local level. We hypothesize that the ways in which the imperial model of rule conditioned and integrated local societies—together with the quite significant social changes experienced during the war—defined how local societies dealt with the challenges posed by the reconfiguration of the state, resulting in local societies' explicit embrace of nation-statehood and its push for a more uniform and more homogenized state and society. Importantly, this is an assumption that may be applied to the pre-1918 Kingdom of Hungary too, allowing for easier integration of the Cisleithanian and Transleithanian halves of late imperial Austria–Hungary (1867–1918) into the research frame, thus also offering examples that may be contrasted with the successor states which emerged out of the entire territory of the Empire.

Thus, the fundamental issues the project examines are the various relations between statehood and society at the local and regional levels, the ways these were negotiated, and how these interactions affected both social and political transformations—understood as longer-term and long-lasting changes—and the process of transition on these territories; the latter perceived as a set of intended changes that were supposed to shift state, society, and economy from one structural arrangement to a markedly different one (in this case from empire to nation-state, whether republican or monarchic or otherwise).

Design and structure

During the past four years (2018–2022, plus a ten-month extension due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lasting until the end of 2023), a nine-member team has been working on nine different localities and regions that experienced the transition out of Austria–Hungary and into its various respective successor states. The regions were primarily selected to represent typical variations in social and political configurations during this period (1917–1930), although also to avoid re-doing work on localities or regions that has already been treated generously by international historiography. (See the profile of the team members on the project website www.1918local.eu and www.nepostrans.eu.) Of the nine case studies, Tyrol is the largest compact region with a rural and religious population and politics, and is comparatively easy to contrast with the Italian-annexed southern part of this former Cisleithanian crownland (*Kronland*). The area around and including Hradec Králové (Königrätz) in eastern Bohemia was multi-ethnic and also the site of a process of industrialization which encompassed several social groups and integrated the area into the European economy. Similarly,

southern Banat was a prosperous industrial region where, while not as localized as in Hradec Králové (Königrätz), transnational capital dominated the economy and the former military border created a specific social group with strong dynastic identification. The area around Znojmo (Znaim) on the border between Lower Austria and Moravia was of strategic importance for rail transportation, featuring strong agriculture and important urban centers where twin processes of embourgeoisement and proletarianization were accompanied by region-centered attempts at ethnic and class self-organization. In contrast to Znojmo (Znaim), Prekmurje (Muravidék) was an agricultural backwater of Hungary. While the post-1918 period saw the disappearance of large landowning elites in Prekmurje (Muravidék), the region conversely became an object of competition for rival national political projects within Yugoslavia. Further south, the littoral straddling Rijeka (Fiume), from northeastern Istria to northwestern Dalmatia, offers an example of local societies that transitioned under the manifest influence of military state-building efforts and, simultaneously, a second fundamental political change in the annexation of the western littoral by the Kingdom of Italy and the establishment of fascism in the early 1920s. The easternmost regions of the former crownland of Galicia, Kolomiya (Kolomea), represent another case of a rural society in transition; one which found itself on a new international border marked by military conflict and occupation, though marked by an exceptional Jewish presence whose characteristics differentiated the region from otherwise similar ones. The city of Baia Mare (Nagybánya) (and, to a certain extent, the Romanian parts of the erstwhile Maramureş [Máramaros] County) represents, on the one hand, a case of an industrializing city with strong traditions of a privileged municipal status and, on the other, an area where society was dominated by a multilingual and multireligious nobility tied by kinship relations who nurtured this tradition actively. Finally, the outskirts of Budapest serve as an example of a suburban and submetropolitan region which was connected with the metropole (Budapest) but was still a periphery in relation to this center with several differentiating political, social, and institutional consequences.

These cases do not exhaust all of the types of regions that composed the Habsburg Empire and its successor states. However, when combined with literature on other cases, the regions at the center of Nepostrans's work offer the first possibility for new research into imperial transformation and post-imperial transition at the local level. The work of the project has thus enabled meaningful comparisons among cases that are similar in scale but different enough regarding their status and position before and after 1918. They also represent cases from different varieties of nation-states in terms of politics, ideology, and economic conditions. In order to organize our research, then, the analyses work through a sequence of four key themes. For each key theme, we devise a conceptual framework with the help of

secondary literature, then we look at examples of preexisting analyses, and then present our own findings annually at a public conference and then among ourselves at an intensive team workshop.

The first key theme of Nepostrans was ‘the state’—more specifically, how the state apparatus underwent changes during the war as a result of mobilization efforts (1914–1918) and afterwards as a consequence of national state-building efforts (1918–1930). Given our focus on local and regional scales of analysis, our primary concern is how these processes affected local societies, how they reacted, and how these processes were co-constituted by the agency of local societies. By using analytic heuristics like ‘adaptation’, ‘adjustment’, and ‘informality’, our research has become sensitive to different means of preserving continuity with the imperial period across our cases, often as a means of maintaining stability in a rapidly changing (even deteriorating) local situation. Out of this, we have been able to make convincing claims regarding the appearance of “uneven statehood” as a feature of the process of post-imperial state succession; a phenomenon which seems to have emerged across all cases, although driven by different factors in different directions relative to the local specificities of each case.¹⁰ The second key theme was ‘the elites and their challengers’; that is, individuals and groups who had access to different types of capital which enabled them to control or contest key institutions and decisions at the local level. By exploring administrative elites and political personnel active below the national or state level, our research in this work package revealed the significance of, for example, local politicians who did not necessarily have clout in the center but could shape local and regional policies, as well as the paradoxical role of business elites in the centers who managed to salvage their business empires on the periphery. Thus, in this case, several scales of analysis and their connections became visible simultaneously, even showing the intermediary connections to other informal economic empires (e.g., investments by German and French capital) fixed on Southeastern Europe. The third theme was ‘ethnicity’. In this package, we explored how the transition was defined by the idea of the nation-state, and our work confirmed the conclusions of the literature on national indifference and everyday ethnicity.¹¹ For our fourth and final work package, we are currently working on ‘local discourses of transition’, looking at the ways in which local actors discursively reflected on the transition itself and situated their small worlds within larger ones.

The final analysis to come is imagined to be more than just connecting these sequential results. A comparison of these cases as entangled histories¹² is planned.

10 See the thematic cluster “Experimenting with the State? Post-Habsburg State-building and Local / Regional Societies,” *Südost-Forschungen* 79 (2020): 1–149.

11 See: e.g., van Ginderachter and Fox, eds., *National Indifference and the History of Nationalism*.

12 Werner and Zimmermann, “Beyond Comparison.”

The challenge is the conceptualization of the crossing itself, which is imagined as the basic unit of analysis in entangled or ‘crossed’ histories. In contrast to the most frequent use of this concept, it is not just another variety of transfers or separate histories connected by the fact that they happened at the same time and in the same space. Instead, entangled history focuses on what it labels as a crossing—i.e., the interaction or interference *itself*, whether constituted by the entanglement or crossing of historical or social processes, events, institutions, or persons at a specific moment and in a given space. The result of which is, however, not some combination of the elements of the crossing, but rather the changes *themselves* which continue to characterize the separate elements henceforth.

Expected outcomes – methodological innovation

As such, one of our expected results is also of methodological nature: a first large-scale testing of the concept and method of entangled history on the territory of the former Habsburg Empire. This result is also important, as it shows how looking at historical processes and devising a typology on the basis of entangled history or *histoire croisée* could differ from what a more traditional analysis focused on social history would yield. This is not simply to say that *only* the changes occurring at a given moment or those which induced the unfolding of certain social developments over a longer period may be included into the analytic frame. Rather, the analysis is about the crossings themselves; the way that their constitutive historical phenomena interacted in this short but intense period; and how these different interactions contributed to the outcomes we see later in the interwar period, during World War II, and after.

Thus, we expect to show (or, after the publication of *The Fiume Crisis*, rather confirm) the utility of looking at moments of rupture not only as vantage points for looking forward, but also as peepholes into the past. Likewise, the continuities revealed by the contrast of focusing on ruptures often make clear the practices, informal institutions, or habits that are—often deliberately—obscured by the use of ‘official’ discourses that legitimized the contemporaneous ideological representations of states and societies. To put it another way, answers to questions about how local societies worked in these moments of intense transformation, or immediately afterward in periods of transition, could also reveal how these societies operated in earlier, more stable periods.

A systematic cataloguing and typology of local transitions is also of importance for the historiography of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe more broadly. It offers us a chance to rethink how we can craft a narrative of macro-regional history that is neither a combination of national ones placed next to one another, nor

one that is based only on *longue durée* social processes that were similar enough throughout the region to provide a unifying framework and a single homogenizing narrative. Instead, local stories of imperial continuity and resilience may shift the focus to lower-level units of analysis and present historians with material that provides a foundation for a narrative that combines the stories of these units in a way that highlights the internal heterogeneity of nation-states as well as cross-border commonalities and shared histories, attributes agency to the peripheries and their people—including the constitutive role of the middle class during the late imperial period¹³—, posits informality as a structural stabilizer of societies and states, and conveys historical experiences that explain how states which failed to realize their envisioned ideal of statehood survived and ones that got close to it collapsed.

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Byzantinische Goldschmiedearbeiten im Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum. Edited by Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm (in collaboration with Birgith Bühler, Maiken Fecht, Sonngard Hartmann, Ramona Müller, Andrea M. Pülz, Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm, Roland Schwab, and Péter Somogyi).

Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum – Kataloge 42. Mainz: Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, 2020. 344 pp.

Adrienn Blay 

Institute of Archaeological Sciences, Eötvös Loránd University, H-1088 Budapest, Múzeum körút 4/B;
blayadri@gmail.com

The work of *Byzantinische Goldschmiedearbeiten im Römisch-Germanischen Zentralmuseum*, edited by Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm, was published in Mainz by the museum's own publishing company. This catalogue is the forty-second volume in the series. In its field, this catalogue is gap-filling because previously unknown objects from the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum (RGZM) are discussed, which are especially interesting for researchers of Byzantine archaeology¹ and for historians as well. In the catalogue first are presented original objects which have been kept since 1928/29 in the RGZM. Altogether 49 objects—among them, two treasure finds unfortunately without any context, a find ensemble in three parts, and 36 individual pieces—are listed. The catalogue includes a further two copies and a reconstruction. The majority of the objects are from the core regions of the Byzantine Empire, although in some cases they are from neighboring areas. The finds are from the fifth until the fourteenth–fifteenth century, spanning a wide time horizon.

Unfortunately, the listed objects came from the art market, so they are without any context—actually, they are stray finds.² At the same time, the multi-aspect analysis

1 Some synthesis works, catalogues, and typological works in the last 10–15 years about Byzantine small finds and their distribution: Drauschke, *Zwischen Handel und Geschenk*; Bosselmann-Ruickbie, *Byzantinischer Schmuck*; Böhlendorf-Arslan and Ricci, *Byzantine Small Finds*; Adams and Entwistle, *Intelligible beauty*; Daim et al., *Spätantike und Byzanz*; Linscheid, *Die frühbyzantinischen Textilien*; Presser, “Schmuck,” 46–47.

2 Most of the objects from Byzantine are unfortunately stray finds, because this time horizon

in the catalogue enriches our knowledge about the objects, and can be the basis for scientific work in the future.³ It is furthermore important that the authors try to put the objects in a historical frame and context, enlivening the related historical events.

Welcome is the publication of this catalogue from the perspective that the texts about the finds have waited more than 10 years to be published, and it was thanks to Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm that this was accomplished. Schulze-Dörrlamm is not just the editor of the volume, but she accurately analyses the objects in time and based on their use.

The structure of the volume differs from a bare listing of objects. After a short presentation of the collection of the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum (*Zur Sammlung Byzantinischer Goldschmiedearbeiten des RGZM*) there is an introduction by Andrea M. Pülz about Byzantine goldsmithery. Then there is an analysis of the listed objects by Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm and Andrea M. Pülz based on the dating and function of the artefacts (*Alter und Funktion der Goldschmiedearbeiten*). The finds are divided traditionally by sex—first, the jewelry of the women is presented: headdresses, neck ornaments, ornaments for arms and fingers and other dressing accessories. After this are presented the jewelry and insignia of men: torques, finger-rings, and separately the weapons and elements of military dress. A separate chapter deals with roman glass re-used by the Byzantines.

In the next chapter there is a numismatic presentation and analysis of Treasure No. 2. by Péter Somogyi, who is an expert on Byzantine coins. As a matter of interest, Treasure No. 2. contains a group of coins from the seventh century, which are well separated from the other coins of I. Iustinian based on the scratch marks on them. These marks are in fact helpful in the identification of the exact location of the treasure deposit.

Then there is an evaluation of two treasures written by Mechthild Schulze-Dörrlamm, whereby she tries to put the treasure in a wider context. Treasure No. 1. probably contains the products of a Syrian goldsmith, and the client may have been a Syrian noblewoman who hid her jewelry in around 636 AD, during the period of the Arab conquest. On the other hand, the pieces that make up Treasure No. 2. could have been the jewelry of a well-to-do member of a family, but not one from the imperial circle. According to Schulze-Dörrlamm, the necklace is probably a gift from the emperor in the sixth century; it may have been kept for a long time and was deposited/hidden only in the seventh century among the other objects.

was not—and nowadays is still considered barely—interesting in relation to excavations in the territory of the former Byzantine Empire. Wołoszyn, “Byzantine archaeology” 259–92; Crow, “Archaeology,” 47–58; Bollók, “The Archaeology of the Byzantine State,” 275–76.

3 In the case of half-crescent earrings, the analysis of the manufacturing technique of the earrings in RGZM is a good basis for the comparison of earrings in a new evaluating study. Heinrich-Tamáská et al., “Byzantinische halbmondförmige Ohrringe,” 135–229.

Details of the manufacturing technique of the objects and their classification based on observations (creation of base form, structure, filling material, inlays, non-cutting and cutting ornamental procedures, manufacturing of rounded wire, filigree, granulation, manufacturing of necklace clasps, fastening of fittings, and gold alloys) are included in the next chapter, which is written by two experienced goldsmiths and restorers, Birgit Bühler and—since deceased—Maiken Fecht. The biggest advantage of the volume is that this chapter contains 164 colored illustrations. There are artistic photos of some of the details on objects, and in some cases there are microscopic records as well which are presented as evidence in the analysis of manufacturing techniques, but they are spectacles in themselves.

The catalogue is a good starting point for researchers of Byzantine small finds in special regard to manufacturing techniques, but the long bibliography and exact data about the listed artefacts are also significant.

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The Essential Marosi: a Review of His Collected Essays

“Fénylik a mű nemesen”. Válogatott írások a középkori művészet történetéről [“Bright is the Noble Work”. Selected Writings on the History of Medieval Art]. Vols I–III. By Ernő Marosi. Budapest: Martin Opitz Kiadó, 2020. 1408 pp.

Béla Zsolt Szakács 

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Mikszáth Kálmán tér 1., Budapest, H-1088;
szakacs.bela.zsolt@btk.ppke.hu

The publication to be presented here is highly significant in itself; nevertheless, it is relevant in another sense: the author, Ernő Marosi, aged 81, died a few months ago. Professor Marosi (18.04.1940 – 09.07.2021) was unquestionably the most significant Hungarian art historian of the last half century, and one of the most prominent medievalists. He graduated from Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest in art history and literature and started to teach there at the Department of Art History in 1963. A professor from 1991, he educated generations of art historians—practically almost all the present-day Hungarian art historians are his former students. He was invited in 1974 to the Institute for Art History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, where he acted first as vice-head and later director (1991–2000). In 1993 he was elected corresponding member of the Academy, and in 2001 he received full membership. He acted as vice president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences between 2002 and 2008. He also participated in the foundation and work of the Medieval Studies Department of Central European University with his advice, lectures, and seminars. He gave the last public lecture at the department on the Budapest campus of CEU just before teaching went online in early 2020 (this paper was published in HSCE 1, no. 1, pp. 3–27). But beside all his positions and prizes, he was an excellent scholar. As a medievalist, he switched easily between philology and philosophy, but primarily he was an art historian. The present publication is a summary of his oeuvre.

When Professor Marosi was 70, he was honored by a *Festschrift*.¹ Thus, the approaching anniversary of his eightieth birthday needed to be celebrated in a

1 *Bonum ut Pulchrum. Essays in Art History in Honour of Ernő Marosi on His Seventieth Birthday*. Edited by Livia Varga, László Beke, Anna Jávör, Pál Lövei, and Imre Takács. Budapest: MTA Művészettörténeti Kutató Intézete 2010.

different way. The idea came from Imre Takács, one of Marosi's closest disciples. He suggested collecting Marosi's earlier, often not easily available publications in a single volume. Marosi received the idea enthusiastically—he himself selected the papers, worked on the translations, and added new remarks. Imre Takács, a major promotor of the edition, wrote a long epilogue for the book, which is a useful overview of the career and oeuvre of the most influential art historian of our age.

The result is astonishing. The publication, printed by the Martin Opitz Publishing House (which has been one of the most active publishers in the field of medieval studies in Hungary during the last decade), is enormous in many regards. It consists of three heavy volumes (sold in a large box), altogether 1408 pages with 1359 black-and-white photographs and 54 figures. The bibliography of the publications of Marosi between 1961 and 2019 fills 37 pages. To read and understand the entire oeuvre of Ernő Marosi one would need an entire lifetime; to facilitate this task, we here receive the essential part. From his colossal output, 88 studies have been selected. Among these, 22 have never been published in Hungarian, thus the author translated them himself for the purpose of the present edition. This might be disappointing for those who do not read Hungarian, but the good news is that a quarter of his most important studies exist in international languages (the translation of the rest would definitely be an urgent task). Marosi not only selected and edited his own essays, often originally published decades ago, but added fresh remarks to them. These are occasionally additions or corrections but also self-reflections in an essayistic manner.

The enigmatic title "*Fénylik a mű nemesen*" is a quotation from a poem that once decorated the door of the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis, commemorated by its author, Abbot Suger, in his autobiographical work *De administrando*. I have used the classical translation of this passage by Erwin Panofsky, which reads: "Bright is the noble work."² Marosi borrowed this quotation for the title of an essay he wrote about the light and brightness of medieval churches in 2015. The Hungarian translation is his own, coming from his ground-breaking source collection on medieval art.³

One of the three volumes contains the illustration material. This consists of black-and-white photographs, usually high quality, reflecting the characteristic aesthetics of the 1960s–1970s, a classical period for black-and-white movies and the years of the early career of Ernő Marosi. He preferred black-and-white photography for documentation purposes, partially because it is more resistant to deterioration. Nevertheless, the title pages of each chapter are accompanied by beautiful color pictures.

2 Panofsky, *Abbot Suger*, 47.

3 Marosi, *A középkori művészet világa*. Extended version: Marosi, *A középkori művészet történetének olvasókönyve*.

The other two volumes contain the textual part. The first volume includes studies dealing with more general subjects and with Romanesque and Early Gothic art, while the papers in the second volume discuss the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, historiography, and problems of monument protection. The essays are grouped in twelve chapters; thus, the whole collection is comparable to a symphony in twelve movements. The first chapter consists only of two short papers, both from 2015: an autobiographical essay, and the analysis of the role of light in medieval art. The studies in the second group are dedicated to the problems of interpretation. These were written mainly in the 1990s and 2000s and reflect the emerging problem of visibility, naturalism and reproduction, scientific models, and artistic connections. The theoretical attitude of these essays makes them essential for non-medievalists, too.

The next two chapters are also general in character. One of them is dedicated to the problems of nationality, nationalism, and the nation (*natio*) with respect to medieval Hungary, its national saints and its regions. Another more general topic is medieval architecture; a side-production of his more specific research which leads to general conclusions.

The historical part starts in the fifth chapter. In around 2000, the problem of the art of the previous millennium was relevant, which corresponds in Hungary to the problem of Christianization and the beginning of Western-type art in the country. Marosi, one of the organizers of the exhibition series *Europas Mitte um 1000* (which opened first in Budapest and continued in Berlin, Karlsruhe, Prague, etc. in 2000–2002), dedicated himself to many of the related problems during these years. Unfortunately, some of his ground-breaking papers are missing, probably because of their length. This chapter ends with the period of Saint Ladislas; i.e., the end of the eleventh century, and continues with the next chapter, entitled “Monuments of the Árpád Age,” which traditionally corresponds to the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Here, we can read about Benedictine monasteries as well as parish churches, stone carvings, and the Holy Crown of Hungary. Early Gothic is also discussed in two early essays (the reception of Regensburg from 1983 and a Madonna from Somogyvár from 1972). In fact, Early Gothic was one of the main research topics of Ernő Marosi, summarized in his most important monograph.⁴ This book is dedicated to the role of Esztergom and the royal court in disseminating Gothic style as early as the end of the twelfth century in Hungary. Not surprisingly, the next chapter focuses on two Hungarian cathedrals: those of Pécs and Esztergom. Marosi regularly returned to these two key monuments of Hungarian Romanesque and Gothic architecture, and the respective selection offers a useful cross-section of his extended research.

4 Marosi, *Die Anfänge der Gotik in Ungarn*.

The second volume starts with problems of fourteenth-century art, which corresponds in Hungary to the rule of the Anjou dynasty. Marosi was the editor and major author of the magistral compendium of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century art in Hungary.⁵ Among the topics of this chapter, key objects of the period return, such as the Prague statue of St George of 1373 and the Hungarian Illuminated Chronicle. Marosi was also organizer of the important exhibition on the period of King Louis I (1342–1382, Székesfehérvár, 1982),⁶ which was continued with another one on King Sigismund of Luxembourg (Budapest, 1987).⁷ He was also an important contributor to the later, large international exhibition entitled *Sigismundus Rex and Imperator*.⁸ Thus, the ninth chapter is dedicated to the time of Sigismund (1387–1437), which corresponds in art history to the decades of International Gothic style. Marosi himself contributed to our knowledge of this period, starting with his early analysis of St Elisabeth's church at Kassa/Košice; the earliest essay published in this collection deals with this church (1967) and one of the last ones, too (2015). Another key problem of the period is the '1974 Buda sculpture found', to which Marosi also returned regularly. A re-evaluation of these highly important statues is expected from Szilárd Papp in the near future; this was announced with expectation by Marosi as well. The historical part ends with the last great Hungarian ruler, Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490). Peculiarly, the title of the chapter calls Matthias a medieval man: just the contrary of the traditional view that sees him as a humanist and supporter of Renaissance art. The portrait of Matthias is also an opportunity for Marosi to make an excursion into twentieth-century art, analyzing the statue of the king by János Fadrusz in Cluj-Napoca (Kolozsvár, Klausenburg).

The historical part is followed by two more general chapters. One of them is dedicated to historiographic problems. While the second chapter is entitled "Understanding the Middle Ages," here we read about the concepts of the Middle Ages in historiography. Visegrád, a palace of Matthias Corvinus, connects the previous chapter to nineteenth-century concepts, which also touch on problems of national identity. The figure of King Matthias also leads to the analysis of Tibor Gerevich, the most influential Hungarian art historian between the two world wars. The *Wiener Schule*, a research topic of the young Marosi, returns here in a 2015 paper. Finally, the last chapter is dedicated to the protection of historic monuments. All those who deal with medieval architecture face the fact that what we see is not original but the construction of nineteenth and twentieth-century restorers. The *furor* of reconstruction has gained new impetus during recent decades in Hungary

5 Marosi, *Magyarországi művészet*.

6 Marosi et al., *Művészet I. Lajos király korában*.

7 Beke et al. *Művészet Zsigmond király korában*.

8 Takács, *Sigismundus Rex and Imperator*.

(as is elsewhere), with the destruction primarily of important medieval sites and castles (Székesfehérvár, Esztergom, Visegrád, Diósgyőr...). Marosi often raised his voice against these attempts—alas, without much success. The illustration for this chapter, a tapestry by Mária Túri that once decorated the palace of the Office of Protection of Historic Monuments (1974), is also a memento to the dissolved institution. Moreover, it is a reference to the interest of Marosi in modern art, which started with his earliest publications and was continuous until his death.

The 88 essays and their splendid illustration material, while representing only a small portion of the oeuvre of Ernő Marosi, offer insight into a breathtakingly wide spectrum of the genres of medieval art, from architecture to sculpture, from stone carvings to altarpieces, from miniatures to goldsmithworks, and include the interdisciplinary analysis of royal seals, heraldry, iconography, and the cult of saints. The collection will be a standard reference work not only for art historians but all medievalists and beyond.

Of course, with the publication of this essential portion of his oeuvre, Marosi did not stop writing. One of the last studies he was working on deals with the reception of Early Gothic architecture in the central parts of the Hungarian Kingdom (*medium regni*) in Transylvania. He saw the proof of this 120-page paper, but died before it was printed;⁹ further manuscripts are expected to be published, too. However, the three volumes of the present essay collection will comfort us for a while. Readers of this publication will surely agree with the title: *Bright is the Noble Work*, indeed.

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Crown and Coronation in Hungary 1000–1916 A.D.

By János M. Bak and Géza Pálffy.

Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of History –
Hungarian National Museum, 2020. 263 pp.

Attila Bárány 

University of Debrecen, H-4032 Debrecen, Egyetem tér 1, Hungary; barany.attila@arts.unideb.hu

The *Crown and Coronation* is János M. Bak's last work; a final piece in a long career of more than seven decades. Sadly, in June 2020, a few months after we celebrated his ninetieth birthday in 2019, he passed away—but Professor Géza Pálffy, the co-author of the present volume, let me know that he was full-heartedly working on this text, making final remarks even on the phone from his bed. Now having the book in hand, I believe he would have been greatly pleased to see it: thanks are due to Professor Pálffy for finalizing the manuscript.

It is a summary of several decades of the scholarship of János M. Bak, starting from his *Königtum und Stände*¹ throughout his efforts in the journal *Maiestas* (very close to his heart) to his grand enterprise, *Coronations*,² which gathers the works of Janet Nelson, Jacques Le Goff and Aleksander Gieysztor; not to mention here a less widely known venture of his: “Insignia of Rulership,” a keynote paper delivered at a conference dedicated to the representation of royal power.³ (Several of Bak's major pieces of writing in this field were published in Ashgate's *Variorum collected studies*).⁴

The volume also contains insights into Professor Bak's series of lectures and seminar on crowns, coronations, coronation insignia, symbols and political symbolism in medieval Europe at the Department of Medieval Studies at Central European University from the early 1990s, of which the author of these lines most proudly

1 Bak, *Königtum und Stände in Ungarn*.

2 Bak, *Coronations*.

3 Bak, “Holy Lance, Holy Crown, Holy Dexter: sanctity of insignia in medieval East Central Europe.” Published in the Festschrift dedicated to Boris Nikolajevič Florja.

4 Nagy and Klaniczay, *Studying Medieval Rulers*. This contains a revised version of “Coronation studies: past, present, and future”; or his “Holy Lance, Holy Crown, Holy Dexter.”

attended as an MA student. One may distinguish some particular elements of János Bak's teachings in the present book that have never been published, although one may have learnt about them personally from him through his classes on the Holy Crown, or on other insignia of the Central European kingdoms, or the medieval "multiple symbology" of the state—the term he used to refer to his Göttingen master, Percy Ernst Schramm.

This is the first comprehensive study in English of the Holy Crown of Hungary and its history during 1000 years, as well as the coronations of the monarchs of the kingdom from Saint Stephen (1000–1038) to Charles IV Habsburg (1916–1918). Since the essential *Die heilige Krone Ungarns* in the mid-1960s by the émigré József (Josef) Deér in German, there has been no such extensive and critical scholarly monograph dedicated to the "Sacra Corona" of the rulers of Hungary (not to speak of the fact that Deér only focused on the coronation jewel itself).⁵ Investigating the Holy Crown, the volume relies on the works of generations of scholars. Magda Bárány-Oberschall, Éva Kovács, and Zsuzsa Lovag have produced outstanding results in art history, of which only a few are available in foreign languages.⁶ One also needs to mention Erik Fügedi's article on coronations in medieval Hungary, published in a volume of collected studies in which János Bak also put in hard work.⁷

The authors make it explicitly clear at the outset that they do not only speak of the Holy Crown, but follow through its "fate" its "own" long and entangled history, as it was several times "on its own way"—that is, lost, stolen, recovered, rescued from invaders and taken into safekeeping, and buried, ending up in a rather unusual resting place for a medieval crown jewel—for more than 30 years at a US military base (Fort Knox, Kentucky). Furthermore, making its "adventures" more intricate, replicas were even made. Saint Stephen's *corona* has, in itself, a history, concerning which the book is—if one might put it in this way—the "crown" of Géza Pálffy's academic activity of decades. Pálffy has by now been the leader of a special research group for ten years at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, supported by a fund for excellent scholarly achievement ("Lendület" [Momentum]) where he has been studying the Holy Crown and the coronations.

The Holy Crown "Lendület" Research Group have revealed hitherto little known but significant details, of which the book provides the first insights for an international public.⁸ The group explored the earliest inventories of the insignia

5 Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1966.

6 See: e.g. Bárány-Oberschall, *Die Sankt-Stephans-Krone*; Fülep, Kovács, and Lovag, *Insignia Regni Hungariae* 1.

7 Fügedi and Bak, "Coronation in medieval Hungary."

8 On the more recent findings, a brief summary has been published: Pálffy and Tóth, "Les couronnements en Hongrie à l'époque modern," 253–76.

(1551, 1608), including an unparalleled register of the chest of the regalia from 1622,⁹ eye-witness reports in Latin and Hungarian from 1563 and 1655, and the notes of King-Emperor Leopold I Habsburg about the removal of the crown to Vienna during the Turkish campaign in 1663–64—the only known surviving document written by a ruler regarding the insignia. Pálffy and his colleagues also discovered the hitherto unknown coronation sandals, the oldest surviving coronation flags of Hungary and Croatia (1618, 1647),¹⁰ and the standard-bearer lords, as well as the ceremonial baton of the Hungarian Lord Steward for 1792. New information is provided, for instance, on the coronation *ordo* of Ferdinand II (1618); its manuscripts also disclosing colored images of the related flags. The surviving Latin and German manuscripts of the first authentic *ordo* have been investigated. The scholars have undertaken a thorough investigation of the last coronation in 1916, of which we have now footage on film; and completed enormous research into the coronations in present-day Bratislava (Pressburg, Pozsony)—disclosing, for example, the itinerary of the crown to St. Martin's Cathedral—and Sopron. The group has had the particular goal of treating Pressburg, a real seat of the monarchy for centuries, in its own right, as it has been much neglected in this role in historiography. Particular attention is devoted to the coronation church in the volume. The authors also examine St. Martin's role as a funeral place for the aristocracy, thus shedding light on the relationship of crown and elite and the latter's representation policies. The research team have also studied the history of coronation diets, particularly in the latter city, as well as examined the representation of coronations in numismatic evidence.¹¹ The research also involved a fundamental enquiry into the history of the reginal coronation since 1563 (see e.g., the one in 1714 in Pressburg) and female monarchical insignia as well. (To be precise, Anne de Candale was of the *Foix* comital family.) Pálffy analyses the customary ritual—alongside coronation with the queen's own private crown—of touching the right shoulder of the queen consort with the Holy Crown. The volume attests that the reginal ritual must have its own political significance and is to be investigated more profoundly in historical scholarship.

The research group have paid specific attention to the “fate” of the insignia, including its “eleven trips abroad” from 1205 until its final “homecoming” in 1978, which is also reconstructed in detail in the latest volume of studies. The book not only covers the latest developments in research in all these subfields, but also brings forth even more novel findings—for example concerning painted “coronation panels,” formerly unknown “crown verses,” an exceptional iron door in the Crown

9 See a whole monograph on the subject: Buzási and Pálffy, *Augsburg – Wien – München – Innsbruck*.

10 Pálffy, “The Heraldic Representation of Croatia at Hungarian Coronations,” 80–93.

11 Pálffy, Soltész, and Tóth, *Coronatio Hungarica in Nummis*.

Tower in Bratislava, and details about a less known coronation in the latter city in 1830. The authors also give an overview of their results concerning the years (1619–1622) when the Holy Crown was in the possession of Gábor Bethlen, Prince of Transylvania, making a detailed itinerary of the regalia. The *Crown and Coronation* brings to light new *consuetudines* in the first Pressburg inauguration of a Habsburg monarch (Maximilian II) in 1562/63 and the ceremonies for Charles III in 1712; the latter also seen through the eyewitness account of a Cistercian monk. It also examines Rudolph II's 1572 Hungarian coronation.

Bak and Pálffy also cover the extended ceremonies and rites of accession, together with all the constitutive acts implying the enabling of the candidate to their high office. In addition, as the rites of inauguration had particular political implications in Hungary, and underwent special transformation in local traditions, the peculiarities are investigated using a complex, comparative approach, and treated in parallel mainly with Bohemian and Polish examples—a methodological approach which was always warmly treated by János Bak and, in the field of mainly Czech developments, can be similarly observed in the works of Pálffy. Pálffy has been working in co-operation with Slovak, Croatian, Austrian, and Czech scholars (e.g., Tünde Lengyelová, Václav Bůžek, Rostislav Smíšek, etc.), whose results are to be found in this volume as well. The authors count on the special expertise of Manfred Hellmann, Stefan Albrecht, Hilda Lietzmann, Benita Berning, Harriet Rudolph, Michal Bada, Michaela Bodnárová and Friedrich Edelmayer in coronation research, as well as, for instance, the art history research of enameling of David Buckton and Paul Hetherington and the iconography studies on the “corona graeca” by Cathérine Jolivet-Lévy. The findings of recent Slovak scholarship on Bratislava are referred to.¹² It should also be pointed out that the Holy Crown research group publish in the Romanian, Czech, Croatian, and Slovak languages to make their work available to a larger public in Central Europe, thus promoting academic communication as well. The findings in the Esterházy *Schatzkammer* concerning the castle of Forchtenstein are unique even for Croatian historical scholarship.¹³ The group is committed to interdisciplinary research, relies heavily on art history and numismatic and literary evidence, as well as works in cooperation with experts in sigillography, vexillology, and heraldry (e.g., the art historian Enikő Buzási), this way making János Bak's heritage come alive in the field of symbology and political ritual. For power rituals the volume relies on cooperation with Slovak scholarship. The volume does provide fresh insights into symbolic political communication in the sixteenth-nineteenth centuries, a field where the legacy of János Bak seems to have been carried forward by Pálffy—the volume specifically addresses coronation oaths (e.g. the earliest authentically recorded one by Charles I

12 Holčík, *Krönungsfeierlichkeiten*.

13 Pálffy, *Die Krönungsfahnen in der Esterházy Schatzkammer*.

in 1312 held at the Vatican Archives), inaugural *decreta*, as well as (pre-)election promises and agreements (Bak compares some to the practice of *Wahlkapitulation*). It is seen how the prerequisite of observing *conditiones* developed into coronation patents written into law. The *diploma inaugurale* served as a preeminent guarantee of constitutional rule.

Beyond gathering all available sources on the acts of accession and accompanying festivities (references in liturgical books, ordinances, the *Ceremonia privata* and the *Zeremonialprotokoll* of the Vienna court), the volume gives an overview of the recently revealed written sources—for example, an unprecedented inventory of Johann Probst's works on the 1681 reginal coronation in Sopron and the Diet in the following year in Vienna. The authors provide insight into the history of accession and unearth a range of symbolic rituals (the main actors, the role of the *coronator*, investment with the mantle of St. Stephen, and the “swinging of the sword” in the four cardinal directions); and secular acts (dubbing of the Knights of the Golden Spur; the ruler dressing in traditional Hungarian noble attire or even wearing the uniform of a Hussar general; the erection of a coronation mound, sometimes from clods of earth brought from various locations; the offering of a piece of the ox roasted in the open air to the populace; and the gift of the coronation carpet to the commoners who were afterwards allowed to cut themselves a piece).

The authors introduce, for example, the heraldic representation of the oratory of St. Vitus Cathedral, Prague, providing novel insights for Czech art history. The book introduces very important new—sometimes formerly unpublished—iconographic sources: coronation tokens (jettons), copper engravings, lithographs, heraldic banners flying the colors of the “members” of the “lands of the Crown of St. Stephen”, portraits of rulers, commemorative gift coins and offering medals.

The volume sheds light on the earliest credible depiction of the Holy Crown in Clemens Jäger's *Ehrenspiegel des Hauses Österreich* (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Cgm895) and makes it clear that it has nothing to do with a so-called “Fugger chronicle” (for long maintained in Hungarian scholarship), as well as gives a precise dating of between 1553 and 1561. The pictorial image and the newly revealed details of its birth also help with exploring the custody of the Crown in Vienna from 1551. The authors give some less widely known coronation objects their rightful significance: arm-bands, the cap worn inside the crown (also explaining why it was needed), coronation gloves, stockings (and their pictorial representation), paraments (chasubles, the pluvials of the Archbishops of Esztergom), the stoop for holy water, the “last” 1916 chalice, and the altar antependia and benedictionals. A miniature from the Gospel-book dedicated to Otto III (ca. 1001, Domkapitel Aachen), depicting Stephen I at the Emperor's feet with a lance in hand may justify the ruler's *lancea regis* gift, corresponding to the image of Stephen's silver denarius, a hand holding a lance with a flag. A most unique jewel is

a thirteenth-century “swearing cross,” but no less important is a seventeenth-century *pax aurea* (‘kissing cross’) by a Prague master. A very modern type of historical source is treated alike: postcards from the 1916 ceremony.

The description of the crown jewels and other regalia (sceptre, orb, mantle, sword) contains the results of the most recent research, based to a great extent on Endre Tóth’s monograph, of which an English translation is planned.¹⁴ This is still a highly controversial issue. The date and origin of the “Crown of St. Stephen” have been ardently debated for centuries, and there is still no unchallenged common agreement on all points. However, the authors take into account all hypotheses and, while treating them critically, take a sober and cautious stand. They stress that as there are no written or iconic sources for its early history, “everything has to be gauged from the object itself.” To begin with, there is no reliable contemporary evidence that Stephen either had a crown at all, or that he received one from the pope. Despite the many speculations of amateurs, there is no unequivocal evidence that *this* surviving “Holy Crown”—a circular diadem with enamels of Byzantine origin surmounted by two bands in cross form with Latin-inscribed plates—can be connected to the ruler at all. Stephen might have had a crown, but there is no way to find out anything about this hypothetical first one. This is a question that may never be answered unequivocally, even if “some parts of it [the crown] may be coeval with the founding monarch.” The enamel plates of the lower part are fairly well dateable, belonging originally to a Greek crown—*corona Graeca* in literature—from ca. 1074–77. Nonetheless, the authors are critical about whether this piece was originally a crown and propose it might have been some other object—perhaps a present to King Géza I and his queen of Greek origin, related to a future emperor. The volume argues that it has a “female character” and was designed for a lady. The authors also make it clear that the two crosswise bands have been incorrectly referred to as the “Latin crown.” Although scholars have always seen—or wished to see—it resemble a “closed crown” or an “arched crown” (*Bügelkrone*) in the “fashion” of the German-Roman imperial crown, the *corona Latina* (although the authors refrain themselves from using this anachronistic term) “is not a crown.” The enamel plates on the bands came from some other object. The style and the inscriptions point to a southern Italian workshop. The authors argue that the peculiarity of their lettering points to Sicily and is similar to that found on a royal ring, which had for long been taken as Béla III’s (1172–1196), but according to a more recent analysis is now assumed to be Coloman’s, from ca. 1100, who had a consort from Sicily. (It is however not true that the queen was “the daughter of the King of Sicily”; her father was *Count* Roger I.) There has been much speculation about the original function of the bands (and that of the enamels on them). It has been suggested that they might have been

14 A magyar Szent Korona és a koronázási jelvények.

either part of a book cover or a *stella*, an arched cover over a liturgical plate, but the authors argue that (as the form of a Latin cross fits ill with a book-cover, while no *stella* is known with enamel decoration) the bands may have been made for the very purpose of utilizing enamels of older origin, probably in the royal treasury.

Nevertheless, the basic question is when were the two parts assembled and to what purpose. The presently known form of the crown is authentically documented only from the early seventeenth century, after which a realistic image was introduced to the coat of arms of Hungary. The authors treat all hypotheses critically. The argument that Béla III had the crown “manufactured” is in no way compelling. The assumption by Josef Deér was that a highly prized crown, maybe even dating to the eleventh century, was taken to Bohemia in 1270, and a new one was needed. However, the authors—while taking the cautious stand that a combination of the Byzantine lower part with closing bands is unlikely to date to before 1100—suggest a solution “much more fitting to medieval practice,” and emphasize that “we may not need to look for a politically or otherwise significant moment for the construction.” Jewels and crowns were regularly reworked. All treasuries contained several crowns and “only in late medieval and modern times did one of them become the particular and only valid insigne.” It was only in the late thirteenth century that the Hungarian crown was referred to as being “holy” and as dating back to St. Stephen. After the extinction of the House of Árpád (1301) it acquired special significance and linking it to St. Stephen made it a crucial object of legitimation, together with another two “necessary conditions” (crowning at Székesfehérvár and by the primate of Esztergom). János Bak argues that such “sanctity” would have in some way been transferred to the bearer of Stephen’s crown. The book oversees how the crown became “irreplaceable”; the “one and only.” It also explains why a “fake” festive crown-wearing event (*Festkrönung*) was staged in 1304.

Furthermore, the golden cross mounted on top of the arches is undoubtedly of late medieval origin. It is bent to the right, which anomaly has been the subject of much unfounded speculation. However, early images show the cross as straight, and the first time it is reliably noted to be bent is 1784. Géza Pálffy, revealing eyewitness accounts, has come forward with a convincing solution: the chest for the crown had an “accident” in 1638: the locks had to be broken and the case of the crown was damaged, which must have caused the bend. The authors detail another four more times when the chest had to be pried open.

The volume reports on succession and its peculiar relationship to the Holy Crown—from “the right of blood” and then that of the estates to the hereditary right of the House of Austria. They explore heredity versus suitability (*idoneitas*) and election as well as other limited forms of inheritance. It also examines disputes over coronation orders (Anglo-Saxon or German) and the acceptance of papal liturgy.

The authors also give insight into the doctrine of the Holy Crown—a theory rooted in the Middle Ages but elaborated only in the nineteenth century—that maintains the public legal status of the crown: the physical object merged with an abstract, “invisible” notion of kingship.

The Holy Crown is “one of the rarest signs of rulership.” The volume helps to understand why it is still treated with special reverence. The symbolic affiliation with King Stephen was needed to buttress sovereignty. It came to safeguard constitutional developments and became a symbol of noble commonwealth—the estates as a *corona regni*; that is, the “political nation.” As it stood metaphorically for authority, even when no ruler was inaugurated with it, between the two world wars it remained a paramount symbol of national sovereignty. The research on its symbology explains why it adorns the coat of arms of a republic, and why it was a custom even in 1916 for the queen to make a few stitches on the mantle.

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Szentkultusz és személynévadás Magyarországon [Cult of Saints and Naming in Hungary]. By Mariann Slíz.

Budapest: Szent István Társulat, 2021. 167 pp.

Eszter Konrád 

Eötvös Loránd University, University Library and Archives, Department of Collection Development, H-1053 Budapest, Ferenciek tere 6; konrad.eszter.erzsebet@gmail.com

The fact that naming customs may provide valuable information on the cult of saints, requiring multi- and interdisciplinary approaches, is not new. Relating the changes in the cult of certain saints to the naming habits in Hungary in a given period, however, demands a different method. Mariann Slíz's monograph presents the outcomes of an experiment testing whether we can examine on the macro level in the spatial, temporal, and social dimensions the relationship of a saint's cult and the personal names related to it (including family names derived from it) based on existing databases, starting from the Middle Ages to the present day. Already at first sight, the enterprise seems challenging, but after reading the author's well-considered, problem-sensitive and critical presentation of points of view and methods, we become even more aware of the limitations and difficulties of a research project about the complete Hungarian history of names, and we understand why this is the first comprehensive monograph on the topic.

The book consists of two major parts: the first presenting its aims, sources, and methods, and the second applying them to case studies of three groups of saints the author has compiled according to certain principles (pp. 17–18): those of the Árpád dynasty (Stephen, Emeric, Ladislaus; Elizabeth, and Margaret), the knight-saints (Martin, George, and Demetrius), and the three female saints of the *virgines capitales* (Catherine, Barbara, and Dorothy), who also had a steady position among the fourteen helper saints. The saints were selected primarily based on the sources available, meaning that research into the relations between the cults of saints and naming customs is necessarily limited.

Naming customs cannot be directly related the popularity of a given saint, as they may be due to several different reasons which, in some cases, are intertwined. As Slíz points out, it is worth choosing a period when there is a change in the history of a saint's cult or a religious order (p. 49). Although there are several works

dealing with medieval name occurrences, most of them cannot be applied for examining changes in the frequency of a name over a certain period, and it is even more difficult in the case of female names since there the sources have far fewer of them than of male names. Naming customs were also influenced—although not in every case—by the Reformation (the Protestants refused the intermediary role of saints and preferred names from the Old Testament), the Catholic renewal, as well as the Ottoman rule in Hungary. Cultural and political-ideological issues would affect the popularity of the cult of saints and would indirectly influence the frequency of names (pp. 52–54).

One of the great merits of Slíz's analysis is that she relies on studies related to the cult of saints in order to provide a background for the case studies for a clearer interpretation of their figures. Her perspectives and results help to refine previous statements in scholarship. To cite just one example: while Gábor Klaniczay a few years ago already pointed out a 'rivalry' between the cults of the Hungarian holy knight-king Ladislaus and the most popular international knight saint George in the fourteenth century, Slíz provides a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon in showing that although both names started from the same position in the thirteenth century, Ladislaus gained a much more important position among the landlords influenced by chivalric culture and by the royal house who supported the dynastic saints (p. 112).

Each case study has the same structure, starting from the cult of the saint and the frequency of their names and their variants in medieval Hungary, moving to the early modern period and to the present day in order to find out what could have motivated these changes. Slíz also considers two less self-evident areas, namely the family names derived from names and the female counterparts of male names. She shows with numerous examples that the changes in the intensity of a certain saint's veneration could in fact affect the popularity of their name both in positive and negative ways. The author presents the various ways agents popularized certain saints (or, indirectly their names associated with a broader notion), ranging from composing sermons to establishing bus companies named after them. In complex cases when there is more than one cult in the background of naming customs (Stephen, Elizabeth, and Margaret) resulting in 'strong' cults, Slíz manages to dissociate them—at least as far as it is possible—by looking at their history. The case studies reveal (particularly in the cases of Stephen, Ladislaus, Elizabeth, and Catherine) that when a saint's name is well-established in the name stock, it may become more independent of the cult. This, in turn, could result in the longevity of the name's popularity, influenced by social, cultural, or linguistic factors rather than the current state of the cult. This was the case with the name Catherine, the popularity of which could be ascribed to the Alexandrian martyr, to the efforts of the Árpadian

and Angevin rulers of Hungary as reflected in their naming customs, and to a much lesser extent, to the Sienese *mantellata* canonized in 1461. The name remained in fashion throughout the centuries, while the names Barbara and Dorothy fell victim to fashions: the two saints' cults emerged swiftly in the fourteenth century but decreased relatively quickly by the sixteenth century. Treating together the three *virgines capitales*, Slíz successfully demonstrates that even if the legends of certain saints share a number of common elements, the popularity of their names are far from being equal (pp. 135–145).

The book offers a thorough methodological introduction and an innovative approach to the application of naming habits in the study of the cult of saints and beyond for researchers of various disciplines. Its numerous new results based on the largest pool of data available makes it a mandatory reading for those who deal with any of the saints treated in the book. Hopefully, it will open the way for further research of a similar character, a prerequisite of which is a database in compliance with the author's observations in the first part of the book.



Egy elfeledett magyar királyi dinasztia: a Szapolyaiak [A Forgotten Hungarian Royal Dynasty: The Szapolyais]. Edited by Pál Fodor and Szabolcs Varga.

Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont: Budapest, 2020. 382 pp.

Zoltán Ujj 

Eötvös Loránd University, Department of Early Modern History; H-1088 Budapest, Múzeum krt. 6–8;
ujjzoltan10@gmail.com

This edited collection is about a Hungarian royal dynasty which has not yet received attention to this extent in scientific research, thus it may easily count on the interest of not only Hungarian but also international readers. Indeed, counting on such readers, the full work was published in English a year later.¹

This lack of attention shown to the House of Szapolyai is especially interesting in light of the fact that Hungarian historiography tends to reserve a special place for the so-called “national royal dynasties” (the Árpáds, the Hunyadis, and the Szapolyais) in history, but regarding the Szapolyais this distinguishing glory never really prevailed. A vital aim and virtue of the collection, which is anticipated in the foreword, is seeing the dynasty as a complete whole, which effort can clearly be seen in the thematically wide range of articles: all the important questions are covered by individual studies.

In Tibor Neumann’s paper, the story of three generations of the Szapolyai family is presented, from their uncertain origins to the royal throne of Hungary. The study introduces how huge work and permanent progression in rank and the financial status of many generations were required to make the founding of a royal dynasty possible. As the author notes, we have no data about John I’s ancestors before the fifteenth century, and these uncertain origins made it possible for the political adversaries of the Szapolyais to damage the reputation of the dynasty as harshly as they could. The Hungarian dignitaries, in a letter written to Henry VIII in 1527 (in which they sought the help of the English king), stated that the father of John I had arrived in Hungary a few decades before as a penniless esquire from Bosnia. The Bosnian

1 Fodor, Pál and Szabolcs Varga. *A Forgotten Hungarian Royal Dynasty: The Szapolyais*. Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities, 2021.

origins come up regularly in contemporary work, suggesting to readers that John was not even Hungarian for a long time.

The first confirmed ancestor is László Vajdafi, grandfather of the king, who appeared in the sources in 1444 as a landlord from Pozsega County. László had three similarly successful sons. Imre served at the court of Matthias Corvinus as a skillful military and financial organizer and became the Governor of Bosnia in 1463, after Matthias I took it back from the Turks. Imre had his quarrels with the king, but as a gesture Matthias created the title Count of Szepes for him, which title eventually became the prime component of the Szapolyai fortune for decades. Vajdafi's other son Miklós joined the church, and in 1462 became the bishop of Transylvania, while István earned a reputation as a gallant commander. István fought in Matthias's campaigns in Bohemia and on the side of Vladislaus II in the succession war. For his achievements, the diet of 1492 elected him palatine of Hungary. István died at Christmas in 1499, but managed to preserve and pass on the full family fortune to his son János Szapolyai, later king John I.

In the following years, the son of the palatine acquired the great castles of Oravský hrad (Árva) and Likavka in northern Hungary (present-day Slovakia), and in 1510 he persuaded the king to promote him to voivode of Transylvania. From this nomenclature one can clearly see the formidable might of the family, which made János Szapolyai the highest-ranked landlord in the country (the paper by István Kenyeres presents the Szapolyai possessions). Neumann also mentions the contemporary opinion that the Kingdom of the Jagiellons did not work properly because of the machinations of the Szapolyai family. On the other hand, the author points out the militant defense activity of the family in the service of the king, thus we have reason to be critical of the former statement.

The paper of Teréz Oborni and Pál Fodor analyzes the history of John I's kingdom, stuck between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire. According to their summary, both Suleyman and Ferdinand were chasing false illusions when they hoped to conquer the whole kingdom with one significant military campaign.

The authors prudently show the fluctuating territorial extent of the Szapolyai-ruled areas of Hungary and their constantly changing role in the Ottoman plans. The latter data should be considered a novelty, for they broadcast the results of the last decade of Ottoman Studies. After the Battle of Mohács, the majority of the Hungarian estates elected John, and most of the country indeed pledged loyalty to him, but Ferdinand's campaign in 1527 annihilated John's kingdom. This led John to voluntarily put the territories loyal to him under Ottoman protection in 1528. However, being a protectorate led to no change in the daily life of John's kingdom: he looked on himself as the King of Hungary who ruled over the Kingdom of Hungary, and there were no Ottoman garrisons in the country except in the overrun Syrmia.

The situation changed in 1541 (after the death of John I): following the occupation of Buda, the sultan refused to give John's former country to his son John Sigismund Szapolyai, but instead created the Eyalet of Buda and left a notable garrison in the city, then divided Transylvania into three sanjaks, putting a local Christian lord at the head. With this move, the sultan demoted Transylvania into a position similar to that of Wallachia.

This status quo had been abandoned when in 1551, after long negotiations with Cardinal Martinuzzi, Ferdinand sent an expeditionary army that conquered most of the three sanjaks. This enraged the sultan, who launched a huge offensive in 1552, planning to fully integrate Transylvania into his empire. Yet realizing his armies had no power to manage it, he urged the Transylvanian estates to call back the Szapolyais, who returned in 1556. With the Szapolyais back, Transylvania had again been assigned vassal status. But the vassalization this time happened on way better terms than before—to confirm this, the authors make a detailed comparison with the Wallachian territories. After years of negotiation, through the Treaty of Speyer (1570) the Habsburgs and the Szapolyais finally made their compromise, but the agreement never took effect: after John Sigismund's death in 1571, the estates elected Stephan Báthory as voivode, and during his reign Transylvania was detached from Hungary and evolved to be a self-governed state under an Ottoman protectorate.

Szabolcs Varga gives an overview of the Szapolyai legacy from the sixteenth century to the present. Despite the fact that many contemporaries acknowledged the virtues of the educated king who could recite Virgil by heart, his name is associated with that of the Jagiellons, who are blamed for the fall of Hungary. The unbalanced nature of this verdict is clearly seen in comparison with the Hunyadis, who competed in almost the same way for the throne, but at a more fortunate time.

In the eighteenth century, the Habsburg-oriented scholars of Hungary showed little interest in the Szapolyais. In the decades of the reform era, during the debate on serfdom, he who had put down the peasant uprising of 1514 was not a lucky character to commemorate. It was only after the defeat in the War of Independence in 1849 that the figure of John I appeared again in debates about history (in Mihály Horváth's and László Szalay's work), as an alternative to the Habsburg dynasty. In the years of dualism, researchers' focus turned to Bishop Martinuzzi, who served as John's right hand, and was considered a grey eminence. For the following decades this pattern remained: in his great summary of early modern history, Gyula Szekfű considered John a weak monarch, and the prelate as a genius.

After World War II, the new communist regime stigmatized the whole feudal world, particularly the main dignitaries before the Ottoman occupation, and especially John I for putting down the peasant revolt. Therefore, knowing more about the dynasty is a relatively new phenomenon; the pioneer of the process was Gábor

Barta, who deeply researched the diplomacy of John I. The legacy of the Szapolyais started to revive slowly in Transylvania in the 1990s—the Unitarians of the region erected busts of John Sigismund Szapolyai in the villages of Dârjiu (Székelyderzs) and Șapartoc (Sárpatak).

The mentioned names and geographical locations have been collected into an index at the end of the book, while the inner section of the cover shows the lineage of the dynasty. The collection can surely be of good use to professionals and students of early modern history, but it will also be a good read for those with a more general interest.



Eagles Looking East and West – Dynasty, Ritual and Representation in Habsburg Hungary and Spain.

Edited by Tibor Martí and Roberto Quirós Rosado.

Habsburg Worlds 4. Turnhout: Brepols, 2021. 338 pp.

Dóra Baráth 

Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Institute of History,
Doctoral School of History, 1088 Budapest, Mikszáth Kálmán tér 1; barath.dora93@gmail.com

This book is the fourth volume in the series *Habsburg Worlds* from Brepols, and explores the lands under the rule of the Habsburg Dynasty, including both the Spanish and the Austrian branches, focusing on several different aspects of the history of these regions. The series aims to “foster an interdisciplinary and comparative approach necessary for studying the manifold of languages, cultures, history and traditions.” The volume entitled *Eagles Looking East and West – Dynasty, Ritual and Representation in Habsburg Hungary and Spain* fits well with this approach: the research papers focus on the Eastern or Western domains of the dynasty, while examining similar aspects.

In recent years, the topic of relations between the Spanish and Austrian branches—the Central European *Habsburgermonarchie* and the *Monarquía de España*—have been well researched in thematic volumes, but mostly with a focus on diplomatic relations and cultural transfer, respectively—and according to the references given in the introductory study of the volume, were in Spanish, not English, which made them less accessible to Central Europeans. Compared to the earlier research of the dynasty that traditionally emphasised diplomatic and military history approaches, the authors of this volume focus on the symbolic political communication and forms of representation of power by the rulers, which thus far has not been at the heart of research. Since the turn of the millennium, however, the study of ceremonies, rituals, and symbolic manifestations of courtly society has been significantly strengthened and enriched with new methodological approaches at an international level. This volume attempts to apply these new research approaches to the interpretation of the cultural and political working mechanisms of the courts of the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs. The volume is edited by Tibor Martí, a research fellow from the Early Modern History Research Team of the RCH (Research Centre

for the Humanities) Institute of History, and Roberto Quirós Rosado, an assistant professor of Modern History at the Autonomous University of Madrid. The fact that the editors have Hungarian and Spanish origins (and their research areas concern their own countries' histories) reinforces the duality of the book's perspective, which is always beneficial in research, as the texts present the realms of the dynasty in relation to the differences and similarities of their geographic locations and cultures. The declared aim of the volume is to stimulate research into Spanish-Hungarian relations (not only during the times examined by these studies, but also during the eighteenth century), which has been complicated because of distance and language barriers.

The edited, augmented and revised papers from the international conference *The Representations of Power and Sovereignty in the Kingdom of Hungary and the Spanish Monarchy in the 16th–18th Centuries*, which took place in Budapest on 5 and 6 April 2016, organized by the Institute of History of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, have been published on nearly 350 pages. The studies were written by Hungarian, Spanish, and Czech researchers, and are a milestone of cooperative research between Hungarian and Spanish historians.

In the preface, three insights are identified by the editors. First, the new results in the research into the representation of sovereignty in the early modern period have not yet been available to the Anglophone public. This volume is in English, in contrast to the previous one in the series, thus is easily accessible to the growing number of English-speaking researchers. Second, such research can only be fruitful through international comparison, especially in the case of a dynasty like the Habsburgs, which involved widespread domains. Third, through the research it is apparent that, beyond symbolism and representation, the resources (natural, economic, military, intellectual) of the Early Modern Hungarian Kingdom played a more important role in terms of their Habsburg influence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries than previously thought.

The introductory study by the two editors starts with a report by the Spanish ambassador in Vienna from Sopron (in 1622) about a feast following the coronation of Eleonora Anna Gonzaga, Ferdinand II's second wife, at which the second dance (after one between the emperor and the empress) was between the empress and the Spanish ambassador, thus representing the relationship between the two dominions of the dynasty, Hungary and Spain.

In their study, the editors outline another aim: "to facilitate comparison by structuring the volume so as to let individual studies outline the shared and differing characteristics and elements of the representation of power across the two Habsburg branches" (p. 23). The case studies in the volume allow for comparison of propagandistic goals and various means and shared practices, which cannot be done

by a single researcher or in a monograph. Studies that focus on the Hungarian or Spanish dominion alternate in this book, further facilitating comparison, but they also follow a chronological order, from the fifteenth century until the beginning of the eighteenth century. However, the comparison has to be made by the reader, as many of the studies deal with only one of the aforementioned dominions.

The editors have divided the studies in the volume into two thematic sections. Part I examines the ceremonies and dynastic representation of the Habsburg dynasty. Coronation rituals are the focus in the majority of the papers, but some of them also deal with funerals, which were also important events of dynastic representation. Géza Pálffy explores the heraldic representation of dynasties in Central Europe at funerals and coronations from the fifteenth to the early seventeenth century. Alfredo Floristán Imízcoz gives a panoramic view of rituals of majesty during the inauguration of reigns in the Kingdom of Navarre in comparison with those in Castile, Aragon, Valencia, and Catalonia in the sixteenth century. Borbála Gulyás shows the coronations and court festivals of two kings, Maximilian I (as Emperor Maximilian II) and Rudolf I (as Emperor Rudolf II) in Bratislava (Pressburg). The paper by Václav Bůžek and Pavel Marek focuses on the Imperial funeral rituals of the same Rudolf II. János Kalmár examines the proclamation and accession of Archduke Charles (later Emperor Charles VI) to the Aragonese kingship in the era of the War of the Spanish Succession. The political representation of coronations and sovereigns appears in the study of Nóra G. Etényi, who presents the printed political representations of the coronation of Joseph I in Hungary. The last paper in the first thematic section is written by Fanni Hende, who studies the political representation of Hungarian kings, focusing on the aforementioned rulers Joseph I and Charles III (Charles VI as Emperor).

Part II presents the political interactions, self-representations and internal dynastic affairs between the Eastern and Western branches of the dynasty. Zoltán Korpás studies the fraternal relationship of Charles V and Ferdinand I and their attitudes towards Hungary. Rubén González Cuerva examines the cooperation between the two Habsburg branches after the wedding in 1631 of Ferdinand III of Hungary and Maria Anna, the Spanish infanta, by showing the changes in the iconography of the dynasty. Tibor Monostori writes about the ideas that sustained and upheld the military and political power of the Spanish Monarchy in the seventeenth century by examining the essays of Diego de Saavedra Fajardo, where the example of Hungary is used in argumentation when asking for support for Spain and the dynasty against their enemies. The studies of Cristina Bravo Lozano and Zsolt Kökényesi explore the topic of court life—however, with significantly different approaches. The former shows the importance of etiquette in the operation of Spanish diplomats in the United Provinces in 1649 (in the year after the Peace of Westphalia), while the latter

presents the relationship networks of the noble elite using the example of shooting competitions that took place at the Viennese court of Charles VI. The two editors in their studies both focus on function of the Order of the Golden Fleece. Tibor Martí explores the aims and motivations of the dynasty behind the conferrals of membership of the Order, and shows the importance of membership in the careers of Hungarians who joined it. Roberto Quirós Roasdo studies the War of Spanish Succession and the religious-political ceremonials of the Order in Vienna. The volume ends with an index of names, which will be of great help to future researchers.

The studies use different sources and different methods and look at different aspects, but several characteristic features of the display of power recur, such as the confessional nature of displays (*Pietas Austriaca* and *Pietas Hispanica*) and various manifestations and portrayals of the common origin of the two branches. The introductory study summarizes and briefly introduces all of the other studies in the book; however, it is not entirely balanced: for some, it goes into great depth, using a whole paragraph, while for others it gives only a sentence description to the reader. However, the various topics and approaches attract our interest, and the names of the editors and writers guarantee the quality of the volume—therefore this volume should be read by anyone who is interested in the history of the Habsburg Dynasty and their dominions.



Aufklärung habsburgisch. Staatsbildung, Wissenskultur und Geschichtspolitik in Zentraleuropa 1750–1850.

By Franz Leander Fillafer.

Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2020. 640 pp.

Zsolt Kökényesi 

Institute of Historical Studies, Eötvös Loránd University, Faculty of Humanities, H-1088 Budapest, Múzeum krt. 6–8; kokenyesi.zsolt@btk.elte.hu

The study of the interaction between the Baroque and the Enlightenment is considered a traditional historical problem. At least as important—though less researched—is the study of the afterlife of the Enlightenment after the French Revolution. The independent examination of these research questions for even just one European country or region is a sufficient task for an author who wishes to work on his subject in a monographic way. Franz Leander Fillafer, however, has taken on an even more complex task: in his new book he attempts to answer both questions, even though the geographical limits of his investigation are not limited to a single country, but rather to the entire Central European conglomerate of the Habsburg Monarchy. The author makes the heterogeneous problem of the Enlightenment into the subject of a complex study in the Central European region, with its different cultures and levels of development. The reader is introduced to the process of the Enlightenment and Habsburg state-formation over a hundred-year period of major political, cultural, and social transformations.

Franz Leander Fillafer is a well-known author in Austrian Enlightenment studies, having defended his doctoral dissertation at the University of Konstanz in 2012, and is currently a research fellow at the *Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften* (ÖAW). The work of the author is characterised by philosophical and historiographical interest and a strong international embeddedness as well.¹ In his studies, Fillafer combines the approaches and methodologies of the history of ideas and the history of science and global history—this is also reflected in this monograph.

1 For some of the author's major studies and edited volumes, see: Fillafer and Wallnig eds. *Josephinismus*; Fillafer, Feichtinger and Surman, eds, *The Worlds of Positivism*; Fillafer, "Die Aufklärung in der Habsburgermonarchie"; and Fillafer, "A World Connecting?"

The aim of the book is formulated by the author as follows: “The core concern of this book is to open up the Enlightenment in the Habsburg Monarchy as a historical event in its long-term formative power, without forcing it into the Procrustean bed of secular-democratic modernity, without assuming that the Enlightenment found its actual fulfillment in revolution and liberalism.”² (p. 15). Achieving this goal is a very difficult task, not only because of the constant historical reflection and critical reinterpretations, but also because of the extensive literature and source base, which is particularly challenging in Central Europe due to the linguistic diversity. However, Fillafer’s book is the result of thorough and mature research; the author has conducted research in several ecclesiastical and secular archives of five countries (Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia), and even more remarkable is the 80-page bibliography of the book, which does not only contain English, German and French items, but also provides a rich list of Czech, Croatian, Hungarian and Slovak literature. Reading the volume, it soon becomes clear that the Hungarian and various Slavic-language literature in the bibliography is not only for representational purposes but also due to their becoming an integral part of the author’s thought flow. The author’s linguistic competence and historiographical knowledge must therefore be commended.

The monograph contains many innovative approaches, which can be seen not only in the geographical and temporal framing of the study, but also in the methodology, narrative, and the structure of the volume. In addition to the introduction, the book consists of nine chapters, of which, apart from the last two summarising and overview chapters, the other seven chapters form larger thematic units, which are further subdivided into subchapters. The first chapter (*Von der Vaterlandsliebe zum Völkerfrühling 1770–1848*) describes the development and transformation of state patriotism (*Landespatritialismus*), then of linguistic nationalism, and its relationship with the past, and the government and the surrounding countries from the late eighteenth century to 1848. In the chapter, Fillafer pays special attention to the analysis of the related works and activities of two important authors, the publicist and professor of the *Staatswissenschaften* Joseph von Sonnenfels (1732–1817) and the Tyrolean-born lawyer and historian Joseph von Hormayr (1782–1848). The second thematic unit (*Die katholische Aufklärung*) is one of the most exciting chapters of the book, in which the author both interprets the relationship of the Theresian and Josephin governments to the Church from a new perspective and draws attention to the scientific reforms within the Catholic Church (including the reception

2 “Das Kernanliegen dieses Buches besteht darin, die Aufklärung in der Habsburgermonarchie als historisches Geschehen in ihrer langfristigen Prägekraft zu erschließen, ohne sie in das Prokrustesbett der säkular-demokratischen Moderne zu zwingen, ohne davon auszugehen, dass die Aufklärung in Revolution und Liberalismus ihre eigentliche Erfüllung fand.”

of Newtonian doctrines). The third chapter (*Die Erfindung der Allianz von Thron und Altar*) is closely related to the previous thematic unit and can be seen as a direct continuation of it, in which the author looks behind the assumed perpetual alliance of the altar and the throne, identifying the church propaganda in the dissemination of this ideal in the period of the post-Revolutionary Restoration.

The fourth chapter (*Wissenskulturen des Vormärz*) takes stock of the state of scientific thinking in the Habsburg Monarchy in the first half of the nineteenth century, with a special focus on the discipline of philosophy. In the subchapters, Fillafer reconstructs the hidden legacy of the Enlightenment in several areas with great precision; examples include the seminal work of the ecclesiastical mathematician and philosopher Bernard Bolzano (1781–1848), and the critical biblical hermeneuticists. The next thematic unit (*Vom Merkantilregime zum Binnenmarkt: Die Monarchie als Wirtschaftsraum*) examines the leading economic trends of the Habsburg Monarchy and the impact of changing economic thinking on state formation, with a special sub-chapter on the Kingdom of Hungary, which was in many ways in an exceptional situation. The sixth chapter (*Naturrechtspraxis und Empire-Genese. Kodifikation, Rechtsstaat, Wissenschaftsgeschichte*) is the longest and most detailed thematic unit of the monograph, comprising 11 subchapters and 120 pages. The chapter provides a richly detailed picture of the monarchy's transformation into a legal state, a process convincingly reconstructed by the author along the lines of the changes in natural law thinking, detailing the activities and influence of (among others) Karl Anton von Martini (1726–1800) and Franz von Zeiller (1751–1828). The seventh chapter (*Aufklärungserbe und Revolutionsabwehr: Selbst- und Feindbilder der Restauration*), the last major thematic unit of the book, analyses the confrontation between the camps of the *Josephiner* and the *Romantiker*, and their ideas about the revolution and those responsible for it. At the end of the monograph there are three shorter summarising and concluding chapters, which, especially the theoretical conclusion of the chapter *Was war Aufklärung?* serve as a very useful synthesis of what has been presented.

Franz Leander Fillafer's book is undoubtedly an important milestone in the study of the Central European Enlightenment. The volume is to be commended not only for its broad chronological and spatial scope, but also for the new research results, which have been developed with a precise methodology and which in many ways add nuance to our present knowledge, and which will certainly stimulate further research. The monograph provides a complex picture of the process and legacy of the Enlightenment in the Habsburg Monarchy—which, while not dominated by the radical Enlightenment, benefited from Enlightenment ideals much more than many historians have conceived, whether in the government, the Catholic Church or the universities—by revealing internal contradictions and differences of interest

and by purifying them from many contemporary and later historiographical judgements. The book is quite substantial in length, almost 650 pages, but if the reader is only interested in specific topics they will get comprehensive information by reading single chapters. An index of subjects and names helps one to find their way around the book. However, it is worth noting that, despite the author's narrative style and contextualising intentions, it is not an easy read, and a firm logical arc and a real understanding of some of the analyses require solid background knowledge. The Czech–Austrian context is the one most deeply rooted in the Central European region, and several chapters focus on the Hungarian and Croatian aspects, but there are only few examples from the Balkan and Transylvanian areas of the Habsburg Monarchy; furthermore, it would have been interesting to read more about the spread of the Enlightenment outside the academic and governmental spheres—for example, the changes in the curriculums of the gymnasiums or the problems of the Masonic movement. The reviewer's obligatory criticisms do not, of course, detract from the value of the monograph, which can be summarised as an attractive, well-illustrated volume that presents the results of very thorough and mature research. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of the Central European Enlightenment or the Habsburg Monarchy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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Hungarian Psychiatry, Society and Politics in the Long Nineteenth Century. By Emese Lafferton.

Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022. 442 pp.

Janka Kovács 

Independent researcher; csigaszem@gmail.com

Emese Lafferton's comprehensive account of the nineteenth-century history of Hungarian psychiatry, defended as a PhD dissertation in 2003 at Central European University, has certainly been eagerly awaited by historians of science and medicine for almost two decades. Being the first volume to approach the entangled questions of nation-building, medicalization, medical and psychiatric professionalization, and the challenges evoked by modernity and urbanization in a complex, multidimensional, and dynamic framework, Lafferton offers a contained and clear overview of the main transformations, institutions, debates, and actors shaping the landscape of Hungarian psychiatry in the nineteenth century in (not counting the introduction and the conclusion) seven well-focused chapters building primarily on printed materials.

The introduction promises a “uniquely interdisciplinary approach” (p. 2) to the world of psychiatric institutions and the intellectual history of concepts and theories of mental illness, as well as a micro-historical study of institutional practices and doctor–patient relationships, the struggle for the organization of a professional community, and its gradual engagement with social critique near the turn of the century fueled by theories of degeneration in a comparative, Austro–Hungarian perspective. However, and especially in the first half of the book focusing rather superficially on the development of psychiatric practices before the establishment of the first private and, subsequently, state-funded institutions for psychiatric care, the author in some measure falls short of her promises. While the book is certainly a good introduction to the most important issues surfacing in the organization of psychiatric care, to the internal struggles of the profession, and to psychiatrists' main social responsibilities, and even though the author rightly admits that the field is too vast to allow for an in-depth discussion of minute details, its undertakings are still over-ambitious. This is a problem rooted mostly in two major methodological oversights sometimes resulting in rather trivial deductions. Given the lack of thorough archival research and, more importantly, the fact that the author has largely ignored the latest results

in the field of medical history in both Hungary and Austria,¹ even though including fresh perspectives and more recent research could have to some extent balanced the primacy given to mostly normative, printed accounts on medical professionalization, institutionalization, and institutional practices, Lafferton's analyses and conclusions—certainly offering a novel and pioneering overview of the development of psychiatry in Hungary twenty years ago—sometimes seem rather unsubstantiated.

Chapter 2 offers a summary of the most significant problems and milestones of psychiatric professionalization and institutionalization in Hungary, starting with the self-image of late-nineteenth-century psychiatry through the reflections of formative psychiatrists, such as Ernő Moravcsik and Gusztáv Oláh, and psychiatry's entanglements with the 'national project', above all, the stake of the establishment of an asylum for Hungary viewed as a civilizing force. To underpin this argument, Lafferton briefly reviews the national histories of psychiatric development and their differences in Europe based on the by now classic and influential analyses and accounts of Michel Foucault, Roy Porter, Edward Shorter, Andrew Scull, and others. As for Central Europe, especially Austria, a region in the focus of the volume and, therefore, yielding a more dynamic and reflective interpretation, however, Lafferton only recounts a well-known, descriptive, and rather fixed narrative of psychiatric institutionalization from the establishment of the Viennese asylum, the so-called 'Narrenturm' through Bruno Görge's private institution in Döbling to the establishment of the first 'proper' asylum, the Imperial Royal Institution for the Treatment and Care of the Insane in Bründlfeld in mid-century, implementing at least partially the non-restraint system and the ideals of moral treatment. This chapter, similarly to most reflections on Austrian psychiatry later in the book, from education through the intellectual history of the theories of mental illness to institutionalization, relies heavily on the English translation of Erna Lesky's influential 1965 book,² an unquestionably important, but by today in many respects challenged account of the development of late eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century medicine in Austria, while contributions from the newer generation of historians of psychiatry, including Carlos Watzka, Elisabeth Dietrich-Daum, or Maria Heidegger,³ are overlooked.

1 The introduction mentions the works of Ferenc Erős, Pál Harmat, Csaba Pléh, Judit Mészáros, Júlia Gyimesi, and Melinda Kovai, but leaves out others who have been active in the research of the history of psychology and psychiatry for the past decades, among them Anna Borgos or Zolt K. Horváth.

2 Lesky, *Die Wiener medizinische Schule*. In English translation: Lesky, *The Vienna Medical School*.

3 See for example: Dietrich-Daum et al., eds, *Psychiatrische Landschaften*; Heidegger and Dietrich-Daum, "Die k. k. Provinzial-Irrenanstalt"; Heidegger and Seifert, "Nun ist aber der Zweck einer Irrenanstalt Heilung..."; Watzka, *Arme, Kranke, Verrückte*; Watzka, "Psychiatrische Anstalten in Österreich"; Watzka and Charour, eds, *VorFreud*.

In a similar vein, the sub-chapter discussing the Hungarian model of medicalization and psychiatric institutionalization up to the turn of the century, focusing on religious care, early state initiatives, and the long history of lobbying for an asylum, doctoral and hospital supply, medical and professional forums, the boom of psychiatric and medical institutions, and finally modern scientific research and professionalization between the 1870s and 1920s is merely an unsystematic review of older literature, including either historical reflections written at the turn of the century by eminent psychiatrists, among them László Epstein, Ernő Moravcsik, Gusztáv Oláh, and Kálmán Pándy, or largely descriptive summaries published after 1945, by, for example, György Gortvay and István Zsakó. While these articles are certainly informative, more problem-oriented literature on medical reforms, education, or the development of healthcare and the hospital network has since emerged, including books and articles by, for example, Lilla Krász and Balázs Pálvölgyi, or in the Austrian context, Martin Scheutz and Alfred Stefan Weiss,⁴ whose analyses would certainly have added to the depth of the discussion of these topics, similarly to religious care, a profoundly important practice from the point of view of psychiatric professionalization in the region, and a fairly well-researched area since the early 2000s.⁵

Following the summary of general trends, Chapter 3 zooms in on the first proper mental asylum in Hungary, established as a private enterprise by Ferenc Schwartz in 1850 in Vác and moved to Buda two years later, subsequently playing an important role in mental normalization up to the early twentieth century. The chapter recounts the circumstances of creating a private asylum, reflecting on an earlier attempt in the 1840s by József Pólya, and then, based on Ferenc Schwartz's 1858 book, *A lelki betegségek általános kór- és gyógytana, törvényszéki lélektannal* [General Pathology and Treatment of Disorders of the Soul, with Forensic Pathology], the first comprehensive account of concepts of mental illness in Hungarian, Lafferton reconstructs Schwartz's rather eclectic vision of mental illnesses in the mid-nineteenth century within the context of the medical culture of Vienna and Pest based on Lesky's earlier cited volume, reviewing the conflict of reformist and traditionalist thinking in medical education, the traditions of Romantic psychiatry, and the growing influence of neurology and patho-anatomical findings. Lafferton considers Schwartz's book a "*unique*"⁶ mixture of medical and psychological traditions and

4 See for example: Krász, "From Home Treatment to Hospitalisation"; Krász, "A mesterség szolgálatában"; Pálvölgyi, *A magyar közegészségügyi közigazgatás*; Scheutz and Weiss, *Das Spital in der Frühen Neuzeit*.

5 See for example: Watzka, *Vom Hospital zum Krankenhaus*; Watzka and Jelínek, "Krankenhäuser in Mitteleuropa"; Jelínek, ed., *Germanische Provinz*; Kovács, "Szegénység, betegség, örület."

6 Italics are mine.

[...] remarkably idiosyncratic and eclectic in nature” (pp. 109–110), even though contemporary medical literature, and especially literature used in medical education in the first half of the nineteenth century and, thus, having shaped the first years of Schwartzter’s professional socialization, as well as contemporary medicine’s concern with the nature of the psyche and mental illnesses, show the same eclecticism. Schwartzter uses most of the commonplaces which had a long tradition in medical and early psychological literature, and therefore should not be considered unique, but rather deeply embedded in and reflective of contemporary traditions in Hungary and elsewhere in the Habsburg Monarchy.⁷ The remainder of the chapter focuses on the ideals of moral treatment and their implementation in the therapeutic setting of the Schwartzter asylum based on Ferenc Schwartzter and his colleagues’ summaries and reflections on the statistics, therapeutical aims, and regulations of the asylum, emphasizing that the institution was instrumental in training a generation of alienists (asylum doctors) who shaped the development of Hungarian psychiatry in the subsequent decades, among them Károly Bolyó, Gyula Niedermann, Károly Laufenauer, Károly Lechner, and Schwartzter’s son, Ottó Babarczi Schwartzter.

Chapter 4, largely through the operation of the above-mentioned alienists, systematically reviews the development of state-run asylums, especially the Lipótmező Royal National Asylum opened after decades of struggle in 1868 and its life under directors Emil Schnirch, Gyula Niedermann, Károly Bolyó, Jenő Konrád, and Gusztáv Oláh. Though the chapter partly relies on original archival documents from the archive of the National Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology closed in 2007, the documents are not properly referenced (neither is there a general description of the material, nor are titles or dates given when single documents are cited). Thus, the reader cannot always infer from the notes which conclusions are based on these immensely valuable and still available sources.⁸ Though an in-depth original analysis of the documentation would have been enormously important as the archive is accessible, Lafferton seems to restrict her focus on a descriptive summary of printed accounts and secondary literature, as she does in previous chapters. Nevertheless, she still raises a number of questions, among them the issue of the transfer of knowledge between leading Western European asylums and Hungarian institutions (a fashionable and widely researched area in the history of science today) that remain largely unexplored, but can give impetus to new research in the field.

7 On early psychological knowledge in medical education, see: Kovács, “Az orvostudomány »legsetébb mezeje«”.

8 Contrary to the author’s claims that the documentation has been inaccessible since the institution was closed (180, footnote 12), the archive of the National Institute of Psychiatry and Neurology is held by the National Healthcare Service Center in Budapest and is accessible to researchers.

A glimpse into the everyday life of asylums is provided through the analysis of the practices of coercion, restraint, and discipline. Here, Lafferton compellingly argues, based partly on original patient files, that “therapeutic aim [...] clashed with the custodial reality of institutions” (p. 160), and even if theories of moral management were widely known by alienists, their implementation in practice was problematic. The last part of the chapter dwells on this problem, systematically reviewing the legal regulation of admission, the double system of admission and guardianship, and discharge from asylums. However, while aiming to reconstruct the clash of legal regulations and everyday practices, the author juxtaposes only legal sources instead of using the actual documentation of the asylum to reveal the ‘reality’ of asylum life.

Another area vital to the development of psychiatric practices, the university clinic, and the birth of biological psychiatry is in the focus of Chapter 5, which recounts the prelude to the establishment of the Department of Mental Health and Pathology in 1882 and its threefold role in teaching, research, and therapy from the 1880s in a comparative European context reflecting on French, British, German, and Austrian traditions. The scientific-based experimental medical culture of Germany and its research-oriented practices exerted a great influence on both Austrian and Hungarian medicine via cultural transfers, while the establishment of the clinic was necessitated by practical factors, namely the inadequacies of public asylums and internal professional needs, as professionalization required the foundation of university departments where both the production of knowledge and its transmission were simultaneously possible. In Hungary, due to the lack of financial resources, the insufficiency of the institutional infrastructure, and the emerging conflicts between asylum doctors and clinicians, discussed also in Chapter 6, meant a constant struggle for resources and the rivalry of approaches, finally giving way to emerging studies on neuro-anatomical research at Károly Laufenauer’s clinic and hypnosis studies sparking serious controversies at Ernő Jendrassik’s ward at the Second Clinic of Internal Medicine.

A rather descriptive summary in Chapter 6 concentrates on the emerging new institutions battling the influx of incurable patients and hopeless cases, which led to the over-crowdedness of asylums from the 1880s onwards. This was in strong connection with the emergence of therapeutic nihilism characterizing late-nineteenth-century psychiatry in Europe and also in Hungary, stemming mostly from the same general problems. This pessimistic view of the role of asylums in therapy urged psychiatrists to look for alternative solutions, which led to the fragmentation and specialization of psychiatric care. By the turn of the century, four large state-run institutions were opened in Sibiu (Nagyszeben, Hermannstadt) (1863), Lipótmező (1868), Angyalföld (1884), and Nagykálló (1896), but the number of patients awaiting admission and the low numbers of institutionalization necessitated other cheaper and more viable options to make up for the shortcomings of large nineteenth-century asylums. From the turn of the

nineteenth century onwards, as a (seemingly) cheaper option, annex asylums (wards in general hospitals) were opened, sparking criticism in professional circles, while family care and colonies providing more humane care for patients suffering from less serious conditions proved to be both therapeutically and economically more successful.

The fragmentation or specialization of psychiatric care is more evident in the proliferation of smaller institutions focusing on the treatment of certain groups of patients, such as imbeciles or idiots, the deaf and dumb, epileptics, alcoholics, or nervous patients, all being private enterprises offering care mostly for well-to-do 'customers' of the—to borrow William Parry-Jones's term—"trade in lunacy"⁹ (and other ailments). The only state-funded specialized institution opened in the late nineteenth century was the National Observation and Mental Hospital for Persons in Detention and Prisons, originally established for 140 patients. Here, the 'real troublemakers' of mental asylums were admitted, the instigators of conflicts having a criminal background (pre-trial detainees and prisoners), who needed special nursing and more surveillance. Financial problems, however, hindered the establishment of more progressive institutions fulfilling therapeutic ideals, demonstrating the limits of traditional institutional psychiatric care by the turn of the century.

Chapter 7 focusing on asylum statistics and the social composition of patients is perhaps the most original study in the volume. Based on published statistics and a systematic survey of (unreferenced) patient files, Lafferton compellingly argues that the impact of social factors on mental health necessitated the entrance of psychiatrists into the arena of public discourses on social problems discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, while refuting some age-old claims prevalent in nineteenth-century psychiatric literature and even the (not-so-recent) historiography of psychiatry. The author zooms in on two of these claims in more detail. Firstly, she discusses that madness, according to Elaine Showalter's influential 1985 study, *The Female Malady* emerged as a 'female problem' by the 1850s, asserting that women were overrepresented in both cultural representations of madness and institutional statistics. As Lafferton convincingly argues, this does not hold for the Hungarian case, where a large proportion of patients suffered from *paralysis progressiva* as a consequence of syphilis. Thus, in the light of asylum statistics, the author concludes, madness did not depend on biology, but gender-specific social conditions and resulting medical problems. Secondly, the popular medical idea of 'Jewish nervousness' is refuted based on statistics, the analysis of social factors, and the related unequal access to medical care in fin-de-siècle Hungary: while in fact, there is a strong overrepresentation of Jews in the Lipótméző case files and statistics, this is due largely to the overrepresentation of urban dwellers and bourgeois intellectuals in the patient population, rather than to biological factors.

9 Parry-Jones, *The Trade in Lunacy*.

Strongly related to issues raised in connection with asylum statistics, Chapter 8 focuses on how psychiatric expertise and knowledge moved into the arena of the discourse on social problems, and, following Elizabeth Lunbeck's¹⁰ approach, explores how the psychiatric perspective became prevalent in society, detaching itself from psychiatric institutions. Based on medical literature produced at the turn of the century, Lafferton calls attention to a significant shift of psychiatrists' understanding of their own function in society and the roles they undertook in actively battling emerging social problems related to suicide, crime, or alcoholism, for example, by engaging in temperance movements. A case in point of this issue, discussed in more detail by Lafferton, is the problem of shell shock and traumatic neurosis, an issue that—in most of Europe—medical professionals could not overlook after the World War I. These were problems entangled with questions of patriotism, masculinity, national versus individual interests, and the social and economic consequences of war and the trauma written into the psyche of soldiers returning from the battlefields. In Hungary, as in most European countries, psychiatric professionals were split over both the etiology of the disease (neurological, degenerationist, and psychoanalytical interpretations) and, consequently, the best possible therapeutic options.

All in all, and my critical remarks notwithstanding, Emese Lafferton's comprehensive volume on nineteenth-century Hungarian psychiatry, and this is especially true for the second, more concentrated and measured part of the book focusing mostly on the turn of the century, offers a good introduction and important insights into issues of psychiatric professionalization and the institutionalization of psychiatric care in Hungary, highlighting the most significant debates, as well as financial, infrastructural, and professional struggles around establishing and operating well-functioning therapeutic spaces from private asylums through state-funded institutions to university clinics. It is an undisputable merit of the author that she has systematically collected and organized the most important printed sources related to the history of psychiatry from the second half of the nineteenth century, and thus provides the first overarching narrative in Hungarian historiography on the development of psychiatry in the period. It offers a useful manual for researchers engaging in related topics and—hopefully—more thorough archival research will follow in both Hungarian and Austrian collections that could either complement or challenge the narrative delineated by Lafferton. Nevertheless, it should be repeatedly emphasized that the use of literature produced by various Hungarian and Austrian researchers in the past twenty years and the incorporation of their results based largely on extensive archival research could have added more depth to the analyses, could have led to more substantiated conclusions, and would probably have resulted in a volume more embedded in the current trends of Hungarian and Austrian medical and psychiatric historiography.

10 Lunbeck, *The Psychiatric Persuasion*.

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The Habsburg Monarchy and Austria–Hungary Between Global and Comparative History

The Habsburg Empire: A New History. By Pieter M. Judson.
Cambridge, Mass: The Belnap Pres of Harvard University Press,
2016. 567 pp.

The Rise of Comparative History: Perspectives on Transnational
History in East Central Europe and Beyond. A Reader. Edited
by Balázs Trencsényi, Constantin Iordachi, and Péter Apor.
Budapest: Central European University Press, 2021. 418 pp.

John R. Lampe

The University of Maryland, College Park, 3111 Francis Scott Key Hall, College Park, MD 20742, USA;
jrlampe@umd.edu

This review article examines two conflicting approaches to nineteenth-century Habsburg history. The relatively new but now widely applied framework of global history reaches beyond the nation-state to empires and transnational, preferably transcontinental connections. Pieter Judson calls his magisterial volume *A New History*. As detailed below, he concentrates on transnational social and cultural connections within its borders and into the wider world. Like the general practice of global history, the diplomacy of great power politics and the domestic conflicts of party politics are barely mentioned.

The longer standing approach, particularly to the post-1867 framework of Austria–Hungary, is comparative history. Its interwar founding fathers, as represented in the first section of a new reader (*The Rise of Comparative History*, edited by Trencsényi, Iordachi and Apor, pp. 61–142) focus instead on comparing the economic and social history of near neighbours. The selections from Henri Pirenne, Henri Sée, and more explicitly from Marc Bloch spell out the attraction of comparing similar cases in order to identify the differences. Austria and Hungary, 1867–1914, compiled an ample record of separate economic statistics and elected bodies to invite this approach. The invitation to compare the foreign policies of the competing European powers before 1914 is of even longer standing in scholarship too

voluminous to mention. Let us consider the wider base of these two approaches and then weigh their usefulness in appraising the much-debated prospects for what became Austria–Hungary from 1867. Taken together, they suggest a peacetime balance between imperial unity and Austrian and Hungarian division that preserved the Dual Monarchy until it was undone by their joint failings in World War I.

I.

Empires rather than nation-states have attracted the attention of the new global history, spreading widely in English-language scholarship since the 1990s. As recently summarized by Sebastian Conrad, this new approach has grown up as a critique not only of Eurocentrism but also of the ethnically based nation-state.¹ While denying the dominance of the European model makes little sense for East Central Europe, a case can be made for devaluing the nation-state in the face of minority abuses by its ethnic majority. Conrad details the current predominance of global history in Anglo-American scholarship and English-language publication. He welcomes its emphasis on empire as the major political model over time and space since the ancient world. Empires are credited with having lasted longer than the modern nation states, accepting migration and promoting transnational transfer among a multi-ethnic population and with the wider world through trade and cultural transfer. He acknowledges that the approach began in the 1970s with the world-systems theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, making the West European empires the capitalist core for the profitable exploitation of its overseas colonies from the early modern period forward. Conrad makes no mention of subsequent statistical evidence from economic historians that, individual profits side, the core economies did not generally profit from their colonies.² But he joins the new global historians in discounting world systems theory as a Eurocentric argument that relies on the sociology of modernization as a one-way street for Westernization. They focus instead on the social-as-cultural framework that allows them to range across empires as diverse, distant and undocumented, for Conrad, for example, as the Mongols and the Native American Comanches.³ Their approach has however concentrated on the modern European overseas empires and the post-colonial burdens and reciprocal transfers with non-Western continents, now dubbed the Global South.

Pieter Judson introduces his new Habsburg history as an account of state-building, its imperial centre connecting a multitude of multi-ethnic elites and

1 Conrad, *What is Global History?*

2 See a summary of recent research: Austin, “Economic Imperialism.”

3 Conrad, *What is Global History*, 185–204.

communities, rather than the nation-building that has long been identified with the resident ethnic groups (pp. 3–4). He begins with the single Austrian monarchy of the eighteenth century and its consolidation under Emperors Maria Teresa and Joseph II. He emphasizes the liberal reforms under the authoritarian regime from which flowed the suppression of the 1848 revolutions, and then explores the imperial and also global binding that continued under the Dual Monarchy of Austria–Hungary from 1867 to 1918. His focus on multi-ethnic imperial history is indeed a new approach for East Central European historiography, as it is for Southeastern Europe. In her own magisterial volume, originally published in German, Marie-Janine Calic tracks the transnational, even trans-imperial features that spread, typically from multi-ethnic ports or trade centres, from the early modern period forward; so does a recent, revisionist history of the Ottoman Empire and its European credentials.⁴ And from regional scholars comes a volume of essays on the imperial and transnational projects of Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek origin in the nineteenth century.⁵ None were realized, but all three were based on ethnic predominance and the assimilation of Croats and Bosnian Muslims for the Serbs or Macedonians. The abuse of these ethnic presumptions in World War II and the Wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution opened the way for this scholarly repair of reputation for the multi-ethnic Habsburg and Ottoman Empires, often disparaged since World War I.

Starting almost a century ahead of any Ottoman reform, the Cameralist consolidation of central authority over previously autonomous kingdoms under Empress Maria Theresa from the 1750s were followed by the land reforms of Joseph II in the 1780s. Judson points to her creation of a single supreme court in Vienna and the efforts of her ministers to staff state institutions with an educated civil service. Enlightenment ideas, Masonic lodges, and popular education were welcomed, and the restrictive Jesuit Order banned in 1773. The start of land reform, the abolishing of internal tariffs and a first census were also part of what Judson calls state-building (pp. 28–42). Joseph II paid even more attention to administrative regulation and its reform than did his mother. Acknowledging her anti-Semitism while not mentioning her expulsion of Prague's Jews in 1745, Judson details Joseph's decision to emancipate the Jewish population growing after the annexation of Galicia in 1772. His disputed efforts to make German the state language and end the use of Latin in Hungarian territory receive equal attention. His regime relaxed censorship but also established a secret state security service. Missing from Judson's account is the

4 Calic, *The Great Caldron*, 2–4; Baer, *The Ottomans: Khans, Caesars and Caliphs*, 6–8. Baer argues that the Ottoman Empire should not be judged as backward by Eurocentric standards but was a constituent part of the European experience, ranging from modernization to transnational connections beyond the conventional continental borders.

5 Stamatopolos, ed., *Imagined Empires*.

continuing fiscal focus of the German Cameralism imported to centralize Austrian state administration in response to Prussia's seizure of Silesia in 1740. No statistical tables are presented here, or elsewhere in the book, to show tax rates and collection, the balance of state budgets or of foreign trade. Nor is the Cameralist ideology of state-supported import substitution and state-controlled economic growth, which went beyond the trade-centred mercantilism of export surpluses and gold reserves identified with early modern Spain, France, and England.

Not missing is the attention, often omitted in standard scholarship, to the subsequent regimes of Leopold and his son Francis. In the two years before his death in 1792, Marie Antionette's brother Leopold not only dismantled some of Joseph's centralizing reforms and Hungarian restrictions but also convened provincial diets in the name of representing their nations. But in Bohemia and elsewhere he saw those nations only as their titled elites. His son Francis began as Francis II of the Holy Roman Empire but by 1806 had become Francis I of the Austrian Empire. He resisted constitutional reform and popular patriotism but not further administrative centralization including loyalty oaths for the growing bureaucracy. Acknowledging these restraints, Judson still finds the empire after the Napoleonic wars and occupations united by a common culture that stood above the disparate, largely peasant communities as protection against their local lords and elites (p. 101). His same appreciation of an educated state bureaucracy and the rule of law under a civil code enacted in 1811 continues through the oppressive political regime and censorship under Klemens von Metternich, his position as State Chancellor never identified. Absent here, Metternich's role in restricting domestic reform, reinforced under the reactionary aegis of Francis I, remains prominent in the recent Habsburg history of Robin Okey as well as in previous historiography.⁶ This lack of attention to political leaders in favour of social conditions is common practice for global history. Okey joins Judson in acknowledging the considerable economic progress by 1848 under the imperial framework of railroad construction and a free market for middle-class private enterprise. Judson does amply reference the standard scholarship in covering the various conflicts in the revolutionary year of 1848. Then he steps away from much of it by concluding that the 1848 revolutions were essentially a set of demands to restructure the existing empire, leaving the insurrections in Hungary and the northern Italian region aside as exceptions to the rule (p. 136).

The centrepiece of Judson's argument for a liberal empire is his chapter "Mid-Century Modern", focusing on the reforms of the 1850s under the young Emperor Franz Joseph and his Minister of Justice and Interior Aleksander von Bach. Previous scholarship has concentrated on Bach's repressive political control and centralization extending even to Hungary. Okey calls it neo-absolutism, similar to the

6 See: Okey, *The Habsburg Monarchy*, 68–98.

Hungarian and Austrian historiography. Like previous standard scholarship, Okey traces the constitutional compromise of 1867 to the stirrings of pluralism by Bach's successors in the early 1860s followed by the empire's military defeat by Prussia in 1866. The two agree on the economic modernization led by Commerce Minister Bruck, ranging from the abolition of guilds, property rights extended to the peasantry, and to an internal customs union. The market economy spread further with an agreement with the German *Zollverein* and the transfer of railroad construction to private enterprise. Okey details the financial problems of Crimean War expenses and the European depression of 1857, but Judson moves past them to the visual representation of the Emperor and the Empire as social ties that held into the political turbulence of the 1860s⁷ (pp. 218–68). Judson's chapter nonetheless concludes with a well referenced account of how liberal Diet representatives and liberal newspapers in Vienna and Budapest prevailed against imperial authority after the army's defeat by Bismarck's German Confederation in 1866. The Emperor was forced to accept the compromise settlement (*Ausgleich*) of 1867, creating Austria–Hungary.

With foreign policy and military authority left to the Emperor, the *Ausgleich* also established a common army and financial procedures. The terms were subject to renegotiation by a joint delegation every 10 years. Under separate constitutions, the settlement for the Dual Monarchy made Franz Joseph King of Hungary while remaining the Emperor in the Austrian Crownlands. Judson instructively notes the Crownlands' experience with local councils and chambers of commerce as a positive step in the Bach era and a separate section is devoted to "Independent Hungary". Such separate attention is conspicuously absent in the subsequent chapters on Austria–Hungary. These chapters deal with culture wars and nationalist political conflicts, rather than the "conflicting nationalities" blamed for the inevitable breakup of the Dual Monarchy from the interwar work of Oscar Jászi forward.⁸ Judson joins a volume of essays from Hungarian historians in detailing the overriding social connections. Imperial celebration and architecture, and a common high culture helped to tie the empire together under Franz Joseph.⁹ Judson also acknowledges the parliamentary predominance of largely loyal landed nobility, especially in Hungary. Its plurality continued elections there, even after the expansion of the very narrow Austrian franchise in 1907 was not extended in Hungary to most of the peasantry. Little attention is however paid to the political conflicts over a common framework for two economies and the question of the army. They are the stuff of a comparative history of Austria and Hungary, to which this article now turns.

7 Okey, *Habsburg Monarchy: From Enlightenment to Eclipse*, 138–68.

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

9 Ránki and Pók, eds. *Hungary and European Civilization*.

II.

The Introduction to the new Reader on comparative history (pp. 1–30) points out that the new global history generally neglects East Central and Southeastern Europe. Despite its prolonged division between the multi-ethnic empires attractive to this approach, the authors worry that a region with no colonies across several continents and no credentials as part of either the West or Global South is typically left out of narratives that favour post-colonial or subaltern studies. Before World War I, it was instead the denial of the Western credentials to Southeastern Europe that had begun to attract comparative scholarship, separating the backward Balkans from Central Europe, the Dual Monarchy included. The interwar emergence of small nation-states replacing the Austro–Hungarian, Ottoman, German, and Russian empires generated more publication comparing them, some of it asserting one state’s more Western credentials than its neighbours. With Germany’s defeat in World War II, the designation of Central Europe gave way to Eastern Europe during the Cold War that followed. The new Communist regimes invited comparison not only with each other, Yugoslavia included, but with non-Communist Greece or Western Europe. East–West comparisons continued after the collapse of the Communist regimes in 1989. Set in a common political framework, comparative history for this Eastern Europe concentrated on the growing body of economic statistics both from the region and from alternative Western calculations. This concentration coincided with the rise of comparative economic history on both sides of the political divide. Joint publication based on country comparisons followed in the region’s interwar economic history.¹⁰

Starting with the West European struggles to recover from World War I, its comparative economic history received new attention from the work of Henri Pirenne forward. His aim was to overcome pre-war national exclusiveness and lament the economic division of his native Belgium from the Netherlands (“Henri Pirenne, On the Comparative Method in History”, pp. 65–66). After World War II, the long British interest in their own Industrial Revolution joined with French desire to demonstrate a comparable advance and German interest in disputing the post-1945 idea of its own *Sonderweg* leading to the Nazi regime. Drawing on historians from all these, the most comprehensive project was *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*; its ten volumes reach from the Middle Ages to World War II. Volume VIII provides a lengthy contribution from Scott Eddie. Eddie’s analysis supported by 13 statistical tables provides a systematic comparison of the economic history of Austria and Hungary under the Dual Monarchy.¹¹ Okey devotes an entire chapter to comparing the two economies, drawing on the work of David F. Good,

10 See for instance the two collaborative interwar volumes in Kaser and Radice, eds, *The Economic History of Eastern Europe, 1919–1975*.

11 Eddie, “Economic Policy and Economic Development in Austria–Hungary, 1867–1913.”

John Komlos, and Hungarian economic historians; more recently, we have comparative chapters in edited volumes of regional monetary and financial history to 1914.¹² The growing rivalry between the two sets of political parties and within their ranks over these economic issues have long been addressed in standard scholarship. But none of this statistical record or party rivalry appear in Judson's work or for that matter in Calic's and Baer's books on the Balkans and the Ottoman Empire.

A comparative history of Austria and Hungary provides the following account of disputed support for a common army and the decennial renegotiation of a customs union and common tariffs. They fed political rivalries that divided the Dual Monarchy and put its survival in jeopardy even before World War I. Their challenge to the Habsburg Monarchy should at the start be balanced against earlier initiatives that evolved after 1867 to the advantage of a unified empire. A single bank of currency issue, founded in 1816 as the Privileged Austrian National Bank, became the Austro-Hungarian National Bank but remained in Vienna. The stability of a single currency was secured by the informal adoption of the gold standard in 1892 and then the use of monetary policy in the forward exchange market to protect gold reserves. Good makes a case for convergence not only on the basis of common enterprise incorporation and bank-industry ties but also for market integration from the narrowing of differences in interest rates between them, clearly between the Austrian Crownlands and at least some Hungarian cities.¹³ The professional staffing of the ministries with a new class of educated bureaucrats also became standard practice. They prided themselves on administrative efficiency within the existing political framework. They also helped to deny the royal leverage over military funding that Bismarck had used to his advantage in Prussia. They were also freed after its revocation in 1875 from the religious leverage that the 1855 Concordant with the Catholic Church had provided. Public education was then free to rise to the highest European level. But here the Hungarian commitment was only to spread literacy and schooling in the Hungarian language. It was already required in county government business despite the Nationality Law of 1868 guaranteeing local language rights. This framework for a Hungarian nation-state faced a population then less than half Hungarian. Between 1890 and 1914, the pressures and advantages of assimilation had added one million people, largely German, Slovak, or Jewish, to a Hungarian population that was still less than 55 percent of the total.¹⁴

12 Jobst and Scheiber, "Austria-Hungary from 1863 to 1914". On the earlier work, see: Okey, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 228–50; Good, *Economic Rise*, 96–256; Komlos, *The Habsburg Monarchy as a Customs Union*, 198.

13 Good, *Economic Rise*, 116–21. On the use of foreign exchange to stabilize currency value, see: Jobst, "Market leader."

14 Jewish assimilation was encouraged by the economically liberal Hungarian constitution that

A series of economic disjunctures between and within the two halves of the Dual Monarchy also worked against its consolidation as a modern market economy and pushed ahead the political conflicts that threatened its survival even before the outbreak of World War I. The political threat came from the burden to co-existence imposed by an Austrian empire of competing Crownlands and a Hungarian Kingdom whose leaders saw it as an independent nation-state except for the acceptance of Franz Joseph as its king. These disjunctures went beyond the requirement under the *Ausgleich* that the customs union between Austria and Hungary be renegotiated by a joint delegation every ten years. The respective shares of joint expenses were also re-examined. The tax burdens in the two halves and among the Austrian Crownlands further engaged the political parties that were taking shape despite the limited franchise. The more prosperous northern Austrian and Czech Crownlands paid far more in the common indirect taxes on consumption than they received in state expenditures. The common state budget used these surpluses to cover the deficits in the southern provinces like Carinthia and Dalmatia, or Galicia to the east. The northern objections may be compared to the complaints from Slovenia and Croatia in the former Yugoslavia. Here, seeking the same confederal rights as the two Yugoslav republics would, the fiscal imbalance strengthened Czech support for a third subdivision of the Dual Monarchy to provide the same rights as Hungary.

The greater strains came from the separate procedures and interests of Cis-Leitanian Austria and Trans-Leitanian Hungary as they were called after a river dividing the two halves of the Monarchy. Tax burdens and trade patterns joined the familiar decennial debate on tariff rates as major points of conflict between their two delegations. From 1867, the division for funding the common budget was set at 70 percent for the Austrian side and 30 percent for the Hungarian side. This proportion reflected the significantly larger Austrian national product. Almost all of this common budget was devoted in one way or another to the military, but population determined the share of Austrian and Hungarian troops in the common army. Given the significant increases in both totals by the census of 1900, the need to reach agreement on the two annual drafts plus other army issues created a decade of dispute from 1902 forward over the annual military bill for the common budget. Its passage became a subject for repeated conflict in the common parliament and in the separate Austrian and Hungarian bodies. Only intervention from the Emperor broke several of the deadlocks. His support allowed the Austrian resistance to the main Hungarian demand for Hungarian officers in Hungarian units and the use of Hungarian in their all Trans-Leitanian units. But the Austrian demands for

removed anti-Semitic restrictions in return. Another two million non-Hungarians were at least able to speak Magyar. Zsuppan, "The Hungarian Political Scene," 105; Okey, *Habsburg Monarchy*, 215–16.

higher pay for a largely Austrian officer core were frustrated in turn by Hungarian opposition.

Any compromise between the two delegations was also limited by divisions within the two sides. By the 1907 elections for the Austrian lower house of the *Reichsrat*, the majority of Austrian German votes were divided between the emerging Social Democrats and Christian Social Party with the traditional Liberal Nationalists still holding the largest number of seats. There were similar divisions among the Czechs and the seven smaller ethnic groups holding over half of the seats. In Hungarian parliamentary elections, the long-ruling Liberal Party lost its majority to a new and uncompromising Independence Party in 1905 but won it back as a reconstituted and less compromising Party of Work in 1910. These internal rivalries encouraged the hardest line in dealing with the rival demands over the common army. The Emperor and his designated successor Franz Ferdinand stood firm against any language concession for the common army. The Hungarian side was also unable to win approval for its own central bank, a right more clearly associated with a separate nation-state. The Austrian side also won higher officers' salaries in return for raising the Hungarian obligation to the common budget by two percent. By the end of this last peacetime decade, neither political spectrum was internally unified or comfortable with the other, as previous scholarship has long made clear.¹⁵

The larger and more industrialized Austrian economy ran a consistent export surplus in its trade with Hungary, enough to compensate for deficits in its external trade. Austrian textiles and machinery were exchanged for Hungarian grain, flour, and meat. The Hungarian Delegation used the decennial tariff renegotiations of 1876, 1886, 1896, and 1906 to press for higher tariffs on the competing agricultural exports of Romania and Serbia.¹⁶ They pushed the Dual Monarchy into tariff wars with Romania in 1886 and Serbia in 1906. Both were unsuccessful, only cutting Austrian imports from both of them until withdrawing the restrictions. More importantly, the Hungarian side used the bargaining to seek concessions in the frustrated struggle noted above to establish the use of Hungarian as an alternative language of command to German in the common army. In the 1906–1907 negotiations, the Hungarians did win a doubling of the tariff on foreign grain imports, thereby increasing the price of Hungarian grain, its main export to the Austrian economy which rose substantially. Austrian textile and machine sales to Hungary had already been similarly protected by import tariffs. Hungarian machinery sales to the common army were promised but

15 For instructive accounts of the divisive political decade, see Boyer, *Culture and Political Crisis*, 102–31; Zsuppán, “The Hungarian Political Scene.”

16 Full details comparing the foreign trade of the two halves of the Dual Monarchy may be found in the analysis and statistical tables in Eddie, “Economic Policy and Economic development,” 824–44.

their quotas were never met. On the Austrian side, the dispute with Serbia confirmed the loss of a major contract for its main arms manufacturer Škoda to a French rival, bringing two large French loans to cover the cost by 1907–1908. Serbian meat-packing and alternate markets through Salonika compensated for the veterinary ban on Serbian livestock that launched the tariff war. An often-neglected consequence for Austrian foreign trade was the denial of its needed agricultural imports and the reduction of the already small share of the Dual Monarchy's imports in the European total to barely 5 percent by 1910.¹⁷

III.

Serbian survival promoted its confrontation with the Monarchy's imperial centre, the Emperor, his Foreign Minister and the army leadership that would lead to World War I. Frustration with Serbian ambitions for Bosnia had persuaded Emperor Franz Joseph and his Foreign Minister Alois Aehrenthal to approve the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 and push Serbia into a presumed Russian alliance. Franz Joseph did resist the pressures for war with Serbia from the common army's Chief of Staff, General Franz Conrad von Hötzendorf, dismissing him in 1911. The Monarchy's credentials as a major European power were further threatened after Serbia's victories in the two Balkan Wars of 1912–1913. Its reputation rose in Bosnia and the Monarchy's other southern borderlands. The new Foreign Minister, Leopold Berchtold, joined the Great Powers' European Concert in peace talks but lost faith in joint diplomacy after it failed to impose its full demands on Serbia after the Second Balkan War. Less confident than his predecessor, he turned away from Aehrenthal's aversion to closer ties with Germany and quickly restored Conrad to his position as army Chief of Staff.¹⁸

Austria-Hungary's war with Serbia in response to the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in 1914 followed from decisions in this imperial chain of command. As Judson acknowledges, it was only in foreign and military policy that imperial authority remained unchecked. He does call attention to growing resentment in the military leadership of the rival and assertive civilian bureaucracy. It was indeed growing in Vienna and each of the Crownlands. He calls their demands for increased funding a first July crisis in that fateful month of 1914, possibly at the army budget's expense. The Austrian diplomatic demand to punish Serbia for its responsibility for the Archduke's assassination created the more familiar July crisis. Pressure mounted

17 Eddie, "Economic Policy and Development", 88–89, Table 107.

18 See the dean of Western historians of Austro-Hungarian diplomatic history, Bridge, "The Foreign Policy of the Monarchy."

within the Foreign Ministry by the last week in July to present an unacceptable ultimatum to Serbia that would justify a declaration of war. His brief description of this week centres on the desire of the army leadership for war, neglecting the long diplomatic exchanges with Germany that ended with Kaiser Wilhelm's endorsement of an unacceptable ultimatum. Nor does he mention that Conrad himself pressed for some weeks' delay in mobilization for war through July because of the absence on summer leave of common army units from a dozen districts across the Monarchy. The diplomatic efforts, the subject of so much subsequent scholarship, ended only in strengthening the younger hardliners in the Austrian Foreign Ministry and reliance on an Austrian–German alliance that grew under Berchtold's less resistant leadership as Foreign Minister.¹⁹ Judson's account moves on quickly to condemn the army leadership not for its inept Serbian and Italian campaigns but for replacing civilian authority with repressive martial law once war was declared. (pp. 389–91) He calls the military's assumption of dictatorial powers and the suspension of the common parliament and the Crownland Diets in Austria “a fundamental break in Austro-Hungarian history” (pp. 390–93). The Hungarian parliament remained in session, under the leadership of István Tisza. He had resisted an immediate declaration of war and any prospect of occupying Serbian territory permanently. Judson does not comment on the momentum from a sitting parliament for declaring Hungary's full independence in October 1918.

The fateful chain of these events began, as argued above, with a set of internal economic disputes between the Austrian imperial framework and Hungarian representatives. Before the war, they had used the decennial trade negotiations to preserve the large urban Austrian access to Hungarian grain in the customs union as means to assert their language rights as a separate state at least in the common army. During the war, the multi-ethnic common army held together the Monarchy, minus only the Monarchy's Serbs, until 1917, when some Poles and Czechs joined Romanians from Transylvania in going over to the Russians. From the start, the two halves of the economy faced an Allied blockade and common domestic problems in mobilizing resources from the civilian economy. They ranged from the mobilization of troops needed for the industrial and agricultural workforce to a shortage of rolling stock and coal to maintain their two rail networks. Only economic as well as military dependence on the German ally sustained its campaigns after initial defeats, as a comparative history of the two war efforts makes clear.²⁰

19 For the most detailed account of the tangled diplomacy of July 1914, pushing Foreign Minister Berchtold and Austrian diplomats to press for attacking Serbia before the army high command could agree, see: Martel, *The Month that Changed the World, July, 1914*. For his review of the immense literature on the causes of World War I, see 401–31.

20 See: Herwig, *The First World War*, 149–64, 204–17, 230–44, 337–46, 365–73 on the Austrian

Comparing the problems posed by its two economies receives more attention than the common strains noted above in the analysis and statistical tables of a recent appraisal of the Dual Monarchy's war economy.²¹ The pre-war problem of providing the huge surplus of Hungarian grain needed for Austrian cities soon reappeared. Arguments between the two sides began in 1914. As the demands of a war economy to supply the troops with food increased, the flow of Hungarian grain to Austrian cities declined. By 1915, the flow mainly to the army was reduced to less than 20 percent of the pre-war total and by 1917 to only two percent. Tisza even authorized some grain sales to Germany as a way of forcing Austrian concessions on the use of Hungarian troops. Finally granting an Austrian demand for a Joint Food Committee in 1917, Tisza did not increase the deliveries to starving Vienna. Ironically, Austrian representatives could only turn to Germany for emergency supplies, thereby increasing the dependence on the German alliance that the new Emperor Karl vainly sought to break.²²

Whether the common cultural mage and social experience of a single empire could have survived without war is surely conceivable. Austria–Hungary would have faced another decennial conflict in 1917 but with the younger reforming Emperor in whom Judson based hopes for a revived legitimacy in a federalist framework (pp. 417–28). But whether it or any of the continent's other three land-based, multi-ethnic empires could have survived World War I is not conceivable.

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reliance on German troops and supplies in Conrad's ill-considered Italian and Russian campaigns. Conrad remained in command of the common army until July 1918.

21 Schulze, "Austria-Hungary's Economy in World War I."

22 Herwig, *First World War*, 377–79.

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The Hungarian Agricultural Miracle? Sovietization and Americanization in a Communist Country. By Zsuzsanna Varga.

Translated by Frank T. Zsigó. The Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series.
Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2021. 323 pp.

Mária Hidvégi 

Tungsrám Operations Kft., 1044 Budapest, Váci út 77; ELTE BTK Research Centre for Business
History, 1088 Budapest, Múzeum krt. 6–8; Maria.Hidvegi@tungsram.com

The present review focuses on how this book, analyzing “a unique case of how to pull success out of failure within the Soviet bloc” (p. ix), offers insights into topics relevant for an international audience of business, economic, and transnational history.

The book offers overview of the development of Hungarian agriculture during the Socialist era, laying equal weight on the periods of forced collectivization and that of the development of a successful ‘Hungarian model’ by combining multidimensional historical comparison with transfer studies. Six chronological chapters take the reader through the transfer and implementation of the Soviet kolkhoz model and of the American ‘closed production system’ embedded into the development of Hungarian agricultural policy in the framework of the Cold War, stressing the importance of local agency and the partial simultaneity of model transfers. Chapter 7 contextualizes the ‘Hungarian agricultural miracle’ and presents the circumstances, such as the decreasing prices of agricultural products on the world market and Hungary’s growing indebtedness leading to a renewal of high extractions from agriculture, which meant that “Hungary’s hybrid agriculture reached its developmental limits” (p. 283). The conclusion reflects on how comparative and transfer studies can be combined in the field of transnational history. The book is based on extensive archival research, on the contemporary Hungarian and foreign press, and on an impressive collection of oral sources, in part thanks to the author’s decades-long research on the history of Hungarian agriculture in the Socialist era.

The first chapter clarifies the meaning of the Soviet kolkhoz model, describing it as part of the Stalinist economic system in which agriculture was assigned the role of an inner colony and functioned in the new hierarchical order made of the new operational units of state farms, machine and tractor stations, and kolkhozes (= communal farms). Following World War II, all key elements of the Stalinist

system of socialist agriculture were implemented by force in Eastern Europe, though allowances had to be made in the form of retaining to some degree peasants' formal land ownership and authorizing several types of collective farms.

The following three chapters analyze the Sovietization of Hungarian agriculture, that is the process of collectivization with varying degrees of coercion, linked to periods of de-collectivization. Chapter 5 presents the circumstances leading to the modification of the Soviet kolkhoz model in Hungary by partial rehabilitation of the market economy from 1956. Hungary has advantageous natural endowments for agricultural production. Therefore, agricultural products had for centuries made up the bulk of the country's export revenues. As in other Eastern European countries, forced collectivization led to a sharp decline of agricultural production in Hungary, resulting in shortages of food supply and even the necessity to import bread grain and meat up to the mid-1960s. The statistical material presented here displays the consequences of the inner colony status of agriculture, forced collectivization and the criminalization of large-scale farmers then of successful cooperatives' managers on rural communities' social structure, labor discipline, and families' survival strategies.

Because of the 1956 Revolution, the Soviet leadership granted its Hungarian counterparts more room to maneuver in certain issues in order to ensure the superiority and viability of the socialist system (p. 162). This resulted in allowing for deviations from the Soviet agricultural production model and in resuming the first attempts at opening to the West after Stalin's death. The term 'Americanization' in the subtitle of the book refers to the transfer of the results of Western agricultural science, especially of closed systems of production mostly from the USA and West Germany, which was gathering speed from the second half of the 1960s. Successful technology transfer required to reshape the organizational structure of Hungarian collective farms (producer cooperatives), to introduce new systems of management, quality assurance, and labor discipline. Fast growing export earnings in convertible currencies were crucial for continuing political support for such transfers. The introduction of closed production systems went hand in hand with reviving entrepreneurial initiative and competition, organizing networks of cooperatives on a voluntary basis, and establishing horizontal contacts for continuous knowledge transfer with universities and research and development institutions. Agricultural reforms predated, shaped, and subsequently capitalized on the opportunities of the New Economic Mechanism introduced in 1968.

As the book stresses, the transfer of American technology was a bottom-up process, with cooperatives or state farms initiating and implementing it themselves, and it did not end at faithful adaptation. A few leading cooperatives and state farms such as the Bábolna State Farm, which became knowledge and service centers of networks of cooperatives, developed the licensed technology in the sense of higher-yield

hybrids (chicken, cereal) and even independent production systems. Based on such achievements, Hungary excelled in per capita production of corn, wheat, chicken, chicken eggs, and pork, especially in the early 1980s. Agricultural export became a crucial source of the country's convertible export revenues. Hungary was even exporting closed agricultural production systems to the Near East. The 'Hungarian agricultural miracle' in the book's title refers to these achievements of the hybrid 'Hungarian model' of agricultural production, a term coined in the contemporary Western press. Its chief characteristics were (1) the coexistence of state, cooperative and private property, (2) the synthesis of large farms and small-scale production, (3) large farms' non-agricultural ancillary activities, and (4) the widespread implementation of closed production systems, practically, the successful Americanization of state farms, and Soviet-type, which had come into being through the transfer of the kolkhoz model.¹

Varga draws particular attention to the agency of local actors. First, she lists various forms of peasants' active and passive resistance to forced collectivization and describes how members of co-operatives denied giving false or compromising testimony against managers of successful cooperatives during show-trial proceedings in the 1970s. These prosecutions have attracted little scholarly attention, compared to the ones after World War II. Second, due attention is given to the emergence of an agrarian lobby that managed to transform peasant initiatives for work organization, remuneration, and household plot farming into policies that gradually turned Hungarian cooperatives into independent farming enterprises. Prominent members of this lobby played an important role in establishing international contacts proliferating behind the 'Iron Curtain' and permitting knowledge and technology transfer. The power of the agrarian lobby is shown to have depended on the development of the Cold War including the competition of the superpowers in terms of consumer goods supply, the Soviet leadership's changing interests in prioritizing dogmatic questions, and on Hungarian political leaders' solid power and commitment to reforms. Third, the book prompts further comparative research on the role of agriculture in attempts at reforming the socialist economy in the 1960s and in the emergence of 'the second economy', entrepreneurship, and transnational private economic networks, especially in the 1980s with an outlook on the applicability of such entrepreneurial experiences, networks, and adjustment measures after 1989.

The book contains large sections of quotes from sources. This sometimes results in longer roads to coming to a point, but at the same time, it gives readers source material often seen for the first time in English translation and helps them

1 See also: Benet, Iván. "A magyar agrármodell hatékonysága [The Efficiency of the Hungarian Agrarian Model]." *Acta Universitatis Szegediensis de Attila József nominatae: Acta Oeconomica* no. 1 (1996): 35–54.

understand the inner logic of the processes described. Charts and tables displaying certain characteristics of agricultural production over the entire period of investigation could have demonstrated more concisely the achievements and setbacks described in the various chapters. A few more charts of international comparison and more reference to Polish and Czechoslovak agriculture would have been equally instructive. Without doubt, however, the book is an excellent example of transnational history, which combines thorough micro and macro level analysis of 40 years of Hungarian agriculture with a concise story of transsystemic model transfers.



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Postal address: H-1088 Budapest, Múzeum körút 4/A, Hungary

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Homepage: hsce.elte.hu

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