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Emigration from the Old Empire to Hungary in the 18th Century as Being Reflected by Contemporary Communication

Abstract

This contribution is not about the causes and reasons of emigration from the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation to the lands of the Hungarian Crown in the 18th century. Rather, the focus is on the question of how the contemporaries communicated about this emigration. More precisely, it is about which problems appeared to be so important to those involved in the migration process that, in certain contexts, they were condensed into metaphors or verbal images by way of which they could argue without the need to give more detailed reasons for their decisions and positions.²³ The analysed metaphors and verbal images represent several levels of communication, such as the level of communication between Emperor and Empire, between authorities and those willing to emigrate, and between emigrants and those staying home.

Keywords: population, communication, emigration of Germans, Hungary,

Communication between Emperor and Empire: Hungary as the outer wall of Christianity

Research has already worked out in detail that in the Early Modern Age both the Habsburg Empire and the Ottoman Empire created legitimacy myths to emphasize the necessity of defending their each respective religious identity. The self-understanding of the soldier of the Christian faith was contrasted by the Muslim religious warrior. On both sides, among the people the centuries long confrontation created a self-understanding of being a bulwark of one's own religion.²⁴ Not only frontline countries such as Hungary could claim to be defenders of Christianity, but also the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. For, since the second half of the 16th century German territorial princes with their troops had taken part in the war against the Turks, and finally they had also been fighting alongside the Emperor in the decisive liberation wars between 1683 and 1699, thus contributing essentially to the defence against the danger the Ottomans posed to Central and East Central Europe. The further fighting on the Turkish front, however, receded 'spatially, spiritually and politically'²⁵ ever more into the distance, and with the end of the immediate threat to the Old Empire there also disappeared the foundation for understanding oneself as a defender of Christianity.

What did not disappear, however, was the self-perception of the Habsburg rulers – who were Emperors of the Roman-German Empire and Kings of Hungary at the same time – as soldiers

²³ On the verbal images see, among others, Jost, J. (2007)

²⁴ Varga, J. (2000): 55-64; Tibi, B. (1999)

²⁵ Wrede, M. (2004): 214.

of the Christian faith. The reason for this was not only the Emperors' obligation, who in the electoral capitulation swore to be 'Advocates' of Christianity, of the Holy See in Rome and of the Christian Church and to keep them 'under good and faithful protection and shield'.²⁶ Among others, the still existing Ottoman danger on the southern border of the Habsburg Empire played a role for this. However, the religiously connoted task to protect was adjusted to the changed military and political situation at the end of the 17th century. Accordingly, now the Habsburgs considered it their obligation, also in Hungary, to support the territories they had reconquered from the 'arch enemy of Christianity' for the purpose of 'improved education, re-elevation and population', as it said in the edict on the settlement of the country, the so called *Impopulationspatent* (Immigration Edict) of 1689.²⁷ By this declaration, also in Hungary the population discourse found its place in national-policy considerations, and the Hungarian King, in his function as the Roman-German Emperor, in a way established a connection between the discourse which in the Old Empire had been conducted as early as since the end of the Thirty Years War and as it had only then become acute in Hungary.²⁸

The Immigration Edict of 1689 was one of the results of those lengthy consultations which happened between the Privy Council and the main committee, established by Emperor Leopold I., for newly establishing the Kingdom of Hungary after the long period of Ottoman rule.²⁹ What was discussed was not only the urgency of settling the under-populated regions of the country but also the way in which this was supposed to happen. Both at the meetings and by the *Einrichtungswerk* presented to Leopold I., the principle of voluntariness instead of the forced resettlement of subjects within the Kingdom of Hungary was supported.³⁰

By help of benefits such as the free distribution of plots or tax-free years, people from foreign countries 'without estate, nation, and religion' were supposed to be motivated to migrate.³¹ Concerning foreign countries, one had most of all people from the Roman-German Empire in mind, as becomes obvious from the *Einrichtungswerk*. However, the edict was never publicly announced either in the German territorial states or in the Habsburg Hereditary Lands. Nevertheless, the news of the extremely favourable settlement conditions for farmers and craftsmen spread rapidly. Also soldiers coming home from the Turkish front as well as the traditional trade and news routes such as along the Danube played a role for this.³²

The emigration of Germans from crisis-ridden and starved Upper Swabia had its first peak in 1712. Some landowners, such as Alexander Károlyi or Ladislaus Dóry, grasped the opportunity and had Germans settled on their estates in County Szatmár or County Tolna.³³ For many of these, however, the attempt to settle down in Hungary had to end in disaster. This was not only due to mostly spontaneous and thus ill prepared emigration³⁴ to a country which, between 1703

²⁶ Burgdorf, W. (2015): 314.

²⁷ Das *Impopulationspatent* was signed by Leopold Kollonich, Cardinal Bishop of Győr, und Peter Korompay, Bishop of Nyitra and Royal Chancellor, on 11.08.1689. The text is printed in Tafferner, A. (1974-1975): 53.

²⁸ On the long history of the population debate in the Old Empire see Nipperdey, J. (2012)

²⁹ On this see Kalmár, J. – Varga, J. J. (2010); Seewann, G. (2013): 100-114.

³⁰ Kalmár, J. – Varga, J. J. (2010): 130-136, 339f., 394f.

³¹ Quoted after Tafferner, A. (1974-1975): 53.

³² Franz Ferdinand Jany, Titular Bishop of Sylvania and Abbot of Pécsvárad, was one of the first landlords in Hungary who settled Germans on his domains in County Baranya. Even in early 1689 Dionysius von Rehlingen und Guggenberg was active as a recruitment agent in Augsburg on his behalf. On this see Hermann Egyed, I. (1929): 48-60.

³³ Vönház, I. (1931); Eppel, J. (1988): 31-40.

³⁴ On the organisational flaws both among the immigrants and among the landlords see Eppel, J. (1988): 38.

and 1711, had been suffering from the Rákóczi Rebellion, however also from the plague.³⁵ The failure of the 1712/13 emigration of so many was a lasting memory most of all of the territorial princes who had to accept again subjects they had already dismissed, allowing them to give reason to their sometimes negative attitude towards emigration.

Emperor Karl VI. verifiably turned towards several worldly and clerical territorial lords for the first time in the spring of 1722, asking for the release of subjects willing to emigrate to the Banat of Temesvár, which had been liberated in 1717 and where he was the sole landlord. His individual correspondence partners in this context are unknown. What is known, however, is a thus-connected correspondence of the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt which, however, has only been preserved by one late copy.³⁶ In a letter from April 20th, 1722, the Emperor asked Ernst Ludwig of Hesse-Darmstadt to release 600 families without charging the compulsory redemption and emigration fees, giving the reason that he intended 'to occupy the lands which have been conquered from the hereditary enemy in the course of last year's war and which are so bare of inhabitants, with German people, as an outer wall of Christianity [...]', to this way 'serve the common Christian spirit'.³⁷

But the Emperor's hopes were lessened. The Lutheran Landgrave at first asked the neighbouring territorial princes for their opinion. Lothar Franz, Elector and Archbishop of Mainz, who had also been contacted by the Emperor, was ready to comply with the request 'solely out of goodwill and in honour of' the Emperor'.³⁸ Karl, the Reformed Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, who had not been contacted by the Emperor, argued against the Imperial request by referring to the Peace of Westphalia whose articles stipulated the redemption of serfs and the emigration fee according to denominational aspects. Apart from legal problems, he feared that emigrating Protestants would be suppressed in Habsburg Hungary because of their denomination and that they would neither be able to bear the unfamiliar climate nor the foreign way of life. Thus he claimed that they would return in a state of impoverishment, like the emigrants from the Swabian Imperial Circle in 1712.³⁹ By advice of his government, who believed a rejection of the Imperial request to be unwise, the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt allowed his subjects to emigrate.⁴⁰ However, he was not ready to let the emigrants go without them paying the ten per cent tax on the wealth they would take with them and the redemption fee.⁴¹ Thus, in 1729 the Emperor once again appealed to the Landgrave, repeating his arguments.⁴²

³⁵ Fata, M. (2009): 43-57. Extreme weather also played a role, such as the great floods of 1712. On this see Éble, F. (1893): 83.

³⁶ Tafferner, A. (1974-1975): 77-84.

³⁷ Ibid. 77.

³⁸ Ibid. 82.

³⁹ Ibid. 83.

⁴⁰ Schmidt, J. (1929): 211-214.

⁴¹ On October 14th, 1722, the Landgrave issued a decree where he did not only warn his subjects of emigration, among others by urging that the shipwrecked should not again be accepted as subjects, but just the same affirmed the emigration taxes and fees and told his officials to report on the financial situation of those willing to emigrate and not to permit emigration until he had issued his resolution on the issue. Hessisches Staatsarchiv Darmstadt R 1 A 42/17: Verordnung, die Emigration der Untertanen nach Ungarn betreffend. – On the various taxes in case of emigration see Heinz, J. (1989): 66-77.

⁴² He asked for not charging the high emigration fees and once again emphasized the common Christian interest, according to which the settlement of the Banat would establish an outer wall of Christianity. See Schmidt, J. (1929): 213.

Astonishing with this correspondence is not the attitude of the territorial lords, which was most of all due to their different denominations, but the fact that all three avoided to call Hungary an outer wall of Christianity. Although they did not in principle reject emigration to Hungary, they took care not to take up the Emperor's argument. Possibly this would have had the signalling effect that the territorial lords were giving up on their rights vis-a-vis the Emperor, among which there also counted the regulation of migration.

The metaphor 'outer wall of Christianity' appeared again after the Seven Years War. Then the territorial lords were confronted with their subjects being massively lured away. England and France wanted German settlers for their overseas colonies, but also Spain, Denmark, Prussia, and the Habsburg Monarchy as well as Russia canvassed German colonists.⁴³ In particular the generous economic benefits as well as religious freedom announced by Tsarina Catherine II. in 1763 did not fail to have effect.⁴⁴ As the territorial lords were unable to solve the problem themselves, the Imperial Districts were included into the fight against emigration.⁴⁵ In 1766 the Bavarian Imperial District even asked the neighbouring districts to jointly work against the 'evil of transports of colonists to foreign empires which were not at all closely related to our most worthy German fatherland'.⁴⁶ And finally the Anterior Imperial Districts asked Emperor Joseph II. to pass a ban on emigration from the Empire.⁴⁷ The edict to this effect of June 7th, 1768, included the clause, introduced by Bavaria, that emigration to countries outside the Imperial borders was not permitted.⁴⁸ Thus, Joseph II. took a position between the interests of the Empire and his own interests as a territorial lord in Hungary. These were tacitly brought in line, however quite in the sense of what the Imperial envoy told the Franconian district assembly, confirming the validity of the clause, however he added: 'anytime, with the eminent exception of the Kingdom of Hungary as an outer wall serving the Empire and entire Christianity against the Turkish assaults'.⁴⁹

Hungary's special position was also included by Imperial publicist Johann Jacob Moser into his work of 1772, 'Teutsches Auswärtiges Stats-Recht', in the context of the edict of 1768, however without referring to the bulwark function. Moser only emphasized: 'Hungary [...] because it is a hereditary kingdom of the House of Austria which is provided with Roman Imperial dignity; it is thus understood by other foreign powers.'⁵⁰ That Moser's explanations were still understood in the sense of the metaphor of 'Hungary as an outer wall' is proven, among others, by a correspondence between the government of Württemberg and the Senior Bailiff of Leonberg of 1773. In the Duchy of Württemberg, where the Treaty of Tübingen of 1514 was valid as the foundation of emigration law, the emigration edict was not publicly announced. Nevertheless, the Senior Bailiff asked how he was supposed to behave in the case of Jakob Großhaupt, who intended to emigrate to Medgyes in Transylvania, because 'according

⁴³ On this see among others Schünemann, K. (1935): 234-243.

⁴⁴ On this see among others Brandes, D. (1993)

⁴⁵ Wunder, B. (2000): 112.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Among the Anterior Imperial Districts there counted the Franconian, the Electoral Rhenish, the Upper Rhenish, the Swabian, and the Westphalian Circle. The Swabian Circle was not involved in the letter to the Emperor. On the specific case of this Imperial Circle as far as emigration is concerned see the explanation further below.

⁴⁸ Tafferner, A. (1974-1975): 245.

⁴⁹ Quoted after Wunder, B. (2000): 114.

⁵⁰ Moser, J. J. (1772): 330.

to Moser's treatise on the Emperor's prerogatives, this ban [is not supposed to] cover Hungary and Transylvania as an outer wall of Christianity'.⁵¹

When considering the communication between the Habsburg ruler and the Hungarian estates,⁵² it is worthwhile to have a look at the texts written in the run-ups to the diets. At their conference of 1712, where they discussed the female succession of Habsburg in Hungary, the Hungarian magnates demanded the impartibility and safeguarding of Hungary's special position within the Habsburg Monarchy, giving the reason that 'for the non-Hungarian countries Hungary is the blessing of being an outer wall'.⁵³ Both magnates and estates considered themselves quite in line with the bulwark tradition. At the Diet of 1722/1723 where, in line with the traditional custom, speeches were given, also Franz Szluha, the Protonotary and Vice-Zupan of County Komárom, raised his hand. In his speech, which was also printed in German, surprisingly he changed the traditional metaphor by emphasizing that only by help of 'the glorious arms' of the Emperor Hungary 'had been saved from the dangerous-bloody sea waves of the Turkish War' and that also in the future the safety of the Kingdom required the 'powerful shield' of the House of Habsburg.⁵⁴ In a way, Szluha represented those noblemen who, during the Rákóczi Rebellion, had belonged to the confidants of the insurgent prince but had gone over to the Imperial side after the Peace of Szatmár of 1711 and considered the ruling House of Habsburg the guarantor of Hungary's safety and wealth.⁵⁵ Szluha's speech was thus more than just a gesture of reconciliation, which found clear expression by the diet's decision concerning the issue of settlement.

In the run-up to the Diet other noblemen, such as already mentioned Károlyi, once Rákóczi's general, worked on plans for political, economic, and military reforms as members of the so called Systematic Commission established in 1715. Similar to the *Einrichtungswerk* of 1689, also for the Commission the settlement of the underpopulated regions was a political topic, thus a topic which fundamentally concerned the state.⁵⁶ It suggested two possible ways of settlement to the Diet, which assembled in Pozsony in 1722, i. e. inviting foreign colonists or, on the other hand, resettling native subjects from the densely populated regions of the country. Instead of a violent resettlement of native subjects, the Diet voted for voluntary immigration from foreign countries, which became law, as Article 103/1723, after the decisions of the Diet had been sanctioned by the King.⁵⁷

Like the *Einrichtungswerk* and the Immigration Edict, also this Article desired immigration from the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The Article even gave that task to the King (Karl III.) as the Emperor (Karl VI.) to support the Hungarian case in the Empire: '§1 However, so as to announce edicts in the Holy Roman Empire and also in the neighbouring

⁵¹ Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart A 202, Bü 2428.

⁵² On this see among others Forgó, A. (2020): 233-250.

⁵³ The meeting happened in the context of extending the Pragmatic Sanction of female succession in the House of Habsburg on Hungary. Both magnates and estates grasped the occasion to secure or extend their privileges. On this see Turba, G. (1906): 166.

⁵⁴ Szluha, F. (1722): 1, 3.

⁵⁵ Szluha, M. (1996): 71-78.

⁵⁶ Kónyi, Mária: (1932): 168. On the other hand, the immigration of craftsmen was negotiated, quite in the mercantilist mode, among the Commission's the sub-delegation on economic issues, which was then included into Diet Law 117/1723. Márkus, D. (1900): 649.

⁵⁷ 'His Most Holy Majesty will kindly allow that free individuals of any kind are called into the country, that these will be relieved of any public tax for six years, and that this liberty may be announced all over the country.' Quoted after Márkus, D. (1900): 645.

countries and provinces of His Much Blessed Majesty in this sense, His Majesty together with the Estates of said Holy Roman Empire, of the neighbouring countries and provinces, may consider.’⁵⁸ There is no indication that Emperor Karl VI. turned to the German Estates in this sense. Still, emigration was a sovereign right of the territorial lords who always acted according to their own economic interests when granting or trying to prevent emigration. The Emperor was only entitled, by permission of the respective territorial lord, to support emigration by help of his agents, while observing that those willing to emigrate were regularly released from the state.⁵⁹ Yet still, the significance of Article 103 must particularly be emphasized, as it provided the necessary legal grounds for German immigration in the 18th century.

The communication between authority and emigrants: ‘food’

Right from its beginnings, the research on emigration from Germany in the Early Modern Age focused on its causes and reasons.⁶⁰ However, the results show that these were not only different each according to region and time but that they were also multi-causal, which caused quite a headache even for the authorities of the 18th century in their search for answers, particularly to major emigration waves. For example on July 2nd, 1712, Duke Eberhard Ludwig of Württemberg ordered his public servants to investigate if ‘poverty, a lack of food, or any other cause’ was responsible for the sudden desire of so many people to emigrate to Hungary.⁶¹ ‘Food’ in the sense of subsistence was a key term of the politics of the territorial princes, on which social peace was depending.⁶² However, there was no clear definition of what exactly was meant by food. However, there was agreement that every subject was entitled to food according to his/her social status and that the territorial prince had the obligation to take care for his subjects’ livelihood.⁶³ Among others, this found indirect expression by the occasional fee for emigration, such as in the Margraviate of Baden-Durlach. The law code of 1715 stated: ‘Who leaves our lands has to show gratefulness for having been protected and shielded and must pay half the fee for being granted citizenship.’⁶⁴ On the other hand, there was little agreement about the methods of maintaining social peace by way of ‘food’ given a growing population and stable natural resources. Suggestions made by cameralistic authors were difficult to implement. For, the preconditions such as those formulated by Johann Gottlob Justi – prudent governance and a good state of food⁶⁵ - required complex social and economic reforms for the implementation of which the early modern state usually lacked the means. Accordingly, the governments of the territorial states wavered between admitting and banning emigration.

Also in the emigration records and the petitions by those willing to emigrate there was no further explanation of what ‘food’ was, it was only topically postulated as the reason given for the wish to emigrate. Urban Walser, a citizen of Meßkirch in Fürstenberg, stated in 1712 that ‘because

⁵⁸ Márkus, D. (1900): 645.

⁵⁹ On the migration regime in the Old Empire see Härter, K. (2016): 45-86.

⁶⁰ For an example see Miller, M. (1935); Hippel, W. (1984)

⁶¹ Quoted after Hippel, W. (1984): 284.

⁶² On the concept of food see Krünitz, J. G. 1773-1858): <https://www.kruenitz1.uni-trier.de/xxx/n/kn01027.htm>, (accessed 16.10.2022); Blickle, R. (1988): 73-94; Spiekermann, U. (2004): 40-46.

⁶³ See among others Kocka, J. (1990).

⁶⁴ Quoted after Hacker, W. (1980): 109.

⁶⁵ Justi von, J. H. G. (1761): 199.

of the always many interventions in his actions and expensive times [he could] no longer make a living here'.⁶⁶ Jörg Krauß, a weaver from Knetzgau in Bavaria, wanted to emigrate three years after that, as he wrote: 'given my needy state, and that I find it impossible to any longer make a living in honest ways and to feed wife and children'. Like so many, also he hoped to 'find better sustenance' in Hungary.⁶⁷ In 1771 Josef Berner, a farmer from Welschingen, which was ruled by the Lords of Hewen, gave as the reason why he intended to emigrate that with his family he wanted to move 'to his cousins at German, 8 miles from Ofen', as 'they wanted to help them to get themselves something for better food.'⁶⁸ The living conditions of the petitioners were certainly different, like their ideas of what they needed for a living. Nevertheless, tersely and unanimously they argued by referring to 'food', not only because they knew that this way they could legitimate their wish to emigrate by referring to their right to sustenance. Also the language and worldview of the common man in the Early Modern Age contributed considerably to this term becoming a general means of communication between subjects willing to emigrate and authorities. Usually the notions of the common man did not go beyond his/her own sphere of living. His/her milieu was that one world he/she could understand, consisting of a sufficient supply of basic foods, in particular grain, for moderate prices as well as safe employment.⁶⁹ Thus, in the detailed justifications the authorities demanded from time to time one frequently referred to bread shortages, rising prices and unemployment.

Each according to territory and even within one and the same territory the territorial lords and authorities reacted differently to their subjects' desire to emigrate. Nevertheless, one main trend of decision-making can be stated: if release was granted or even desired, then this mainly referred to the emigration of the poor, to this way relieve the communal coffers. Also the emigration of indebted farmers was welcome, such as in the Bishopric of Würzburg in 1724, to this way support 'the wealthy subjects by appropriating the estates on sale'.⁷⁰ Thus, the farms left behind were supposed to be distributed among those farmers who were staying and economically working or among their sons. From the support of the emigration of those subjects labelled 'lazy, wanton and good for nothing' it became obvious that the authorities could not meet their obligations towards their subjects because they were unable to maintain the balance between food and population.⁷¹ Only with the insight into the possibly positive effects of the cameralistic ideas of reform since the mid-century also the arguments of the authorities changed.⁷²

Files from Württemberg provide deeper insight into this changed way of thinking. On June 30th, 1750, the government council in Stuttgart stated on the emigration issue that it was incomprehensible 'how subjects leave, without the greatest need, a well-kept country

⁶⁶ Hacker, W. (1975): 351.

⁶⁷ Staatsarchiv Bamberg, Hochfürstlich Bambergische Regierungsakten B 67, I/15, Prod. 7

⁶⁸ Hacker, W. (1975): 171.

⁶⁹ Münch, P. (1996): 58-110.

⁷⁰ Selig, R. (1988): 24.

⁷¹ For an example: Von Gottes Gnaden, Eberhard Ludwig, Hertzog zu Württemberg und Teck [...] wie es mit Annehmung der Burger und Beysitzer gehalten, und das Land mit überflüßigen Leuthen und Haußhaltungen, denen es nachgehends an Nahrung gebriecht, nicht angefüllet [...]. Stuttgart, den 31. August 1714. <https://digital.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/werkansicht/?PPN=PPN1029217351>, (16.10.2022).

⁷² Fertig, G. (2000); Fertig, G. (1999): 77-88.

abundantly provided with everything needed for sustenance and need, where thus food may be supposed to be easily found.’⁷³

Starting out from the interplay of demography and economy, in Stuttgart the emigration particularly of wealthy subjects was considered, from the point of view of the welfare of the state, to be harmful. For, due to ‘moving away, the number of subjects is considerably reduced, which way however [...] the interests of Lord and territory are affected, also much money [is] taken out of the country, and in a word, while the strength of a country depends on the amount of its well-doing inhabitants, general damage must be caused.’⁷⁴

On September 3rd, 1781, the Württemberg territorial assembly repeated the well-known arguments against emigration. However, in the course of the more than 30 years which had passed since the former document, the perspective had changed significantly. If until 1750 emigration was said to be the fault of those subjects who, instead of meeting their obligation to provide food, had abandoned themselves to idleness, in 1781 the motto ‘*Fleiß und Arbeit die nahrung vermehret, der Müßiggang solche verzehret* (diligence and work increase food, idleness eats it up)’⁷⁵ was no longer stated as an argument. Not the subjects alone, it was said, were to be blamed for emigration. Rather, the territorial assembly recognized that the subjects themselves were suffering from the consequences of a rapid growth of the population, because in Württemberg the fields were fragmented as a result of gavelkind and the basic food resources were becoming ever tighter, and because the daytillers had no income anymore since the farmers were working their small plots themselves. One recognized the problems causing emigration, however the subjects could not be helped.⁷⁶ As long as the policy of balancing food and population had priority, emigration remained an important element of the economic system, even if it was undesired or even banned. This was also because other means of regulating the population, such as marriage restrictions, could no longer be supported in the second half of the century.

Instead, now there were more frequent appeals to the subjects that also they had to meet their obligations towards the country by not emigrating. For example the Fürstenberg government rejected Gabriel Hafner’s emigration from Kreenheinstetten in 1770, when emigration was at its peak, by giving the reason that he should ‘apply for service and food in the country’.⁷⁷

The communication between emigrants and those staying home – ‘dung’ and the ‘good Emperor’

Letters by emigrants are particularly suitable for the analysis of the communication between emigrants and those staying home in the 18th century. Ursula Lehmkuhl in the handbook published in 2020 writes that the letters by emigrants may not just be considered information media but a ‘medium of cultural transfer and sense-making in contexts of abrupt and often

⁷³ Quoted after Hippel, W. (1984): 300. By the way, this was a self-perception which was not at all unique, as also the Electoral Palatinate liked to argue by way of the self-perception of being ‘paradise on earth’.

⁷⁴ Quoted after Hippel, W. (1984): 300.

⁷⁵ Quoted after Wagner, S. (1711): 5.

⁷⁶ Hippel, W. (1984): 311-315.

⁷⁷ Hacker, W. (1975): 223.

traumatic experiences of difference.⁷⁸ This is certainly true for the ca. 11,000 letters written to Germany by emigrants living in America, but not for the ca. 150 thus far known letters by German emigrants to Hungary in the 18th century. These letters are no evidence of an abrupt experience of difference, only occasionally they give testimony to traumatic losses of family members which could destroy the emigrants' hopes for a new beginning. At the same time it must be emphasized that the letters by those emigrating to Hungary in the 18th century were considered an official kind of recruitment, which is why they were observed by the authorities. It is thus not uncommon that the authorities in the region of emigration did not pass over all too positive reports to the addressees, or that letters telling about negative experiences in regions of immigration were confiscated by the authorities there.⁷⁹ The question if in the preserved letters there appears certain information condensed to metaphors must be answered by no. Nevertheless, certain metaphorical messages can be read from them.⁸⁰ They are going to be explained by the example of letters from the time of Emperor Joseph II.'s rule in Hungary (1780-1790).

These letters from the 1780s tell about what the emigrants meant by good 'food'. The settlers in Hungary had encountered circumstances which seem to have far exceeded their expectations as farmers. For, from the letters we can read astonishment and joy about the favourable natural conditions they found. Adam Wegehenkel from Cservenka in the Bačka, for example, wrote home on July 17th, 1785: 'The soil is so rich that you won't believe it when I'm writing it.'⁸¹ On the same day Johann Georg Wittig, also from Cservenka, wrote: 'The area is such good soil that it must not be manured and provides the best yield that it lies down because it is so rich.'⁸² Also Stephan Kaufmann from Bukin reported to Weissenhasel in Hesse that the 'dung we produce in the winter is just a burden for us. If there should be anybody to take it in spring, I would be happy to help him with loading.'⁸³ It seems as if Kaufmann perceived the new situation in a foreign country as being relieved from the production system in his home country. There, one had not been able to achieve a good balance between grain yield and fodder, as a result one had not been able to increase the number of livestock and the amount of dung, and had thus not succeeded with improving the fields.⁸⁴ The fields at Bukin in the Bačka, on the other hand, were so fertile that there was not even any need to fertilise them.

If we go on reading Kaufmann's letter, we are told that he even considered his emigration a real salvation 'from the vale of tears'⁸⁵ and the 'heavy burden of labour':⁸⁶ 'Also in Hungaryland we must work, but for the amount of hay I make, together with my children, every day over here, at Hasel you may send 12 people to making hay and they won't make as much as 4 over here. And over here in Hungaryland, in the course of one year I've been wiping more grease off my mouth than I had to eat at Hasel over 2 years, and I wiped more wine off my mouth than I had beer to drink at Hasel.'⁸⁷ In a way, here Hungary I presented as a land of milk and honey

⁷⁸ Lehmkuhl, U. (2020): 631.

⁷⁹ On this see e. g. the confiscation of letters in the Duchy of Pfalz-Zweibrücken in 1785, Landesarchiv Speyer, B2, Zweibrücken, Polizeisachen, Nr. 4313: Verordnung bezüglich des Emigrierens in fremde Lande, 1738-1787.

⁸⁰ On the issue in the context of emigration to America see Helbich, W. (1990): 63-80.

⁸¹ Hefner, A. (2002): 439.

⁸² Ibid. 445.

⁸³ Ibid. 441f.

⁸⁴ On this see Trossbach, W. (2001): 198.

⁸⁵ Hefner, A. (2002): 441.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ebd.

– a counter-idea to the statist order which was popular in the 18th century.⁸⁸ Here it is a counter-presentation to the bad food supply in the original home country.

It was also thankfully noticed by the emigrants that all the promises they had been made by the recruitment bills when it came to establish independent lives as farmer were indeed kept. 35 years old ploughman and miller Nikolaus Rabung from Rubenheim in County Leyen, who seems to have had not a penny to his name, wrote from Mercydorf in the Banat: 'what they promised us out there, for the first time a newly built house for two hundred and fifty Guilders, also two horses and a wagon as well as a cow with a calf, like also a bed and as much of iron ware as a farmer needs in his house [...] all that we've got. We are given as much land as we can farm [...]. For which we cannot be grateful enough to our most gracious Emperor.'⁸⁹ Other settlers compiled tables to list in detail what they had been given for free to build their new lives as farmers, so that Wegehenkel had to assert those who stayed home: 'I'm telling you no lies, this is as certain as it is certain that I owe my life to God. If you don't believe it, don't blame me but our gracious Emperor who gives this gift to us.'⁹⁰ Such an assertion was indeed necessary, as compared to the benefits under Karl III. and Maria Theresia, under Joseph II. the immigrants on the state domains of the Hungarian Chamber received extremely generous benefits.

The authors of these letters told that in the foreign country they had found the solid basic food resources they had missed so much at home, which they exclusively owed to the graciousness and kindness of their 'good Emperor', as Ottilia Säcklerin told in her letter from Kolut of February 18th, 1786.⁹¹ Due to his popular attitude and the benefits he had granted to immigrants, Joseph II., who not seldom had personally received groups of immigrant farmers and even complaining settlers in Vienna, could be condensed to become the perfect example of the good ruler whose memory remained an element of the legends of the Danube Swabians still in the 20th century.⁹² Certainly the letters from the period between 1784 and 1787 do not cover the entire range of fates and emotions of the immigrants, which were indeed not free of negative experiences. But they do not show any traumatic experiences of being different. On the contrary, the fertility of the natural environment and the figure of the good Emperor give expression to hopes having become reality.

Conclusion

As a conclusion it may be stated that the linguistic analysis of texts written in the context of migration allows for a more thorough understanding of the motivation as well as the patterns of behaviour and thought of those involved in the migration process. Verbal images pursue a certain goal and are meant for unfolding effect. The metaphor of 'Hungary as an outer wall of Christianity' as well as frequently used terms such as 'food' or 'the good Emperor' and 'dung' were supposed to make the territorial lords allow emigration or to convince those staying home

⁸⁸ On this see Müller, M. (1984); Richter, D. (1984)

⁸⁹ Klugesherz, L. (1987): 94.

⁹⁰ Hefner, A. (2002): 439.

⁹¹ Ibid. 449

⁹² Magyar, Z. (2006): 51-81. Several legends about Joseph II. are still known, among others also from Csávoły in the Bačka. On this see Cammann, A. – Karasek, A. (1977): 121f., 268.

that emigration was worthwhile. The metaphors used were important elements of communicative negotiations simply because, due to being rooted in the common knowledge of early-modern society, they were commonly understood.

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