

# Oesterreich ist eben Oesterreich

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

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

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

*I am convinced that some books by Austrian historians caused more harm than any lost battle.*

*A lost battle only becomes fatal if the historian constructs the fall of Austria from it.*

(Richard von Kralik)

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

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

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

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

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

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2 Marczali, “Hongrie.”

3 Šusta, “Tchécoslovaquie.”

4 Ottenthal, “Autriche.”

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

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

### Community histories

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

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

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

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

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

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

11 Cp. Bourdieu and Martin, *Les écoles historiques*, 207.

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

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

### Performative discourse

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

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

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13 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

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

15 Bourdieu, “Identity and Representation.”

16 Bruckmüller, “Österreichbegriff und Österreich-Bewusstsein,” 256.

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

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

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

17 Stourzh, "Die dualistischen Reichsstruktur," 109.

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

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

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

21 Biedermann, *Geschichte de österreichischen Gesamt-Staats-Idee*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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25 Marczali, *Emlékeim*, 137.

26 Bruckmüller, "Österreichbegriff und Österreich-Bewusstsein," 270.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

35 Helfert, *Über Nationalgeschichte*, 1.

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

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

## History as language: historical visions in political discourse

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

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

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

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

39 Schorske, *Thinking with History*, 3.

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

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



an important part of which was the cult of Hungary's historical constitution.<sup>42</sup> The lessons of history and Austria's new constitution dictated a relationship that was closer than mere personal union, yet respected the freedoms of Hungary.<sup>43</sup> The two authors practically come to the conclusion that, in order to save the *Gesamstaat* (in the sense of the powerful empire), one has to sacrifice the *Gesamtstaat* (the centralized administration).

The liberal press accepted promptly this dualism, which is also discernible from the fact that for them *Österreich* meant Cisleithania.<sup>44</sup> In the meantime, they were quick to counter-attack at any tentative move from Czech politicians that was aimed at gaining the same rights for their national community. On one occasion, the *Neue Freie Presse* labelled the Czechs the “marauders of history”<sup>45</sup>—it was also in this paper where the historian Theodor Mommsen published his infamous article about the Czechs being the “apostolate of barbarism.”<sup>46</sup> In the meantime, the *Neue Freie Presse* defended dualism from its many adversaries.

Such attacks came from Joseph von Helfert, who was at the height of his career in the 1850s, but remained an important figure in the conservative movement even after 1867 and was a prominent member of Taaffe's “iron ring.” This true *Altösterreicher* wrote a lengthy pamphlet against dualism when it was due for its first renewal in 1876.<sup>47</sup> Helfert dedicated the first passages of a book to the question of Austria's *raison d'être*. He refuted the idea that Austria was merely the outcome of cleverly organized marriages—for marriages between dynasties are never the reason for the rapprochement of countries, but are only the signs of a historical tendency. Austria's existence is a geographical and historical necessity, which transcends the house of the Habsburgs: the “historical instinct” of these countries had driven Austria's countries towards unification as crystal atoms merge into one, obeying the law of nature.<sup>48</sup>

The social democrat Karl Renner's view of Austria is similar to the old conservative's vision to a great extent. Renner also considered that the existence of closely tied country-complexes was not the private matter of the Habsburg family. However, Renner (writing under the pseudonym Rudolf Springer) put the emphasis on the interest of the masses (*Masseninteressen*) instead of geopolitical necessities.<sup>49</sup> Similarly to Helfert, Renner aimed at pointing out how the ambitions of the Anjou

42 Cp. Lajtai, “Magyar nemzet vagyok.”

43 Fischhof and Unger, *Zur Lösung der ungarischen Frage*.

44 Kienzl, *Nation, Identität und Antisemitismus*, 50.

45 Ehrenpreis, “Die ‘reichschweite’ Presse in der Habsburgmonarchie,” 1732.

46 *Neue Freie Presse* 30 October, 1897.

47 Helfert, *Revision des ungarischen Ausgleichs*.

48 Helfert, *Revision des ungarischen Ausgleichs*, 1–7.

49 Springer, *Die Krise des Dualismus*, 9–10.

and Jagiellon monarchs and Matthias Corvinus had been the creation of an empire just like Austria. The Habsburgs' success was due to the fact that they were in the position to use the resources of the German territories against Ottoman aggression.<sup>50</sup>

Both Helfert and Renner were against the dualist system; nevertheless, they did not want a break from Hungary as the Pan-Germans did, but to integrate it more fully into the empire: Helfert into an old-fashioned empire with federalist elements (which favored the Czechs to a large extent); Renner into a carefully elaborated new system. In both cases, their argumentation led to an image of Hungarian history that radically contradicted the most basic elements of the Hungarian national history narrative. In Helfert's view, Hungary's history did not justify its exceptional position in the empire. Hungary, in his vision, had been weakened by selfish nobility in the Middle Ages, which had led to the Ottoman conquest.<sup>51</sup> The liberation and rebirth of the country were solely the merit of Austria. Furthermore, the laws of 1848 on which the legitimacy of the dualistic system was based represented a radical break from the past, hence they could not justify the *Ausgleich*—which was based on historical continuity.<sup>52</sup>

Renner was perhaps even more hostile to the Hungarian historical self-image. The most important feature in his strategy was considering the Ottoman conquest of Hungary a radical turning point in the country's history. According to Renner, only Upper Hungary, inhabited by Slovaks and Germans, and Transylvania, inhabited by Szeklers and Germans, had been spared, while the regions inhabited by Hungarians fell victim to the Ottoman terror.<sup>53</sup> Hence, there is no continuity whatsoever between medieval and contemporary Hungary, which makes claims based on medieval glory and constitutionality void.

Renner in fact diverted from his party's official position regarding Hungary when he argued for maintaining, and in some sense improving, Austria's relations with the country. The social democratic party officially declared the intention of completely breaking from Hungary in 1903. Otto Bauer represented this view in his famous work on the nationality question in Austria. Bauer considered that, in contrast to the Czechs (whose striving for state rights—that is, a position similar to that of Hungary—Bauer strongly opposed), the Hungarians never became a “nation without history” as they had never lost their ruling class. This class, the nobility, vehemently opposed the taxation policy of Joseph II under the pretext of “national liberty.” The monarch responded with absolutism and colonizing customs policy. The historical memory of this period embittered the relations of Austria and Hungary. It also enabled the Hungarian ruling

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50 Springer, *Die Krise des Dualismus*, 10.

51 Helfert, *Revision des ungarischen Ausgleichs*, 109–10.

52 Helfert, *Revision des ungarischen Ausgleichs*, 86.

53 Springer, *Die Krise des Dualismus*, 10–1.

classes to legitimize everything with the ideology of the “freedom fight against Vienna.” As long as Austria and Hungary were not separated, this ideology could hinder the natural development of the class struggle in Hungary.<sup>54</sup>

Bauer not only contradicted Renner with regard to Hungary, but he also had very different views about Austria, which did not represent great value to him. Bauer saw Austria’s history as, in essence, German history: in his view, Austria only came into being and aimed at stronger relations with Hungary and Bohemia in order to strengthen the Habsburgs’ position in the German lands. For Bauer, the whole Central European world revolved around the German *Reich*: all major dynasties of the region wanted to use the combined powers of Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary to overcome the German princes’ leaning towards independence, and strengthen the German Empire. This case was lost when attention was diverted from the German question to the Ottoman conquests.<sup>55</sup>

Bauer’s account of Austria’s history has many similarities with Heinrich Friedjung’s vision. Friedjung was a member of the famous Pernerstorfer circle in the late 1860s which rebelled against the liberal political culture and nurtured nationalist as well as socialist ideals.<sup>56</sup> Friedjung himself was an enthusiastic German nationalist until the movement adopted the racial antisemitism of Georg Schönerer in the 1880s. In the mid-1870s, Friedjung published a book against the dualistic system which served as one of the foundations of the German nationalist party’s program (and also cost him his position as a secondary school teacher). For Friedjung, Austria belonged to Germany not because of linguistic or ethnic factors, but for reasons of historical development: whereas Switzerland had had a life of her own for a long time, until recently Austria and Germany had constituted one entity.<sup>57</sup> This unity had been disrupted by two major errors on the part of Austria: her attachment to Eastern Europe on the one hand, and to the Habsburg dynasty on the other. The greatest sin of the dynasty was engaging Austria in the counter-reformation, which deprived her of the achievements of German enlightenment.<sup>58</sup> As for the other dire error, Austria’s engagement in the East, Friedjung denied the existence of any *österreichische Mission*. For him, the East was something of complete foreignness; a different world of its own which must be completely separated from Austria. The idea of an *österreichische Mission* would only serve those who wanted to detach Austria completely from the German world.<sup>59</sup>

54 Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage*, 413–14.

55 Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage*, 195–99.

56 On the circle and Friedjung’s place in it: McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics*.

57 Friedjung, *Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn*, 27.

58 Friedjung, *Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn*, 22–3.

59 Friedjung, *Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn*, 24–5.

Hungary was an integral part of this East, which no German hands should ever touch. Historically, the relationship with Hungary had brought nothing but misfortune to Austria: the dictatorial measures which the Habsburg rulers had to introduce in order to contain this rebellious nation were adapted in the Austrian half as well. Even if Austria had the power to subjugate Hungary, as she had done in the past, it would be a mistake, as this would still mean ties to the East.<sup>60</sup>

The other major political party which introduced “politics in a new key”<sup>61</sup> to Austria was the Christian Social Party dominated by Vienna’s charismatic major, Karl Lueger, whose infamous anti-Hungarian rhetoric served as a diversion from the Czech problem (which was particularly acute in Vienna) and designated a common enemy against which all the nationalities of Austria could unite.<sup>62</sup> This strategy was also visible in the party’s newspaper, the *Reichspost*, in which the Czech question was hardly treated, whereas Hungary was often discussed in a derogatory manner, without the accompaniment of sophisticated, systematic historical visions such as those of Renner’s or Helfert’s. In a series of articles, for example, Adam Trabert discussed Hungarian history, focusing on the occasions when the Hungarian elite had revolted against their king, proving to be a traitorous, ungrateful nation.<sup>63</sup> Another occasion for discussing Hungary was in 1896 during the millennial celebration. At this point, *Reichspost* reproached the Magyar elite for choosing to celebrate a period when the nation was still pagan and conducting deadly campaigns against the Christian countries of Europe.<sup>64</sup>

The most famous Czech critic of the dualist system, František Palacký, provided a different perspective about both Austria’s and Hungary’s history than his above-quoted peers. Palacký was not only the most prominent Czech historian, but an eminent figure in the Czech National Party. He presented his concept in a famous article published in 1866 in both Czech and German. According to him, Austria did have a duty; however, this was not the quasi-timeless mission based on the *longue durée* opposition between West and East. Austria had concrete tasks at precise moments, and her existence would be justified only if she fulfilled these duties. Projecting this argument back into history, Palacký saw the birth of Austria only in 1526, not as the result of a long-term tendency of the core lands gravitating towards each other, but at a clearly definable moment, when European culture needed protection from Ottoman aggression.<sup>65</sup> Later, the duty of supporting the Catholic revival completed

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60 Friedjung, *Der Ausgleich mit Ungarn*, 55.

61 Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna*, 133–46.

62 Boyer, *Political Radicalism in late Imperial Vienna*, 215.

63 *Reichspost* 17, 18, 19, and 20 December 1895. (Abendblatt.)

64 *Reichspost*, 16 June 1896.

65 Palacky, *Oesterreichs Staatsidee*, 3–4.

the duties of Austria. These two tasks became outdated; however, a new mission awaited the empire: establishing of the equality of her nations (*Gleichberichtigung*), which she must realize in order to maintain her legitimate place in the world. This would only be possible through the federal system, which respected all political-historical individualities of the empire, while both German centralism and German-Hungarian dualism were illegitimate.<sup>66</sup> The ideological basis of centralism which claims German cultural superiority was false, as Slavs had always been strong pillars of European culture throughout history. Dualism equally disavows history because, in the past, Hungary was the ideal land of *Gleichberichtigung*, proof of which could be found in the country's constitution—foremost, the position of Latin as the administrative language of the multinational state.<sup>67</sup> This noble heritage was tragically cast aside in 1848 when the program of aggressive Magyarization was put in motion. Dualism, in fact, in contrast to what its supporters strove to convey, could not be deduced from history; on the contrary, it was a revolutionary construct that flew in face of every historical tradition.<sup>68</sup> Magyarization was an ulcer on the body of Austria, and if she chose that path, her downfall would be certain.

Finally, we should turn our attention to the other side of the Leitha for a brief moment, where the question of relations with Austria divided the political sphere into supporters of the *Ausgleich* and independentists, although there were certain situations in which this dichotomy could be overcome. Both of these political groups had an important member who at the turn of the century wrote his own narrative of Hungarian history, which proves the validity of the term “thinking with history.”

Count Gyula Andrassy Jr., son of the first prime minister of dualist Hungary, and an impactful politician himself, was an ardent supporter of the *Ausgleich*, although he did have his differences with the monarch concerning the question of the language of the shared army.<sup>69</sup> In his historical account, in line with the argumentation of other supporters of the Compromise, Hungary's history is determined by external forces, and international trends. The greatness of Hungary's most respected statesmen lay in their ability to recognize these trends and act accordingly.<sup>70</sup> The one constant order that world tendencies dictate is that Hungary's place is with the West. Andrassy judged the different revolts according to the extent of which they looked to East for allies—which he harshly condemned, as they countered the only constant law of Hungarian history—while in those rebels who remained aware of this fact, the count recognized the precursors of Deák. For Andrassy, Austria represented the West to which Hungary

66 Palacky, *Oesterreichs Staatsidee*, 37.

67 Palacky, *Oesterreichs Staatsidee*, 18.

68 Palacky, *Oesterreichs Staatsidee*, 48.

69 On Andrassy see Szalai, *Iffabb Andrassy Gyula élete és pályája*.

70 Andrassy, *A magyar állam fennmaradásának és alkotmányos szabadságának okai*, vol. I, 5, 41.

must tie her faith. Naturally, the count did not deny the conflictual episodes of the past; however, he argued that Austria never succeeded in completely weakening Hungary, precisely because this country historically belonged to the West.<sup>71</sup>

The independentist Ákos Beöthy argued for the relations between Hungary and Austria to be reduced to those of personal union, as did the independentist parties themselves throughout the majority of the period. Beöthy presented the nation as the sole agent of its history. Even during the foundation of the state, Western models and ideas did not influence substantially the nation, but only provided a rough framework.<sup>72</sup> It is in accordance with this concept that Beöthy never pondered the international context and prospects of the independentist movements in history—for him, they were fully legitimate just because of their rightfulness. In his book, Austria appears as completely incompatible with Hungary. Beöthy opposed Austria's "mechanic" character (a very common qualification of Austria at the time) to the "organic" nature of the Hungarian nation. The mechanic Austria and its ruling family knew nothing of noble ideals; her existence was restricted to the soulless clattering of administrative machinery.<sup>73</sup> Although Beöthy also believed that Hungary belonged to Western civilization, he was persuaded that mechanic Austria could not serve as mediator between Hungary and Western Europe.<sup>74</sup>

## **Institutional framework: professional history and the question of the empire**

### **Research of Austria's history or research of history in Austria?**

The notion of narrative which appears frequently in this research brings the famous concept of Hayden White's to the minds of most people. For this research, however, I found the approach of Michel de Certeau more useful. De Certeau also recognized the narrative character of history, but he drew attention to something that his contemporary had neglected: the social and institutional context.<sup>75</sup> For de Certeau, the "historiographical operation" is a social practice which is inseparable from the social and institutional milieu in which it is produced.<sup>76</sup> In the first section of this paper, I aimed at presenting the social context: the notions the usage of which could not be neutral, and the visions of history that political actors used to legitimize and

71 Andrásy, *A magyar állam fennmaradásának és alkotmányos szabadságának okai*, vol. I, 40.

72 Beöthy, *A magyar államiság fejlődése, küzdelmei*, 63.

73 Beöthy, *A magyar államiság fejlődése, küzdelmei*, 659.

74 Beöthy, *A magyar államiság fejlődése, küzdelmei*, 304.

75 Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*, 43–49.

76 de Certeau, *L'écriture de l'histoire*, 77–100.

express their standpoints. In this section, I will present the institutional framework of the three historiographies, mainly concentrating on German-Austria. The focus will be on the ideological questions that concerned the empire, and not on how professional historiography came to be, nor on its wider socio-cultural embeddedness, both of which would merit studies of their own.<sup>77</sup>

The revolutions of 1848–49 brought about a paradigm shift in the empire's policy towards intellectuals. Relying on the experience of the French Revolution during the *Vormärz*, any political involvement by any intellectual, even such loyalists as Joseph von Hormayr, was considered to be a deadly threat to the status quo.<sup>78</sup> This took a heavy toll on universities which became the training schools of functionaries, rather than workshops of scientific fantasy and freedom.<sup>79</sup> After the crisis, Leo Thun, minister of education, broke from this policy, which he considered responsible for the revolutions: not only did it fail to prevent the spread of subversive ideologies, but it left Austria unprotected against them. The empire was in need of state-of-the-art education and scholarship, and it needed to appreciate its faithful intellectuals.<sup>80</sup>

In the discipline of history, it was Thun's secretary of state, the above-mentioned Joseph Alexander von Helfert, who outlined the tasks and goals that applied in the new circumstances. In a book published in 1853, departing from his political definition of the nation that we witnessed above, Helfert defined the task of the historian in researching and writing the *österreichische Nationalgeschichte*, by which he meant the history of the entire empire. This *Nationalgeschichte* must inspire the love of Austria (*Vaterlandsliebe*) in all inhabitants. It had to deduce the path of Austria's development practically in the same way as Helfert explained it in his above-mentioned political pamphlet; that is, by demonstrating how the core lands of Austria had been gravitating towards each other ever since late antiquity. The year 1526 should not be treated as the great moment of unification of Hungary and Bohemia with Austria; instead, the pasts of these countries should be discussed in parallel, emphasizing the numerous ways in which their histories were already entangled, centuries before they came together under the Habsburgs.<sup>81</sup>

With his book, Helfert aimed at defining the guidelines of an institute that was to be established a year afterwards: the Institut für österreichische Geschichtsforschung (IöG). This institution had a dual task: on the one hand, it had to provide world-class

77 For a general overview of the region's historiography, one can consult various works. For the Austrian case: Lhotsky, *Österreichische Historiographie*; for Bohemia: Kutnar and Marek, *Přehledné dějiny českého a slovenského dějepisectví*; for Hungary: Romsics, *Clio büvöletében*.

78 On Hormayr's case: Robert, *L'idée nationale Autrichienne*.

79 Lhotsky, "Geschichtsforschung und Geschichtsschreibung," 412.

80 Lhotsky, *Österreichische Historiographie*, 157–61.

81 Helfert, *Über Nationalgeschichte*, 57–59.

education in the auxiliary sciences following the example of the *École des Chartes* of Paris; on the other hand, it had to convey the ideological goals of the *österreichische Nationalgeschichte* to future historians.

Soon, in a sense, the two goals became opposed. The first generations completed their education under the directorship of Albert Jäger. Franz Krones and Franz Martin Mayer, both of whom taught at the University of Graz and wrote syntheses on Austrian history which we will study in the next section, frequented IöG during this period. Jäger was committed to the Austrian patriot ideals; however, he was soon overshadowed by Theodor von Sickel, who officially took over as director in 1869.<sup>82</sup> This was part of a larger scale process in which Prussian scholars were invited to Austria to help in the development of the reforms of universities and education in general. At first glance, in the context of the period, this should not strike us as unusual, because the German university served as a model for the entirety of Europe and even for Japan; however, some historians are puzzled by this development considering the rivalry between Austria and Prussia in the process of German unification.<sup>83</sup> Sickel himself was protestant and Prussian, and hence understandably indifferent to the idea of Austria. Under his leadership, the focus of IöG shifted completely towards the study of auxiliary sciences, in which he was an extraordinary craftsman. His indifference towards Austrian patriotism was part of a general indifference towards politics, not intentional sabotage. This does not alter the fact that, gradually, the *Institut* which was intended to be *the* Austrian historical research institution became an institution of historical research that happened to be in Austria.<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, it is a massive exaggeration to see the entire discipline of history as completely indifferent or even hostile to the Austrian idea from this point on. Even among the student unions which are usually seen as the seedbed of anti-Austrian German nationalism,<sup>85</sup> there were some the profile of which included Austrian patriotism.<sup>86</sup> To such a student union of historians belonged Alfons Huber, author of the most appreciated synthesis on Austrian history. The Akademische Historikerklub of Innsbruck was supported by Julius Ficker, Huber's master, who represented the Austrian viewpoint in a fierce debate with Heinrich von Sybel, which is perhaps the most famous clash between *kleindeutsche* and *großdeutsche* historians.<sup>87</sup> A significant

82 For the history of the IöG, see: Lhotsky, *Geschichte des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*.

83 Friedrich Heer saw this process as the deconstruction of Austrian identity. Heer, *Der Kampf um die österreichische Identität*, 218.

84 Cp. Lhotsky, *Geschichte des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 7; Fellner, "Die Historiographie zur österreichisch-deutschen Problematik," 149.

85 Whiteside, *The Socialism of Fools*, 43–63.

86 Wilfling, *Akademische Fachvereine*.

87 On the debate see: Koch, "Der Streit zwischen Sybel und Ficker."



step, though arriving late in the period, was the introduction of *Reichsgeschichte*, the history of the Habsburg Empire, at the faculties of law and humanities from 1893. Huber was among the scholars who urged this decision, claiming that without the knowledge of Austria's history, one could not be expected to appreciate the state.<sup>88</sup> Even later, in 1897, a commission for Austria's modern history (*Kommission für Neuere Geschichte Österreichs*) was set up in order to counterbalance IöG's focus on medieval history. Here as well, professional aspects were mingled with the goals of identity politics: the study of the period after the union of 1526 was presented as a patriotic duty.<sup>89</sup>

Notwithstanding the importance of these developments, they were the exceptions and not the rule. It was the perceived indifference towards Austria and the predominance of the national vantage point that motivated Richard von Kralik to write his own account of Austrian history. Kralik was a literary man; however, during his long *grand tour* he studied history from personalities such as Mommsen and Treitschke. His historical works were also treated in the review of the IöG.<sup>90</sup>

### The *kuruc* and the *labanc*

When Alexander Flegler wrote his book on Hungarian historiography in the mid-1870s, he was convinced that "it is impossible that the [...] Compromise [will] not affect the spirit of historical studies."<sup>91</sup> Flegler was right in predicting that the Compromise would shape historical studies; nevertheless, he was wrong in thinking that historians would univocally prove that the goals of the radical independentists were illusions. Instead, the Compromise divided the community of historians in a similar way that it did the political sphere in general, dividing them into groups of *kuruc* (independentists) and *labanc* (loyal to the dynasty and to the *Ausgleich*).

The most important independentist historian was Kálmán Thaly. Thaly did not elaborate a sophisticated, systematic historical narrative which supported the idea of complete rupture from Austria. Rather, he cultivated the quasi-worship of his favorite historical heroes, most importantly Ferenc II Rákóczi, leader of the early eighteenth-century rebellion against the Habsburg court, whom he presented as a perfect saint without the most basic human fallibilities. While this was unacceptable for professional historical scholarship, it played well with the public at large, which showed something of the schizophrenic status of Hungarian public life, while

88 Fellner, "Alfons Huber – Werk und Wirken," 292.

89 On the history of the *Kommission* see Fellner, "...Ein wahrhaft patriotisches Werk."

90 On Kralik's life see: Geehr, *The Aesthetics of Horror*.

91 Flegler, *A magyar történetírás történelme*, 264.

Thaly's numerous academic positions showed the limits of early professionalization.<sup>92</sup> Most scholars clearly saw the many limits of Thaly's work; however, he had serious admirers among the younger generation of historians, among them Ignác Acsády, a historian of independentist views who wrote a synthesis of Hungarian history at the turn of the century. Acsády was originally a journalist, which remained his livelihood; nevertheless, he was one of the most original Hungarian historians of the period, and used an innovative methodology for studying demography and economy in early modern Hungary.<sup>93</sup>

The opposite of Thaly was considered to be the bishop Vilmos Fraknói, whose academic positions were comparable to those of Thaly's,<sup>94</sup> while Fraknói was a much more serious scholar who constantly sought to improve himself. His synthesis of Hungarian history is from an early period of his immense oeuvre.

Naturally, there were several personalities who strove to overcome the *kuruc-labanc* antagonism. A circle of Hungarian historians formed in Vienna with the leadership of Lajos Thallóczy. For these scholars, the ideological antagonisms, as well as other features in Hungarian intellectual life, appeared to be provincial.<sup>95</sup> In Hungary, Henrik Marczali, undoubtedly the greatest Hungarian historian of the end of the century, also wanted to emancipate himself from the friction between loyalists and independentists.<sup>96</sup> Marczali not only wrote a synthesis of Hungarian history in 1911, but took great part in the creation of the millennial synthesis written between 1895 and 1898. This letter was a major work of 10 volumes edited by Sándor Szilágyi, who was famous for reconciling historians with very different ideological positions and even personal differences.<sup>97</sup> Among the most important authors we can find Acsády, Fraknói, and Marczali. For the same occasion, another historical opus was published, written by historians József Szalay and Lajos Baróti.

## Enemies and friends—dilettantes and professionals

The birth of Czech professional history was directly linked to Charles University, which stood at the center of German–Czech rivalry. For long, Czech national activists and scholars had striven to establish an equal place for Czech scholarship and education at an essentially German university. The decisive step came with the arrival to power

92 Romsics, *Clio bővületében*, 130.

93 On Acsády's life and oeuvre, see Gunst, *Acsády Ignác történetírása*.

94 Romsics, *Clio bővületében*, 130–32.

95 Dénes, *A történelmi Magyarország eszménye*, 34.

96 Romsics, *Clio bővületében*, 143.

97 On the history of the Millennial *grand récit*, see Mann, "A millenniumi Magyar Nemzet Története."

of Count Taaffe, who negotiated a deal with the Old Czechs who had been in passive resistance until then. Part of the deal was that Charles University would be divided into two parts, a German and a Czech one, both of which could keep the historical name. The university thus became a cultural and intellectual center for the Czechs in 1882.<sup>98</sup>

Among the young scholars who taught at the old-new Czech university was Jaroslav Goll, a former student of the University of Göttingen and leading figure of what became the Goll School. The young scholars of Charles University were immediately faced with a major challenge which was related to the infamous Königinhofer and Grünberger manuscripts forged by Václav Hanka and his collaborators. Goll, with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and Jan Gebauer, exposed the forged manuscripts which “proved” the existence of an ancient, highly advanced Czech literary language and state, and became substantial parts of Czech culture. Palacký himself believed in their authenticity and used them as sources for his major historical work. Consequently, their exposure entailed the accusation of anti-patriotism.<sup>99</sup> The second major challenge that the Goll School had to face came from Goll’s former comrade-in-arms, Masaryk, and lasted well into the interwar period. Masaryk strove to fill the void left by Palacký as “father of the nation” who informs his community about the sense of its history.<sup>100</sup> Masaryk, following Palacký’s path, found the “meaning of Czech history” in the Hussite movement, which he described as democratic, and established a direct line from the Hussites to the main figures of the national revival.<sup>101</sup> Evidently, this concept was rejected as an unacceptable anachronism by the Goll School, from which Josef Pekař took up the debate with Masaryk. The main difference between the two was their understanding of history: whether it was a source of inspiration for the nation’s contemporary fights (as Masaryk believed) or whether the past ought to be studied merely for its own sake (as was Pekař’s conviction).<sup>102</sup>

These major conflicts were not related to Austria, in contrast to the situation in Hungary. The Goll School accepted the empire: in 1916, Goll even wrote an article arguing for the necessity of Austria’s existence for which he was reproached in the early 1920s. In the meantime, some reviews in *Český časopis historický* give the impression that the school supported the striving for Bohemian state rights, such as the review of Ede (Eduard) Wertheimer’s biography on Andrásy, who blocked Hohenwart’s attempt at a Czech *Ausgleich*.<sup>103</sup>

98 Kutnar and Marek, *Přehledné dějiny*, 378.

99 On the case of the manuscripts, see Rychterová, “The Manuscripts of Grünberg and Königinhof.”

100 Plaschka, *Von Palacky bis Pekař*, 77–8.

101 Masaryk, *Česká otázka*, 14–5.

102 Plaschka, *Von Palacky bis Pekař*, 80–1. On the debate also see Brušák, “The Meaning of Czech History.”

103 Hoch, “Wertheimer Eudard von.”

Nevertheless, it was necessary to recall these episodes in order to understand why the Goll School did not produce a complete historical synthesis about Bohemia's past before the World War I. In his account of the development of Czech historical studies, quoted at the beginning of this article, Josef Šusta also mentioned this fact, which he considered to be one of the weak points of the Goll School. Šusta referred to political and social factors as reasons for this lack.<sup>104</sup> The categories developed by Carl Schmitt could perhaps help us better understand this phenomenon: Schmitt considered that the essence of every major field is the opposition in which they see the world: politics interprets the world as divided into enemies and friends, whereas aesthetics, for example, sees it as the duality of beautiful and ugly.<sup>105</sup> Historical scholarship at the turn of the century, we might add, operated with the duality of experts and dilettantes. Ever since its birth, the Goll School had experienced the dramatic clash between their notions of the academically *professional* and the political *friend*. This might also be a reason why, in the inaugural address of the *Český časopis historický*, there is no mention of the historical mission of the nation, or the historian's task regarding the nation, whereas the review's Hungarian counterpart *Századok* was packed with such ideas.

Nevertheless, an eminent member of the Goll School published a piece of work that we can consider a historical synthesis, even if it was a secondary school textbook. Josef Pekař published the *History of Our Empire* in 1914.<sup>106</sup> For several experts on Pekař, this book represents the synthesis of the historian that he wanted to complete as a proper historical work, but did not manage to do so.<sup>107</sup> Perhaps it is not an accident that it was the very member of the Goll School who wrote a synthesis who had already proven that he could play the part of the *intellectual engagé* if necessary: not only did he engage in a debate with Masaryk, but he was also the one who responded to Mommsen's above-quoted article in the *Neue Freie Presse*.<sup>108</sup>

## Gesamtstaat and the empire of nations

Our survey of Austrian community histories should start with the very notion of *Österreich*. The historians examined here (implicitly) defined *österreichische Geschichte* in the title of their works in the same manner as the above-quoted Meyer encyclopedia did: as the history of the whole empire, including Hungary.

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104 Šusta, "Tchécoslovaquie," 434.

105 Schmitt, "A politikai fogalma."

106 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*.

107 E.g. Janowski, "Három történetész Közép-Európából."

108 Pekař, *Die Böhmen als Apostels der Barbarisierung*.

Franz Krones used the notion of *Österreich* inconsistently. In the first introductory chapters of his book, he claimed to have accepted completely the dualist system as the greatest concession possible without harming the *Gesamtstaat*. Treating the geographical conditions, however, he spoke of *österreichischen Staat*, even though Hungary was included as well.<sup>109</sup> In a later chapter, Hungary was also included as a part of *Natur Österreichs*;<sup>110</sup> nevertheless, when speaking of the events of 1848, *Österreich* and *Ungarn* become separated.<sup>111</sup> Alfons Huber's work gives an example of what literature considers to be the common Austrian interpretation of the Compromise, according to which the common affairs represent a common state positioned above the two separate ones. Establishing a parallel between Albert V and his own period, Huber speaks of today's *österreichisch-ungarischen Kaiserstaat*.<sup>112</sup> Curiously, it was the Christian-Social sympathizer Richard von Kralik who reflected on his usage of *Österreich*, explaining that he did not aim at questioning the validity of the Compromise, but believed that this notion was more adequate for a historical account.<sup>113</sup>

All authors see the empire as uniting nations. This is in line with the affirmation of Pieter M. Judson, according to which even those intellectuals who put their talents at the service of promoting the empire imagined the world as a conglomerate of nations.<sup>114</sup> Krones considered that there were two possible ways of organizing a state: the state can be constituted by one, or by several nations.<sup>115</sup> For Huber, the natural order of things is that one powerful nation obtains the dominant role over other peoples in a series of combats, after which it assimilates or submits them. As Austria represented another way, Huber considered it to be an artificial construct.<sup>116</sup> Even for Kralik, the most committed Austrian patriot, the essence of the empire is to assemble foreign nations in order to achieve higher political and cultural goals.<sup>117</sup> We can see clearly that none of these historians followed Helfert's concept of the nation, according to which Austria is herself a giant nation.

Of the four authors, Franz Krones and Richard Kralik made great efforts to demonstrate a profound idea behind the genesis of Austria. Krones rejected the idea that Austria was an unorganized formation. According to the historian, this major

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109 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 87.

110 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 540.

111 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 641.

112 Huber, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. III, 3.

113 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, v.

114 Judson, *The Habsburg Empire*, 274–75.

115 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 79.

116 Huber, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. I, v.

117 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, iii.

idea is reviled by a more sophisticated intelligence. Krones labelled this idea the *Gesamtstaat*, which became a key concept in his work. For him, *Gesamtstaat* did not concern the structure of the administration, but the idea of the powerful empire. He identified this idea with the dynasty when giving a definition of the dynamics of the empire's history: this dynamic was defined by the dynastic force representing the state, and the national force which aimed to separate from it. The body of the state (*Staatskörper*) moved according to whichever force gained ascendancy.<sup>118</sup> *Gesamtstaat* in Krones' interpretation did not mean a striving for cultural homogenization—that is, Germanization, for which it was a synonym in Hungary and Bohemia. For the historian, the multinational, multicultural profile of the empire is one of its crucial characteristics, which is not to be denied and certainly not to be altered by force. In order to liberate the notion of *Gesamtstaat* from its Germanizing connotations, Krones introduced the notion of *Einheitstaat*. In contemporary works, *Einheitstaat* and *Gesamtstaat* were used as synonyms.<sup>119</sup> For Krones, however, *Einheitstaat* signified a striving for cultural homogeneity: the centralizing measures of Joseph II were introduced to create the *Einheitstaat*; also, the revolutionary Hungarian government of 1848 aimed at creating an *Einheitstaat* by establishing Hungarian as a state language which understandably provoked the nationalities of the country.<sup>120</sup>

Evidently, for Kralik, the most committed patriot, Austria also represented an ideal. For him, it was the logic of world history (*Weltgeschichte*) that made the existence of Austria not only possible, but necessary.<sup>121</sup> Alluding to Huber, Kralik declared that only someone without the gift of historical thinking could see Austria as an artificial creation.<sup>122</sup> The *Gesamtstaat* was the essence of the Austrian idea; federalism or dualism were only manifestations of this main idea. Kralik saluted the Germanizing ambitions in Austrian history—in his view, these were not forced by political considerations but dictated by the universal law of culture.<sup>123</sup>

This shows that the two enthusiastic supporters of Austria in fact had radically different views about the essence and mission of the empire. Using the categories of Moritz Csáky, one could point out that Kralik thought in terms of *Mittleuropa* (that is, the subordination of the culturally plural region to German culture), whereas Krones imagined Austria as *Zentraleuropa* (accepting cultural diversity as a crucial element of its nature).<sup>124</sup> Another difference between the two is that while Krones

118 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 79–80.

119 E.g., Winkler, *Studien über Gesamtstaatsidee*.

120 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 641.

121 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, v, 274.

122 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 51.

123 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 65.

124 Cp. Csáky, *Das Gedächtnis Zentraleuropas*, 29–31.

placed the dynasty at the center of his interpretation, Kralik aimed to liberate the *österreichische Idee* from the dynasty, defining the three major factors which shape the empire as the *Gesamtstaatsidee*, the national idea, and the historical structures.<sup>125</sup> Although there are several heroes in his account (Rudolf IV, Maria Theresa, Maximilian I), the great accomplishments of these individuals are only manifestations of the *gesamtösterreichische Staatsgedanken*. What really matters is the inner necessity: “Great Austria [Gesamtösterreich] was not born because the Habsburgs gained the right [to] the thrones of Bohemia and Hungary, but the Habsburgs had to [en]sure these rights because the necessity of Great Austria demanded it.”<sup>126</sup>

The popular work of Franz Martin Mayer offers a striking contrast.<sup>127</sup> The historian did not see the creation of the empire as the realization of any idea. For him, Austria’s existence was merely explained by the needs of the Holy Roman Empire for protection on its eastern borders.<sup>128</sup> *Gesamtstaat* signified a mode of administration that was mainly discussed in the chapters dealing with the governance (*Verwaltung*) and only after 1526.<sup>129</sup> The representation of certain events and personalities reinforced this tendency. Albert V, for example, who saw the first unification of the hereditary lands with Hungary and Bohemia, was not the visionary politician that he was for Kralik and Krones.

Alfons Huber represents a middle way between Mayer and Krones. He refused to adopt any meta-historical idea; accordingly, for him, the *Gesamtstaat* was also a governmental technique, the unfolding of which Huber did not have a chance to study as he died after finishing the volume on the Thirty Years’ War. The historian also refused idealizing important personalities from Austria’s history. When working with Helfert in the early 1860s, he rejected softening the tone of the presentation of how Rudolf IV’s *Privilegium maius*, which was considered to be the premier vision of an independent Austria, was forged on the prince’s orders.<sup>130</sup> Nevertheless, Huber remained loyal to Austria and to a certain extent was able to express this as a historian. He presented Austria as the accomplishment of talented, visionary statesman, and, as a territory, he considered it to be geographically determined to take the form of a single unit.

For Josef Pekař also, the empire was made of nations, although the Czech notion of *národ* was less the perfect equivalent of *Nation* and much more an in-between of *Nation* and *Volk*.<sup>131</sup> The historian emphasized the fragmented nature of “Austria” up

125 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 558.

126 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 80.

127 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*.

128 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. I, 42.

129 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 270.

130 Fellner, “Alfons Huber – Werke und Wirken,” 282.

131 Kořalka, *Tschechen im Habsburgerreich*, 23–5.

to 1526. Although he mentioned the fact that the name “Oesterreich” appears in 996, in the following chapters, in contrast to his peers, he still referred to the territories in the chapter titles as *zemí alpských* instead of *zemích rakouských*. The creation of the Austrian core lands was not a historical necessity, but, just as the creation of the Bohemian state, the result of the Magyars’ arrival to the Carpathian Basin. In this, the Magyars (whom the author described as savage nomads) were not conscious actors, but their presence constituted a challenge to which state formation was the adequate response.<sup>132</sup> The notion of *vserakousko*, which is closest to *Gesamtstaat* and had Germanizing connotations in Bohemia as well, does not occupy a central place in Pekař’s work. The sole key moment of Austria’s creation is the year 1526, and its essential characteristic is centralization: this interpretation is closer to Mayer’s than Krones’.

### The German question

In the second section (Performative discourse) of this paper, the complex relationship between Germanness and Austrian citizenship was pointed out. Given its importance in Cisleithanian public life, it is no surprise that those historians reflected on the German question in an explicit manner for whom Austria was the most important—that is, Franz Krones and Richard Kralik.

Krones had already raised the question in the long introductory chapter of his work. His view is dynasty-centered in this case as well, as he considers that the question of German unification could be seen as the rivalry between the Hohenzollern and Habsburg dynasties. The conflict was inevitable, and Prussia’s victory was necessary, as Austria could not have been engaged in the West and the East at the same time.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, Krones refers to the new Prussian-led Germany as *Preußen* or *Preußen-Deutschland* and not *Deutschland*. Maria Theresa’s conflict with Frederick the Great is depicted as an inevitability and a major, historically defining moment in Austria’s existence. Maria Theresa was in fact the central heroine for patriotic Austrian historians, who practically built a cult around her person.<sup>134</sup> Presenting the conflict, Krones speaks of the empire as *unsere Staat* (our state), which is one of the very rare moments that his wording permits the reader to identify themselves with Austria. “For our state, this war was a fight for her rights and her existence; it was a process of internal purification and renaissance.”<sup>135</sup> In one of the closing thoughts to his work, Krones also responds to the common Austro-German view, according to

132 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*, 18.

133 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 128–29.

134 Wandruszka, “Die Historiographie der theresianisch-josefinischen Reformzeit,” 20–3.

135 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 179.



which Austria is, in essence, a German state. The historian warns that these kinds of ideas provoke the non-German inhabitants of the country; furthermore, they are false, as Austria is nothing else but Austria: the unification and reconciliation of diverse elements under the aegis of the dynasty and the common interests.<sup>136</sup>

In Richard Kralik's work Bismarck's empire is also referred to as *Preußen* and not *Deutschland*. In contrast to Kroner, Kralik declares himself to be a supporter of a *großdeutsche* solution.<sup>137</sup> According to him, Austria had always been the dominant German power; she guaranteed the greatness of Germany throughout her history by defending German borders from French aggression.<sup>138</sup> As already mentioned above, Kralik believed that Germanisation was a natural step in cultural development. However, he not only considered German culture to be essential for the greatness of Austria, but more importantly, he believed that it was in Austria that this culture could reach its full potential. This may be related to a belief common in Austria after the defeat of 1866 that, notwithstanding Prussia's military force, the *wahren Deutschtum* (true Germanness) remained in Austria.<sup>139</sup>

Protestantism and Catholicism were closely related to the German question, as could already have been seen in Friedjung's above-quoted famous book. Only Kralik, who was a man of strong clerical sympathies and anti-modernist convictions, supported counterreformation, claiming that it prevented Austria's falling apart.<sup>140</sup> The three liberal historians univocally condemned the counterreformation. For Kroner, counterreformation, similarly to the futile efforts to establish an *Einheitsstaat*, only harmed Austria, as it turned massive populations against the imperial center.<sup>141</sup> Huber sees the greatest destruction of the movement in the fact that it led to Austria drifting away from the rest of Germany spiritually, which resulted in political rupture.<sup>142</sup> This opinion is shared by Mayer as well, who sees the Jesuits as the incarnations of the anti-German spirit.<sup>143</sup> Similarly to Friedjung, Mayer argues that counterreformation not only exterminated the Reformation, but Humanism as well, and it also prevented German enlightenment from spreading in Austria, condemning her to regression. Mayer's aversion to Catholicism is a central element in his book. In the last chapters, the historian presents the years of Eduard Taaffe's government as the years of decadence when Germans were deprived of their power at the profit of

136 Kroner, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. IV, 658.

137 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, vi.

138 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 232.

139 Haider, *Im Streit um die österreichische Nation*, 84–5.

140 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 109.

141 Kroner, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. III, 433.

142 Huber, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. IV, 354.

143 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 360.

Slavs and clericals.<sup>144</sup> Mayer's account is a sense not an Austrian community history, but one of the German populations of Habsburg Central Europe who are the real protagonists of his narrative.

### The notions of political loyalty

The use of such central notions as *Österreich* and *Gesamtstaat* has already been studied above. It is worth briefly examining other notions presented in the second section. The notion of *österreicher* is constantly present only in the work of Kralik. Krones, in enumerating the different peoples of the empire, does not mention the *österreicher* either as the Germans of Austria, or as Austria's people as a whole. It becomes a recurrent actor during the times of Marie Therese, when it refers to the Germans of Austria.

Notions which express loyalty towards the empire, such as *Vaterland* and *Patriotismus* are also practically absent from these works with the exception of Kralik's; however, even in his account, they do not play a central role (as, for example, "nation" does in Hungarian narratives). For Krones, the variants of *Staat* fulfil the role of *Vaterland*, as we have already witnessed above. In these accounts, *Vaterland* and *Vaterlandsliebe* do not appear in relation to Austria but are used to describe the attitude of a historical figure to his own country (most commonly Hungary or Bohemia): "Zápolya [...] was saluted by his comrades as savior of the Fatherland [Retter des Vaterlandes]."<sup>145</sup> Likewise, *Patriot* does not describe loyalty to the *österreichische Vaterland* but to the other country in question. "Even patriotic [patriotisch gesinnte] Hungarians disapproved of Matthias's continued fights for the Czech throne."<sup>146</sup> *Mutterland* appears in the work of Mayer in the sense described in the second section of this paper; that is, to refer to the common German cultural space from which Austria was excluded due to the defeat of 1866.<sup>147</sup>

### Hungary and Bohemia

In relation to Hungary and Bohemia, the diffusion of German *Kultur* is the empire's greatest merit in these master narratives. The most important good of this *Kultur* is the state itself. Nevertheless, there are differences between the authors concerning how they describe German influence on Hungarian and Czech state foundation. In Huber's and Krones' accounts, the German influence is more of a helping hand

144 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 737–39.

145 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. II, 567.

146 Huber, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. III, 224.

147 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 708.

for the founders of the Hungarian state. Kronos is most in line with the Hungarian self-image when he describes Hungarians as a resilient community which adopts Western phenomena by making them its own.<sup>148</sup> Mayer's tone is more confrontative, declaring that the Hungarians have never created their own constitution, which is a German creation.<sup>149</sup> In a similar way, Kralik presented the Hungarian and the Bohemian state as purely German foundations.<sup>150</sup>

The *Kultur*, the civilizing measures, could not be implemented at the peripheries of the empire, but only at the cost of major conflict. The national idea is presented as the principal destructive factor which prevents civilizing measures from being properly introduced and which provokes irrational hatred, foremost in Hungarians and Czechs, against Germans. Again, imperial historians project national identity into the past just as much as "national" historians of the period. Religious differences become major social issues only when they meet national ideas. The most important case is naturally the Hussite wars, which are presented as the result of fanatical national hatred. The wars are depicted as the destruction of culture for which the Czech "national movement" is responsible. In Kralik's account, Czech "national radicalism" damaged irrepealably Bohemia's culture; accordingly, the enemies of the Hussites become "the champions of culture against the menacing barbarism."<sup>151</sup>

Hussitism was, of course, the single most important event in national history for the Czech self-image, being of central importance to every single Czech political party.<sup>152</sup> However, as already mentioned, Pekař fought against the ahistorical, idealizing interpretation of the movement. This does not mean that he adapted the derogatory tone of his Austro-German peers in the work examined here. Pekař presents the core of the movement as having complex social, economic, as well as national origins: the economic difference between Czech and German artisans happened to coincide with the fact that one group spoke Czech while the other German.<sup>153</sup> The greater blow to the Masarykian image of the Hussites as followers of national-democratic ideas is Pekař's affirmation that different groups within the movement, such as soldiers and university teachers, all had their own interpretation of the Hussite ideals that were sometimes incompatible with each other.<sup>154</sup>

National passions, envies, and hatred are also blamed for Hungary's downfall in the imperial narratives. Both Mayer and Huber explain Hungary's unpreparedness

148 Kronos, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. I, 120.

149 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. I, 48.

150 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 17.

151 Kralik, *Österreichische Geschichte*, 66

152 Cp. Paces, "Religious Images and National Symbols."

153 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*, 63.

154 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*, 64.

for the Ottoman attack as due to national hatred against Germans which consumed their energy, and diverted them from handling the Ottoman menace.<sup>155</sup> The critique of the Hungarian self-image has also a conceptual level, which concerns the notion of the nation. Speaking of Hungary, Mayer used the word in quotation marks to warn his readers that in Hungarian verbiage this only refers to the nobility, excluding the overwhelmingly larger part of the population. Consequently, “Hungarian freedom” loses all its glory: “Constantly, they demanded the restoration of [...] so-called ‘national liberty’ which meant the liberty of the nobility, unruliness for the privileged, slavery for the oppressed classes of the people.”<sup>156</sup> In Mayer’s view, “national liberty” is in fact the denial of progress and civilization, as, in its name the privileged classes refused “every ambition that aimed at improving general conditions and were already introduced in civilized countries.”<sup>157</sup> Krones also clarifies that in the Hungarian and pre-1620 Bohemian context, *Nation* is to be understood *im politischen Sinne*; that is, as referring to the nobility only—consequently, the struggle for national liberty is in reality a struggle for outdated privileges.<sup>158</sup>

For Hungarian historians, the nation (*nemzet*) was in fact the protagonist in every account of Hungarian history. On the one hand, this nation referred to the Magyars, excluding the nationalities who were depicted as passive factors in the national history. In this sense, similarly to how Mayer’s account is in reality more of a German community history than an Austrian one, Hungarian national histories are Magyar community histories.<sup>159</sup> The other important feature of the nation in Hungarian narratives is its class dimension—precisely what the above-quoted Austro-German authors criticized. It was a particular *mélange* of the estate and the modern definition of the nation which resulted in the protagonist of these narratives becoming the lower nobility. The depiction of the Golden Bull is a vivid example: while in the *Vormärz* it was mostly described as a document that records the *nobility’s* privileges,<sup>160</sup> it assured the rights and privileges of the *nation* in Fraknói’s account.<sup>161</sup> Another example of how the lower nobility becomes identified with the nation is József Szalay’s account of John Szapolyai’s and Ferdinand Habsburg’s rivalry in the re-edited version of the work completed by Lajos Baróti. At the beginning of the third volume, the author affirms that the lower nobility sided with Szapolyai, while a few pages later it is the *nation* who sympathizes with the

155 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. I, 431–32; Huber, *Geschichte Österreich*, vol. III, 10.

156 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 269.

157 Mayer, *Geschichte Österreichs*, vol. II, 459.

158 Krones, *Handbuch der Geschichte Oesterreichs*, vol. II, 567; vol. III, 431–32.

159 Cp. Tarafás, “Nemzeiségek a nemzeti történelemben.”

160 Lajtai, “Magyar nemzet vagyok,” 154.

161 Frankl, *A magyar nemzet története*, vol. I, 119. (Fraknói only changed his name after his father’s death, which is why the work referred to here was published under his original family name Frankl.)

Hungarian nobleman.<sup>162</sup> This harmony between the lower nobility and the notion of the nation only starts to crumble when the authors arrive at the absolutist reign of Maria Theresa and her son. Here, the much-needed modernizing reforms clash with the privileges of the nobility which guarantee the “liberty of the nation” and the “independence of the country.”

Another crucial feature of the nation is that it is depicted as the acting protagonist of Hungary’s history in a manner similar to what we have seen in Beöthy’s independentist historical account. Even the great historical tragedies are considered to be the makings of the nation—foremost, its tendency to be divided. “If noblemen and serf unite, perhaps they could have saved Hungary”—wrote Marczali, referring to the peasant revolt which preceded the Ottoman conquest.<sup>163</sup> In a similar way, Baróti believes that the war of independence of 1848 could have been won if there had been harmony instead of disconnect between its leaders.<sup>164</sup>

The community as agency is a crucial feature of community master narratives.<sup>165</sup> It is practically missing, however, from the imperial narratives, where history is formed by concrete historical figures, and sometimes precise groups, such as the Hungarian or Czech nobility. On one interesting occasion the Hungarian and Austro-German perceptions clashed. Huber’s work was translated into Hungarian at the turn of the century. Translations are never only a matter of language; they represent a complex process of cultural transfer, during which an intellectual product is moved from its original field of production to another with its own particularities to which the translated product has to be adopted.<sup>166</sup> The translator (who happened to be Baróti in this case) made this adaptation in a rather invasive way. In the Hungarian version of Huber’s work, he did not include Hungary’s history, as in the Hungarian field of production Hungary was not considered to be part of *Österreich*. Some parts nevertheless had to be kept as they had implications for Austrian or Bohemian history. Such included the period of interregnum after the death of the last king from the house of *Árpád*. Huber clearly defined which group of clergy and nobility preferred which candidate for the throne. In Baróti’s version, however, it is the *nation* that has to make a decision; is divided into two groups; and, at the end, decides not to support the pope’s candidate. In this episode, Baróti managed to integrate two major characteristics of how he and his Hungarian peers perceived national history: the nation as history-forming protagonist, that is represented mainly by the nobility.<sup>167</sup>

162 Szalay and Baróti, *A magyar nemzet története*, vol. III, 9, 13.

163 Marczali, *Magyarország története*, 381.

164 Szalay and Baróti, *A magyar nemzet története*, vol. IV, 495.

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

166 Bourdieu, “Les conditions sociales de la circulation international des idées,” 4–7.

167 Tarafás, “A tulajdonságokkal bíró ember találkozása,” 147–48.

Generally, it can be stated that the Hungarian authors viewed their country's relation to Austria as harmful to Hungary, which had been degraded to a colony during this relationship. It is not surprising that the independentist Acsády's formulation is the most radical. The historian presents Habsburg rule as one homogenous period of depriving Hungary of its rights and exploiting its resources for the dynasty's ambitious wars. According to Acsády, Austria only attended to the needs of Hungary in order to obtain the necessary resources.<sup>168</sup> It is much more surprising that the famously loyal Fraknói's view is in many ways similar. Although he urges his readers to respect even those noblemen who always supported the Habsburgs, he also affirms that Hungary and Austria had prevented each other from establishing the fundamentals of healthy development.<sup>169</sup> Austria's harmful policies are not attributed to certain rulers but to the court and advisors, which implies that the eventual death of certain harmful rulers will not put an end to such policies which are rooted in the *longue durée* political culture of the Viennese court.

Furthermore, the system of values transmitted by the Hungarian works elevates independence above all other factors. "There is no treasure dearer to a nation, than its independence" claimed Marczali in a book from 1911.<sup>170</sup> The historian also implied that the ideal scenario would have been a complete rupture from Austria: "This was a great moment in Central Europe's history, affirms Marczali speaking of György Rákóczi's campaign in Poland, for [it was] the last time [...] it was possible for Hungary to develop without Austria."<sup>171</sup> Independence is not only important in relation to Austria, but is a general measurement of historical phenomena. For Acsády, the greatest merit of St. Stephen's state was to have maintained Hungary's independence.<sup>172</sup> Finally, independence is also depicted as the central value for the contemporaries themselves in every period: in the millennial synthesis, Marczali considers that Hungarians of the eleventh century converted to Christianity so easily because the independence of the country remained intact, whereas the pagan revolt broke out precisely because independence was menaced.<sup>173</sup>

There is one author who explicitly aims to justify Hungary's relations to Austria. However, he is not a historian but a celebrated publicist, Gusztáv Beksics, who was charged with writing the last part of the final volume in the millennial synthesis which dealt with a period that was considered to be too close for historical representation. Beksics, who always supported the *Ausgleich*, presented an

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168 Acsády, *A magyar birodalom története*, vol. II, 188.

169 Frnakl, *A magyar nemzet története*, vol. III, 92.

170 Marczali, *Magyarország története*, 675.

171 Marczali, *Magyarország története*, 482.

172 Acsády, *A magyar birodalom története*, vol. I, 76.

173 Marczali, *Magyarország története az Árpádok korában*, 32–38.

image of Hungarian history that one could find in his political pamphlets and which was similar to Andrásy's above-quoted account. He emphasizes the necessity of an empire in Central Europe and claims that the perfect structure of this empire is the "marriage" between centralization and a respect for Hungary's historical rights—that is, the Compromise of 1867 which "draws the curtain on the sad past."<sup>174</sup> By "sad past," Beksics was referring to the period between 1849 and 1867; nevertheless, he could have meant the three-centuries-long relationship with Austria, the depiction of which did not imply a fruitful or justified coexistence with the Habsburg Empire.

### Concluding remarks

Our main questions at the beginning of this article concerned, on the one hand, how the legitimacy of the empire was argued in "imperial" narratives, and, on the other, how compatible these historical accounts were with those of the two other main parts of the empire.

Concerning the first question, one can point to two historians who were most committed to the idea of Austria: Franz von Krones, and Richard von Kralik. In the works of both, the *Gesamtstaat* is understood as it was by the thinkers examined in section two, who strove to preserve the empire, such as Fischhof and Helfert. However, on closer inspection, beyond this similarity Krones and Kralik defined the idea and mission of Austria in radically different ways, in which one can identify the rivalry between *Zentraleuropa* and *Mitteleuropa*.

As stated above, Mayer's work, which has many merits of its own with regard to its impressive presentation of social and cultural history, is more of a community history for the Germans of Habsburg Central Europe than an Austrian history. It is not surprising that Otto Bauer labelled Mayer's work the only considerable achievement related to Austria's history<sup>175</sup> and that this work was revised and republished in 1930's Austria.

Alfons Huber's case is more complicated. He was undoubtedly an Austrian patriot, which he proved when insisting on the introduction of *Reichsgeschichte* at the faculties of law and the humanities. However, he was too much of an honest positivist scholar to introduce meta-historical ideas in his work, such as the *Gesamtstaat* of Krones or Kralik. The historian accepted the nation-obsessed worldview of his time, which left him with the only option of seeing Austria as a *künstlicher Bau*. One wonders if there could have been another way. How different this is to the case of his Belgian contemporary, Henri Pirenne, who incidentally wrote his *Geschichte Belgiens*

174 Beksics, "I. Ferenc József és kora," 517.

175 Bauer, *Geschichte Oesterreichs*, 5.

in the same book series as Huber. Pirenne also had to deal with the history of a community which was perceived to be abnormal by many; nevertheless, he managed to give an original and convincing explanation of Belgium's particularity by treating it as a miniature of Europe; the meeting point of German and Latin civilization.<sup>176</sup>

The Czech case could only be examined briefly as Pekař's textbook was the only complete *grand récit* that the Goll School produced before the First World War. Its explanation of Austria resembles Palacký's view, in that both historians see Austria's beginning in 1526 in a contrasting way to how the Austro-German patriots examined here did. The striving for Bohemian state rights can be experienced in Pekař's narrative, foremost in the way the historian aims to show the equality of the Bohemian and Hungarian state, and claims that the Hungarian state's Slav origins are as equally important as the German influence.<sup>177</sup>

Considering compatibility—the possibility of an Austrian–Hungarian *pacte mémoriel*—the results look rather gloomy. First of all, it should be pointed out that, with the exception of Fischhof, the historical image transmitted by the Austro-German political discourse is only compatible with the basic elements of Hungarian self-representation when the author argues for the break with Hungary. As for the historical *grand récits*, the question needs to be raised whether one can truly speak of “imperial history,” given that most of our authors see the *Staat* as the main object of their books, especially Kroner and Huber. While the dualist system could have easily been integrated into a truly imperial narrative the main object of which was the empire or the *Vaterland*, it is hard to see how a two-state system could have been integrated into a state history. The other major issue on the part of the Austro-German authors is their interpretation of the Hungarian nation, which is absolutely incompatible with the self-image of the Hungarian authors: the two are in fact counter-canon.

Regarding the Hungarian narratives, the results urge us to re-examine the common thesis in literature that Hungarian historians, even those with independent inclinations, have accepted the relations with Austria. Péter Gunst has already pointed out that the acceptance of the *Ausgleich* by these historians personally did not determine their views of the past.<sup>178</sup> Our research points in this direction, warning that instead of the personality of the historians, their work and its implications need to be closely studied in order to determine how they could have influenced the perception of Hungary's relations with Austria.

In the past decades, Austria has been seen as an inspiring historical field of study in relation to certain phenomena that define our contemporary world, such

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176 Tarafás, “Miniatures of Europe.”

177 Pekař, *Dějiny naší říše*, 33.

178 Gunst, “Egy történeti monográfia születése,” 291.



as modernity,<sup>179</sup> populist politics,<sup>180</sup> and globalization.<sup>181</sup> Perhaps it would also be worth studying the diverse community histories of Austria, their relations with each other, and the accomplishments and failures at reconciling them into one larger community history that can transcend particular narratives of the conflictual past. Such research could provide us with valuable lessons in relation to our contemporary dilemmas that the question of a common European history raises.

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