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BOOK REVIEWS

Eastern Europe in Icelandic Sagas. By Tatjana N. Jackson. Amsterdam: ARC Humanities Press–Amsterdam University Press, 2019. 228 pp.

The series, *Beyond Medieval Europe* (published by ARC Humanities Press), targets topics previously neglected in Anglophone scholarship which are related to the history of the peripheries of medieval Europe. In this regard, Tatjana Jackson's new book, her first in English, is a big success, as it presents what people on one edge of the continent, medieval Iceland, knew about the other fringe, Eastern Europe. Jackson is one of the leading Russian experts on medieval Scandinavia and its relations to the Early (or Old) Rus', and she offers now a reworked and updated version of her findings previously published for the most part in Russian. The title of the book, *Eastern Europe in Icelandic Sagas*, is a little misleading, as it mostly discusses information pertaining to ninth-eleventh-century Rus', whilst one would expect to find details in the book about other territories too, such as Poland or Hungary, even if these territories feature less frequently in the Old Norse Icelandic corpus.

Jackson begins with an introductory chapter on her aims, sources, and methodology (pp.1–17). The book is then divided into two major parts, the first and longer of which presents the place of Eastern Europe (actually modern-day European Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus in geographical terms) in the Old Norse worldview (pp.19–114), while the second focuses on the stay of four Norwegian kings in Old Rus' (pp.115–70). The research questions in both parts are clearly formulated: what do the Old Norse sources reveal concerning knowledge of Eastern Europe, and how much of this information is historically reliable? Given the nature of the source material, namely that the Icelandic sagas usually describe events from the Viking Age (or earlier) but were committed to parchment only beginning in the twelfth century (and most were written down in later centuries), the methodology section is indispensable for an understanding of the whole argument.

Jackson introduces the three main types of sources of which she makes use: skaldic poetry, sagas, and runic inscriptions. Of these, the first two receive the most attention. Skaldic poetry was usually produced by eyewitnesses or first-hand informants, and due to its metrical complexity, it hardly changed until it was written down in later centuries and thus is usually regarded as authentic. Sagas, on the other hand, are viewed today with much criticism as historical

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sources due to their literary nature, the fact that they were recorded significantly later, and the fact that their authors included narrative interventions (or least to the consensus in the secondary literature). According to Jackson, the early kings' sagas, written down before the great compendium of 1220–1230, preserved authentic knowledge of the ninth-tenth-century Scandinavians about the geography of the "east" in the form of place names and navigable river routes. The later sagas, however, continued to rely on the ninth-century and early tenth-century conditions when describing events in Eastern Europe (simply copying the earlier compendium) and did not follow up on the southward advancement of the Scandinavians. In Jackson's view, this explains why places names such as Kiev (*Kænugarðr* in the sagas) do not receive prominence in the sagas and Novgorod (*Hólmgarðr*) is displayed as a capital of the Rus'.

The first part of the book vividly illustrates with a sound handling of the source material how information was transmitted and could change shape (media) during its formation from orality to literacy. More importantly, it shows that the Icelandic sagas reveal details about Eastern Europe left unmentioned in other documents. We learn that Ladoga's presentation in the sagas as a possible toll and control station where foreigners were checked and safe conduct was issued was a remnant of historical memory, as was Polotsk's strong fortress and defense system.

In the second part, the logic of applying the methodology twists a little. The Russian sources make no mention of the four Norwegian kings who visited Rus' (Olaf Tryggvason, Olaf Haraldsson, Magnus Olafsson, Harald Sigurdarson). Jackson, however, feels that their presence in Rus' cannot be cast into question, since it was confirmed by the skaldic poets. It would thus be inconceivable that they did not travel to Rus'. However, any other information in the sagas which is not confirmed by skaldic poets (Jackson suggests) is either falsification or the projection of later medieval conditions on the Viking Age. Thus, the goal is not really to squeeze out every useful bit of information from the sagas (as in the first part), but to call into question anything from the prose narrative which is unconfirmed by contemporary reports. Jackson questions saga accounts with rigorous source criticism and demonstrates how the great influence and deeds of a "later-Norwegian king abroad" are exaggerated by saga authors.

Jackson notes that in a few cases not all information found in the sagas is unreliable (e.g. Harald Sigurdarson's stay and activity in Rus', such as his use of Jaroslav the Wise to bank his amassed Byzantine wealth). I would suggest that by less strict with her methodology, Jackson would have had even more positive

results. First of all, skaldic poetry was usually produced precisely to meet the demands made by the kings (and always with the intention of praising the ruler) and thus should not be taken at face value. The magical healing skill of Saint Olaf's body as recorded in skaldic poetry (p.137) is just one example of overstatement. Second, skaldic poetry was not produced about every event in a saga. This does not mean that every detail of a political history in a saga is *de facto* a fabrication. The details may not always be accurate, but sagas often present what we call "potentially believable stories," i.e. situations which probably occurred Even if it is not possible to link them, on the basis of other sources, to a precise person or situation . In this regard, I would not immediately dismiss the possibility that a Scandinavian warlord was exacting tributes (or mustering forces) among the Chuds for a tenth-century prince in Rus', nor would I see Olaf Tryggvason's imprisonment as a reflection of fear from thirteenth-century Estonian pirates (pp.121–23), especially since the slave childhood of a future Norwegian king hardly adds anything to the "building-up" of a glorious character and thus could easily have been omitted by a saga author had it not been a well-known fact to other contemporaries.

These critical remarks notwithstanding, the book is a welcome contribution both to the wave of studies which aim to illuminate the Eastern sphere of the continent and to the branch of sagas studies that turns back to the historical reality behind this literature. Although its specialist nature possibly makes it a hard read for scholars untrained in Old Norse philology, Jackson's work reminds us of the value of consulting Russian scholarship when dealing with Icelandic sagas and the Vikings.

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Účtovné registre Bratislavskej kapituly 1417–1529 [Account registers of the chapter of Bratislava, 1417–1529]. By Rastislav Luz. Bratislava: Univerzita Komenského v Bratislave, 2018. 288 pp.

Historians usually approach the history of the medieval ecclesiastic chapters by using the prosopography, focusing on the personnel of the chapter, and drawing on the methods used in archontology. These methods and the findings they yield are no doubt valuable. However, to understand the ecclesiastic chapters entirely, historians should also study their economic and administrative systems. In this sense, the sourcebook edited by Rastislav Luz constitutes a significant contribution to the secondary literature. A young Slovak archivist and a doctoral student at the Comenius University of Bratislava, Luz has published the transcribed account registers of the medieval chapter of Bratislava. It was published as a first book in the framework of the series *Documenta Posoniensia*. As Luz explains in one of the chapters of the book, the transcription of these sources is not a simple task. Since the registers were subsidiary documents which were usually disposed of immediately after they had fulfilled their purpose, this directly reflected on the way in which the canons fashioned them. They were thus written in the Gothic cursive script, which is difficult to read, and many abbreviations were used, though not uniformly. Even the way in which the registers were bound and folded makes them difficult to read. The book itself consists of two main parts. In the first part (pp.15–51), Luz deals with the chapter of Bratislava and its personnel. He also describes the fond of the chapter of Bratislava in the Slovak National Archive, where the sources he transcribed are kept. Furthermore, he gives a short paleographic and diplomatic analysis of the registers. To make the study of the accounts easier, he has included a chapter on the monetary system which appears in the registers. In the second part (pp.53–242), he presents the transcription of the thirty-three account registers. In the end, the edition includes an index of the names (pp.245–58), places (pp.259–68), items (pp.269–83), and items that appear in German (p.284). The chapter of Bratislava was a collegiate chapter. Its personnel ranged from 10 to 15 canons in the late Middle Ages (the fourteenth century to the sixteenth century). The specificity of the chapter's personnel was that two canons of the chapter were the rectors of the parish churches in Bratislava. Though the chapter was small, it owned large estates and had the right to collect different incomes, from census and tithes to tolls and parish fees. This led to the development of an elaborate administrative system which relied on written account registers for

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more efficient administration. The chapter divided the incomes into communal, individual, and those belonging to the provost. The mention of the oldest register, which is not preserved, is from 1400. However, Luz presumes that the account registers had begun to be written earlier, around the second half of the fourteenth century, when the whole institution became more bureaucratized. The canon who supervised the incomes and expenses and wrote the registers was the dean. He had to present the accounts two times a year, on St. George's Day (April 24) and St. Michael's Day (September 29), after which the canons distributed the incomes among themselves. The thirty-three account registers which Luz has transcribed in this edition cover the period from 1417 to 1529. Luz put the registers chronologically, but they are not continuous, since not all of them were preserved. Luz endeavored to keep the original distribution of the text as much as possible. He also kept the Roman letters for the numbers and abbreviations for the currencies. The canons originally wrote all the registers on paper, and Luz was able to identify 24 different handwritings, indicating that they were written by 24 different people. The account registers list the incomes and expenses in the span of one or two years and the distribution of the incomes among the canons. The expenses could be both communal and individual. Those could be money for travel, transportation, collectors of the tithe, gifts, lunch, shows of hospitality, new clothes, etc. Since the registers are not uniform, some list all the elements and some only list the expenses. The most significant change noticeable in the inventory management is that from the second half of the fifteenth century, the dues were also paid in kind, not just in money. Accordingly, some of the inventories also list the inhabitants who gave the dues, while the earlier registers note only the amount of the due given for the whole settlement. All in all, historians can use the account registers transcribed by Luz with confidence in further historical analysis. To list just several possibilities: the everyday life of the canons, the social history of the chapter, the administrative and economic system of the chapter, the trends in economic production, environmental history, e.g. the system of dams and fishing on the estates of the chapter. Finally, this edition also makes possible comparative analyses of similar material from different European ecclesiastic chapters.

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Media and Literature in Multilingual Hungary (1770–1820). Edited by Ágnes Dóbék, Gábor Mészáros, and Gábor Vaderna. Budapest: Reciti, 2019. 285 pp.

Media and Literature in Multilingual Hungary (1770–1820) presents the proceedings of a conference held under the same name in April 2018, organized by the Momentum Research Group Literary Culture in Western Hungary, 1770–1820 (Institute for Literary Studies of the Research Centre for Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences). The volume is bilingual, with the contributions written either in English or German. The eighteen studies comprising the book reflect the various research interests and goals of the Research Group, making it clear to the reader the study of the culture of historical western Hungary at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries constitutes an academically relevant if challenging scholarly endeavor.

After the Holy League defeated the Turks in 1687 and thus brought the more than 150-year-long dominance of the Ottoman Empire in Hungary to an end, the Habsburg Monarchy (which had ruled the western third of the country since 1526 as a result of a marital contract with the Jagiellonian dynasty) felt entitled to claim the liberated Hungarian territories. The end of the seventeenth century thus marked another turning point for Hungary, with Austria extending its political power over the country and adding another layer to its already immensely rich culture. It was during the reign of Maria Theresa that the Age of Enlightenment (ca. 1750–1820) came, and new ideas swept through Hungary. As Gábor Vaderna explains in the introductory study of the volume ("Language, Media and Politics in the Hungarian Kingdom between 1770 and 1820"), this era was characterized by remarkable cultural innovation, which brought about the strengthening of Habsburg Hungary both as a political and as an economic power in the region. Development naturally triggers institutional changes, one of which was the expansion of the press and its synergy with other literary media. The period witnessed the emergence of new journalistic genres and the specialization of the press: alongside the conventional economic and political newspapers, readers now had access to scientific periodicals covering specific disciplines. As the press enabled greater accessibility to information, new types of readers and reader behaviors appeared, as did novel forms of editorial attitudes and strategies. Interestingly though, these changes were fueled by the interests of the aristocracy, in part simply because the bourgeoisie was virtually nonexistent in Hungary at the time. In other words, as the smallest yet most

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privileged and dominant social class of the country, the aristocracy made it possible for the literate population to access information.

One can see from this brief overview that the political and cultural atmosphere in Enlightenment Hungary was peculiar by European standards and, at the same time, unique in that it represented great diversity. The principal aim of the volume is to investigate how media developed and functioned in multilingual and multicultural western Hungary in the approximately fifty years of this period. Such complex research calls for the crossing of disciplinary boundaries. It is therefore natural, if not necessary, that the contributions to this volume focus on the different aspects of life on which the revolutionization of journalism left its mark. The major themes covered in the volume include cultural development (generalization of information, periodicals, and dictionaries), regional outlooks (Croatia, southern Slovakia), language planning, political journalism, literary criticism and publishing, and, last but not least, religion.

Cultural development and the foregrounding of Hungarian identity were tightly connected to the promotion of Hungarian dictionaries and Hungarian-language periodicals. The question of language choice was particularly important in a country in which the official language of administration and education was Latin and German was starting to take over this role. There was an increasing need to write and publish in Hungarian and to balance out the dominance of Latin and German in the media. István Fried's study, entitled "Mehrsprachigkeit in den ersten Jahrzehnten der ungarischen Zeitschriftenliteratur" examines multilingualism in the press in western Hungary in relation to nationalist movements and language planning endeavors in the 1810s. He concludes that multilingual publishing promoted the use of Hungarian and the spread of knowledge in the regions which were parts of historical Hungary. In a similar vein, Réka Lengyel ("The Newspaper as a Medium for Developing National Language, Literature, and Science"), Margit Kiss ("Magyar Hírmondó and Dictionary Proposals"), and Eva Kowalská ("Die erste slowakische Zeitung Presspurské nowiny zwischen Journalismus und Patriotismus") all highlight the importance of disseminating information in the vernacular in the strengthening of national identity. The rise of nationalism in the non-Hungarian speaking regions of the kingdom is further discussed in Suzana Coha's discussion of journalism in the Croatian territories ("History of Journalism in the Croatian Lands from the Beginnings until the Croatian National Revival").

Language planning went hand in hand with a desire for cultural revival. It is thus no surprise that Hungarian intellectuals were striving to enable the

broader diffusion of Hungarian cultural and scientific products. Gábor Vaderna emphasizes József Péczeli's (1750–1792) merits in organizing intellectual life in Komárom (today Komárno, Slovakia) and publishing *Mindenes Gyűjtemény*, which is considered by many as the first Hungarian scientific journal ("Möglichkeiten der Urbanität in der ungarischen Zeitschrift *Mindenes Gyűjtemény*"). Further contributions made by, among others, Rumen István Csörsz ("The Literary Program of István Sándor and the Periodical *Sokféle* [1791–1808]"), Olga Granasztói ("The Paper *Hazai Tudósítások* and the Beginnings of the Cult of Monuments Through the Lens of Ferenc Kazincy's Articles [1806–1808]"), and Béla Hegedűs ("Literary History as an Argument for the Existence of Literature. Miklós Révai's Call in *Magyar Hírmondó* and *Költeményes Magyar Gyűjtemény*") all provide evidence of the fervent and productive cultural work that was taking place among the Hungarian upper circles at the time. Speaking from a more literary perspective, Piroska Balogh gives an account of the emergence of critical journalism at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and Katalin Czibula reflects on German-language and Hungarian-language theater criticism in western Hungarian newspapers. Norbert Béres presents the most frequent distribution strategies of novels ("'Roman, und was besser ist, als Roman.' Über die Vertriebsstrategien des Romans"), providing insights into advertising and selling literature as a form of cultural product. Ágnes Dóbék takes a glance at how the western Hungarian press viewed European journalistic practices, and András Döbör analyses political articles by pro-Enlightenment publicist Sándor Szacsvay in "Magyar Kurír" (Sándor Szacsvay's Underworld Dialogues as Political Publicisms in the 1789 Year of the Enlightenment-Era Newspaper *Magyar Kurír*"). From a more Austria-focused perspective, Andrea Seidler investigates the presence of the imperial couple in the *Preßburger Zeitung*, a German-language newspaper in Bratislava (Pressburg, the capital city of today's Slovakia), published twice a week from 1764 (until 1929). The final contribution to the volume, Zsófia Bárány's "Catholic and Protestant Union-Plans in the Kingdom of Hungary between 1817 and 1841," provides insights into the emergence of what we today call "public opinion" in relation to religious tolerance and freedom in the region.

The versatility of the papers published in *Media and Literature in Multilingual Hungary (1770–1820)* bears testimony to the complexity and richness of the subject. Through close and detailed examination of how the press evolved and functioned in western Hungary in the fifty years that were crucial to the unfolding of the ideas of the Enlightenment in the region, one can understand the role

the press played in the wide distribution of knowledge and the promotion of national identity. With its illuminating contributions, the volume serves as a helpful source of information for any scholar or student venturing into this vast territory of Hungarian cultural studies.

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The Secular Enlightenment. By Margaret C. Jacob. Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019. xi+339 pp.

The concept of secularization is without doubt one of the most paradoxical notions within eighteenth-century and Enlightenment studies. Although the notion of secularity and the Enlightenment seem to make strange bedfellows, secular tendencies, such as profanation and laicization, have been widely disputed phenomena in early modern scholarship. As far as the history of the concept is concerned, it should be noted that, alongside the predominant ecclesiastical interpretation (canon law), the eighteenth century witnessed a significant expansion in the semantics of the notion. Therefore, secularization and the notion of secularity became counter-concepts of religious life and tended to describe both the distance from monastic life and those persons who were freed from vows and lived at liberty in the world (*Cyclopædia, or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences,* 1728, vol. 2, 45). In this respect, this semantic extension *per se* covers two approaches with regard to the Enlightenment. First, it stands for a religious movement which, in the course of the eighteenth century, became more and more profane by putting religious sentiment in the background. Second, it is identified with the stance of the so-called "High Enlightenment," which by no later than the mid-eighteenth century had irrevocably distanced itself from the religious and spiritual *Weltanschauung*. From among the two diffuse interpretations, *The Secular Enlightenment* seems to choose the second path. The position of the author on this matter is clear. Jacob, however, tends to see enlightened secularism as also having had religious sources, and her book only aims to register the shift when this religious agenda gave place to a secular setting.

Margaret C. Jacob (University of California) is one of the few prominent scholars who has made significant contributions to the intellectual history of the Enlightenment in the past half century. Jacob's view expressed in this book seems to synthesize her results in the volumes on Newtonianism (1995, with Betty Jo Teeter Dobbs) and Enlightenment Radicalism (1981). In her book published in 2019, she attempts to provide a panoramic account of the secular tendencies of the Enlightenment. From a historiographical point of view, Jacob's perspective, on which she reflects in the Prologue (p.5), can be taken as a fresh addition to the ongoing debates (David Sorkin, John Robertson) on Enlightenment modernity. *The Secular Enlightenment* is in multiple ways connected to this traditional historiography forged by leading historians, such as Peter Gay, Franco Venturi, Daniel Roche, and John Marshall.

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First, it upholds the "radical thesis," which proclaimed that the Enlightenment project fundamentally impacted the cultural, social, and political basis on which modernity was built. However, Jacob seeks to find the balance between the religious initiations and the social and political circumstances. Second, in the Epilogue (pp.263–65), Jacob attributes to the notion of the "secular Enlightenment" a long-lasting impact on the twentieth-century European and American liberal project of democracy when she claims that, "[w]here enlightened principles survived the repression of the 1790s and beyond, democracy had a greater chance of emerging."

As for the roots of these intellectual initiatives, Jacob's central question is concerned with the redefinition of the narrative of secularization by displaying the transition from the religious antecedents to the secular period: "The Enlightenment was an eighteenth-century movement of ideas and practices that made the secular world its point of departure. It did not necessarily deny the meaning or emotional hold of religion, but it gradually shifted attention away from religious questions toward secular ones" (p.1).

In addition to the historiographical implications, Jacob lists other arguments central to the thesis throughout the eight chapters. The first three chapters explore how human life changed in the eighteenth century. Chapter 1 ("The Setting: Space Expanded and Filled Anew") focuses on the question of how, beginning in the seventeenth century, colonial experience reshaped the existing narratives on the role of God's providence and "celestial and terrestrial" reality. In the new intellectual setting, space tended to lose its Cartesian conceptualization and became neutral, parallel to the expansion of the new language of Newtonian physics. Chapter 2 ("Time Reinvented"), using the well-known cultural historical thesis and personal examples (such as the example of the Huygens family), aims to renegotiate how the expansion of material culture and technological improvements laid the groundwork for everyday materialism by profoundly altering the perception of biblical and religious time. As a consequence, the perception of time multiplied and secular punctuality became predominant, while "[t]he Christian meaning of time remained, but like predestination, millennial time seemed less and less relevant" (p.52). Following this logic, Chapter 3 ("Secular Lives") pays attention to the scope of ordinary people. It offers glimpses into the cacophony of small and unheard voices of the literate, represented by freethinkers, industrialists, travelling booksellers, scholars, religious and sexual heretics, and unnamed producers of erotic poetry, pornography, and other genres of forbidden literature. By using personal and

unpublished sources, in this chapter Jacob aims to provide a comprehensive account of the wider social foundations of secularity.

In the remaining five chapters, the Enlightenment is portrayed as a collective project which had its own entangled geographical and cultural characteristics. Concentrating on these geographical and cultural differences, each part discusses one of the most virulent European centers (Paris, Edinburgh, Berlin, Vienna, Naples, and Milan) between the 1700s and the caesura of the 1790s. As far as the themes are concerned, the scope of the chapters is very broad; they cover a wide variety of topics, including economic, moral, theological, political, and scientific quarrels. The leading principle behind these chapters is that the emergence of enlightened ideas was confused everywhere in Europe, though at the same time it was inseparable from secular(ized) sentiment. Although Jacob's goal is to retell the "well-known" topoi in a subversive way by adding pieces of information that go beyond the narrow thematical frame, the orientation towards the great names and the philosophical and theological debates remains a persistent feature of her analyses. The thematical blocks, however, appear to stand on their own and to resist comparison. Thus, the case studies, even though they represent the depth of the author's knowledge impressively, seem to lose sight of the latest findings in the scholarship on the Enlightenment.

Chapter 4 ("Paris and the Materialist Alternative: The Widow Stockdorff") places the Francophone Enlightenment in the contexts of anti-royalism, Anglophone political literature, and natural scientific discourses shaped by materialist ideas. According to Jacob, secularism in the French Enlightenment was preoccupied by a set of vibrant political and social visions which were debated extensively in unofficial literature. Therefore, the radical ideas could find expression "more commonly in cities rather than in the countryside" (p.89). Chapter 5 ("The Scottish Enlightenment in Edinburgh") depicts a more balanced and sophisticated image of the Scottish tendencies. As Jacob argues, the beginning of the Scottish Enlightenment in the 1690s was rather hesitant. In contrast to French radical sentiment, the lack of forbidden literature and the alliance between the moderate Presbyterian clergy and the university elite proved to be constitutive throughout the century. Here, the secular framework was equivalent to discussing a set of issues (such as literary works, agriculture, manufacturing, politeness, social progression, Newtonian science, and the participation of women in society) in front of a wider audience.

Chapter 7 ("Berlin and Vienna") with its almost fifty pages aims to extend the scope of the investigation to the German-speaking lands by outlining

the developments from the post-Westphalian intellectual climate to German idealism. Here, the two most substantial assets advancing secularization were the advanced university culture and the widespread anti-scholastic sentiment. Thus, as Jacob argues, in the early Enlightenment, more attention was paid to theology and religion than in France or Scotland (p.159). The search for "secular freedom" had a significant impact on the later philosophies represented by the prominent thinkers of the High Enlightenment, Lessing, Mendelssohn, Kant, and Herder (p.166).

Chapter 7 ("Naples and Milan") brings further arguments into negotiating the Italian experience, where secular tendencies appeared to have met the need for pragmatic reform. As the cases of eighteenth-century Naples and Milan exemplify, the enlightened vision could be channeled via the cultural transfers of experimental physics, political economy, and anti-tyrannical literature, into the Catholic scholastic mindset in various forms. As for the reform of agriculture and the penalty system, they were unquestionably connected to social and political needs.

As the title indicates, chapter 8 ("The 1790s") provides an outlook on how the French Revolution impacted the Enlightenment. By accepting the conventional explanation that the Enlightenment came to an end with the French Revolution, Jacob offers glimpses into the variety of reactions to the French tendencies, such as the Irish rebels, the distant supporters of the Revolution, the members of secret societies and masonic lodges, and the rejection of the Low Countries and German-speaking lands. Although the chapter begins with an evocation of the Romantic vision when, for the vast majority of people, it seemed like "everything could be questioned, rethought, reimagined, and even lived in new and unprecedented ways" (p. 237), it portrays an incomplete victory over enlightened secularism. This dramatization of the revolutionary sentiment has its purpose, as the earlier reviews have already pointed out, but many notable developments which would have merited more attention have been left out of the book.

While Jacob's scholarly experience, which draws on American, Scottish, English, Dutch-Belgian, German, French, and Italian narrative and archival sources, is impressive, the book focuses mainly on a conventionally Western-centered canon, and it fails to reflect on the experiences of the enlightened peripheries, such as Northern Europe (the Swedish and Danish Kingdoms), the Iberian peninsula, and East Central Europe (Austria, Bohemia, Poland, Hungary, and Russia). The disproportion is the most visible in chapter 6, in which the

assessment of Habsburg absolutism is restricted to the culture of the masonic lodges and Mozart's *Zauberflöte* (p.172–78). Apart from these, Jacob's book takes the secular experience as evidently accessible in the context of the eighteenth century but pays no attention to the conceptual and contextual concerns that may make the notion of "secularity" less apt for historical analysis. Jacob's distinctly secular view implies that the progress of secularism as a Western-born phenomenon which became closely related to enlightened sentiment proceeded from the late sixteenth century onwards, contributing to the development of a set of seemingly "modern" questions, the effect of which on nineteenth-century modernization is hardly deniable.

All in all, *The Secular Enlightenment* is a thought-provoking collection of ideas, which provides an impressive account of the secular tendencies of the eighteenth century which were most substantial to the intellectual movement. Jacob guides her readers with considerable confidence and compassion over a set of topics which demand serious attention even from experts. Thanks to her elegant and fluent prose, the book reads easily. Merely with its choice of subject, the book merits scholarly attention, and Jacob approaches the topic in a way which will lead to constructive debates on the field.

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"Kedves Hazámfiai, mozdulni kell..." Georgikoni peregrinatio oeconomica a 19. század elején ["Dear fellow countrymen, we must move..." The technological journeys of Hungary's first college of farming in the early nineteenth century]. By György Kurucz. Budapest: Corvina–Ráday Gyűjtemény, 2020. 303 pp.

The practice of international travel went through exponential growth from the early to mid-sixteenth century, but it was perceived as dangerous and frivolous by many intellectual authorities. In order to provide a framework for a possible practice of *useful* travel, a specific genre emerged in the second half of the century: *ars apodemica*, normative texts aiming to shape the "art of being abroad." Young men were to be exposed to the dangers and temptations of foreign travel and to invest both time and extensive resources (their own, their family's or their sponsors') only if a clear benefit was in sight. A beneficial travel experience had a dual goal: service to the state and development of the self. Personal development itself was only an intermediary step towards service to the state: thanks to individual's experience abroad, the state would gain a trained and experienced specialist able to fill crucial roles. Within the development of traveling practices over the following centuries, a key novelty was the emergence of new entities which completed and modified this schema. Service to the supranational *Republic of Letters*, learned societies, and particular institutions could complement or, indeed, replace the idea of traveling in the service of the nation.

György Kurucz's monograph tackles one such case, drawing on a corpus of international significance. The Georgikon school of agricultural studies of Keszthely, founded and directed by members of the Festetics family, was an institution of European importance. In order to keep up with innovations abroad and to maintain essential interpersonal and scholarly networks, the school regularly sent students and also staff on European trips. The book tackles the most extensive of these expeditions, the 1820–1825 *peregrinatio oeconomica* of two teachers, physician Pál Gerics and horticulturist József Lehrmann, using the large amount of materials in diverse genres (instructions, journals, reports, correspondence) resulting from these trips. One of the strongest features of the book is the careful distinction between these various writings: Kurucz is careful to consider which text targeted which audience.

Finding a format that does justice to the practice discussed and acknowledges the work that remains to be done must have been a difficult task. The structure of the book is one possible solution. After an introductory chapter, Chapter

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2 sketches the immediate local and national intellectual context, followed by a chapter (which offers a welcome range of international parallels) on the genre and practice of instructions for travel. A central chapter describes the journey step by step, helpfully complemented by maps of the itinerary of the two scholars (who sometimes traveled together and sometimes parted ways) on the inner cover at the beginning and end of the book. The last two chapters shed light in particular on two types of interactions and experiences at various stages of the journey: Chapter 5 provides an excellent summary of all things related to innovation in agriculture and related fields; Chapter 6 tackles what relates to the human experience of such a journey. The book comes to an end with a quick conclusion which mostly highlights the extensive work yet to be completed.

While this structure is logical, I was left uncertain about some of the editorial decisions regarding the length of the various chapters. The central chapter, which presents the trip itself, stands out. It is a 96-page behemoth, without any subchapters, giving a quick summary of every stop the travelers made. The subsequent chapters provide a more detailed analysis of the main centers of interest at various stages of the trip (agrarian innovations and the human aspects of travel). Since these survey chapters are present, would it not have been possible to shorten (or even do away with) the central chapter and to extend the chapters which contain analyses? Particularly the last chapter on the human element (described here as "sentimental journey," a term I do not necessarily find appropriate) flits a little too quickly through multiple topics, including meetings and networks, infrastructure, and curiosity concerning politics and religion, etc. Breaking up chapters into subchapters would have increased the book's readability, as would have a more extensive index featuring key subjects at the end of the book. The volume is richly illustrated with relatively contemporary illustrations of the places visited and some key persons. These illustrations provide some sense of "getting closer," but ultimately, they remain only decorative; at times the link between the illustration and the text is tenuous.

While the surviving material is of exceptional depth, the trip taken by Gerics and Lehrmann has some parallels. Chapter 3 explores comparisons of a range of instructions for and practices of travel. To complement this, I would suggest two additional paths to be explored for further research. One of these paths revolves around schools, and especially schools of technical education, to which both teachers and advanced pupils regularly traveled: by the late eighteenth century, this had become regular practice in the cases of two major French schools of engineering, the École des Ponts et Chaussées and the École des Mines. Another

possible comparison would be the tradition of instructions for "patriotic" travel, or in other words journeys which were expected to serve the improvement of the nation (and, ultimately, humankind) through the scientific knowledge gained by the travelers. This corpus grew out of two traditions discussed in the book, that of travel instructions issued by learned societies and the Göttingen tradition of traveling methodology; however, it went even further in developing a meticulous methodology of observation, often using tables of observation. The best-known example is Moravian aristocrat Leopold Berchtold's influential *An Essay to Direct and Extend the Enquiries of Patriotic Travellers* (London, 1789), considered a "total" methodology of travel.

The work on the Georgikon traveling practices clearly merits further exploration. Some aspects of these practices would be of interest to historians of agriculture, while others would be of interest to historians of education, intellectual historians, and specialists on travel. Kurucz's monograph attempts to cater to all these audiences at once, and even to the general public, as shown by its use of illustrations. This ambition comes with some challenges. Nevertheless, the volume is a fitting tribute to the major endeavor it presents, and its findings should be shared with an international audience.

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Universities in Imperial Austria 1848–1918: A Social History of a Multicultural Space. By Surman, Jan. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2019. 460 pp.

A revised and updated version of his doctoral dissertation *Habsburg Universities 1848–1918: Biography of a Space* (University of Vienna, 2012), Jan Surman's new book is an ambitious study of universities as spaces of knowledge, multilingualism in the Habsburg Empire, and changing landscapes and networks of academic mobility in Cisleithania in the long nineteenth century. The book follows a chronological structure while engaging with a multi-layered thematic framework which draws on historiographical traditions and debates in the history of science and knowledge, the spatial turn, and imperial history, making an important contribution to understandings of the history of the Habsburg Empire. Surman's work will surely be of interest to scholars in these fields, as well as to readers interested in the history of education, migration, and nationalism.

While the title indicates that the narrative will focus primarily on the period between 1848 and 1918, Surman takes a broader view, exploring the transformations of what he calls "imperial academic space" (p.3) from the late eighteenth century to the afterlife of the empire in the late 1930s. He starts with an introduction of the Habsburg academic landscape of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, when universities were seen as institutions which made civil servants rather than scholarship, and the production of "real" scientific knowledge in the empire took place in other spaces, such as museums, botanical and zoological gardens, clubs and associations, libraries and other (state) collections. 1848 is identified as a turning point for Habsburg universities in Chapter 2, when new agendas emerged and universities were reorganized under Minister of Education Leo Thun-Hohenstein. Surman argues that Thun saw science as a panacea for the various problems, national and social, of the Habsburg composite state: universities were part of an agenda of imperialism, and the new policies aimed to create universities which were positive towards the monarchy and furthered the idea of German linguistic and cultural superiority. At the same time, Surman calls for a more nuanced view of the 1850s and the changes it brought forth, pointing out that the matter of university autonomy remained a central point of debate. He also argues against the forced Germanisation discourse in earlier historiography. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 consider the transformation of the intellectual geography of Cisleithania from

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the 1860s as a consequence of the implementation of university autonomy, with a particular focus on changes to the language of instruction at universities across the empire. These chapters focus on changes to imperial, regional, and local academic landscapes, academic hierarchies, academic mobility and migration, and scholarly identities across three main language spaces: Czech, German, and Polish. Surman maps a network of tensions around issues of language, education, scholarship, and identity, pointing to parallels and differences in, for instance, Bohemia and Galicia, and he shows that there were definite similarities, for example, in Czech and Ruthenian language activism from the perspective of political stability. At the same time, these spaces developed very differently, as shown through examples of disciplinary diversification, patterns of academic mobility and exchange, and the stabilization of the institutional hierarchy, with Vienna at the top. The question of identity is explored further in Chapter 6, which considers the experience of being an "Other" at Habsburg universities, with a focus on the role of religious denomination in academic advancement in a context of increasing anti-Semitism, Catholic anti-modernism, and nationalism. Finally, the last chapter moves beyond 1918 and explores the pervasiveness of the Habsburg system in the successor states, not only through the survival of personal connections and scholarly entanglements, but as a consequence of the fact that prominent universities (Cracow, Prague, Vienna) had already been acting according to national geographies before the war.

Surman defines the Habsburg Empire as a "linguistically divided but still culturally entangled scientific space" (p.279). The engagement with the concept of entanglement (or multiple entanglements, in fact) is one of the most interesting aspects of the book. Surman focuses on the productive nature of multiculturalism, which, he argues, outweighed monoculturalism and nationally oriented intellectual retreat. In this sense, when he argues that language change and linguistic plurality did not lead to the dissolution of the empire, he is very much in conversation with recent revisionist histories of the Habsburg imperial space and imperial Austria in particular. The originality of Surman's book is in that it depicts the Habsburg Austrian university sphere as a moveable, dynamic environment, in which universities were part of an agenda of imperialism, even if, at the same time, they also pursued their own, autonomous agendas. This is illustrated, for instance, through the question of language equality: the book shows that these agendas could be very different in Bohemia and Galicia, two of the book's most important case studies, but as Surman argues, one cannot understand processes in one without looking at the other.

Space and its limits/limitations is one of the central themes that runs through the narrative as Surman maps the parallel transformations of the academic and imperial landscape. There are multiple, overlapping spaces under the lens here, both vertically and horizontally: Surman quotes Theodor Mommsen as saying that "Habsburg scholars are sentenced to Chernivtsi, pardoned to Graz, promoted to Vienna" (p.154), showing that the institutional and academic hierarchy in the Habsburg Empire was inseparable from imperial symbolic geography. The limitations of the academic space are also demonstrated through the analysis of academic appointments and scholars' careers outside universities, with Surman crafting a nuanced picture of career insecurity and the role of untenured and unpaid university instructors. *Privatdozenten* (unsalaried university lecturers) are identified as key victims and, at the same time, important pillars of the Habsburg imperial academic landscape. They constituted a precarious teaching force which, for the most part, worked for no pay and which, through the work the members of this teaching force did outside universities, made an important contribution to local and urban developments. Another instance where the significance of multidirectional spatiality is made clear is when in Chapter 6 Surman writes about the anti-Semitism of academic participation and appointments, delineating the "invisible ghetto walls" and glass ceilings that affected Jewish scholars horizontally and vertically.

Language is another key theme used by Surman to argue that Habsburg universities were both spatial and imperial projects. The book uses the question of language use in university education and research to address various tensions in the empire, not only in terms of how nationalism affected academia at a more universal level, but also down to the more particular questions of local sciences or disciplines, such as the development of regional historiographies. Surman identifies changes to the language of instruction as a particular turning point, and he shows that it affected not only demands for language equality, but also the intellectual geography of the empire, its regions, and cities. Chapter 5 examines these processes through comparative analysis of the appointment processes in Galicia and Bohemia, looking at linguistic and geopolitical aspects of how the universities in Cracow and L'viv sought Polish-speaking professors, while Prague looked to appoint Czechs from the 1860s in a different fashion. Ultimately, the book convincingly argues that while science was, and remained, an overall universal enterprise for Habsburg scholars, pursuing it in the national language was seen as essential for national development, as the use of the national language in the sciences was seen as serving and securing loyalty to the national cause.

A meticulously researched work based on extensive archival research in an impressive number of languages and countries, the book offers detailed and nuanced analysis of the source material. In addition to several tables offering statistical evidence about academic salaries, appointments, and other social patterns of university life (including the percentage of professors' offspring who entered the professoriat), the narrative is also interspersed with some well-placed anecdotes. As Surman states himself in the introduction, the book would have benefitted from more attention to women (or rather, the virtual absence of women) in the Habsburg academic system, and, as evident from the title, Hungary is largely missing from this history of a Habsburg multilingual university space. This criticism notwithstanding, the book shows remarkable range in its coverage and analysis, and it is a significant achievement for the history of science in Central Europe.

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Slovutný pán prezident. Listy Jozefovi Tisovi [Your Honor, Mr. President: Letters to Jozef Tiso]. By Madeline Vadkerty. Žilina: Absynt, 2020. 228 pp.

Since the struggles and debates over the memory of World War II and the Holocaust have not come to an end in most of the countries concerned, including Slovakia, the German position concerning its allegedly exclusive responsibility for the Holocaust has become an obstacle not only to independent scholars, but also to the society which needs to confront its own troubled history and its own responsibility. While the Holocaust was exclusively a German plan, as Jan Grabowski correctly claims, the Germans found many willing allies and enablers. Thus, the Slovaks too should take responsibility for the acts of the Slovak authorities, the Hlinka Guards, and collaborators who helped facilitate the deportation of tens of thousands of Slovak Jews to their deaths. The Holocaust in Slovakia happened smoothly in large part because the local representatives and populations participated. And among those who represented the whole regime responsible for the destruction of the Slovak Jewry was Jozef Tiso.

There are not many Slovak personalities who are more controversial than Jozef Tiso, the Catholic priest and president of the wartime Slovak Republic. While every serious academic research has proven his role and participation in the Holocaust in Slovakia, nationalistic sentiment tends either to rehabilitate him and point out his role in saving Slovaks (including some Jews) or bluntly admire him for his alliance with Nazi Germany and his participation in the persecution and massacre of Jews, Roma, and political opponents. American author Madeline Vadkerty decided not to write a major biography of Tiso or an academic analysis of existing debates on the role of Tiso in the Holocaust. In her book *Your Honor, Mr. President: Letters to Jozef Tiso*, she used archival sources to demask the Catholic compassion of this man, who was a politician and a clergyman, and shed light on the helplessness of the persecuted Slovak Jewry. In her book, Tiso stands in the background, yet his persona is omnipresent. The central figures of her book are people whose lives had been brutally affected by the anti-Semitic policies of the Slovak Republic, i.e. the Jews of Slovakia. The ongoing adoption of anti-Jewish measures gradually had a devastating effect on the lives of about 89,000 people. And when the economic destruction of Slovak Jewry was completed, the Slovak authorities led by President Tiso decided to "solve" the "Jewish question" by stripping the Slovak Jews of their citizenship and deporting them in collaboration with Nazi Germany to the "East."

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Vadkerty examines the prelude to the deportation, and she sheds light on the time of permanent persecution, which included the loss of jobs and thus livelihoods, the loss of property, and relationships broken up due to the racial laws regulating sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews. Vadkerty's book brings the reader to the moment when thousands of people decided to write to the president of the republic of which they were citizens with the hope that they could trust in the compassion and moral commitment of the head of the state, who was also a Catholic priest. Thousands wrote to Tiso hoping that their letters would prompt him to recognize their fundamental human rights, for instance by helping them keep their jobs, shops, or property or by granting them the "famous" presidential exception, awarded to the "economically important" Jews. These exceptions protected approximately 1,000 people (the exceptions also included family members, and thus they involved an estimated 5,000 people) from deportation in 1942.

Through these letters, which can be read as testimonies to the destruction of the Slovak Jewry, readers can learn about the Holocaust through the fates of individuals. These 13 real stories, which Vadkerty had chosen, are presented in the form of short novels, based on actual historical events. Vadkerty recreates (fictionalizes) possible monologues, dialogues, and backstories while she writes about little-known chapters of the Holocaust in Slovakia. Using the format of a short novel, she introduces readers to real Jewish and non-Jewish women and men of all ages from numerous Slovak villages and towns as they reacted to the regime's anti-Jewish measures. Each of 13 stories is based on deportation records, archival documents, and interviews with family members, and they are all accompanied by pictures of the original letters. Vadkerty switches back and forth from fictional dialogues and recreated stories inspired by historical sources and historical narrative based on references to historical sources, so she keeps reminding the reader of historical facts and documents which are the base of these stories. The book shows how the anti-Jewish policy of the wartime Slovak republic destroyed the lives of ordinary people simply because these people were regarded as Jews. Vadkerty describes how these people not only asked for mercy, but also proclaimed their own integrity, diligence, love of country, and other civic virtues in their letters. However, the President's Office did not respond to many of the letters. In some cases, the President's Office simply declined the requests or called on other local authorities to investigate the situation. Often, replies arrived after the people who had written the letters had been deported.

Thanks to archival research and her focus on story-telling, in collaboration with Ján Púček, Vadkerty manages to shed light on the unhealed wounds of recent Slovak history. While the introduction of the book by Ivan Kamenec, one of the most important Holocaust scholars from Slovakia, gives an academic frame to a book which is intended for a general audience, it points out this problem in Slovak historiography. In Slovakia, the gap between best-selling memoirs of Slovak Jews who survived the Holocaust and the highly exclusive academic works on the Holocaust, which are almost inaccessible in their vocabulary and approach to a reader who is not a specialist in the field of history, calls attention to the need for more approachable historical narratives on the Holocaust in Slovakia. Yet more and more scholars in Slovakia, such as Hana Kubátová, Monika Vrzgulová, Marína Zavacká, Ján Hlavika, Anton Hruboň, and Jakub Drábik, have begun to recognize the potential roles for scholars of this area and the need not only for extensive research but also for comprehensive and accessible publications which meet high scholarly standards while also appealing to wider audiences.

Vadkerty's book follows a trend of semi-fictional writing in the international Holocaust literature. Yet, unlike many other similar books based on real stories, such as Heather Morris's best-selling novel *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*, Vadkerty does not blur the authenticity of the history. Vadkerty's book uses primary historical sources, including photographs and testimonies, and thus it can be recommended not only to readers looking for interesting literature about tragic stories of Jewish fates in Slovakia during the Holocaust, but also for scholars who search for new formats to share their research findings. Nevertheless, *Your Honor, Mr. President: Letters to Jozef Tiso* does not fulfil the function of a standard work of historical scholarship. Hopefully, Vadkerty will add to her book an additional publication which will allow her to combine archival research with a more academic approach. Her research would thus be an important addition to Holocaust historiography, and her style of writing could hopefully be an inspiration for professional scholars and an example of how to write more accessible academic texts, which are still rare in the historiography of the Holocaust in Slovakia.

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Budapest–Bergen-Belsen–Svájc: A Kasztner-vonat fővárosi utasai [Budapest–Bergen-Belsen–Switzerland: The Budapest passengers of the Kasztner train]. Edited by Anikó Lukács. Budapest: Budapest City Archives, 2020.

The story of the so-called Kasztner train and Rezső Kasztner's activities were parts of one of the controversial episodes of the Hungarian Holocaust. Kasztner worked as the deputy chairman of the Vaada, the Zionist Aid and Rescue Committee. In 1944, as a result of his negotiations with the SS, he was able to organize the escape of several hundred Hungarian Jews to Switzerland. For each of the 1,684 passengers, thousand dollars had to be paid to the Nazis, and the train, which departed from Budapest on June 30, first took the refugees to the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen. Many of them managed to reach the safety of Switzerland only half a year later. Kasztner was criticized then and is still criticized today for having "sold his soul to the devil," (a phrase used by the judge in his trial) in part because some people assume that only rich, prominent Jews were able to get on the list of passengers. As a consequence, Kasztner became involved in a trial in 1953, where he was accused of collaborating with the Nazis, and the trial drew attention to him which may have caused his death: three members of Lehi, a Zionist paramilitary underground group assassinated him.

Budapest–Bergen-Belsen–Switzerland: The Budapest passengers of the Kasztner train, a book published by the Budapest City Archives, contains the material from the exhibition of the same name, which was opened in June 2019. The material for this exhibition was compiled in the course of an exciting international cooperative endeavor connected to the discovery of approximately 7,000 data sheets with information concerning the owners and tenants of Budapest apartments from 1944 (the digitalized documents are available at https://archives.hungaricana.hu/en/lear/Lakasiv/). In this volume, documents concerning the life of Kasztner train passengers are combined from two collections: the Budapest City Archives and the Verband Schweizerischer Jüdischer Fürsorgen (VSJF), the Swiss association which aided Jewish refugees.

The book applies a previously neglected approach: the story of the Kasztner train is introduced through the fates of ten rescued persons or families on the basis of a variety of archival sources, photographs, documents, letters collected from private individuals, recollections, and diaries. The book is attractive, with photographs and documents arranged in a "scrapbook style." Both the main

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text and captions have been translated into English, making it accessible and engaging to the English readership too.

In Holocaust research, the perspectives of victims and microhistory are becoming increasingly prominent; this book is an example of this trend, as the core consists of the stories of survivors. Editor Anikó Lukács also mentions this in her foreword, where she emphasizes that the main focus was not on Kasztner's activity and its political aspects but on the refugees themselves.

A short writing by Annie Szamosi, in which she gives an account of how she learned of her family's past, fits into this concept. Szamosi's story is typical: her parents were reluctant to tell her and her brother what had happened to them during World War II; however, during a trip she took to Budapest, a relative disclosed the entire story. Thus, her interest was raised in how Kasztner had saved her grandparents from certain death, and the story of Zebulon Jonatán Sternberg and Margit Dach became part of the volume.

The family stories are contextualized by a short historical introduction. The reader learns of the actions of Kasztner and the Zionists and the story of the train. The recollections of the refugees themselves and the suggestive postcards by graphic designer István Irsai, in which he depicts the characteristic objects and scenes of the camp behind barbed wire, provide an expressive picture of their experiences during the time spent in Bergen-Belsen. Nonetheless, the lack of information about the camp's history and structure may be bothering. Finally, photographs, documents, and a short account describe the circumstances of the refugees after their arrival in Switzerland.

Then come the stories of the ten families, among whom we may find a contractor, an industrialist, a lawyer, a goldsmith, a scientist, and a merchant. The family stories are based on a rich collection of sources, and the main text is complemented with quotes from ego-documents and letters. Since the fugitives are in focus, they could have been given more space to tell their stories in their own words; but alongside the historical text, an abundance of photographs, forms, letters, and other documents also speak for them, providing further details about the families' lives.

The volume offers the reader a picture of the passengers' prewar situation, how their careers and lives were broken by the Holocaust, what it meant for them to get a chance to escape, and how they lived in Switzerland and after the war. From the point of view of the latter, the families whose stories were chosen for inclusion in the volume may be representative. Most of them never

returned to Hungary. Instead, they settled in various countries throughout the world, from countries in South America to Israel.

Though according to the historical introduction "almost every class of Hungarian Jewry was represented" on the Kasztner train, most of the ten families whose narratives were chosen for inclusion here were prominent members of the Budapest community: for instance, György Bamberger and his wife, Rózsa Stern, who was the daughter of Samu Stern, leader of the Pest Israelite Congregation; Nison Kahan, one of the leaders of Zionism in Hungary and Gábor Munk, a member of the board of the Pest Israelite Congregation, whose daughter married Nison Kahan. Others were given places on the train due to their outstanding artistic or scientific achievements, such as the abovementioned graphic designer, István Irsai, contractor József Apor, and world-famous physician and psychiatrist Lipót Szondi. This asymmetry is probably a result of the disproportionately larger number of sources documenting the lives of well-known personalities or those who were in leading positions. Given this abundance of sources, it is easier to write about their lives. However, the material compiled for the book seems to underpin the assumption that only rich or famous people were given places on the train. This is contradicted only by the fact that the young Gádor–Donáth couple and Zebulon Jonatán Sternberg and his wife, Margit Dach, were also included on Kasztner's list, together with numerous other less wealthy persons whose stories are not well-documented and are not mentioned in the book.

The moral implications of the Kasztner train cannot be avoided, even if the lives of the refugees remain the focus and the process according to which passengers were selected is touched upon only indirectly. A final conclusion would be hard to draw, but one factor must be underlined, which can be demonstrated through the life of the Gádor–Donáth couple. László Gádor was 32 years old in 1944, and Blanka Donáth was 23. After they returned to Hungary in 1945, Gádor worked for the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and Donáth had a long and successful career as a doctor of educational psychology. Had they stayed in Hungary in 1944, probably they would not have survived until the end of the war. Kasztner's train made it possible for some 1,700 persons to survive the Holocaust. The life stories of the passengers effectively illuminate this simple but important truth.

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Hóman Bálint és népbírósági pere [Bálint Hóman and his trial at the People's Court]. Edited by Gábor Ujváry. Budapest: Ráció Kiadó; Székesfehérvár: Városi Levéltár és Kutatóintézet, 2019. 668 pp.

Bálint Hóman (1885–1951) a long-serving Minister of Culture of the Horthy regime, became a recent symbol of "historical revisionism." By revisionism, I am referring not only to the revisions of indictments made by the people's court after 1945 but also to the history of the period between 1945 and 1989 and thus, indirectly, to the attempt to revalue the whole period before 1945, which is a constitutive part of the memory politics of illiberal regimes. A thick volume entitled *Historical Revisionism* was also published in 2011. It was edited by Gábor Ujváry, a founding member of the controversial government-sponsored Veritas Historical Institute and Archive, in which the most outstanding contemporary Hungarian historians presented Hóman as a historian, a public collection specialist (as he was the director of the National Museum), and a politician while also examining his networks of valuable contacts (without which his upward career would have been unthinkable) and his connection to Székesfehérvár. However, this edited volume did not bring any closure on the subject. Rather, it was followed in 2015 by the ultimately failed plan to erect a statue of Hóman and, in 2016, the also failed lawsuit against the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (Magyar Tudományos Akadémia – MTA), which demanded the restoration of Hóman's MTA membership.

The volume under review, which offers the text of the documents in Bálint Hóman's people's court files and analyses of these documents surprisingly begins with a detailed, almost hundred-page, extremely thoroughly compiled chronology (pp.11–108). Although there are usually chronologies at the end of publications of historical sources, this chronology at the beginning of the volume provides a primary framework for interpreting the publication: the volume sticks to sources and facts and seeks to give the impression of a scholarly endeavor that is objective, clearly substantiated, and apolitical. The chronology and bibliography of Hóman's works are followed by Tibor Zinner's 40-page study on the history of the people's courts. The basic tenet of illiberal "revisionist historiography" is the emphasis on the need for a fresh start on the grounds that, until the work we have in our hands now was written, no one had dealt with the topic being analyzed. Zinner, who published his first work on the history of people's courts already in 1983, also uses this topos. Another reflection on the history of the people's court by Zsolt Horváth (which for some reason is at the end of the

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volume) mentions only the book by Tibor Lukács published in 1979 as the only summarizing work on the topic.

The volume contains two introductions concerning the people's courts and one about the 2015 retrial. This is followed by material from the people's court case in 1946. The real starting point of the volume is the thorough research work carried out by Gábor Ujváry as an expert for the case in 2015 (pp.537–610) and his analysis of the public debate (pp.162–99). This is followed by the documents of a court case in 1946 and then the 2015 trial.

The larger, more substantial part of the volume (about 300 pages) is the thoroughly annotated publication of the documents of the People's Court. The rules concerning the publication of these documents are explained in a preface to the collection (as is fitting). In this volume, the studies about the court case exceed in length the documents of the court case themselves, so the reader gets two loosely connected books. The largest theoretical problem of the volume is the authors' ambiguous attitude towards the empirical source of the volume, i.e. the minutes of the people's court proceedings.

Anyone who has ever worked with people's court documents knows this is a very challenging genre. The materials from a single case are sometimes held in different archives, and it can be extremely difficult to determine what documents the people's court used and often how it used them. The version of the Hóman court case published in the book was also created by merging two archival files (one from the Budapest City Archives, the other from the Historical Archives of the State Security Services). It is therefore strange that the documents' archival references are completely missing and, furthermore, that there is no reference to the missing materials that have been removed from the files in the meantime.

There are other methodological and theoretical problems which the authors fail to raise concerning the genre of people's court protocols as a source. The first problem concerns the transitional nature of the institution of the people's court itself. In an ever-changing legal environment, the authorities ran and used an institution which gained its legitimacy precisely from its ignorance of this constant change.

The second problem concerns the fact that, as is true in all court sources, since these kinds of written sources are available, they can be analyzed in two ways. The first approach is to consider these lawsuits as theatrical productions in which the actors performed the events of their past for the audience and the community according to the rules they thought were known. This, of course, had political consequences. In the case of the Hungarian people's courts, for

example, if the defendants were female, they referred to themselves as "weak women" and were usually given lighter sentences for crimes for which a male defendant would have been given a more seriously punishment.[1] Hóman tried to use this tactic. According to the interrogating investigators' summary report he behaved "womanly": "[He] describes his role as insignificant, denies his influence, and omits from his role the moments that show his unbroken German friendship, fascist attitude, and anti-Semitic attitude throughout." (p.210) He was not successful, given the court's politics and context. In other cases, defendants try to arouse emotions. Female defendants, for instance, may try crying. In the case of Hóman, however, the "old woman's complaint" (p.210), his strategy to portray himself as a victim, which is also mentioned in the report, did not help and may have hurt him. In this interpretive framework, the emphasis is on the fact that the trial, regardless of whether it happened incidentally in the transitional justice system of the extraordinary transitional period, never returns "the truth."

The other methodological approach typical of this volume is to consider what was happening in the court as "objective." The courts as institutions of post–World War II political justice did not function in this manner. The publication insists on factual accountability of the people's courts with great commitment and a huge footnote apparatus. This interpretation, even if consistent in its own methodological approach, would still be questionable. First of all, it is not clear that the lawyers, police officers, and investigators working in Budapest (a city largely in ruins) in 1945 and 1946 can be expected to have the same insights, knowledge, and source knowledge that today's researchers have. Second, this approach is inconsistent in the volume. For example, the investigative report of November 29, 1945 mentions 147 pieces of attached evidence in support of the allegations against Hóman, on which the volume does not reflect here. It is incumbent on the historian who is editing the text not simply to check and (quite legitimately) criticize the professionalism of the people's courts but also to explain why and how this kind of legal institution and procedure developed. Analyses of large, highly symbolic court cases like the Hóman hearing, however, are not suitable for this purpose.[2]

1 See more on this: Andrea Pető, The Women of the Arrow Cross Party. Invisible Hungarian Perpetrators in the Second World War (Palgrave: Macmillan, 2020).

2 See more Ildikó Barna, and Andrea Pető, Political Justice in Budapest after World War II (Budapest–New York: CEU Press, 2015).

In this review, I would not go into the controversial points of judging Hóman's professional life, which was extensively analyzed in the 2011 volume. The volume under review is interesting in part because it returns to the pre-2011 framework without meaningfully reflecting on the failure to erect a statue of Hóman and the failure to rehabilitate him as a historian and scholar. The book seems to have been intended as a monument of sorts, like a book to create a memory of the trial.

The volume concludes with a history of attempts to rehabilitate Hóman, analyzing the process that resulted in neither the erection of a statue of Hóman nor the restoration of his membership in Hungarian Academy of Sciences. István Varga (FIDESZ MP), who has been the political engine behind the rehabilitation of Hóman in recent decades, gained significant space in this part of the volume. In his writing, Varga puts himself at the center of these attempts, saying "without the two-thirds parliamentary majority, I would have found it much harder to take up the obstacles" (p.505). Thus, the legal process of rehabilitation became just as much a political process as the verdict against Hóman in 1946. When the volume mercilessly and meticulously footnotes the court case, it fights a battle that it had already lost when it was launched.

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New Perspectives in Transnational History of Communism in East Central Europe. Edited by Krzysztof Brzechczyn. Dia-Logos 26. Bern: Peter Lang Verlag, 2019. pp. 384.

New Perspectives in Transnational History of Communism in East Central Europe, edited by Krzysztof Brzechczyn, is the result of a renaissance in the research on the twentieth-century totalitarian systems in Central and Eastern Europe and an attempt to evaluate new theoretical proposals from various fields of study. It was published in 2019 as the twenty-sixth book in the Peter Lang series *Dia-Logos. Studies in Philosophy and Social Sciences*.

First, I should say that the very title promises to introduce new perspectives on the historiography of European communism. That promise is not easy to keep, especially with respect to such a well-established sphere of research. Although the subject matter has been examined in depth, it is obvious to me that there are still too few studies that go beyond the national perspective. An examination of a phenomenon like communism should not, by definition, be restricted to one historiography. It should be global and comparative.

Brzechczyn outlines precisely this perspective in his introductory remarks. He draws a clear distinction between transnational and comparative studies, and he argues convincingly that they are based on different premises. From the comparative approach, the existing national historiographies are assumed to be ready-made, independent beings, and they are compared by means of a derivative determination of the criteria for their evaluation. Such a concept can be developed with the use of the available material, and in that sense, it does not constitute an entirely new perspective, but it does make it possible, as it were, to put the existing descriptions in order and contextualize them (p.15).

Brzechczyn suggests that the transnational perspective is methodologically more challenging, as it requires one to forget the existence of borders and national differences in order to allow the consideration of communism as a global movement, and only then is the implementation of the discovered model analyzed in the particular context. The national aspect is not the original context here. On the contrary, it is the global perspective that makes it possible to define and understand the local situation. This intriguing assumption could rightly be termed a "new perspective."

It is worth noting that that term was also used during the Third Annual Conference of the OSI–CEU *Comparative History Project. Comparative Studies of Communism: New Perspectives* (Budapest, May 27–29, 2010). It was also used in a

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2009 book edited by Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka entitled *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*. It seems clear that Brzechczyn would like to enter this discussion.

Although making paths for new perspectives is theoretically fascinating, it is also practically complicated. It is not easy to "set aside" the context in which the researchers have been raised and educated and in which they have been working all their lives. Can they free themselves from their particularistic histories? When we look through the biographical notes about the authors, we see that many of them lived and worked in more than one national context. That is an interesting Central and Eastern European phenomenon, which explains the possibility of a sensible implementation of the project. We are just entering a time in which the generation which was not shaped or, at least, was not solely shaped by the experience of communism is undertaking the theoretical reinterpretation of this experience.

In the introduction, Brzechczyn rightly notes that in the nineteenth-century scientific European historiography, the nation state was a widely accepted foundation for research. The paradigm of the "national historiography" survived, in a more or less covert form, the whole twentieth century, and it turned out to be one of the most durable assumptions of narratives about the past. Brzechczyn considers this to be both a natural consequence of the emergence of nation states and a construct of the cultural politics of those states. There is no doubt that the book ties in with the trend in transnational studies, discernible since the beginning of the twenty-first century. On the other hand, Brzechczyn correctly points out that the greater popularity of such research has yet not led to a clear theoretical position on the phenomena under study.

Consequently, Brzechczyn draws the logical conclusion that the very definition of transnational history has become a research problem. In his view, some doubts can be dispelled by separating transnational history from comparative history (p.16). This perspective is then rationally explained in a convincing manner. Brzechczyn explains why transnational historiography has recently become so popular and why it was not possible before. He focuses, on the one hand, on the new generations of researchers and, on the other, on the technical possibilities created by the Internet. Brzechczyn points out three areas of transnational research: (1) totalitarization and de-totalitarization; (2) modernist theories; and (3) the history of everyday life. In his opinion, modernist concepts were the first metanarratives of the process of transnational interpretation of communism in Eastern Europe, and the differences between the natures of communism in Eastern and Western Europe were first noted in those narratives.

The research on totalitarianism and the history of everyday life is also a traditional element of the scholarship on communism in Eastern Europe. Brzechczyn openly agrees with Peter Apor's and Constantin Iordachi's views on the topic. However, these authors do not see the need to draw a clear distinction between the comparative and transnational approaches, and they appear to wish to enrich the former with the latter. Indeed, for many scholars, it seems as if transnational studies are to expand and continue the main assumptions of comparative history, despite some tension between the two approaches.

Brzechczyn points to the fundamental differences between the methodological assumptions of the transnational and comparative approaches. The latter has enjoyed an established position since Marc Bloch, but it is especially popular in contemporary research on communism. One reason for this boost in popularity is the inclusion of new strategies of transnational research to that methodology. At the same time, Brzechczyn argues for the actual existence of two separate approaches here (p.17). On the other hand, Brzechczyn's examples do not contradict directly the assumptions of comparative history.

The articles in the book are based on the papers from the 2014 conference (Poznań, October 16–17). They are essentially 16 independent texts written by various authors from different countries. This diversity makes it possible to preserve the interdisciplinary and transnational perspective, however, this comes at the cost of consistency, despite the editor's evident efforts to maintain it. One advantage is doubtless the very broad representation of most national historiographies of the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. Also, various topics are covered, and many postulated "new perspectives" are shown.

Brzechczyn indicates three ways in which the transnationality of the authors' approaches finds expression: (1) in the analysis of the usefulness of the theories and models characteristic of transnational studies; (2) in the research on the use of these methods; and (3) in the research carried out with the use of universal categories which may be effectively applied to many societies. It is easy to notice that point three belongs to the comparative perspective. This very perspective appears to dictate the tone of many fragments of the book, and it indicates how difficult it is to maintain the postulated sharp distinction between comparative and transnational research in practice.

The book consists of five parts. In the first three parts, the general subject matter (communism) is divided into three aspects: political (i), ideological (ii), and economic/social (iii), while the two last parts are called, respectively, the states and societies of Central and Eastern Europe (iv) and the memory and narratives about

the communism in Central and Eastern Europe (v). The texts are consistently impressive, but it seems that not all the authors share the editor's vision of the transnational perspective. Most of them focus on traditional descriptions which emphasize the historical specificity of the given country and nation, with references to comparative methods. In the remaining texts, the comparative method is assumed from the start and effectively applied. The transnationality of the methods and subject matter of research remains in the background, but we see that it is still more of an interesting idea with perspectives for the future than a specific, independent research program. Especially interesting are articles from Chapter Three offering new spheres for study from the transnational perspective: consumerism and emotion studies; and from Chapter Five that shows problems of transnationalism when challenged by official memory politics in Belarus and Ukraine.

To sum up, in most texts in the book, including Brzechczyn's article, transnational studies are not clearly separated from comparative studies. The book does not exhaust the topic of this mutual relation, but that is not the objective of researchers who propose new points of view. It shows, in theory and practice, that there is still much work to be done before we could consider the transnational perspective to be fully conceptualized and standardized. It is difficult to separate the comparative and transnational histories, which gives rise to the question as to whether the endeavor is even justified.

In this respect, the third chapter, which is devoted to consumerism, instills optimism, as it proves that such research is not only possible but, in some areas, necessary. In the fifth chapter, ambitious plans are made for further work on the transnational perspective in historiography, and the last two texts indicate the urgency of that work, which, after all, does not take place in a political vacuum. The historiography of Central and Eastern Europe remains as complicated as its history. This is another reason why we should appreciate this publication, which presents a very broad spectrum of the theoretical and practical problems awaiting new generations of researchers. There is still no unequivocal answer to the question about the relationship between transnational and comparative perspectives in that research. The discussion continues, and Brzechczyn and his coauthors have made an important contribution to that conversation. Altogether, they have provided a good introductory book for everyone interested in transnational perspective, especially from the methodological standpoint, and for the wide range of researchers who focus on the comparative history of European communism.

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Magyar-zsidó identitásminták [Hungarian-Jewish identity patterns]. Edited by Iván Zoltán Dénes. Budapest: Ráció, 2019. 267 pp.

An interesting volume entitled *Hungarian-Jewish Identity Patterns* was published by the Budapest-based Ráció Kiadó in Hungary. The volume aims to trace the spiritual path of Hungarian (Neolog) Jewry through the fates of two Hungarian Jewish scholars, Henrik Marczali (1856–1940) and Bernát Alexander (1850–1927). The editor, Iván Zoltán Dénes, is the leader of the Henrik Marczali Research Group at the Jewish Theological Seminary at the University of Jewish Studies. Dénes analyzes how a 2018 conference which was held at the Institute of Philosophy of the Center for the Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences led to this volume. The spiritual foundation of the book is also provided by Károly Kecskeméti in his introduction, which focuses on the activities and identities of Neolog scholars or, as he writes in connection with the two scholars, "Jewish scholar[s] who at the same time identif[y] with the Hungarian nation" (p.9). Dénes also doubts the apologetics of assimilation, orthodoxy, and Zionism, as well as their idealization as an eternal explanation for every event, thus giving the ars poetica of the book, at least to be assumed.

We can read Mihály Huszár's thorough study on Henrik Marczali's father, Mihály Marczali, in the "Chapter of Identity Samples," who was the first rabbi of the village of Marcali. Huszár writes about the role Mihály Marczali he played in the formation of the identity of the family. Dénes analyzes the Hungarian-Jewish identity of Henrik Marczali, and then Szilvia Peremiczky describes the appearance of three Hungarian Jewish authors (Bertalan Ormódi, József Kiss, and Emil Makai) in Hungarian literary life.

The next chapter is entitled "Situation Assessments, Strategies, Pathways I." Here, Miklós Konrád deals with the problems of depictions of the Dualist era as the Hungarian Jewish golden age. András Zima writes about modern Jewish integration strategies at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and Gábor Schweitzer examines the search for the Neolog rabbi identity in Hungary by analyzing the events between the rabbinical meeting in Győr and the foundation of the National Rabbinical Association.

In the next section, entitled "Location Assessments, Strategies, Findings 2," Péter Zóka analyzes the role of Alexander Bernát at the Hungarian National Congress of Free Teaching. Péter Turbucz describes the views of Bernát Alexander and Henrik Marczali in a long study on World War I, and Péter András

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Varga writes about Alexander Bernát and his circle of students as a "problem of philosophical history writing."

The volume strives to situate a defining part of Hungarian Jewry within the framework marked by the oeuvre of the two great Neolog scholars. In this respect, this book can be said to have been successful, because not many professionals have tried to trace the process of the historical formation of the Neolog Jewish identity. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that we are not talking about all of the Hungarian Jews at that time, but only about a community within this larger group, which means that we are only talking about a kind of intellectual history.

However, if we assume that historian Henrik Marczali and philosopher Bernát Alexander were role models for Hungarian Neolog Jewry, their unbroken enthusiasm for Hungarian national goals, for instance, which made them apologists for the "Great War" (as Péter Turbucz makes clear in his study), seems a bit odd today. Of course, it would be anachronistic to question the degree of enthusiasm at the time, yet at the same time, this unconditional loyalty and enthusiasm proved to be an illusion from a historical perspective.

I would like to highlight a few studies from the book which I feel are essential to an understanding of the message this collection of essays seems to endeavor to convey to the general readership. The essay by Miklós Konrád, which analyzes the attitude of the Hungarian Neolog public and intellectuals about dualism, is extremely interesting. Konrád convincingly demonstrates that, contrary to popular belief, the Neolog Jewry was dissatisfied with the conditions and was increasingly frustrated, and in the end, many of them took a left-wing turn, which in this case meant supporting the revolution of 1918.

The book offers insightful articles about Alexander Bernát and Henrik Marczali, which examine certain stages of their lives and their relationships to decisive historical events. Péter Zóka analyzes Alexander's speech in Pécs (October 1907), which was delivered at the Hungarian National Congress of Free Teaching, where many people were present, from Oszkár Jászi to Ottokár Prohászka. Alexander, in whose view nurturing the desire for knowledge and raising the level of general education were the fundamental goals, condemned all uses of education for partisan political purposes and denied the accusation brought against him that he sought to relativize the truth.

At the end of the volume, Péter András Varga analyzes the circle of students of Alexander Bernát. Bernát's disciples were extremely important people in the history of Hungarian fiction. Béla Zalai, who died in a Russian prisoner

of war camp, Jenő Varga, head of the Moscow Institute of World Economy, Vilmos Szilasi, who had a "European career," and Béla Fogarasi, an important personality of Hungarian Marxist-Leninist philosophy, were all talents whose early interests were significantly influenced by Alexander. Varga sees in the phenomenological philosophical connection the point where these personalities were also connected to one another.

My main criticism of the book would be that it is a somewhat haphazard compilation of very high-quality studies. It sheds light on the careers of the two prominent Hungarian Jewish scholars in many respects, and it offers clear explanations of the relevance of their activities to the Hungarian Jewish intelligentsia in general. We are talking about people who were Jews but who considered themselves Jewish on the basis of religion only and who were otherwise essentially assimilated. They identified themselves as Hungarian, and in this respect, they also stressed the importance of being more than a member of a given nation. However, their unflinching Hungarian nationalism proved to be a failure in all respects, and this caused them great frustration and, paradoxically, prompted them to identify more passionately with the idea of the integral Hungarian state. This was paradoxical given the events of the subsequent decades, when the notion of the Hungarian state as defined by the borders of the medieval Hungarian kingdom proved a mirage, as did the notion that Hungarian society accepted Jews as Hungarians.

This volume is a significant contribution to the secondary literature in part because it brings identity disputes off the emotional plane and places them between the cornerstones of the historical facts and science.

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