

BOOK REVIEWS

Antemurale Christianitatis: Zur Genese der Bollwerksrhetorik im östlichen Mitteleuropa an der Schwelle vom Mittelalter zur Frühen Neuzeit.

By Paul Srodecki. *Historische Studien* 508. Husum: Matthiesen, 2015. 532 pp.

In 2013, when Paul Srodecki defended his dissertation (which bears the same title as the book published two years later) at the University of Giessen, even he probably did not realize how relevant the theme he had chosen for his work would come to be over the course of the next few years. And yet he may have had some guess. In the preface to the book, he puts the changes which the traditional images of Europe have undergone in context in connection with the expansion of the European Union in 2004. He notes that even in the first years of the new millennium, the governments in Central and Eastern Europe made frequent use of Late Medieval and early modern topoi, such as the concept of “bulwark of Europe and Christianity.”

In addition to the relevance of the subject of the book, it is also worth noting that Srodecki examines the evolution of the topos which figures in his title according to the tradition of the classical German schools of history, first and foremost in the Kingdom of Hungary and the Kingdom of Poland. His methodology shifts between an investigation from the perspective of the history of ideas and political science explanation patterns. Only rarely does one find arguments based on conceptual or discursive history. Following a thorough explanation of the corpus of sources under examination and his methodology, Srodecki offers eight chapters of varying lengths in which he presents the subject of his research and his findings.

Not surprisingly, he begins with a chapter on conceptual history in which he examines ideological tenets, one by one, and presents the terms he will discuss (*antemurale*, *propugnaculum*, *murus*, and *scutum*), which reflect traditional warlike rhetoric. In a discussion of the opposition, rivalry, and even conflict between East and West, one cannot avoid offering an overview of the Ancient and Medieval history of the asymmetrical counter-terms. Beginning with Gog and Magog from the Old Testament and concluding with the East–West schism in 1054, Srodecki presents the most important historical nodes, putting his investigation into this larger context. For the bulwark rhetoric (*Bollwerksrhetorik*) was already present in Antiquity (one need merely consider the citation taken

from the Vulgate as a kind of slogan for the book), but it was used with varying intensity in different periods.

Though Srodecki draws particularly heavily on sources relevant to the Hungarian and the Polish Kingdoms, he nonetheless cannot avoid beginning with a discussion of the roles of the Teutonic Order, which he characterizes as a kind of a trailblazer in the spread of the revived trope of the bulwark. In the course of the Crusades, the Teutonic Order rose up as a defender of Christianity. Then, when Andrew II of Hungary had them settle in Burzenland in the course of the wars against the Cumans, they soon again characterized themselves, *mutatis mutandis*, as the defenders of Christianity, though they were fighting not to liberate the Holy Land, but rather against the pagan Cumans. Srodecki offers a brief presentation here of how this image became a familiar and widely used trope in the kingdoms on the eastern edges of the Western Christian world, first and foremost the Kingdoms of Poland and Hungary.

In the use of the bulwark rhetoric (as in the case of uses of other asymmetrical counter-terms), sometimes the same parties who regard and interpret themselves as the embodiments of the allegory disagree among themselves and begin to differ, and a very chaotic warlike situation comes about, particularly on the level of rhetoric. It is, after all, simple to say that a Christian group that forms the bulwark of Christianity is good and the pagan enemy is evil. However, as soon as two groups each of which considers itself the bulwark of Christianity come into conflict with each other, the question inevitably will arise as to which of them is the *authentic* bulwark of the one true faith. Srodecki discusses this interesting question in the chapter in which he presents the long battles between the Teutonic Order and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in particular between the Order and the Kingdom of Poland up until the first third of the fifteenth century.

Then begins the section of the monograph that really constitutes its spine. The few pages concerning Humanist topoi, the (anti-)Turcicas, and the image of Humanist Europe offers the backdrop for the chapters on the rhetoric in Hungary and Poland concerning the two kingdoms as the bulwarks of Christianity. Srodecki attributes considerable importance in the spread of this topos to Humanist orations and in particular to the work of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who, following the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and then his selection as pope, was ever more impassioned in his efforts to urge common action against the Turks in the name of Christianity and Christian Europe. In the first of the two longest chapters in the book, Srodecki offers an overview of

the history in Hungary of the period associated with the rulers of the Hunyadi family from the perspective of the evolution of the trope of a defensive bulwark. While John Hunyadi rose as the “scourge of the Turks” *athleta Christi*, his son Matthias waged campaigns over the course of his rule not only against the pagan Turks but also against heretics, in other words, the Hussites, or at least Srodecki puts the battles he fought for the Czech crown (i.e. the crown of another Christian people) into this narrative. Srodecki notes the importance of the roles played by Matthias’s court chroniclers (Ransano, Bonfini) in interweaving the political legitimacy of the ruling house and the rhetoric of a defensive bastion into their historical narratives and thereby furthering the acceptance of both in the wider circles. By the end of the chapter, Srodecki has completely separated the crusade fought in the realm of rhetoric and the actual crusades fought on the battlefield, and at this point, it again becomes difficult for the reader to disregard the actual political bearings and implications. The longest and most thoroughly thought-through chapter of the monograph addresses the spread of the *antemurale* concept in the Europe of the Jagiellonian dynasty. As he did in his discussions of the rulers of the Hunyadi family, here too, Srodecki presents the history of the use of the term alongside the histories of the dynasties and the dynastic battles. The narrative of the history of the two dynasties and the kingdom culminates in the Battle of Mohács. With the fall of the kingdoms, the notion of a defensive bulwark also begins to crumble and fall out of use.

In harmony with the concept of *translatio imperii*, there were heirs to this rhetorical tradition and enemies of these heirs, but these were relatively small outbursts which flared up in isolated pockets compared to earlier cases. Of them, it is worth mentioning perhaps the denominational conflicts which broke out in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Srodecki makes only brief reference to later use of the concept, and quite rightly. He does not undertake in this monograph to examine the defensive bulwark rhetoric in the modern era. What he has undertaken he has admirably achieved, namely to offer an overview and a readable narrative of the history of the topos he has chosen in the Late Middle Ages and the early modern era.

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Az indigenák [The indigenae]. Edited by István M. Szijártó. Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2017. 235 pp.

The volume is based on a conference held on September 19, 2014 at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest by a group of scholars focusing on the social history of early modern and modern Hungary. The conference dealt with a particular group of the society of estates between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. As the laconic title of the book probably sounds unfamiliar and even enigmatic to most readers, it is worth beginning with a definition. In short, the traditional legal institution of *indigenatus* served as a form of ennoblement through which someone of foreign origin was incorporated into the Hungarian political nation (*natio Hungarica*). Originally, naturalization was a royal prerogative, but during a diet, it required the consent of the Hungarian estates as well. Between the legislative sessions, the king was eligible to decide with the collaboration of his Hungarian counsellors. Although the bestowal of the title was an established practice, it was not always used. Foreigners could be settled in the country and naturalized “tacitly,” without the solemn procedure, though this did not mean that they could enjoy noble liberties and privileges.

As István M. Szijártó, the editor of the volume emphasizes, while *indigenatus* as a legal category is unambiguous, from the viewpoint of social history it appears as a more complex and intriguing phenomenon. As Szijártó points out, the question of who could be considered an *indigena* was determined not by legal status, but by the political contexts and interests. Consequently, the real starting point for historical research must be the inconsistent practices of the period, i.e. when and why somebody was labelled an *indigena*, as well as the attitude of the rest of the Hungarian estates towards these individuals. The use of this label clearly served as a form of social and political discrimination until the middle (or rather the end) of the nineteenth century.

As Szijártó writes in his introduction, “far more myths have circulated in Hungarian historiography about the *indigenae* than actual research endeavors dealing with them.” Fortunately, most of the studies in the volume are founded on genuine archival research, which compensates for the field having fallen into neglect for a long time. Furthermore, though the articles were written by an array of graduate students, early career researchers and experienced scholars, they set an evenly high standard, and some of the younger authors make essential contributions to the field. The time scope of the collection is rather broad, as the first study deals with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the

last two with the post-Compromise (1867) years. However, the focal point of the volume is the era of the “constitutionalism of the estates” (as pointed out by Szijártó), i.e. from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth. It is not surprising that this question was particularly important in the period of the social, economic, and political ascent of the wealthy gentry (*bene possessionati*) and the long-lasting political practice of dualism between the king and the estates.

In the first article of the volume, Tatjana Guszarova discusses the process of *indigenatio solemnis*, the official and solemn naturalization of foreigners at the diets during the reign of the first Habsburg kings. Guszarova presents this act as a means with which the Habsburgs cemented their political position in the kingdom. Article LXXVII of 1550 specified the rules of *indigenatio solemnis*, establishing the conditions of the process for a long time. By offering an overview of the naturalizations which occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Guszarova demonstrates that the efforts of the Habsburgs in this field proved successful, since they managed to increase the number of Hungarian nobles of foreign origin.

András Forgó investigates a subgroup of *indigenae*, the members of the prelates and the middle-ranking members of the clergy who were naturalized, with emphasis on the superiors of the monastic orders. Forgó emphasizes that many monastic superiors arrived in the country after the Ottomans had been driven out, and they had been sent to reorganize the monastic centers. However, the Hungarian estates were distrustful towards them and accused them of using the monastic institutions merely for personal gain. Consequently, in the eighteenth century, it became customary for the monastic superiors to make efforts to attain naturalization. Forgó concludes that by obtaining *indigenatus*, the monastic orders could take the wind out of the sails of the Hungarian estates, even if the operation of the monastic communities remained in foreign hands, headed by an abbot or a provost of foreign origin.

To my mind, the subsequent three studies written by historians who are in the earlier phases of their careers are the most thorough and even trailblazing contributions to the volume. Tamás Szemethy examines the ways in which people managed to become part of the Hungarian aristocracy. There were essentially two means of entering this group: the bestowal of a title by the king (the people who belonged to this category were the so-called “new aristocrats”) and naturalization. Szemethy’s study compares these two subgroups with regard to their number and occupations (soldiers, officials, and clergymen) between 1720 and 1799. He points out the problems of clarifying the separation of the

two subgroups and the terminology regarding them. Szemethy's investigations are based primarily on the *Corpus Juris* and the Hungarian Royal Books (*Libri Regii*), though he points out that these sources are not sufficient in and of themselves as the foundations for a proper analysis. By examining the relevant legal sources, one could offer a plain definition of the process of naturalization, but the actual legal practice appears to have been more complex. Szemethy shows that, in addition to the formal process, it was possible to obtain *indigenatus* in an alternative way. According to Béla Kempelen and Zoltán Fallenbüchl, in the periods between the sessions of the diet, following a proposal by the king, the incorporation of a foreigner had to be announced in a county assembly and reported to the Archbishop of Esztergom, and a diploma had to be issued by the Royal Chancery (*Cancellaria Regis*). Szemethy emphasizes that while it is possible to define the group of "new aristocrats" legally, in the case of the *indigenae*, the legal approach should be replaced or at least complemented with social historical analysis.

In comparison to the other contributions to the volume, the approach adopted by Zsolt Kökényesi is an exception. Kökényesi examines the other side of the coin, the ceremony of *Erbhuldigung*, the solemn pledge of fidelity in Lower Austria in the first half of the eighteenth century. This ceremony was significant, because it was a public act made by an archduke ascending to the throne. The ceremonies meant the formal handover of the Lower Austrian estates, and they were spectacular events. Due to their significance, descriptions of the proceedings and detailed lists of participants were published. After an enumeration of the participants, Kökényesi examines the presence of Hungarians. A Hungarian aristocrat could take part in the *Erbhuldigung* either as an *Inkolat* (one who was incorporated into the Lower Austrian estates) or as a foreign guest of the festive banquet. Kökényesi's study concludes that most of the Hungarian participants in the ceremonies were magnates who maintained good relations in Austria and who wanted to be integrated personally into the upper elite of the Habsburg Monarchy. Thus, their participation in these events can be considered part of a conscious strategy.

In his case study on the 1751 diet, János Nagy looks at the political aspects of naturalization. He analyzes a unique and promising group of archival sources: the requests for *indigenatus* and the documents produced by the commission of the diet investigating the process. Nagy points out that the *indigenae* were self-supporting actors who had legitimate social claims. Consequently, he deals with their role in the debates in the diet, their image in prevailing public opinion,

and also how they argued in their requests addressed to the diet. Nagy shows that the strategies they used when they were trying to convince the Hungarian estates differed slightly from the strategies they used in their requests addressed to the king. The requests addressed to the estates applied four basic modes of argumentation: note military merits, note service to the common good, enumerate Hungarian ancestors and relatives, and refer to possession of lands in the kingdom. Nagy contends that, in the context of the diets, labeling somebody an *indigena* was essentially political.

In the next chapter, Adrienn Szilágyi deals with the *indigena*-families of Békés County in the first half of the nineteenth century, approaching the question from the standpoint of local society. In Békés County (today in southwestern Hungary), following the expulsion of the Turks, Johann Georg Freiherr von Harruckern acquired two-thirds of the lands as a royal donation. He played a crucial role in local politics, and after his death in 1742, his son Franz followed in his father's footsteps. However, when the son died in 1775, the male line of the family died with him, and the heirs divided the lands into five parts. Consequently, in the following decades a few naturalized families were able to establish connections in the county. Szilágyi points out two characteristic strategies used by the naturalized magnate families in this specific county: some families were absent and remained affiliated with the imperial center, while others integrated into the life of the county as active agents in local political and economic life.

Béla Pálmány draws attention in his study to the wave of naturalizations during the diets of the Reform Era. He emphasizes that during most wartime diets at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, no naturalizations occurred, but after the Napoleonic wars, many foreigners obtained status as *indigenatus*. The French Wars and the 13-year break in legislation impacted the number of naturalizations. Pálmány shows that the merits of those involved in the wars were stressed upon naturalization (traditional military merits, office-bearing in the service of the court and country, and as a new element, appeals to various activities undertaken as civilians). During the diets of 1839–40 and 1843–44, the legal-constitutional aspects of *indigenatus* were also disputed, and with the April Laws of 1848, the significance of the issue decreased remarkably.

Although with the vanishing of the old political system of the estates, the political significance of *indigenatus* was weakening, the question was still on the agenda because of the personal legislative right of the members of the House of Magnates. The last two studies focus on this period. Veronika Tóth-Barbalics

investigates the *indigenae* of the House of Magnates between 1865 and 1918. The House of Magnates was reformed in 1885, resulting in considerable changes in the composition of the chamber. With Article VII of 1885, membership was now bound to a tax census of 3,000 forints per year and to the constraint of opting, meaning that naturalized magnates had to make a statement confirming that they practiced the right to legislate exclusively in the Hungarian Parliament. The study complements the investigations of Károly Vörös, demonstrating that of the *indigena*-families which dropped out of the House of Magnates, only a small number found their way back into a legislative body.

Finally, the study of Dániel Ballabás discusses the same period, but from a more comprehensive and problem-oriented viewpoint. His study deals the *Corpus Juris* as an authentic source on the process of naturalization, claiming that between 1542 and 1840, 594 people obtained *indigenatus* in total. After delineating the heritage of the previous period, the study investigates the relationship between the *indigenae* and the changes to the citizenship law in the second half of the nineteenth century. Ballabás also studies the question of membership in the House of Magnates, citing some peculiar arguments against *indigenae*. As had been the case in the Reform Era, the opposition presented the archetypical *indigena* as an absent foreigner, unable to support national interests.

All in all, the findings of the studies complement those of earlier studies and refute some long-lasting political and historical myths. The volume provides deeper insights into the field through thorough study of primary sources. It enriches first and foremost our knowledge of the social history of the upper elites of the Kingdom of Hungary, though the praiseworthy presence of both social and political viewpoints notwithstanding, the approach of quantitative social history dominates, while the “interpretive” attitude focusing on the political discourses and legal practices of the age remains in the background.

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The Grand Strategy of the Habsburg Empire. By A. Wess Mitchell. Princeton: University Press, 2018. xiv + 403 pp.

This is an ambitious, bright, fluent book. It represents an interdisciplinary challenge for historians. It brings the methodology of strategic studies to bear on the Austrian state as it had grown to great-power status by the early eighteenth century, emerging from the carapace of the Holy Roman Empire and negotiating the extinction of the Spanish line of its ruling family.

“All Great Powers need a grand strategy to survive,” we are told (p.304). So, what was the secret of the Habsburgs’ success in the century and a half after 1700? Mitchell begins with the geographical determinants of their realms: an exposed situation in the center of the continent, but with mountain ranges providing protection and river systems securing internal lines of communication. Mitchell makes repeated references to these factors, although neither Frederick of Prussia nor Napoleon was much hindered by orographic obstacles, while the waterways, even those within the Danube’s hydrological network, were grievously underexploited for a long time. Mitchell stresses how well Austrian governments came to understand their terrain thanks to the unrivalled quality of their cartography (a pity his own maps are so crude, illegible, and generally feeble). Essentially, Austria, as a satiated land power surrounded by threats, adopted defensive military postures. It did not risk its main body of troops unless absolutely necessary. That is also the message of a recent book by Richard Bassett entitled *For God and Kaiser*, in which Bassett makes the same argument in a more facile and anecdotal way. Mitchell points to the Habsburgs’ successful “sequencing,” as he calls it, of time and space. They needed, on the one hand, barriers and buffers: fortified redoubts in their own border areas or, better still, beyond them, but in friendly hands; and client states, earlier especially in southern German and northern Italian territories, later also in the western Balkans. On the other hand, they needed alliances. In the 22 wars fought by Austria during this period, it almost always (19 times) stood on the side which had more allies.

That involved a balancing act, directed first against France, with support from the German lands, Great Britain, and elsewhere; then the construction of a coalition against Frederician Prussia; then decades of struggle with shifting power groups to resist France again in its revolutionary and Napoleonic mode. For a century from the 1750s, the Habsburgs’ chief alliance was with Russia, but that would prove costliest in the long run. The (for Mitchell willful) alienation of Russia during the Crimean war began the rapid erosion of Austria as a great

power, combined as it was with a loss of buffers, a new offensive mentality in the high command, and a neglect of earlier operational prowess (by the 1860s, Habsburg troops in Germany were reduced to using Baedeker guides to find their routes). Emperor Francis Joseph, revered by some as the conservator of the Monarchy, rightly appears here, in a strong final chapter, as its foremost gravedigger.

The broad international backing, or at least neutrality, that Austria long enjoyed has often been attributed to recognition of it as a “European necessity.” Mitchell resists this notion, especially for the eighteenth century. He emphasizes Austria’s agency and the influence on its decision-making of a stream of local military theorists, from Montecuccoli to Archduke Charles and Radetzky. Predictably, Mitchell’s appreciation of Habsburg foreign policy culminates in a rosy presentation of the Vienna settlement and the age of Metternich. He shows (in the footsteps of Henry Kissinger and Paul Schroeder) how a *pax Austriaca* was secured by the fruitful deployment of international alliances, *puiissances intermédiaires*, and localized low-cost interventions. At this point we may, however, begin to wonder how complete or even accurate this analysis is. What of Metternich’s woeful mishandling of the domestic affairs of the Monarchy? Did not that count towards the strategic reckoning? Yes, but only on the credit side of the ledger: “The greatest geopolitical success of the Metternich system came in 1848” (p.251). In other words, Austria was particularly effective at fighting its own, largely unarmed people. “General Windischgrätz put down the Prague uprising” (p.252): all in a day’s work, no doubt, for an accomplished Austrian strategist. And we are told how well some fortresses held out against the revolution at home (no mention of the fact that others, in the hands of the Hungarian rebels, held out even longer).

Mitchell’s lack of interest in actual governance goes with some carelessness about detail. He uses the doubtful term “Erblande” throughout for the hereditary lands. He names the wrong Schwarzenberg in 1813 (it was Karl, not Felix). Forms like “Clam-Martinez” and “Menningen” (Memmingen), “Württemberg,” “Witelsbach,” and “Freiburg on the Danube” arouse unease. And even in the grand geostrategic scheme of things, Mackinder’s forename was Halford, not “Harold.” Thus, Mitchell cannot be trusted for a full picture of the determinants of Habsburg decline in the nineteenth century. But that is not what strategic studies are about. Rather we may see his contribution as heuristic. It suggests that in the last phase, we can usefully distinguish *two* Habsburg empires. One was the popular and progressive construction subscribed to by many people of the

Monarchy and much rehabilitated in recent scholarship (notably the American school around Pieter Judson). The other was the strategic Austria, the machine for making foreign policy. The people's empire was aspirational and emergent; the dynastic empire was real and degenerative. From the 1860s onward, the latter's crisis undermined the former. Revealingly, the Austria-Hungary decades form no part of Mitchell's story, since from his perspective, the Monarchy by then was already a spent force.

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“Engesztelhetetlen gyűlölet”: Válás Budapesten (1850–1914)
 [“Implacable hatred”: Divorce in Budapest, 1850–1914]. By Sándor Nagy. Budapest: Budapest City Archives; HAS–Momentum Family History Research Group, 2018. 503 pp.

Sándor Nagy, a senior archivist at the Budapest City Archives, summarized the results of his nearly two decades of research in this volume, which is impressive in many ways. Although the question of divorce, prohibitions against divorce, and licensing of divorce under certain conditions has already been actively studied by contemporaries, a comprehensive analysis of the topic has not yet been written. Sándor Nagy’s work fills this gap. Although most of the concrete examples offered in the book are drawn from urban contexts, the volume offers the reader much more. In the first two parts, which come to about 250 pages, Nagy meticulously explores the evolution of divorce in Hungary, including the perceived or real differences between cities and rural settlements. From confession to confession, he examines the room for maneuver that couples who wished to terminate their marriages had, the interaction between social attitudes to divorce, and the evolution of the legal environment. The reader can also follow the process of the secularization of divorce and the consequences of this process. In addition to examining opinions concerning divorce prevailing in Hungary at the time, Nagy also presents and evaluates earlier findings on the topic in an international context or refutes stereotypes that have become widespread in the secondary literature. For example, he explains in detail why statistics show many more divorced women than men in Budapest. He also throws into question the view according to which the degree of urbanization and modernization is directly proportional to the number of divorces. In some cities in Hungary, such as Kolozsvár (Cluj), which was considered more of a mid-city, couples were more likely to divorce than in Budapest or the much more populous Paris. The stereotype that women benefited from the introduction of civic divorce and it helped them to assert their interests is also questioned. Nagy draws attention to the methodological and computational flaws in the data compiled by contemporary statisticians, which confirmed the preconceived notion that the introduction of civil divorce would bring about an increase in the number of cases. The number of divorces, reconstructed by Nagy, on the basis of court sources, does not prove this. Rather, the number of divorces in Budapest declined significantly in 1896, followed later by a steady but slower increase compared to the number of divorces in towns in rural parts of the country.

In the earlier secondary literature, the question of divorce was primarily discussed by historical demographers, but the sources and methods they employed dealt only with a few aspects. By contrast, the court files that Nagy focuses on and also the other related sources (private letters, recollections etc.) he uses, adopting methods from the field of legal history which so far have been neglected, offer a completely new picture. For example, there is a compelling larger chapter on “alternative solutions” (the “ante-room” of divorce), in which Nagy writes about abandonment and concubinage, paradoxically, on the basis of the subsequent court files. Furthermore, in similar detail, he explains how one could become a legitimate or illegitimate child.

Several chapters touch on gender differences, not in general, but usually in terms of social affiliation. One of the reasons for this is that women’s work, the property rights in marriage, and the financial security of women (and their children) played a crucial role in the initiation and continuation of the procedure. Nagy’s investigation of the fates of people involved does not end with the divorce. He tries to follow the parties and determine what happened to them after the divorce, including how they declared their family and social status, whether they remarried, re-divorced, and whether their prosperity was influenced by the dissolution of their unhappy marriage. Particular attention should be paid to the chapter “Relations and Networks,” in which Nagy gives concrete examples of how divorces could “spread” with the assistance of relatives, neighbors and lawyer acquaintances in a particular community.

Nagy deals with the sources with exemplary objectivity, and in the introduction, he notes that the expression “implacable hatred” in the title is a contemporary legal term. Parties needed simply to use this term in order to terminate a marriage relatively quickly without greater complications. Accordingly, we learn less about bedroom secrets and the real-life emotional conflicts of the litigant spouses and instead come to know how the lawyers “trained” their clients, what consensual divorce meant, and what happened to someone who was not trained or who did not listen to good advice.

It is evident from the monograph that it is from the pen of a very knowledgeable, recognized expert on the sources held in various archives, who is familiar with the relevant literature and who has given the subject lengthy reflection and reassessed prevailing ideas on the history of divorce in the period discussed.

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Everyday Nationalism in Hungary 1789–1867. By Alexander Maxwell. Berlin–Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2019. 262 pp.

For a few decades, we have been witnessing a reassessment of the workings and the importance of nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe. Innovative scholars rethink the weight of national identity in studies based on solid empirical research and thorough theoretical considerations. The voluminous 2016 book by Pieter M. Judson (*The Habsburg Empire: A New History*) can be regarded as a summary of these new findings. However, this thought-provoking book does not pay much attention to the Hungarian Kingdom. Hungarian critics of the work have pointed out that the case of Hungary does not fit into many of the tendencies that Judson demonstrates. Furthermore, one has the feeling that in this major work, which provides an impressive critical analysis of national identity and indifference in Cisleithania, Hungary is presented as an “oasis” of the national idea, where it was able to flourish in a way that nationalists from Cisleithania could only dream of. Fortunately, in the past few years, some works have been published which treat Hungary in a way that is worthy of the abovementioned historiographical trend. These works focus not only on Hungarian (Magyar) nationalism, but also on the different minorities in the country and their responses to the challenges posed by an increasingly powerful Magyar nationalism. One thinks, for instance, of the remarkable book by Alexander Maxwell, which is one of the most recent in this trend.

The purpose of the book is to examine the beginnings of nationalism as a lived experience in the Hungarian Kingdom between 1789 and 1867. The work focuses on certain aspects of nationalism that the secondary literature has tended to ignore, namely the nationalization of banal objects and practices of ordinary people, such as national drinks or national marriage customs. The book can be divided into three main parts. The first (chapters 1 and 2) presents a thorough study of terminological and theoretical aspects. The second part (chapters 3 to 7) provides an analysis of the aforementioned nationalization of everyday phenomena. Finally, in the conclusion, Maxwell evaluates his findings from the point of view of nationalism theories, though some discussion of this question is found in every chapter.

Although, as already stated, the book’s main focus is on the nationalization of everyday life, the first two chapters, which offer a consideration of terminological problems, are just as significant and original as the subsequent ones. In the first chapter, Maxwell analyses the word “Hungarian.” He points out that this kind of

analysis is essential to any book dealing with the nationalism(s) in the Kingdom of Hungary, though it is worth noting that many substantial works published in Hungary and abroad fail to offer any rigorous discussion of such a fundamental term and use the word as if its meaning were self-evident. This is a grave mistake, in particular given that the term featured prominently in national rhetoric. Maxwell shows how the distinction between Hungarian (signifying all inhabitants of the Kingdom) and Magyar (meaning exclusively the linguistic community) was developed among the non-Magyar communities. This distinction signified a more tolerant approach, as it listed Slovaks, for example, and Magyars as equal inhabitants of their common country, Hungary. No surprise that Magyar nationalists were harshly against this differentiation. Concerning Maxwell's own usage of the words, knowing that a perfect solution does not exist, he uses the term "Magyar" in cases in which there was a conflict between Magyar nationalists and the other communities. This solution seems to be more adequate than that of Judson, who only declared briefly and bluntly that the distinction between "Hungarian" and "Magyar" made "little intellectual sense" to him, and so he deliberately avoided using the terms "Magyar" and "Magyarization."

The notion of "nation" is very similar to that of "Hungarian" in the sense that it was an eminent element of nationalist rhetoric, yet several scholarly works use the term as if its meaning were self-evident. First, Maxwell presents the complicated history of how Magyar and "minority" (another highly problematic term) intellectuals defined the notion of "nation" and "nationality" up to the 1868 Nationalities Law. One might regret, however, that he fails to offer a similar analysis of the so-called "Hungarus consciousness," which is considered in the secondary literature as a widespread form of collective identity that transcended ethnicity and based self-definition on loyalty to Hungary as a territorial unit. Second, Maxwell also examines the applicability of the definitions of nation offered by different nationalism-theorists. Maxwell's method is highly recommended: instead of using the definition of one particular theorist and superposing it to the nineteenth century, he proposes an empirical research strategy which consists of analyzing the notion as a rhetorical device, putting emphasis on how historical actors themselves interpreted and used the notion of "nation." This strategy fits into a trend which is gaining prevalence today, as scholars choose an empirical method instead of being absorbed by the overwhelming array of nationalism theories.

With the third chapter, Maxwell arrives to the main object of his work. Chapters three and four proceed from a Marxist inspired base-superstructure

model to explain the phenomena of national tobacco and national wine. Maxwell also presents the limits of this model by showing that although economic interest played a key part in advertising these items as “national goods,” the items themselves became cultural phenomena and started a life of their own. To describe this transformation, Maxwell uses the notion of “banal nationalism,” which he takes from the works of Michael Billig, and he adapts this notion to the Hungarian Kingdom. Maxwell also presents the different prejudices concerning the other nationalities’ preferred types of alcohol. The fifth and sixth chapters present elements of everyday nationalism that have gender implications. Maxwell points out that the cult of the “national moustache” meant the exclusion not only of other nationalities but also women. The chapter on national marriages presents how Magyar intellectuals urged their compatriots to choose Magyar women and disapproved of cross-national marriages. Using Carole Pateman’s terminology, Maxwell shows how the rhetoric of national endogamy presented women as collective possessions of the national brotherhood. Though Pateman’s work does not explicitly deal with nationalism, Maxwell considers it useful, as in his view, other gender works do not address nationalism as such, but only its effects on women. The seventh chapter examines national clothing, a topic which is mostly approached from the sociological and gender point of view, neglecting its implications for nationalism. Maxwell, using first and foremost the theory of Grant McCracken, who treats clothing as a sort of language, analyses the spread of *díszmagyar* (Hungarian national festival clothing for men) and the reaction of the nationalities (mainly Croats) to this trend.

In the conclusion, Maxwell considers what lessons can be drawn from the Hungarian case for nationalism theorists. For we are facing an overwhelming number of nationalism theories which need empirical testing. Maxwell is especially hostile to Anthony D. Smith’s approach, showing that not only is Smith poorly informed about Hungarian history, but his ideas are not even fit to grasp the complexity of the Hungarian case. And he does not limit himself to Smith, but calls into question the notions put forward by all the scholars (Anderson, Hobsbawm, and Gellner among others) who consider nationalism as something which emerged from gradual social transformation. Instead, the history of everyday nationalism turns us to Rogers Brubaker, who has argued that one should see nationness as an event, something that suddenly crystallizes rather than develops. Furthermore, Brubaker’s theory also emphasizes the agency of patriots and the question of reception, an approach which proves more fruitful than the suggestions posed by his predecessors’. Maxwell concludes

that Brubaker's ideas prove the most suitable in dealing with nationalism in an empirical study. It is worth noting that it was also Brubaker's ideas that helped the notion of "national indifference" gain traction in the secondary literature as a useful concept.

One might argue that, in view of its main sources, Maxwell's book is more about the *idea* of everyday nationalism in the first half of the nineteenth century than everyday nationalism itself. However, this would be a rather idealistic and even naïve criticism which would reveal a certain inexperience in dealing with the very few available reliable historical sources, which is a burden every historian seeking to study the reception of nationalist ideas in the period faces. Maxwell's approach offers a solution which is naturally not perfect, but remains one of the best available: the study of national commodities and nationalized practices may be able to bridge "the intellectual history of national ideas and the data available to social historians."

Imre Tarafás
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Magyarok a bécsi hivatalnokvilágban: A közös külügyminisztérium magyar tisztviselői 1867–1914 [Hungarians in the Viennese bureaucracy: Hungarian officers in the joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1867–1914]. By Éva Somogyi. Budapest: MTA BTK TTI, 2017. 268 pp.

At first glance a collective biography of Hungarian officers in the ranks of the (in)famous Viennese bureaucracy, the book by Éva Somogyi offers far more than that, namely an empirical investigation of the very functioning of dualist Austria-Hungary. This insight is all the more appreciated, since recent literature concerning Cisleithanian integration and imperial (rather than national) identity would fill libraries, but the roles played by Hungarians in operating the dualist state are rarely investigated. However, the way they conceived their duty as civil servants in the Joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs sheds light on a peculiar kind of imperial loyalty and state patriotism which is often analyzed in connection with their Austrian colleagues but which is implicitly regarded as quasi non-existent in the more nation-state-like Hungarian part of the dual Monarchy. By meticulously uncovering the daily work done by officers to maintain the empire and ensure it prospered, the book makes up for this shortcoming on the one hand and draws a precise picture of how the establishment of the state (which is almost impossible to define from the perspective of its political essence) functioned in practice on the other.

After a short but comprehensive overview of the Viennese administration, Somogyi offers an investigation of the Joint Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then uses this as a foundation for a discussion of the aforementioned aspects. The Ministry was the most specific institution of the dualist state. As the prevailing minister was also president of the Joint Cabinet Council, it was something like a common government of the *Gesamtstaat*, though needless to say it was not acknowledged as such. This was the institution within the framework of which the multiple interests of the multiethnic empire were reconciled and a livable compromise was found between the two parts of the Monarchy. Members of the staff of this institution who had Hungarian citizenship formed a circle which took part in the exercise of executive political power. As a result, their numbers, roles, careers, visions of Vienna and the Empire, and their national, imperial, and other loyalties and social positions are not only interesting from a mere prosopographical point of view but also help us understand how everyday efforts and dialogues filled out the terms of the Settlement, which at times were vague, with practical content.

Following a presentation of the imperial institutional structure and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within in detail, Somogyi offers another chapter on the backdrop to her story, a chapter which brilliantly depicts the *milieu* of late-nineteenth-century Vienna, or more precisely what Vienna meant to Hungarians who were engaged in the civil service. Some kind of *genius loci* existed in the Ballhausplatz, a tradition institutionally cultivated, characterized mainly by an unconditional loyalty to the emperor and a class-identity of gentlemen in his service. Though imperial state patriotism is a commonly used term in Habsburg historiography, it is new to read about a disciplined corps which behaved in lines with its values.

In the fifth chapter, Somogyi provides a thorough presentation of her protagonists. At this point, the monograph truly benefits from the uniquely rich personal files of the Foreign Service, preserved in the Viennese Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv. Based on these sources and other personal sources, such as diaries, letters, family documents, etc., Somogyi reconstructs the walk of life of nearly a hundred bureaucrats. Given Somogyi's precision and consistency in her use of analytic categories, this work could also be used as a handbook or a database, and it will be exceptionally useful for future research endeavors. Somogyi has also documented the constantly increasing number of Hungarians in the Foreign Service until the reach of parity (in dualist Austria-Hungary, this meant a proportion of 30% Transleithanian officers). This growth was an answer to the need for Hungarian speakers, which was a consequence of the structural and constitutional reforms of the Settlement and also a tool with which the *Ausgleich* was made more attractive to the Hungarian public. From a methodological point of view, the number of cases allows Somogyi both to draw statistical conclusions and to make her story charmingly personal. While the bureaucrats considered impartiality and detachment virtues, in Somogyi's book, they take on the personalities of social climbers, misunderstood lovers, conflicted patriots, or spoiled dandies.

Beginning with the next chapter, the text shifts from political, structural, and ideological questions to strictly social-historical analyses. From generation to generation, a detailed picture is offered of the bureaucrats' family backgrounds, educations, and lifestyles. We see that although this corps never really lost its aristocratic nature, it became more and more professional as expertise became an increasingly important qualification if someone sought to hold such a position, and at the same time it began to enjoy a prestige comparable to that of the diplomatic body. As family background became less important in career

advancement than professional achievements, the seemingly unchanged circle of aristocrats underwent significant changes in attitude. As a result, if the Foreign Service did not turn into a civil institution, it became nonetheless professional and modernized in many ways. This sophisticated social-historical conclusion is one of the many in this book. They all remind us that neither social transformation nor modernization is a simple category in historiographical analysis. Both are the sum of processes of varying rapidity and rhythm.

The next chapter, which deals with the marital practices and constraints of Foreign Service officers, puts the Austro-Hungarian conditions in an international context. Contrary to most of the other European powers, the dualist state did not forbid officers from taking a foreigner as a spouse, as the main Ballhausplatz-tradition was explicitly loyalty to the emperor and *not* to national interests.

This unconditional loyalty to the dynasty and the ability to represent the *Gesamtstaat* abroad, regardless of a given bureaucrat's other ties, was assured by professional education and common culture. Somogyi's examination of the specific education in which officials in the foreign service had taken part is rich with findings. Indeed, her discussion suggests that national indifference survived not simply in blind spots where national activists exerted little influence. Rather, it was at least in part one element of a deliberately cultivated outlook and political program. It is useful to keep in mind that Hungarians were also part of this project.

Whether this project was successful is the main question of the next chapter and the book in general. To avoid simplistic answers, Somogyi sketches several personal variations and strategies to overcome loyalty conflicts. Reconciling different identities was not always a perplexing challenge. Many of the officers thought that strengthening the Hungarians' position in the existing institutions was more effective than waging dubious symbolic struggles for more autonomy. The problem was not always as urgent for the different generations of bureaucrats either. Approaching World War I, however, we have to ask the question: was imperial identity a sustainable self-definition in the middle of national conflicts. Was this special elite a narrow and isolated group, or did they represent competent leadership over a multiethnic society? Could the state patriotism of this group have been a viable model for a wider public, or did this elite constitute an exception? Do we have to face the fact that the creation of an imperial identity was a failure, or do we have to seek the reasons for the Monarchy's dissolution elsewhere? Do multiple identities work in times of crisis, or do they become prioritized and force everyone to choose? One could certainly have read more

about these questions, even knowing that it is probably impossible to answer them. Somogyi does not enter into speculation. She remarks simply that she could not find any officer who would not have clarified that his first and most important duty was protecting Austria-Hungary's integrity during World War I.

Éva Somogyi's book investigates the most intriguing questions of current Habsburg studies based on micro-level examinations of exciting archival material. Her familiarity with both the institutional structure of the Empire and a number of personal details allows her dynamically to change scopes whenever needed, resulting in a monograph that is both precise and highly entertaining.

As a German translation is in the making, one can hope for a worthy international reception.

Veronika Eszik
Research Centre for the Humanities

Traumatársadalom: Az emlékezetpolitika történeti-szociológiai kritikája [The society of trauma: The historical-sociological critique of memory politics]. By Máté Zombory. Budapest: Kijárat, 2019. 248 pp.

Máté Zombory's new book consists of an introduction and six chapters, most of which were originally published in different fora between 2012 and 2016 and have been partially revised since. The diverse studies included here share an agenda of dissecting problematic aspects of memory politics while reflecting on the larger political-moral transformation behind the growing impact of memory politics. Ultimately, the book aims to describe and critique what Zombory calls "our dominant moral economy" based on representations of victimhood, which he labels "the society of trauma" (p.38).

The volume as a whole offers testament to Zombory's theoretical and interdisciplinary proclivities and his wide-ranging erudition, especially when it comes to the secondary literature published in English and French. While the individual studies offer numerous critical insights, they unfortunately also contain some rather misleading assertions and a number of unfounded generalizations.

Partially drawing on Samuel Moyn's recent reinterpretation of human rights history, Zombory argues that it is on the ruins of future-oriented political experiments promising collective liberation that a new politics of moral sentiments directed at the remembrance and reduction of physical and psychological suffering could develop. As Western societies have transitioned from party-based representative democracies to media-based "populist democracies" since the 1970s, their attention has increasingly shifted to the suffering of innocent and passive victims. As Zombory perceptively notes in this context, the remembrance of the Holocaust may not have been truly globalized, but the moral imperative to recognize victims practically has (p.39).

Combined with the ever more frequent use of concepts suggesting sameness across time, such as memory, identity, and recognition, this new attention to victims, Zombory maintains, has resulted in an increasingly fierce competition for the public recognition of specific victim groups. Drawing on the writings of American sociologist Thorstein Veblen in particular, the original theorist of status competitions which know no upper limit, Zombory presents memory politics as the conspicuous and decontextualized representation of suffering where the public visibility of the sufferings of one's group amounts to a form of prestige. The result of this is a hierarchical society of trauma, which is a sort of inverted society of the spectacle (Guy Debord).

The volume thereby articulates a more general criticism of reconciliation efforts in so-called “post-conflict societies.” The author maintains that, despite popular assertions to the contrary, conflicts over remembrance cannot be resolved within the “paradigm of recognition”: he points out that, unlike what propagators of reconciliation such as (perhaps most prominently) Aleida Assmann wish to make us believe, conflicts over remembrance are not merely epistemological, but are ultimately of a social nature. Zombory also adds, in a rather one-sided fashion which overlooks the possibility of mutual recognition, that there is something “inherently narcissistic” in the desire for recognition.

The introduction covers previous criticisms which began to be directed at “victim competition” in the 1990s. The first half of the volume (chapters one to three) addresses issues in the history of Holocaust remembrance and aims to dissect the key moral principles that acts of Holocaust remembrance tend to propagate. In the first of these chapters, Zombory covers mainstream approaches to, debates about, and critiques of the turn to remembrance and the rise of transnational discussions of the Holocaust in particular. The subsequent chapter focuses on an even larger and more general issue, the globalization of remembrance. It aims to describe norms, witnesses, and the representation of victims in transnational spaces of remembrance. As in the introduction, these two chapters summarize key arguments of established Western scholars without sufficiently clarifying the author’s contribution (beyond a sharp sociological critique).

If these early chapters essentially amounted to perceptive literature reviews addressed at a Hungarian audience, the third chapter adds an original case study regarding Shoshana Felman’s interpretation of the Eichmann trial and, more specifically, Yehiel De-Nur’s dramatic contribution to it in order to explore how one of its major propagators has applied her theory of cultural trauma. By offering a nuanced reading of Yehiel De-Nur’s (pen name Ka-Tsetnik 135633) various statements over time, Zombory convincingly shows how a dehumanizing depiction of actors may result from the forceful reduction of past subject experiences to the traumatic and current behavior to mere acts of repetition.

The second half of the volume in turn explores the entry of new actors into transnational spaces of memory politics in Europe and the ways in which these authors have adapted what Zombory calls the “moral paradigm” in Holocaust remembrance. Chapter Four reflects on the shared rules of memory competition to argue that, under the unequal conditions of EU enlargement, the political legitimacy of “accession countries” could be increased if they were able

to assume the position of victim and present their history as a *Leidensgeschichte*. Zombory shows, very much in accordance with Jelena Subotić's new book *Yellow Star, Red Star*, that the new nationalistic remembrance of communism in Eastern Europe was modelled on practices of Holocaust remembrance and claimed an additional layer of suffering as a regional specificity.

What Zombory unfortunately does not discuss here is that the critical impetus behind European Holocaust remembrance—which, contrary to what he appears to suggest, has not only been about the remembrance of innocent and passive victims, but has also constituted a profound grappling with patterns of exclusion and mass violence in modern society—could be largely lost in such new anti-communist attempts at renationalization made across Eastern Europe. Despite his own critical agenda, Zombory appears to take for granted the absence of such a critical impetus behind current memory cultures.

The last two chapters of the volume offer Hungarian case studies. Alongside chapter three, chapter five offers Zombory's most detailed and convincing engagement with a specific discussion and debate regarding the recent past. Zombory aims to show that the House of Terror may have been repeatedly and fiercely criticized in Hungary, but both mainstream propagators and critics of this complex, confusing, even confounding initiative drew on shared moral notions. He explains through relevant examples that agreement with the House's basic intention to commemorate the victims of communism and focus exclusively on the violently repressive nature of past regimes ultimately made it impossible for liberally-minded professional historians to meaningfully contest the conservative-anticommunist reinterpretation of history that the House powerfully displayed. Moreover, the chapter insightfully shows how the House's creators and representatives cleverly used the process of Europeanization and even the unclear nature of their own project to defend themselves against various accusations and further their radically conservative goals in memory politics. Chapter six in turn draws on some of Zombory's oral history interviews to discuss how discursive frames and counterstrategies regarding the German past have developed with regard to the German minority in Hungary since 1945.

There is much to admire about Máté Zombory's critical insights and much to reflect on when it comes to his rather bold theses. He is correct to point out that participation in historical debates has increasingly come to depend on self-identification with victims and that, concurrently, possibilities to question the (over)abundance of political-moral efforts centered around the recognition of victimhood have diminished. He is also right to critique how the oft-declared

“duty to remember” has at times yielded reductive-mythical images of the past. Indeed, the moralizing insistence on remembrance may have made complex and properly contextual historical discussions more difficult. These worrisome tendencies call for the kind of courageous scholarly intervention which Zombory’s polemical volume offers.

There is, however, also much to disagree with in these pages. The book repeatedly asserts that memory political interactions revolve around grievances, mutual accusations of non-recognition, and shaming through inequality, though it offers no empirical documentation in support of this claim. Zombory seems to assume, rather unusually and in fact contrary to mounting evidence, that the broader political culture around memory politics is by default non-democratic and political-moral agency aimed at the recognition of victims cannot possibly contribute to the cause of social justice. Rather tellingly, the volume presents an unduly homogenized image of Holocaust remembrance without discussing the highly varied and always contested Holocaust lessons various people have drawn (and which Michael Marrus, among others, has recently studied).

Last but not least, the book’s rather categorical assessment, according to which recent trends to prioritize victim narratives have fueled a solipsistic and narcissistic form of politics, obfuscates the key distinction between the recently emerged and highly specific realm of memory politics and politics as such. Ultimately, *Traumatársadalom*, insightful and inspiring though many of its claims and arguments indubitably are, aims to explain more than a better focused and more adequately documented exploration of memory political contests would have allowed.

Ferenc Laczó
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Making Ethnicity in Southern Bessarabia: Tracing the Histories of an Ambiguous Concept in a Contested Land. By Simon Schlegel. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2019. 276 pp.

Simon Schlegel's *Making Ethnicity in Southern Bessarabia* poses a series of interrelated questions about the growth of ethnic boundaries and the rising importance of ethnicity in southern Bessarabia over the last two centuries. The region has proven a well-suited ethno-geographical laboratory or “nook” for researching how individuals and communities can “belong” to an ethnic minority (or majority). The book is structured chronologically, albeit with several theoretical or thematic interludes, offering a survey of state policies and actors that ruled Bessarabia beginning in early nineteenth-century Tsarist Russia and ending with the Maidan protest movement in early twenty-first-century Ukraine. The first part describes how ethnic categories superseded religious categories in the tsarist state's synoptic view of its inhabitants. A chapter on Romanian Bessarabia during the interwar period and World War II showcases important new primary sources on the inscription of ethno-national identities through state-mandated but locally issued identity certificates. The following chapter, intended as a “theoretical insertion” or “interruption,” appraises diverging concepts of ethnicity and the ascription of identities and borders so as to better contextualize the previous chapters and set up the next. The book also covers the forty-seven years of Soviet rule in Bessarabia, showing how the shifting concept of ethnicity and language use became preconditions for social mobility; it then details the years since Ukrainian independence, which have been marked by the recurrence of ethnic rhetoric, entrepreneurs, and associations within a system of political clientelism. Schlegel concludes with two more theoretical chapters that function as a kind of coda, meditating on the ways that religion, memory, narrative, and folklore serve as “techniques” or “tools” to delimit ethnic groups and maintain ethnic boundaries. The book highlights the congruence of ethnic boundaries with fluid social boundaries created by local and regional politics, including corruption, clientelism, mismanagement, and economic hardship. Schlegel argues convincingly that putative ethnic differences or boundaries, as well as language barriers and disputes over history, are frequently epifocal to internecine conflicts.

Methodologically, the book is perhaps most at home in the genre of historical anthropology, “in which the readers start out with a tour through local history and then, as the account moves closer to the present find gradually more

ethnographic insight, until they find themselves reading an ethnography” (p.31). Drawing on Fredrik Barth, James C. Scott, and the usual suspects in the literature on nationalism and ethnicity, with a passing nod to the Italian microhistorians, Schlegel weaves his social-anthropological case study into a much broader historical examination about the ways present-day ethnic boundaries and understandings of ethnicity are firmly, if not inextricably, rooted in the past. But the book is ever mindful that history, society, and identity oscillate through time and space, in a multiplicity of contexts, continually informing one another.

Most of Schlegel’s fieldwork and archival research was undertaken in the Odessa oblast, not far from the city-municipality of Izmail in southwestern Ukraine, from mid 2012 through 2013. Although the four villages selected for interviews were chosen for their collective ethnic diversity (Ukrainian, Moldovan or Romanian, Gagauz, and Bulgarian), all interviews were conducted in Russian. The archival research was also based solely on the Izmail State Archive. The book contains a handful of maps and images, the latter of which date from the author’s fieldwork in the area. Considering the book’s sweeping chronological scope and historical treatment of four successive regimes, the two-page index of subjects and names is inadequate. And while generally well written—Schlegel is dutiful in his role as a narrator of his own story—the book could have benefited from additional copyediting for punctuation. But these are minor imperfections in a worthy contribution to the scholarship on the region. That the author completed this in under three hundred pages is no small feat.

Self-reflective and both microhistorical and macrohistorical in scope, *Making Ethnicity in Southern Bessarabia* focuses not so much on ethnic boundaries as actual dividing lines or demarcations but rather on the actors and motivations that create ethnic boundaries. Moreover, it spotlights the techniques used to maintain these boundaries across space and time, from one regime to the next. While historians of the Soviet Union, Ukraine, Moldova, and Romania might gloss over some (if not much) of Schlegel’s wider historical narratives on various states and regimes, they should find fruitful analyses of these topics in the embedded anthropological framing of competing ethnicizing and territorializing paradigms. Experts on Russia and Ukraine might also find rich comparative material in the chapter on Romanian rule, as might scholars on Romania in the chapters on Russian, Soviet, and Ukrainian rule, which comprise the bulk of the story. Likewise, anthropologists and social scientists researching this area will benefit from the book’s insistence on situating niche fieldwork and locales in the *longue durée*. The author’s social-anthropological approach to a historical

subject therefore improves what would otherwise be a typical if also peripheral history, while the sweeping historical framework broadens the relevance of what would otherwise be a typical if also peripheral anthropological case study. In this respect, it brings to mind the pathbreaking books by Katherine Verdery and Kate Brown. Schlegel's contribution is an adroit scholarly treatment of ethnicity and ethnic boundaries in the social, political, and historical palimpsest that is Southern Bessarabia.

R. Chris Davis
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Hungarian Religion, Romanian Blood: A Minority's Struggle for National Belonging, 1920–1945. By R. Chris Davies. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2018. Xxvii + 249 pp.

Using the example of the Csángós, a Catholic group in Moldova, eastern Romania, whose origins and nationality are subject to debate, R. Chris Davies contributes to the historical literature on the sociological phenomenon of ethnicity. Following the path set out by Pieter Judson, Tara Zahra, and Jim Bjork (among others), he analyzes the struggle of national activism to define a group's nationality and align it with either of the two rival nations. However, he cautiously mainly sidesteps the issue of how individuals really reacted to these attempts and concentrates less on the recently contested notion of national indifference. Instead, he deliberately focuses on the discourses and their sources, situated in the context of a radical change of nationalisms in interwar East and Central Europe. Thus, he presents a story triangulated, with Hungarian, Romanian nationalist, and Romanian Catholic intellectuals, whose efforts were instrumental to the fate of the group.

Davies' main claim is that the idea of the Romanian origins and subsequent Magyarization of the Csángós, which is today the cornerstone of Romanian arguments in the debate over their national belonging, was canonized not by anti-Hungarian Romanian intellectuals but by Catholic priests among the Csángós themselves (Iosif Petru Pal, Dumitru Martiñaş etc.), who feared that if they could not shed the stigma of Hungarian-ness in Ion Antonescus's violently ethnocratic Romania, the fate of the Csángós would be deportation. In this effort, they found help and support from ultranationalist Romanian intellectuals who promoted a new, biologized definition of Romanian-ness (most importantly the serologist Petre Râmneanţu), and to make this new claim credible, they were ready to align themselves with extreme Romanian nationalism and even sometimes to join the Iron Guard. Thus, through their unholy alliance with materialist scientific practices (like blood group analyses) and mystical political Orthodoxy, which were both at odds with their Catholic faith, these clergymen, were helped by the turn of the tide in World War II. The resulting willingness of the Antonescu regime to present a less ugly face to the Allies changed the stance of the government, which earlier had deprived the Csángós of their citizenship. The regime fended off Hungarian efforts to achieve a population exchange, which would have meant moving the Csángós to enlarged Hungary in exchange for Romanian speakers from the territory of Hungary after the Second Vienna Awards.

To make this admittedly somewhat narrow story more relevant to the secondary literature on nationalism, Davies offers extensive contextualization, including intellectual and political developments in Hungary and Romania. After an overview of the most important concepts and theories, he provides an outline of the political and intellectual conflicts caused in interwar Romania by the efforts of a group of Orthodox intellectuals and politicians to define Romanian-ness as essentially equal to the Orthodox Christian Church. This effort certainly would have affected Catholics and, among them, the Csángós negatively. Nevertheless, as Davies argues, the late 1930s bore witness to a radical break with earlier conceptualizations of Romanian-ness, not least due to the introduction of what was thought to be cutting-edge science (eugenics, blood group analysis, etc.) to the toolkit of definitions concerning individual membership in a nation. Finally, the state endeavored to assign an unambiguous nationality to all of its citizens (and eventually depriving them of citizenship), as it wanted to purge the national body of anything considered (or defined as) alien and reinvigorate it from the source of the alleged authentic ethnic group.

In the meantime, many Hungarian intellectuals tried to cope with the losses of Trianon with a new concept of the nation which promised rebirth and reinvigoration on the basis of the peasantry, the allegedly purest layer of the national stock. Efforts to salvage the Csángós first aimed to prevent their linguistic assimilation and later to return them to the “homeland,” as was done with Székelys from Bukovina. This was part of a larger effort to redefine the people of Hungary in terms of ethnicity. Thus, the conflicting efforts came to a head regarding the Csángós during World War II and resulted in wider acceptance of their Romanian origins by Romanian academia.

Although sometimes the story seems to be a bit narrowly focused, it is highly readable, and it offers an excellent example of the ways in which national activists of all stripes competed for people whom they wanted to put on their account books. The broad contextualization helps to understand how all these efforts were situated within the contemporary milieu and trends, and the focus on Romanian Catholics and the Catholic Church instead of the Hungarian state or clergy actors is welcome, as it adds more than just nuance to the debate. But the characterization of the changes in nationalism at the end of the 1930s seems to gloss over significant affinities between trends in nationalism before and around that time, and it also obscures how policies and ideas were rooted in earlier contexts. Just to give one example, most of the Hungarian policies towards the Csángós were not based on a reconceptualization of the nation, but

rather had roots which lay in undertakings of the late nineteenth century, which were later abandoned as inopportune in the context of the friendly relations between Romania and the Triple Alliance. Thus, more traditional ideas of the nation could often be surprisingly easily reconciled with the novel and more radical ones, as they bore affinities and this reconciliation also helped foster political alliances.

Finally, Davies claims that the Csángós are an example of how small groups which seemingly divide can connect and unite states which have been brought into perpetual dialogue over their fates (p.164). While this constitutes a provocative claim which I also find appealing, I do not find much substantiation for it in the case of the Csángós. The Csángós were a minor, almost negligible concern for both states and especially for Hungary for most of the 20 years of the interwar period, and during World War II, there were larger issues at stake and forces in play in bilateral Hungarian-Romanian relations which helped the two states avoid armed conflict. These forces could have helped averting the clash only until Romania switched sides and war with Hungary followed, irrespective of the fate of the Csángós was. This does not diminish the value of this book, which will be of interest to anyone, laymen included, interested in nationalism, obscure people, and the history of Romania and Hungary in the twentieth century.

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The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia.

By Zsófia Lóránd. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. 270 pp.

Zsófia Lóránd's *The Feminist Challenge to the Socialist State in Yugoslavia* is an intellectual history of feminist thought, artistic practice, and activism in Yugoslavia from the early 1970s to 1991. Published in 2018 in Palgrave Macmillan's series "Genders and Sexualities in History," it speaks to multiple scholarly audiences. To those interested in the global history of second wave feminism and its relationship to the state and the political left, it offers a challenging view from the semi-periphery. To those interested in the postwar history of political thought, it presents a compelling case for the intellectual prowess and versatility of feminist thought in state socialist Europe. And for those interested in the history of former Yugoslavia, it reconstructs in rich detail the biographies, works, and institutional connections of the members of new Yugoslav feminism, a group critical of the unfulfilled promises of the Yugoslav state in terms of women's equality.

Several main theoretical and historiographical claims run through Lóránd's account of the development of feminist thought and practice in Yugoslavia beginning in the early 1970s. First, drawing on the theoretical tradition of intellectual history and especially the insights of the Cambridge School, Michael Freeden, and Lucy Delap, Lóránd analyzes feminism as an ideology. The focus is on concepts, ideas, meanings, and the struggles around them and with other ideologies, most notably Marxism. To Sara Ruddick's definition of feminism as an acknowledgement that gender divisions are socially constructed, detrimental to women, and should be changed, Lóránd adds emphasis on woman's agency (p.18), which is at the core of the most recent debates on women's organizing and feminism under state socialism.

Second, feminism is defined not as dissidence, but as "a critical discourse and a form of dissent" (p.9). Yugoslav feminists worked within the state to challenge one of its core claims, specifically the achievement of equality for women. This positioning distinguished them both from the state's political mainstream (including the official women's organizations) and from the Central European dissidents working against or outside the state, publishing in *samizdat*, or facing direct oppression.

Third, Lóránd works within a multilayered comparative framework which places new Yugoslav feminism in dialogue with the "second wave feminism" of the West but also with other oppositional discourses under state socialism. Most

promisingly, her work lays out the conceptual and methodological framework for an intellectual history of feminism and women's rights discourses in East Central Europe under state socialism. This project has already brought together numerous researchers from the region over several workshops and will result in a collection of source texts translated into English for the first time.

The Feminist Challenge is organized thematically and chronologically along mediums of critical expression, from the academia to art and literature to popular mass media to activism. Based on published materials, archival sources, and interviews, the chapters balance historical detail, analysis, and participants' accounts of their experiences. There are inevitable overlaps and frequent cross-references among the chapters, but overall the book structure corresponds to the development of new Yugoslav feminism itself over the course of two decades.

The chapter on feminism in the social sciences and humanities introduces the arguments of (mostly) women working in the academia, who reflected on contemporary feminist ideas in the United States and Western Europe and engaged critically with the mainstream class-based approach to the "women's question" under state socialism. Drawing on critical Marxism and French post-structuralism, their work resulted in conceptual innovation, most notably the integration of gender and sexism as key terms of the new feminist language they were developing, first in private around kitchen tables and then in public discourse.

In literature and art, feminist discussion revolved around the topics of creativity, motherhood, and the body. Lóránd introduces the concept of "writing of sisterhood" as different from *écriture féminine*, a major source of theoretical inspiration for feminist literature in Yugoslavia. This "technique of sympathetically reflecting on the lives and fates of other women through one own's story" (p.107) is identified in works by Irna Vrkljan, Slavenka Drakulić, and Dubravka Ugrešić, among others. Lóránd also grapples successfully with the issue of female artists' refusal to identify with feminism while nevertheless engaging with deeply feminist issues, as most famously was the case of Marina Abramović.

The chapter on feminism in the popular mass media unpacks the contradictions of publishing feminist texts in popular publications which offered a wide readership but at the same time encouraged self-censorship. The most striking example is that of the debate on pornography carried out in and around *Start*, a magazine published as a local version of *Playboy*. Yet another place where the tension between medium and content is apparent is women's magazines and

TV shows, where important feminist issues were brought up in a tamed language and appeared alongside patriarchal views of women's roles. Genres like advice columns, for example, nevertheless opened up space to discuss private issues publicly, most notably sexuality and domestic violence.

It was precisely around the issues of sexuality and violence that feminist groups were reorganized in the 1980s. The chapter on feminist activism follows the discussions around women's health and violence against women, the know-how gathered by plugging in to global networks, and eventually the establishing of SOS helplines first in Zagreb and then in Belgrade. "Through the discourse about VaW [violence against women]," argues Lóránd, "the place of feminism was explicitly rethought in a human rights framework," opening a new era in which "women's political participation and role in democracies were the focal point" (p.208). Not long thereafter, the landscape of feminist thought and activism was radically reshuffled by ethno-nationalism, war, and the breakdown of Yugoslavia, which is where the timeline of the book ends.

Zsófia Lóránd writes with clarity, nuance, and feminist commitment, and with this book, she offers a fundamentally important work of scholarship which persuasively argues that feminist thought needs to be recovered not just for the sake of historical justice, but also because it reshapes the very view of history that we currently have. *The Feminist Challenge* must also be praised for its many illustrations, which further ensure that the representatives of new Yugoslav feminism, their works, and their activities, which have been so masterfully presented in this book, are seen, in all meanings of the word.

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Enyhülés és emancipáció [Détente and emancipation]. By Csaba Békés. Budapest: Osiris, MTA TK, 2019. 397 pp.

Csaba Békés's new book offers a detailed analysis of Hungarian foreign policy in the Cold War, from 1945 until the collapse of the communist regime in 1989. It primarily aims to present a synthesis of Békés's ideas and arguments that were put forward in his extensive scholarship of the past few decades, but it also introduces new claims on the basis of new source material. Given its ambition to provide a synthesis, the book's emphasis remains on advancing broad arguments in relation to Hungary's entanglement with the Cold War, systematically supported by empirical evidence. The manuscript follows a chronological structure and it presents an in-depth discussion of the key events in the history of Hungary's international relations, starting with the Sovietization of the country after World War II and ending with the gradual collapse of the Kádár regime in the late 1980s. The individual chapters offer invaluable contributions to our understanding of the international dimensions of Hungarian historical events (such as the 1956 uprising and the events of 1989 in Hungary) and the role Hungary played in the shaping of international developments, most importantly the Prague Spring of 1968, the Helsinki Accords of 1975, and the process of détente, in general.

The most laudable aspect of the book is that it brings together—in a coherent narrative—the most important and most original claims and theoretical reflections which Békés has constructed over the years concerning the Cold War and Hungary's involvement in it. The two keywords that link the various arguments are the concepts that make up the title of the book: détente and emancipation. In the book, Békés proposes a new interpretation of one of the central notions of postwar international history and argues in support of the need for a new periodization of the Cold War. According to the central argument in the book, the process of détente started soon after Stalin's death in 1953, and it remained the key paradigm that fundamentally shaped international relations until the collapse of the Soviet Union. This proposition breaks with the traditional view in historiography, according to which the emergence of détente was tied to the second wave of de-Stalinization in the early 1960s, and it also refutes interpretations that consider détente to have ended in the late 1970s as a result of international tensions following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In critiquing views that break up the history of the Cold War into multiple phases, Békés claims that the Cold War could be divided into two main episodes. The period between 1945 and 1953 was characterized by blatant antagonism and

irrational decision-making, whereas the epoch starting with 1953 (“the second Cold War”) was fundamentally shaped by détente and a more rational and pragmatic approach to international relations. While Békés does not diminish the significance of international crises—such as the Cuban missile crisis or the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—he argues that a tacit acknowledgement of the necessity of cooperation after 1953 prevailed over incentives to escalate conflicts further through military means. Interpreting events from this perspective, Békés claims that conflicts within the Soviet bloc never risked subverting the international status quo, and while they provoked tensions, those should be defined as “quasi-conflicts,” as they did not result in the radical reconfiguration of the *modus operandi* between the two superpowers. The book suggests that there were very few actual conflicts between the Soviet Union and the United States that had the potential to undermine the dominant paradigm of international relations: détente. It is argued, for example, that the antagonism provoked by the Afghanistan conflict merely put détente in a “standby mode.” In other words, the war did not lead to the total abandonment of the policy.

According to Békés, one of the main reasons behind the gradual (and constant) relaxation of tensions was the idea of “active foreign policy” advocated by the post-Stalin leadership in the Soviet Union. The notion triggered the transformation of the relationship between Moscow and the countries of the Soviet bloc, resulting in the slow but steady “emancipation” of the individual countries in the sphere of foreign policy. Khrushchev’s Soviet Union needed allies on the international scene rather more than it needed satellites, and this provoked the gradual decentralization of foreign policy on the peripheries of the Soviet empire. Békés argues that the main forum for negotiations, debates, and conflicts in Sovietized Eastern Europe was the Warsaw Pact. In contrast to traditional perceptions of the military alliance as a tool of Soviet supremacy and control in the region, Békés demonstrates that the organization actually contributed to the emancipation of the various countries and led to the formation of temporary, “virtual” coalitions in the bloc which pursued their own interests, independently of Moscow.

Emancipation and détente are the key themes through which developments in Hungarian foreign policy are interpreted in the period from 1945 to 1989. The book provides detailed and engaging analyses of key events and developments in the postwar era, with emphasis on late socialism in Kádár’s Hungary. The discussion revolves around the topic of agency in “the happiest barrack” and the gradual expansion of Hungary’s room for maneuver and political leeway as a

member of the Soviet bloc. Békés convincingly supports his overall thesis with an incredibly diverse range of sources, and he demonstrates that the Kádár regime often took—occasionally remarkably bold—initiatives in the international arena and came to occupy the position of an intermediary in East-West relations in the 1970s and 1980s. Hungary’s mediating role in the Soviet bloc is explored in a chapter on Kádár’s diplomatic efforts to provide a political solution to the Prague Spring in 1968, while the significant growth of Hungary’s international reputation in the late socialist period is analyzed most vividly in the chapter on the country’s contribution to negotiations culminating in the signing of the Helsinki Accords in 1975.

The book relies on a rich pool of source material to support its innovative and unconventional claims. The discussion is informed by a plethora of secondary sources, published mostly in Hungarian and in English, and evidence supporting Békés’s claims mostly comes from published as well as unpublished primary sources in multiple languages, including English, Hungarian, German, and Russian. Békés has also consulted an impressive array of archival sources, including collections in Hungary, the United States, and the United Kingdom, which contain material relevant to foreign policy and national security.

The extensive discussion of Hungary’s possibilities and constraints in international relations creates a solid foundation for Békés to advance an argument in relation to the multi-faceted (or multi-polar) nature of the late Cold War. Instead of offering a polarized analysis focusing on the theme of antagonism between the socialist East and the capitalist West, Békés claims that Hungarian foreign policy was dependent on three factors. Moscow’s role in shaping developments was inevitable throughout the period, but the book also argues that Hungary became increasingly dependent on access to Western markets and technology in the late socialist period. This dependence led to the adjustment of economic and political priorities and turned Hungary into one of the most ardent advocates of *détente*. At the same time, international dynamics within the Soviet bloc—conflicting agendas and “virtual coalitions”—imposed significant constraints on, but also provided new opportunities for Hungarian foreign policy.

While the book’s main emphasis is on the emancipation of Hungarian foreign policy after Stalin’s death, the notion of agency remains remarkably absent from the discussion of Stalinism and the Sovietization of Hungary after World War II. Indeed, the concept of Sovietization is not discussed in detail in the book and there is little attempt in the narrative to engage with the term

at a more abstract level in light of recent historiography. The meaning of the term, which is remarkably vague in the first place, changed significantly over the course of the twentieth century, and it meant different things at different times. Although Békés proposes a simple typology of Sovietization (quasi-Sovietization and pre-Sovietization), the book does not reflect on alternative typologies suggested by other scholars or on the notion of “self-Sovietization,” which assigns a certain degree of agency to local actors in the implementation of the Soviet model in the countries of the bloc. The somewhat teleological perception of Sovietization in the book could have been refined in conversation with recent works on the subject (most recently, Norman Naimark’s *Stalin and the Fate of Europe*), which highlight the importance of local politics and local actors in the immediate postwar years. Despite the slight under-assessment of the concept of Sovietization, the book remains an engaging read which offers a number of original contributions to the study of Hungarian foreign policy and, indeed, the history of the Cold War. This is a book that will remain an important point of reference in the future and should find a prominent place in university survey courses on the subject of postwar Hungarian and (East) European history, the history of the Cold War, or more specific courses on the history of the Kádár regime and the history of Hungarian foreign policy.

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