



BOOK REVIEWS

Markets and Staples in the Medieval Hungarian Kingdom. By Boglárka Weisz. Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities, 2020. 258 pp.

Economic history is blooming again in Hungarian scholarship, and members of a new generation of historians are revisiting and reconsidering the fundamental principles and institutions of the medieval Hungarian kingdom. A research project coordinated by Boglárka Weisz under the “Lendület” (Momentum) program of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences has produced impressive scholarship in recent years. The monograph reviewed here is a revised version (published now in a beautifully typeset edition) of the Hungarian edition, which was published in 2012.

The book has three main chapters and a large appendix with a “data inventory,” meaning an exhaustive alphabetical and chronological listing with the market days in the medieval kingdom of Hungary. The first chapter examines markets, including the histories of their emergence, the terminology used in connection with them in medieval charters, and details of their financial and social aspects. Weisz takes the most immediate meaning of the word “market” as regular (daily, weekly, and annual) gatherings of people for the exchange of goods and services. The right to hold a market had to be sanctioned by a royal grant, even when natural factors, as Weisz explains, created those markets, owing to a given site’s favorable political or geographic location. The terminology for markets was as complex as the network of daily or weekly markets and the fairs held on saints’ feast days. Weisz expertly guides her reader through the terminology, which changed over the course of the centuries. The term “forum liberum,” for instance, lost its original meaning of providing free passage to merchants coming to the fair and in the fourteenth century became a generic term for “market” (p.20). As becomes evident from the first subchapters, the overview and scope of the book are impressive. Weisz has compiled and analyzed a large amount of data which is nevertheless navigated with ease. In addition to the better-known concepts, she presents ancillary rights to market privileges, which are less familiar to most readerships, i.e., the ban-mile right, which from the examples presented was mostly granted to towns in the northwestern counties of the kingdom (pp.38–39). The social function of markets as sites for the dissemination of information, the discussion of official or private matters,

of the negotiation of new regulations, routes, tolls, or changes in the official insignia (seals) is presented in subchapter seven, which is dedicated to market proclamations. This crucial role of enabling public communication eventually made the markets central places in towns, where the town halls began to be built starting in the late fourteenth century (p.49).

Chapters two and three investigate the historical evolution of the staple right as a complex of trading privileges in the medieval Hungarian kingdom. Weisz challenges the older views in Hungarian secondary literature and highlights the intricacies of the staple rights in medieval towns of the realm, which were diverse and shifted over time. Weisz further corrects the secondary literature and notes that the first staple right charter was granted by King Béla IV to Buda in 1244 for trade on the Danube. There are indications in royal charters that before the Mongol invasion the town of Esztergom benefitted from a privileged position in relation to the foreign merchants entering the kingdom, though the city never received a formal grant in this respect and eventually lost its position to the emerging town of Buda. Based on a meticulous examination of royal charters granting or withdrawing the staple right and of locally issued town regulations, Weisz discerns several categories of staple right covering a variety of obligations that foreign merchants had to meet. Each town sought to carve out certain rules that best served the interest of the local merchants. Weisz shows that only Buda and Kassa (today Košice, Slovakia) succeeded in acquiring the full staple right, though this was met with opposition from merchants, both Hungarian and foreign, who resorted to solutions to circumvent the towns with the staple right, such as using alternate roads or trying to obtain individual exemptions. In fact, as Weisz explains, the use of mandatory roads was connected to the staple right but not constitutive of it. This was true of other commercial privileges that put limits on foreign traders, such as prohibitions on retail sale, bans on transshipment, the obligation to use the local weights, and the ban on setting up merchant companies. Weisz does not dwell on these details, but we see that the bestowal of the staple right was not solely the result of royal urban policy (a concept which the author does not use). Rather, the towns themselves were actively interested in obtaining this right, and at least in the case of the Transylvanian towns, they had agents lobbying at the court who also made payments on their behalf.

The data inventory is a useful tool for historians interested in the medieval Hungarian kingdom, as it provides exhaustive data on all known market days of market. The information is organized alphabetically according to the names of the counties, and it includes the day of a given market, whether weekly or annual,

the year when the franchise was granted, and the bibliographical reference. The bibliography is also impressive. Weisz has pursued research in an array of archives, unearthing new data, and she has combed through a large list of published source editions.

Boglárka Weisz's book sets the history of a crucial institution of medieval economies, the staple right, on a new path. Furthermore, her thorough examination of the chronological evolution of markets underscores how the Hungarian kingdom gradually grew into an economy based on trade and exchange, with markets also acquiring a social role over time.

Mária Pakucs-Willcocks
Nicolae Iorga Institute of History, Bucharest
maria.pakucs@iini.ro

Sándor Kisfaludy: *Hazafiúi Szózat a' Magyar Nemességhez* (1809) [Patriotic appeal to the Hungarian nobility]. Source publication, edited by Ágoston Nagy. Budapest: Reciti, 2022. 416 pp.

The twelfth volume of the prestigious *ReTextum* series published by the Reciti Press of the Institute for Literary Studies at the Research Centre for Humanities consists of the first critical edition of Sándor Kisfaludy's *Hazafiúi Szózat a' Magyar Nemességhez* (Patriotic appeal to the Hungarian nobility, 1809), edited by Ágoston Nagy, research fellow at the József Eötvös Research Centre's Tamás Molnár Research Institute at the University of Public Service in Budapest. The publication of this volume commemorates the 250th anniversary of the birth of famous Hungarian poet and officer of the noble levy (meaning conscription and also referred to as *insurrectio*) Sándor Kisfaludy, who wrote this work on behalf of Archduke Joseph of Habsburg-Lothringen, the Palatine of Hungary, as a semi-official propaganda text on the occasion of the 1809 Hungarian noble levy against Napoleon's invading forces.

Kisfaludy's pamphlet is regarded as the most notable example of anti-Napoleon war propaganda in Hungary, and it is an important historical source of contemporary noble discourse related to the concepts of patriotism and nationhood at a time when the modern concept of the nation was beginning to emerge in East Central Europe. The current source edition by Ágoston Nagy makes all existing textual versions of Kisfaludy's work available to a broader public for the first time, as it contains not only the Hungarian autograph draft and fair copy but also the German excerpt of the work, the latter two with the remarks and deletions of Archduke Joseph, who censored Kisfaludy's work himself, and a German-language translation by his contemporary, the famous scholar and professor of aesthetics, Johann Ludwig von Schedius. The critical edition consists not only of a meticulous textological apparatus, but also ample factual notes, a lengthy and detailed introductory study (which takes up the entire first half of the book), and a short German-language overview.

According to Nagy, the broader context of Kisfaludy's semi-official propaganda work needs to be interpreted within the framework of the French revolutionary wars that began in 1792, with particular attention to the three previous Hungarian noble levies of 1797, 1800, and 1805, as well as the governmental reforms of the Habsburg Court, which were intended to ensure a successful military campaign against Napoleon. In the introductory part, Nagy

examines the military, political, and juridical background of the mobilization of the military campaign by the noblemen for the war of 1809, with a special focus on the leadership roles of Archduke Palatine Joseph and his chief aide-de-camp, Count Joseph Beckers zu Wetterstetten.

After the catastrophic defeat in the War of the Third Coalition in 1805, the Austrian Empire showed “great resilience” as it began to mobilize a broader stratum of society, especially the middle classes “left previously exempt from military service” in the spirit of the new concept of a people’s or national war (or “Volks-/Nationalkrieg”) (p.13). This aim was served by an innovative, far-reaching, and complex field of institutionalized official and semi-official propaganda. The key figures in this propaganda campaign were Minister of Foreign Affairs Count Johann Philipp Stadion and Archduke John, who played a crucial role in setting up a new military force for territorial defense (*Landwehr*) in the Austrian half of the Habsburg Empire. Archduke John maintained good relations with famous patriotic intellectuals, such as Friedrich von Gentz, Johannes von Müller, and Baron Josef von Hormayr, who played a key role in the propaganda activity, which was organized in order to appeal to a heterogeneous array of groups (pp.14–15).

As Nagy emphasizes, the Kingdom of Hungary presents a “unique case” within the Habsburg Empire, not only because of its “constitutional autonomy, the traditional military structure of its estates, and its strong constitutionalist political culture,” but also from the perspective of the relationship between war and nation and the practices of mobilization and propaganda activity. During the Napoleonic Wars, the estates in Hungary exercised significant influence on the military affairs of their country at the diets convoked by the ruler (p.21). The nobility, which enjoyed a privileged legal status, made up a significant percentage of Hungarian society, and in terms of property and wealth, it was a very diverse group, ranging from wealthy aristocrats to petty noblemen who lived more or less like peasants. As a “body politic, it would have been impossible to mobilize the masses of this stratum to fulfill their constitutional duty of defense (the *insurrectio*), or to increase their free offer for military purposes (military aid) without the use of propaganda.” Otherwise, within a political and social framework dominated by the self-confident, influential, and wealthy county-nobility (the *bene possessionati*), it would not have been possible to implement the necessary institutional reforms required by the concept of the whole empire’s “national war” (p.22).

It would not have been an effective solution simply to translate or imitate the centralized imperial propaganda, either. As Nagy puts it, “instead, regarding both the renewal of military institutions and the ideology of the official propaganda that supported it, we can speak of a ‘productive reception’ tailored to the specificities of the country as a specific cultural transfer process—led by Palatine Joseph, who knew the expectations of both the Court and the Hungarian estates very well and tried to balance between the two—and indirectly fitted into larger-scale French–Austrian, French–German cultural exchange processes” (p.22).

Archduke Joseph realized that it was necessary to adapt, given the changed nature of wars, and he elaborated a detailed military reform plan that was discussed at the diet of 1808, resulting in Articles 2 and 3 of the Laws of 1808, which regulated the legal framework of the noble levy (pp.23–24). The *insurrectio* of 1809, which was set up according to this legal framework, can be considered unique from many angles. According to Nagy, it can be viewed as a “socially exclusive, selectively compulsory institution of defense that can be characterized as a temporary national militia” that obliged apt male members of the noble Hungarian nation (*natio* or *gens Hungarica*) to perform personal military service for the cause of defense (pp.24–25).

The official and semi-official propaganda activity for the mass mobilization for this institution of estates managed to implement the concept of “national war” in “relation to communities of estates and their members with a certain constellation of rights and duties” (p.25). The Napoleonic Wars “opened up the world” for Hungarian society, which was to some extent on the periphery of Western European social development, and this was accompanied by a “boom in information” and a rapid increase of literary production, which resulted in a broad exchange of ideas among nobles of all counties of the kingdom (pp.25–26). A significant amount of propaganda consisted of unofficial encouraging texts of various genres. Most of these were originally written in Hungarian, but because of the multilingual nature of the country, the traditional official language of Latin was also used, as well as the German language of the imperial administration (pp.26–27).

The Hungarian system adopted the Austrian mechanism, which employed “professional” literates for the production of targeted propaganda for the population of operational areas of military units. “From the circles of the Palatine, two writers, Sándor Kisfaludy and Ferenc Verseghy, stand out” (p.27). Kisfaludy took part in the production of war propaganda first from the civilian and then from the military side, and Verseghy, a former Pauline monk (who had

suffered almost decade-long imprisonment for his involvement in the Hungarian Jacobin Movement led by Ignác Martinovics and then had served as the Hungarian language teacher of Archduke Joseph after his release), took part in the propaganda production from the civil side (p.27). “Referral newspapers were an important medium for the distribution of official propaganda materials” as well (p.31). The most prominent of these were the German-language *Preßburger Zeitung* and *Vereinigte Ofner und Pester Zeitung* and the Hungarian-language *Magyar Kurir* (Vienna) and *Hazai és Külföldi Tudósítások* (Pest). These journals usually reported news of war and foreign policy without comment, but they also published reports sent in by readers from various parts of the country. They constituted an important node in the flow of information on the course of the war and proved an important and effective tool of war propaganda through the publication of official, semi-official, and unofficial propaganda materials (pp.32–33).

The introductory part of the volume discusses Kisfaludy’s other works related to the noble levy and the war of 1809. This overview by Nagy outlines a proposal for a series of source publications which ideally, by following the principle of the current edition of *Hazafiúi Szózat*, would see this entire group of texts published in a similar format, though without Kisfaludy’s works of fiction inspired by the decisive experiences of the mobilization of the *insurrectio* (p.33). Kisfaludy was given the task of writing an answer to Napoleon’s proclamation to the Hungarian nobility, but he did not finish this answer, since in the end it was not needed, as the county authorities managed to prevent the spread of French propaganda prints. Kisfaludy also composed a report for the ruler on the *insurrectio*. Beginning in October 1809, Kisfaludy wrote and translated other texts as well which “are not only important sources about the noble levy but also represent a distinctly noble-national narrative of the events, which reflects, in spite of its official character, the peculiarities of Kisfaludy’s writing style and his approach to politics and history” (p.39).

The detailed introductory part continues with a “biographical sketch” of Kisfaludy’s activities in the service of Zala County and Palatine Joseph, examining the circumstances of the request by Beckers and the composition of the *Patriotic Appeal*. According to Nagy, several factors played a role in the palatine’s decision to choose Kisfaludy for the role of aid-de-camp entrusted with propaganda tasks. The most important among these were most likely his practical and theoretical military experience, his knowledge of French, his

high education, his good network of contacts, and his popularity as a writer of Hungarian poems (pp.66–68).

After examining the contexts of the genesis of the *Patriotic Appeal*, Nagy gives a thorough reconstruction of its publication history (pp.68–73) and the intentions of the client and author, who presented the approaching war as an existential threat to the noble Hungarian nation and wanted to raise awareness of the alleged need of a “moral regeneration of his political community” through “the revival of heroic virtues and the setting up of an *insurrectio*” (p.77). Nagy also gives detailed information concerning the available manuscripts of Kisfaludy’s pamphlet and its German extract. He outlines the characteristics of Palatine Joseph’s censorship of the original fair copy of the pamphlet, gives a short overview of the draft of the corrections, and reviews the questions related to the German translation by Schedius, of which no manuscript version has survived (pp.77–96). The critical edition presents an extremely thorough historical, contextual, sociological, and textological interpretation of the textual corpus related to Kisfaludy’s work. Nagy uses the interpretative framework of literary studies in the analysis of the para-, peri-, and intertextual dimensions of this historical text, and he gives a detailed overview of its structure and content (pp.96–111). This thorough and wide scholarly analysis is complemented with an examination of the sources and viewpoints of the historical parts of Kisfaludy’s work (pp.111–33), the history of its original publication, its contemporary reception (pp.133–80), and an overview of the textological problems and principles of the textual edition (pp.181–91). The introductory part of the volume ends with a brief German-language summary (pp.192–97).

The second half of the book (pp.199–416) contains the aforementioned textual versions of Kisfaludy’s *Patriotic Appeal* with a detailed but, given its complexity, not necessarily reader-friendly critical apparatus. It also contains a list of archival sources and a bibliography at the end.

In sum, the critical source edition of this important historical textual corpus is without doubt a remarkable interdisciplinary scholarly achievement. Ágoston Nagy has made a significant contribution to a deeper and more complex understanding of the history of ideas and political, cultural, and mental processes at work in early nineteenth-century Hungary and Central Europe.

Kálmán Tóth
University of Public Service
Toth.Kalman@uni-nke.hu

Minta és felzárkózás [Role model and catching up]. By László Fazakas, Szilárd Ferenczi, János Fodor, and Zsófia Gál. Kolozsvár–Marosvásárhely: Iskola Alapítvány Kiadó–Lector Kiadó, 2021. 300 pp.

Transylvania, a multinational part of today's Romania, has its own vernacular culture, including a characteristic type of urban architecture. It also has its own traditional Hungarian academic community, the members of which pursue research in their mother tongue, Hungarian. Because of the troubled history of this region, it is particularly interesting to see how this community interprets its own historical heritage. The book under review aims to reconstruct the history of two main cities, the informal metropolitan center of the region, Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Klausenburg), and another historically relevant city, Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș, Neumarkt), in the early twentieth century. To be more precise, its aim is to show “the history of the development of Kolozsvár and Marosvásárhely during the terms of mayors Géza Szvacsina and György Bernády” respectively. The authors are four young researchers (historians and art historians) who have already shown their lion's claws. Their decision to cooperate on a book about two of the most important cities of their region makes this an exceptional investigation. As it so happens, they embarked down this path without much institutional backing. True, they were all alumni of the same alma mater, the Department of History in Hungarian at the Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj. Three of them are political and social historians, and one is an art historian. Yet only one of them has a position at the university. The others are less integrated into the academic community, and they apparently did not mind not having a formal research unit with an adequate budget. They realized that there was a striking lacuna in the secondary literature that needed to be addressed. Fazakas had published an article earlier in which he had observed that Kolozsvár had been largely neglected by historians when it came to the comparatively prosperous period in the city's history after the Austro-Hungarian Settlement (1867). They put together their individual research findings and created a grand, multi-layered narrative about this topic in this clearly structured and informative volume.

The volume, published by two publishing houses together, one in each of the two cities, offers a comparative narrative of the urban and architectural development of these urban centers under the two aforementioned mayors. The four authors combined their respective expertise, each contributing roughly 60

pages to the final work. The structure and methodology offer the reader a wide historical panorama: political history is backed up with social history, and glimpses of urban planning come with the art historian's detailed introduction of the major public buildings of the age in these two cities. Only the detailed account by Fazekas of the long and painful process of the construction of the water and sewerage networks seems to be somewhat exhaustive and disconnected. Szilárd Ferenczi covers the chapter on Kolozsvár during the time in office of Géza Szvacsina (1849–1917), and János Fodor describes Marosvásárhely's efforts to catch up with the metropolitan center in the days of its powerful mayor, György Bernády (1864–1938). Zsófia Gál gives a careful architectural *ekphrasis* of the main buildings built or planned in this era in both cities.

The major issue of the book is connected to the well-known fact that this province of the Hungarian part of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had to some extent lagged behind compared to the development of some of the other parts of the empire. Yet this period brought with it an unprecedented amount of governmental and local investments here, too. This effort resulted in the construction of several public buildings that were of both practical and symbolic importance, and it also led to the reconstruction of the central urban fabric of these cities. True, there was a difference between the plans hatched by the government in the capital, Budapest, and the ideas and ideals cherished by the local actors, but the locals achieved a great deal thanks to their refined techniques of negotiations and bargaining. The authors provide meticulous readings of the political debates in the local press, thus giving their reader a clear idea of what the local elites regarded as their priorities. We are also given a clear sense of the risks of being a leading local magistrate, as often infrastructural and architectural developments had to be carried out on credit. Nevertheless, these political leaders were clearly bold and ambitious, despite their faults, and the period could very reasonably be characterized as an unparalleled golden age in the history of these cities.

Yet the self-perception of the two cities was rather different. After the establishment of its university in 1872 (as originally proposed by the senior minister of culture, József Eötvös) and also after having become home to many regional institutions, Kolozsvár took on the role of the provincial center, following the steps taken by Budapest, the booming capital of the country (on which see John Lukacs's marvelous classic, *Budapest 1900*). Marosvásárhely, on the other hand, had a more modest role even within Transylvania. It was destined to serve as the cultural and economic center of the Székely Land. So, for Marosvásárhely,

Kolozsvár became the local role model and rival in a competition in which the latter was destined to lose. In fact, the book calls attention to the fact that for a long time, the Saxon towns of Brassó (Braşov, Kronstadt) and Nagyszeben (Sibiu, Hermannstadt) outperformed Marosvásárhely.

A further point of the book is to show not only the difference in the characters of the two mayors who played the leading parts in the story, but also that the political culture of the two cities differed strikingly. In Kolozsvár, Szvacsina was heir to the brave policies of his predecessors, and while holding his office (1898–1913), he was participant in a vibrant political life characterized by internal struggles among the local representatives of the major national parties. Against this backdrop of political intrigue and machination, his own contributions turn out to be less decisive than those of Bernády, the mayor of Marosvásárhely (1902–1912). Once again, the book is careful to point out that local historians might have exaggerated Bernády's own initiatives, such as the launch of large-scale construction in his city.

As for the methodological differences between the two reconstructions, Ferenczi's narrative of Kolozsvár tries to paint the major political scandals of the day with vivid colors, thus offering an overview of the shifting lines between allies and enemies within the city's bodies and institutions. Fodor, on the other hand, offers a more detailed view of the institutional and social layers of Marosvásárhely. He provides detailed statistics about the demographic trends in the city from national and denominational perspectives. In the case of Bernády, he summarizes his protagonist's work in a somewhat less scrupulous manner.

A real merit of the book is the long chapter on the architecture and built environment of the two cities. Zsófia Gál, the author of this chapter, is an art historian, and she provides a detailed, comparative account of the planning processes and an architectural description of the new buildings that were actually constructed. Her introduction to the history (from the moment of inception as an idea) of some of the most prominent and symbolically important public buildings in Transylvania is fascinating, and the narrative is complemented by an excellent array of illustrations.

To summarize, Fazakas, Ferenczi, Fodor, and Gál have taken a brave step with this book project, which constitutes an effort to fill in the gaps in the historical scholarship on the comparative urban history, politics, and cultures of these two major cities. They have done their job in an exemplary manner, making use of the existing secondary literature, including the findings of Romanian colleagues, but also consulting primary sources in the archives and reports in the

daily press of the time. They felt no need to impose an ideological interpretation on the material. Their detached, neutral tone is commendable in an age of culture wars. On the other hand, however, sometimes the reader misses the historian's evaluative guidance. Overall, this is a welcome piece of academic history, which will acquaint readers with this understudied period in the history of urbanization in Transylvania.

Ferenc Hörcher
University of Public Service
horcher.ferenc@uni-nke.hu

Hadifoglyok, dezertőrök – Magyar katonák az olasz háterszágban (1915–1920) [Prisoners of war, deserters: Hungarian soldiers in the Italian hinterland]. By Balázs Juhász. Budapest: Zrínyi Kiadó, 2022. 535. pp.

The recent book by Balázs Juhász deals with the living conditions of Hungarian soldiers who were captured by the Italian army during World War I. Juhász is an assistant professor at Eötvös Loránd University and has written numerous articles about the Italian front and its relationship with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His recent monograph aims for a wide audience while also contributing to more focused academic discussion.

Although historians have written a fair amount concerning several aspects of POW life, Juhász's monograph is important in part simply because of his unique research methods. He goes beyond the existing secondary literature by drawing on a wider array of sources: in addition to the Hungarian scholarly literature, he has also used several documents from Italian archives. His book is highly relevant, given that no synthesis has been published on the history of Hungarian POWs since the 1930s.

The book has eleven chapters in addition to the preface and conclusion, and it can be divided thematically into three main parts. The first part presents the general conditions and management of the Italian POW camps. Juhász emphasizes that the first and second Hague Conventions (1899, 1907) were valid during World War I. Since the terms of these conventions applied to the Italian army, the Spanish embassy and the Pope supervised their observance. In addition, state organizations such as the Italian Red Cross Prisoner of War Committee and the Prisoner of War Committee (set up by the Ministry of Defense) also operated to maintain the structure of the POW camps. Although it became clear at the beginning of the war that Italy was not prepared for a large number of incoming prisoners, the capacity of the camps increased only slowly during the war. This had a huge impact on the events of November 1918, as the Italian army suddenly had to accommodate approximately 300,000 prisoners after the Armistice of Villa Giusti (also known as the Padua Armistice). From the perspective of the lives of the individual soldiers, the armistice seems to have been the most significant trauma for the Hungarian POWs. Juhász emphasizes that it is very difficult to determine the exact number of POWs in Italy, but as far as the sources permit us to venture an estimate, a maximum of 477,000 people were under the control of the Italian army. This number includes soldiers

captured during combat operations as well as deserters (whose number on the Italian front was not significant). With regard to the conditions in the camp, Juhász offers details concerning accommodation, clothing, finances, catering, culture, and leisure. Although the Italians drew a significant distinction between officers and regular soldiers in most respects, the living conditions of the latter were relatively tolerable. At the same time, some Hungarian POWs lived under worse conditions, especially those who had been brought from the Serbian front (1914–1915) via Albania to the Italian island of Asinara. Despite the fact that the story of Asinara is generally known in Italian historiography, narratives of the events which took place at the POW camp on the island often differ strikingly. According to Juhász, the process of bringing the POWs from Serbia to Asinara could justifiably be referred to as a “death march,” but the exact number of soldiers who died due to frost, typhus, and cholera remains unknown. The first group of POWs reached Asinara in December 1915, but the real nightmare had only just begun, due to the extreme inadequacy of the camp (lack of water, inadequate supplies, and no suitable medical care). Although these problems remained issues on the island in the long term, more and more POWs arrived in Asinara in 1916 and 1918. The story of “Donkey-island” ended only after the return home of those who survived in 1922.

In the second part of the book, Juhász presents the most important features of life in the camp, such as the opportunities that prisoners were given to contact their relatives, the compulsory work regimen, and the healthcare that was provided for them. Juhász emphasizes that the postal services provided the most significant connection with the outside world, not only for the POWs but also for the guards. Nevertheless, there were many cases of abuse. In addition to being able to open and read the letters, the censors could also decide which packages were urgent. Sometimes, they robbed the POWs: they kept food or other things that had been sent to the POWs from the hinterland. Although the exact number of letters and packages that were sent cannot be determined, those which have survived offer excellent sources for historians due to their unique content. Working conditions were also an important issue. Juhász examines the question of POW labor in the larger context of the Italian economy. While officers and commissioned officers were prohibited from working, regular soldiers were paid for their work. This is related to the fact that there was a labor shortage in Italian agriculture from 1916. However, POWs were employed not only in agriculture (afforestation, agronomy) but also in industry (the extraction of energy sources) and in infrastructure development (roadworks and the construction of dams and

railways). In Italy, they were used in a wide variety of geographical areas, such as Sardinia, Sicily, southern Italy, Lazio, Toscana, Piemont, Lombardia, and Venetia. Juhász reflects on the Italian healthcare system regarding the physical and mental condition of POWs. Although a four-week quarantine was mandatory for all incoming prisoners, various epidemics (cholera, typhus, malaria) often spread among them. As not all epidemics became known, infections often put the lives of civilians at risk. Healthcare conditions deteriorated significantly in 1918 due to the spread of the Spanish flu. In addition to physical illnesses, POWs also suffered mental illnesses. Juhász emphasizes that doctors could only treat those POWs who were sent to mental hospitals, as doctors did not visit the camps, so early and local treatment of depression was not possible.

The third part of the book deals with the various ways in which POWs could leave the camps. There were POW exchanges, for instance, which were used in particular for POWs who were deemed seriously ill. As they were unable to fight because of disease or injury, they became burdens for the guards. Though the first agreement concerning POW exchanges was reached in the spring of 1916, concrete results were only ratified in the second part of the year. There were also exchanges of soldiers above the age of 60, as well as civilians who had been interned, medical staff, priests, pastors, and theologians. The battle of Caporetto, which lasted from October 24 until November 19, 1917, only meant a short pause, as this form of “human exchange” was soon underway again. Another possibility to leave the camps was escaping. Naturally, the motivations that might prompt a prisoner to attempt an escape were different. They included the threat of suffering physical harm as well as problems related to accommodation, lack of heating, mistreatment or abuse, and personal motivations (the desire for freedom and a prisoner’s concerns for the fate of his family).

Two factors support the fact that the escape of POWs appeared in the Italian camps. First, the POWs were not actually paid in Italian currency. Rather, they were paid in a currency (“camp-money”) only valid in the camp itself. (Namely, POWs could spend Italian currency when they tried to get home.) Secondly, news related to POW escapes was censored in the press. Finally, the issue of nationality was also a factor. The Italian authorities divided the POWs into two main groups based on their nationality: Slavs and Romanians on the one hand and Austrians and Hungarians on the other. With this, the Italians sought to avoid conflicts between POWs and also wanted to give them a chance to switch to the other side. However, only soldiers who had nothing to lose switched to the Italian side, as this act could put the lives of their family members in

danger. Although five national minority legions consisting of former POWs were formed in Italy (Yugoslav, Albanian, Polish, Romanian, and Czechoslovak), the recruitment efforts among the soldiers of the Habsburg Monarchy were not a great success. Also, the real trauma came at the end of the war, as from November 1918, the Italians had to guard an enormous number of POWs. Nevertheless, in the first few months of 1919, the Italian government tried to keep POWs from going home. In doing so, the government sought to ensure that it would be impossible for authorities outside the country to monitor the general state of POWs and also that POWs would be unable to return to the new countries of Central Eastern Europe to serve as soldiers. As a result, POWs were also employed in 1919 for various purposes (filling trenches, preparing land for agricultural work, etc.). After the fall of the Hungarian Soviet Republic, the crisis was finally resolved by the interests of the great powers. In August 1919, POWs began to be allowed to return home in order to strengthen the relationship between Hungary and Italy.

One of the biggest advantages of Juhász's book is that it provides a unique insight into the rather underresearched history of POWs in Italy during World War I. Due to Juhász's unique approach, methodology, and sources, his book is relevant to an international audience. Especially notable is the fact that he gives a voice to low-ranking soldiers. The explanations, tables, list of names, list of geographical lists, and rich illustrations also make the book engaging and relevant. At the same time, I would venture a few critical remarks. It is regrettable, for instance, that the tables, which offer a useful complement to the narrative, are found at the end of the book. Also, in some cases, the explanations Juhász provides of problems related to the lives and fates of POWs are burdensomely detailed, for instance, his discussion of work done by POWs in different Italian geographical areas which, with a few exceptions, does not contain any new information.

Róbert Károly Szabó
Eötvös Loránd University
rszabo.elte@gmail.com

Unmaking Détente: Yugoslavia, the United States, and the Global Cold War, 1968–1980. By Milorad Lazić. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2022. 304 pp.

Recent years have seen a blossoming of works on Yugoslav foreign policy and non-alignment. The field has been augmented by an array of studies dealing with topics such as Yugoslav political networks in the countries of the Global South, economic and technical cooperation, cultural diplomacy, and transnational academic exchange, with high-quality research conducted not only by historians but also by sociologists, anthropologists, art historians, and political scientists. As a result, our current knowledge of Belgrade's international endeavors has become considerably richer than it was merely one or two decades ago, when Yugoslavia's bloody dissolution and its aftermath were still at the center of academic research.

In this context, it might be reasonable to say that there is less room for fresh and original works on Yugoslav foreign policy. Yet Milorad Lazić's recent book *Unmaking Détente*, which is based on a rich and expansive corpus of archival sources, not only constitutes an excellent work of diplomatic history but also makes very valuable contributions to the field by focusing on a relatively less charted historical period and by shedding light on fascinating dimensions of Yugoslav non-alignment.

Unmaking Détente offers a clear and extremely well documented account in three parts of Yugoslav foreign policy from 1968 to 1980. The first chapter deals with Yugoslavia's reaction to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and shows that the regime in Belgrade interpreted these events as a worrying sign that détente could pave the way for "a new Yalta," one in which the superpowers could effectively agree on spheres of influence and dispose of smaller nations at their will. The second chapter analyzes Yugoslav foreign and domestic policies in the first three years after the invasion, describing how Belgrade decided then to approach Washington, improve relations with Beijing, and reinvigorate the NAM. Chapters three and four examine Yugoslavia's efforts to destabilize détente in the 1970s from Cyprus to Ethiopia, efforts which were intended to redefine the global order through increased support for national liberation movements in the "Third World." In these chapters, Lazić also discusses the Yugoslav regime's reaction to the Croatian Spring, its short-lived rapprochement with the Soviet Union after 1973, and the reemergence of tensions sometime

later due to Havana's and Moscow's intention to domesticate Yugoslavia and steer the NAM in a more radicalized direction. Chapters five and six cover Yugoslav diplomacy during the last three years of Tito's life, following his very active personal diplomacy, Yugoslavia's rapprochement with the United States and renewed distance from the Soviet Union, Yugoslav tensions with Cuba, and Yugoslavia's reactions to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Lazić analyzes the many challenges that Belgrade had to face in its attempts to destabilize what it perceived as a threatening foreign and domestic environment. According to Lazić, these challenges arose due in part to the changing and unstable environment in the Eastern Mediterranean, the financial and political limitations of Yugoslavia's policies in the Third World (which were often eclipsed by Cuban radicalism and Soviet might), and last but not least, the country's internal insecurity as a result of conflicts around the Yugoslav national question and Tito's uncertain succession.

Unmaking Détente deals with Yugoslav policies in the countries of the Global South, but it deals first and foremost with how these policies were shaped by and also affected Belgrade's relations with the superpowers. The book gives interesting hints concerning the development of Yugoslavia's relations with the Soviet Union, China, and the United States. It thoroughly examines the evolution of Yugoslav-Soviet relations during the period and underlines the constant distrust that affected interactions between the Soviet and the Yugoslav communist parties even three decades after their break in 1948 and despite the short-lived rapprochement in the mid-1970s. Moreover, Lazić succeeds in introducing the importance of Sino-Yugoslav relations, showing in particular how Belgrade's decision to normalize relations with Beijing was both an asset for Yugoslav power abroad and a cause of strife with Moscow. Perhaps more importantly, and especially due to his systematic use of US archival sources, Lazić offers valuable insights into the development of Yugoslav-American relations in times of détente, and he sheds light on the importance and consistence of Washington's support for socialist Yugoslavia throughout the period. The book gives considerable proof that, aside from the detrimental action of a handful of individuals and notwithstanding recurrent fluctuations in bilateral relations due to Yugoslavia's need to assert its revolutionary credentials in the Global South, the United States highly valued Belgrade's neutral position in the Cold War and especially its tempering influence among the non-aligned, and thus it made significant efforts to secure Yugoslavia's independence even in the face of recurrent pressures from Moscow.

By following the development of Yugoslavia's relations with a wide pool of countries, including the global powers but also several nations of the global South, and also by revisiting Yugoslavia's role in many key international crises of the 1970s, Lazić has produced a study that is original and compelling and also very useful, as it gives a clear picture of the evolution of Yugoslav foreign policy throughout the period. This extensive character is one of the book's strengths, but it is also perhaps one of its few limitations, as Lazić touches on a very wide number of episodes, and he is therefore forced to give a rather short account of many of them. While the book covers the development of Yugoslav relations with Egypt after the death of Nasser and under Sadat in some detail, for instance, it also goes too hastily over episodes such as Yugoslavia's reaction to Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973 or Yugoslav actions following the Cyprus crisis of 1974. Although Lazić underlines such episodes as important elements of Belgrade's independent foreign policy in the 1970s which were meant to secure a wider margin of action for Yugoslavia in the international scene, he gives them only limited space in his discussion.

The overall balance is nevertheless undeniably positive. *Unmaking Détente* is a valuable contribution to the existing secondary literature on the period, and it constitutes an enjoyable reading for any scholar of international history. Moreover, its chronological structure and clarity will make it a useful resource for courses and research seminars dealing with the history of non-alignment. Milorad Lazić has produced an excellent account of Yugoslav foreign policy in the 1970s, one which provides valuable insights and will be of great interest to scholars of the Cold War in Yugoslavia and beyond.

Agustín Cosovschi
École française d'Athènes
agustin.cosovschi@efa.gr

Luxury and the Ruling Elite in Socialist Hungary: Villas, Hunts, and Soccer Games. By György Majtényi. Translated by Thomas Cooper. Studies in Hungarian History Series. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2021. 366 pp.

György Majtényi begins *Luxury and the Ruling Elite in Socialist Hungary* with an account of a birthday gathering for an apparatchik on the Csákberény estate in 1946. Guests dined on caviar, wild boar, and stuffed goose, fine wine was poured from crystal pitchers, women wore the latest fashions, and an accordionist named Andy played Horthy-era revanchist hits such as “Prague is not far from the border” (pp.13–14). Clearly, the leaders of the party-state knew how to party, and as this and scores of other accounts in this idiosyncratic narrative reveal, they did so in a manner that resembled the noble and bourgeois lifestyles of the prewar past far more than the “socialist culture” espoused by József Révai and the other party ideologues.

Luxury and the Ruling Elite takes the reader on a dizzying tour of the lifestyles of the rich and famous in socialist Hungary. The ruling elite enjoyed villas in the Buda hills, access to automobiles, specialized health care, travel abroad (with the added benefit of providing opportunities for deals on the black market), and an array of other perks made possible by their preeminent position. Underpinning these luxuries is the common theme of continuity with the past and engagement with the West: “There was no abrupt rift between the lifestyles of the social classes and the elite under socialism on the one hand and the customs of the prewar period and consumer cultures of the West on the other” (p.299). To take just two examples, automobiles were status symbols that clearly delineated one’s rank in the social hierarchy: initially, party functionaries had to make do with Škodas and Pobedas, but by the 1950s, higher-ranking members had access to BMWs and Chevrolets. By the 1970s, the Mercedes 280 was “all the rage” among the party elite, with Volvos second best (but still popular, as evinced by a wave of “Volvoism”) (pp.66–71).

Tradition and hierarchy were also apparent in hunting circles, as the Concord Hunting Society admitted only top-ranking members of the ruling elite; second-rank cadres had to settle for membership in the Friendship Hunting Society. Members of the ruling elite hunted on the same grounds shot the same expensive guns, and in some cases employed the same personnel as their prewar counterparts, as “the old hunting experts could use their knowledge and

know-how to blackmail the powerful figures of the era.” The bonds formed by hunting—as a form of recreation, of creating and developing social relationships, and perpetuating hegemonic masculinity—bridged the gap between Horthy-era elites and their new rulers, as evinced by the continued popularity of “Comrade Count Zsigmond Széchenyi” and other former nobles (pp.116–24, 130). Even in death, the socialist elite laid claim to membership in the Hungarian tradition, as the Pantheon of the Workers’ Movement in Kerepesi Cemetery was erected in 1959 amidst the mausoleums and monuments of historical figures ranging from Lajos Batthyány and Lajos Kossuth to interwar ministers such as Gyula Gömbös and Pál Teleki (pp.89–90). Amid all this excess and luxury, only János Kádár himself seems to have been immune to the siren song of conspicuous consumption, portraying himself as a simple man with simple tastes and habits and the “veritable trustee of consolidation,” much as Miklós Horthy had before him (pp.296–97). Although Majtényi does not address the modern post-socialist elite at any length, its few appearances in this book—most notably again at Kerepesi, with the reburial of noteworthy figures appropriated from the past, such as poet Attila József, to join new heroes such as József Antall, even as unwanted leaders of the socialist period were interned in the more humble Farkasrét Cemetery (pp.93–94)—suggest that this elite will continue the tradition of borrowing and reinventing the elite lifestyles (and deathstyles) of its predecessors.

Majtényi’s decade of experience as the Department Head of the Hungarian National Archive is apparent in his command and judicious use of archival sources, and he weaves them together with memoirs, interviews, publications in the popular press, and a diverse range of other sources in this book. Majtényi’s expository style may strike some readers as odd, as he deliberately eschews a more conventional historiographical and narrative praxis for what he defines as a contextual historical essay rooted in satire and irony. *Pace* Hayden White, Majtényi argues that “history can be understood as a kind of delicate ‘embroidery.’ We can only unstitch the fabric if we are able to follow the underlying threads and the underlying design, and it is only worth unraveling if we examine how things are intertwined” (p.8). The best example of this unraveling of skeins of social status, political power, symbolism, and performativity is found at the beginning of Chapter 4, dedicated to football (“soccer” to Americans) culture in the 1950s. Majtényi argues that the ruling elite was able to generate legitimacy by coopting football culture: the victories of the new teams with class-conscious origins and especially the international success of the Golden Team of the mid-1950s reinforced the regime’s claim to represent working-class mass culture. For their

part, skilled footballers were one of the few social groups with any hope of upward mobility: victories led to expensive gifts and privileges and, more importantly, enabled their participation in the black market with goods smuggled home from international events. (Ironically, the Stakhanovites—exemplary workers who overfulfilled quotas—were for the most part hung out to dry once their immediate propaganda value had run out [pp.190–98].) However, this symbolic linkage did not always operate in the regime’s favor, as the defeat of the Golden Team on July 4, 1954, led to riots in the streets: “The party leadership had done everything to ensure the masses would attribute the successes of the team to the system, and now the protesters were looking for the people who could be held responsible for what they viewed as a humiliating fiasco” (pp.180). Majtényi goes on to intimate that these protests may have served as a dress rehearsal, or at least a dry run, for 1956, and it is here that his essayist approach arguably falls short. While the protesters in 1954 were doubtless motivated by anger over the Golden Team’s loss, by that time they had many other issues with communist rule, and after the advent of the New Course and its reforms in 1953, the regime seemed both weaker and more responsive to workers’ needs as consumers as well as subjects. Likewise, Majtényi also does not directly address the 1968 New Economic Mechanism that enabled the rise of “goulash communism” in Hungary. He notes that in the 1960s and 1970s “the dress habits of the elite actually became more staid and conservative,” as they “turned back towards more traditional models,” (p.255) but he identifies this as an elite response to changes in Western fashion rather than a reaction to the overall improvement in the amount and types of consumption (both Western and domestic) now more available to the masses. In these two cases, Majtényi’s focus on the lives of elites occludes the broader historical trend towards consumerism. These are not major shortcomings, and they do not significantly detract from the book’s eclectic appeal described above. While *Luxury and the Ruling Elite* was not written for a general audience, it belongs on the reading list of any serious scholar of culture and communism in Hungary and Europe more broadly.

Karl Brown
University of Wisconsin–Whitewater
brownk@uww.edu