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The Misfortunes of a Relocation of Rumanians in the 18th Century: the Case of the Banat of Temes

For political, confessional and economic reasons, Habsburg emperors settled a large number of (mainly German-speaking) people in the Banat of Temes, which had a sparse population and untilled fertile land. Maria Theresa aimed to create a single zone populated exclusively by Catholic, German-speaking settlers in the strategically important border zone with its centre Timisoara. In order to achieve that aim, she had to uproot the Rumanians who had lived there for years, ordering their relocation to other unpopulated areas. This plan met with only partial success and was not fully executed.

Keywords: population geography, minorities, resettlement of Hungary, immigrants, economy, religious identity

Nesrečna selitev Romunov v 18. stoletju: primer Banata ob reki Temes

Habsburški vladarji so iz političnih, verskih in ekonomskih vzrokov v pokrajini Banat ob reki Temes, ki je bila redko poseljena in je imela veliko neobdelane, rodovitne zemlje, naselili večje število (večinoma nemško govorečih) priseljencev. Marija Terezija si je želela v strateško pomembnem obmejnem območju s središčem Temišvar ustvariti cono, ki bi jo naseljevali izključno katoliški, nemško govoreči priseljenci. V ta namen je morala izkoreniniti Romune, ki so tam živeli že dolga leta, in jih preseliti na druga nenaseljena območja. Ta načrt je bil le delno uspešen in tudi nikoli ni bil v celoti uresničen.

Ključne besede: populacijska geografija, manjšine, selitve, Madžarska, priseljenci, gospodarstvo, verska identiteta

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1. Introduction

Hungary's century-and-a-half occupation by the Turks (1526-1699) had serious consequences. One of them was the stagnation of the population, which in some areas caused even a significant decrease. The period following the re-conquest of Buda (1686) was characterized by rough absolutism, and the struggles during the Rákóczi War of independence (1703-1711) were a reaction to it and made a battlefield of several parts of the country.

This period of almost two hundred years was not favourable for peaceful construction: as a significant part of the population escaped from the occupied territories large pieces of land were left uncultivated, and the resultant disorder in the environment caused epidemics that made the cultivation of land even more difficult in these areas.

While in around 1500 the population of the Carpathian Basin could be estimated at 4 million, later this population is estimated as being at most 4.2 million (Wellmann 1989, 25). This means that while the population of England and France grew by approximately fifty percent (Diedericks et al. 1995, 33-35), Hungary's population actually stagnated.¹

In this paper I examine the ethnic and demographic trends which caused significant change in the Kingdom of Hungary.² To this end I review the following issues:

- ♦ Hungary's demographic and ethnic situation after Turkish rule;
- ♦ the review of the Banat of Temes;
- ♦ the historic background and preparation of resettling the Rumanians;
- ♦ a description of the settlement itself;
- ♦ the balance of the settlement.

2. Hungary's Demographic and Ethnic Aituation After Turkish Rule

The decrease of Hungary's population occurred on the fertile Hungarian Plain and the uplands of Transdanubia - areas ideal for agricultural production. The recommencement of ordinary everyday life and agricultural production made it essential that a productive population be moved to areas with low densities of population. These processes had three basic forms: the movement of people

within the country, emigration of people from areas under Turkish rule not belonging to the Kingdom of Hungary (e.g. Serbs, Rumanians and Bulgarians), and organized settlements. The movements within the country, to a significant extent, resulted in the relocation of people formerly living in more densely populated, hilly areas (the people of the hills) to areas more suitable for land cultivation. For example, the Slovak population arrived in today's Voivodina in the Republic of Serbia in this way. The Serbs, fleeing from Turkish rule, arrived in organized form, under the leadership of their patriarch, Arsenije Cernojevic, from beyond the Kingdom of Hungary. A large number of Rumanians emigrated in a spontaneous manner to the territory of Transylvania from present-day Rumania. Organized settlement resulted in an increase in population that may be addressed statistically. A part of the settlements were proposed by the Viennese Court itself, but the landlords - who had vested interests in starting cultivation on deserted pieces of land - also played an important role in this process. The Court considered the land liberated by imperial forces as a new acquisition and formed the *Neoacquistica Commissio* (New Acquisition Commission) under the leadership of Lipót Kollonitsch, archbishop of Esztergom. Under Kollonitsch's lead, an *Errichtungswerk* was created to populate the new acquisition by foreigners.

The settlers were predominantly German-speaking. Most of them arrived from present-day Austria and Germany. The decrease of available land, overpopulation and a change in the system of inheritance can be mentioned among the reasons for German resettlement.

Neither the settlers' ethnicity, nor their religious affiliation mattered to the Viennese Court. On the one hand, the Viennese Court intended to counterbalance the rebellious Hungarian population through the settlement of German-speaking people in certain areas. According to some contemporaries, the Hungarophobe Lipót Kollonitsch strived at "taming the Hungarian blood, having a tendency for revolution and unrest, with German blood" (Ács 1984, 164). On the other hand, as the absolute majority of the settling Germans was Catholic, the Viennese Court wanted to settle Catholic believers among the population that had, at the time of Turkish rule, converted to Calvinism.

However, it would be a mistake to overlay the political/confessional aspects of the settlement. It was in the interest of the Court as well to make those settled by *impopulatio* to stabilize taxpayers, increasing thereby the Chamber's regular income. The trendsetting economic policy of that time was mercantilism, whose principle was *ubi populus, ibi obulus* (where there is population, there also is money). Therefore the Court could hope for more income by increasing the number of taxpayers through settling foreigners, rather than by movements within

the country. In summary, we can claim that, although not in equal proportion, all the above-mentioned three factors (political, confessional and economic) played a role in the Court's settlement policy.

It is clear that in the case of settlements by landlords the economic factor was felt more powerfully, as the value of their estates depended on their economic potential. However, the landlords had to adjust to the Court's political and confessional requirements, for the very reason that settlement could be effected only with the Court's permission (Kupa 2008a, 102-103). The confessional requirement was usually not contrary to the landlords' convictions as they themselves were predominately of Catholic persuasion (Kupa 2008b, 163). The differences between them and the Court were mainly of an economic nature, as the Court frequently gave priority to short-term tax maximization, while for the landlords – who had huge outlays as regards the financing of the settlements – the stabilization of the labour force was more important than the realization of immediate and excessive revenues.

Organized settlement was carried out in many phases. The first phase was the period following the expulsion of the Turks and the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718). It was during this period that the settlement of the Germans on the geographic focus of this study, the Banat of Temes, took place. During the second phase, under the reign of Maria Theresa, settlement was carried out on the largest scale. Joseph II still had much to do in the last period; during his ten-year reign approximately 7,600 German families arrived in what was then the territory of Hungary (Ács 1984, 176).

Due to foreign emigration, organized settlement and the natural increase in the population, the population of the Kingdom of Hungary exceeded eight million at the time of the census of 1787, meaning that the population had more than doubled in 70 years (Kosáry 1990, 56; Katus 2010, 113). But there was a significant change not only in the number of inhabitants, but in ethnic relations as well. While, according to estimates, the number of Hungarians had reached 3,200,000 out of the total population of four million at the end the 15th century (Szabó 1990, 51), by 1787, Hungarians formed a minority and their number was estimated to be approximately 3 million (Szabó 1990, 124-125).³

3. Introduction to the Banat of Temes

Hungary's ethnic map had changed, and within it the most complex ethnic relationship had developed in the Banat of Temes. It is worth mentioning that there were objections in connection with the terminology almost one and a half centuries ago. The eminent topographer Frigyes Pesthy said that the title Ban of Temes had not existed in the Middle Ages, and therefore the Banat of Temes could not have existed in those days (Pesty 1868, 20-21).⁴ Not only Germans, but Italians, Spaniards and French also arrived in small numbers in the Banat of Temes⁵ between 1720 and 1740. In O'Reilly's opinion (2003, 81), the first settlers were quite certainly soldiers and tradesmen. In 1737 a settlement permit was issued for Catholic Bulgarians fleeing from Turkish rule, and in the 1740s Krassovans, coming from the Serb-Bulgarian border, found a new home here. Many of the repatriating Serbs, led by their patriarch (Arsenije Cernojevic), arrived in this region (Szabó 1990, 144) and, as we shall see later, Rumanians arrived in the Banat of Temes as well. This already colourful picture was enhanced by those 3,130 persons who were deported here. Expelled from Vienna, they were declared *persona non grata* from an ethical perspective between 1732 and 1768 (Szabó 1990, 147-148).⁶ Most of the rebellious peasants who were forced to leave their homes in the County of Hauenstein in Baden, Schwarzwald, finally found shelter in the Banat (Szabó 1990, 148). Simultaneously, Eugen von Savoyen expelled the Hungarians from Temesvár (today's Timisoara, Rumania) in 1718 and "Hungarian settlers were forbidden to enter the territory of the Banat or any other location" (Szabó 1990, 160).⁷

Even with the Treaty of Passarowitz the Banat of Temes was not reintegrated into the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary, but was divided into eleven districts and was put under separate administration. The territory was placed under military administration and its first governor was Count Florimund Claudius Mercy.

Settlement started soon after 1718.⁸ Contemporaries called the settlement of Germans in the Banat of Temes the *Schwabenzug*. In the course of the 1720s, Mercy relocated approximately 15,000 Germans to Timisoara, which had been destroyed in the wars. One of Eugen von Savoyen's biographers wrote that the prince himself allegedly warned Mercy not to receive any people other than Catholic Germans into the castle of Temesvár, as the Germans were the only ones who could be fully trusted. Greeks, Serbs and other ethnicities should be tolerated only in the suburbs (Borovszky 1914, 63). There were artisans and craftsmen among the settlers, who contributed considerably to the fast industrialization of the area (Ács 1984, 172). Many among them petitioned for the issuing of guild

privileges which, however, the Court refused to consider (Kulcsár 2004, 344). The Germans who settled in the Banat of Temes, besides various economic benefits, received building sites, ready-built houses and farm-buildings, together with livestock. At the beginning, Germans were reluctant to settle in the Banat of Temes due to the proximity to the Turks and the unusual climate, and there were many who regretted having settled here. The majority of the settlers were paupers, who undertook to leave their homes in the hope of obtaining land. For a long time their only wealth was their land and they feared that somebody would deprive them of that land. Historians explain this fear as the basis of their suspicion against strangers, their hitherto inexperienced drive for acquisition, their extraordinary thrift and their hard work (Ács 1984, 172-173).

The mentality of the early settlers was seriously criticized. For example, Emperor Karl himself stated in 1724 that there were many drunkards and worthless people among the settlers of the Banat of Temes who lived off begging and tramping, at a financial burden to others (Ács 1984, 174). One can find similar opinions even at the end of the 18th century. For example, Karl Riesbeck, the Secretary of Mainz, wrote the following in his book, *Letters of a Frenchman Traveling across Germany*, published in 1783, about the Germans settling in Hungary: "Only the most useless people from Bayer, Swabian and Frankish lands and the Rheinland go to that country /.../. Those having enough money for a trip to America, rather emigrate there /.../. Only the poorest, in possession a couple of pennies for a trip along the Danube, look at Hungary as their last resort" (Ács 1984, 174). In spite of the critics one can state that as a result of the settlements, one of Hungary's sources of foodstuffs was successfully formed from the former marshy and sandy area of the Banat of Temes (Ács 1984, 172).

Although the process of settlement was interrupted due to the Turkish war between 1737 and 1739 and the Plague, it continued during the reign of Maria Theresa. In her colonization patent of 1763, the empress – among other matters – wished to guarantee territories in the Banat of Temes for soldiers who had served in the Seven Years War (Kulcsár 2004, 242). In 1767, the Court decided to have 2,000 new houses built for German settlers on its chamber lands in the Banat of Temes. This period was the Golden Age of settlement. The empress decreed what a Swabian village should look like and this way model villages populated by Germans came into existence. Maria Theresa even made sure that there were enough craftsmen and teachers. The settlement was costly even for the Court. 200,000 Forints was noted to have been spent over nine years (1763-72).⁹ The peak of the emigration was the three years between 1768 and 1771, when almost 17,000 settlers arrived. They came from Lorraine, Trier, Alsace, the Black Forest, Luxemburg, Mainz, Baden, Swabia, the Tyrol and Switzerland (Ács 1984, 175).

On his first visit to the Banat of Temes in 1768, Joseph II was most dissatisfied with the Temesvár administration, and especially with the efficiency of the bureaucratic work there, with its amateurish, wasteful expenditure and the mentality discovered in the offices (Kulcsár 2004, 315-324). It was at this time that he criticized the ignorance of the Romanian and Serbian Greek Orthodox population (Szentkláray 1879, 207-208).¹⁰

Although Maria Theresa stopped the settlement, her son, Joseph II took it up again in 1782, laying down stricter rules for the settlers. During this third phase of settlement, almost six thousand German families arrived at the Banat of Temes from the areas of Koblenz, Frankfurt and Rothenburg am Neckar (Ács 1984, 176).

This was the last phase of German settlement. In 1775, approximately 40,000 Germans lived in the Banat, but by the census of 1851 this population had risen to 335,000 (ibid.). As an effect of the settlement, the most colorful ethnic picture of Central Eastern Europe could be painted on the Banat of Temes (Ács 1984, 171).

The Rumanians arriving in the territory of the Banat of Temes further coloured this ethnic map. Their ancestors had appeared in this area in the 13th century and diplomas issued in the 14th century speak about the “Rumanians of the Banat” (Makkai 1943, 383). Although another, even larger-scale Rumanian immigration took place after the liberation of Temesvár (1716), this process was negatively influenced by the Russian-Turkish war of 1737-39. There were Rumanians who, joining the Turks, attacked the territory of the Banat of Temes, in some places causing greater damage than the enemy (Szentkláray 1891, 5). The historian researching the history of the Banat of Temes knows that Rumanians “fled across our borders in large groups under the rule of the great empress” (Szentkláray 1879, 267). On one single day, on August 6, 1765, simultaneously more than 750 refugee Rumanians arrived from Turkish national territory (ibid.). The administration in Temesvár was not enthralled by their arrival – some did not even comply with the requirements set by the authorities for quarantine (ibid.). Finally even diplomatic steps were taken. The Legate, Baron Benkler, was instructed to inform the Turkish Porte officially that those Rumanians who had escaped from Turkish territory should be called home with the promise of amnesty and the remedy of their grievances. However, this proposal was not successful; therefore the administration in Temesvár was forced to host the large number of Rumanian families. The areas of Karánsebes, Lugos, Oravicza and Mehadia were designated for them. Although the Viennese Court accepted the fact of settlement, it instructed the administration in Temesvár to “carefully and

gradually relocate them elsewhere after a while” (Szentkláray 1879, 268).

There are not even estimates of the number of Romanians settling in the Banat of Temes, nor of immigration of Romanians to Transylvania; all we have at our disposal are a few partial summaries (Köpeczi et al. 1986, 977). However, during this period we can speak not only of immigration to the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary but also of popular movement from Transylvania to the Principality of Romania. And not only Romanians emigrated from Transylvania: for instance, Szeklers fled from military service to Moldavia (Szádeczky Kardoss 1908, 239-242). Hungarian historians believe that migration to the Kingdom of Hungary from the Principality of Romania was proportionately far greater than Romanian migration in the other direction (Köpeczi et al. 1986, 977). The fact that there was an immigration excess in the direction of Hungary, is accepted by Romanian historians (Köpeczi et al. 1986, 978), although the outstanding writer of twentieth-century Romanian history differs in this question.¹¹ According to David Prodan the degree of immigration between Hungary and the Romanian Principality was of equal proportion, although the eighteenth century ended with an “excess of emigration” (Prodan in Katus 2010, 119).

The Court took care that wherever possible only Roman Catholic Germans and those of the Greek Orthodox faith should settle in the Banat of Temes. This religious policy of the Court itself contributed to ethnic conflict in the region, as when for instance it sent Serbian priests to villages inhabited by Romanians (Miskolczi 2005, 91).

4. The Historic Background and Preparation of the Rumanians

Such were the events leading to the repatriation of the Rumanians in the Banat of Temes. This emigrational process – as we shall see later on - was not only done peacefully, but features of forced migration took place as well, as external force, the pressing circumstances of migration, and the devaluation of pre-emigrational situations characterized these situations. We must emphasize that these difficulties affected not only the Rumanians living in the Banat of Temes, but the local Hungarians and the Germans from Austria.

Although the term forced migration can be applied to the topic of this article, we have to emphasize that it was Maria Theresa herself who proposed the relocation of the Rumanians, in other words an empress whose rule was provided by the

legitimacy of a monarch who ruled by the grace of God.¹² The addressees of her decrees were not citizens, but subjects, for instance the Rumanian peasants who suffered relocation. The chronicler of these events was Jenő Szentkláray, who extensively researched the history of the Banat of Temes well ahead of the Millenium in 1896 - the year of the one thousandth anniversary of the foundation of the Hungarian state.¹³

The first stop in our story is Maria Theresa's colonization patent of 1763, after which large-scale, systematic German settlement started in the Temes Gap, whose system was ordained by the Viennese government only in 1767. The empress used the period of peace following the Seven Years' War to fill with people the Banat of Temes. As was the norm for settlement at that time, large, abandoned pieces of land were available for the execution of her plan. However, the legal status of the ownership of the land was unsettled. The abandoned land, which was called *predium*, came into existence where villages that had been destroyed during the Turkish rule were in the possession of the Treasury and located around villages containing Rumanian inhabitants. The Rumanians occupied the more valuable part of that land, which they cultivated to the extent they considered necessary for their livelihood. Of the size of the prediums, "nobody knew, nobody measured them, but they spread from one borderline to the other" (Szentkláray 1891, 7). Neither cadaster nor land registration prevented the Rumanians from their intention of acquiring land, but the legal status of the land they possessed was also unresolved. Although the government leased the land unused by the inhabitants, the use of the land was rather wasteful. The cattle stock pastured there was disproportionate to the size of land leased. Thus it was possible for Joseph II, in a report written to his mother, to mention that as many as 27 Hungarian acres were allotted to one cow (*ibid.*). The empress "little by little confiscated abandoned pieces of land" and gave them, in part to new German settlers, partly into the hands of Germans who had already settled (Szentkláray 1891, 8-9).

The settlement of the Germans from Germany was not conflict-free, and there were incidents between the Rumanians already living there and the newly settling Germans. In 1764 complaints arrived at the administration in Temesvár against the Rumanian inhabitants of the Maros region. The Germans accused them of "constantly harassing the settling German colonies which endangers the foreign settlers' property and even lives with their nightly roamings and thefts" (Szentkláray 1891, 9). The catalogue of crimes allegedly perpetrated by Rumanians did not end here but was supplemented with accusations of "breaches of the peace" and "receiving stolen goods", too (*ibid.*).¹⁴ Szentkláray reported about events as follows: "To bring their hooliganism under control, a whole regiment had to be ordered against them from Temesvár. The prisons

of the territory's court were constantly fully packed with Rumanians, but the punishment could affect only accomplices, because the most dangerous found shelter in unreachable areas in the hills or in the woods" (ibid.). As we can see, there were no doubts in Szentkláray's mind with regard to the criminalizing of the Rumanians.

Following the incidents just mentioned, Maria Theresa decreed on July 14, 1765 that the Rumanian villages in Southern Hungary were standing in the way of German settlement, and so the Rumanians living there must be relocated to another area. The reasoning behind the relocation and its enforcement was the task of the government, while its execution was the responsibility of the provincial administration in Temesvár. The empress even mentioned that relocation of the Rumanian population should be done with necessary care and not all at once but progressively (Szentkláray 1891, 9-10), and that the relocations should be reported to the Viennese Court case by case. A short justification for the relocations was given by Maria Theresa herself, who referred to *ratio status militaris et polici*, arguing for the relocation. The above mentioned cattle-rustling and smuggling were included among the arguments, but were supplemented with two new elements: defence of the treasury and the security aspect of a potential war with the Turks (Szentkláray 1891, 10). Maria Theresa did not choose a totally new approach when she proposed population exchange. In earlier years there had been cases when the "population of hooligan villages" (ibid.) was relocated to the territory of neighbouring Rumanian villages, and the land of the relocated was declared "newly found" predium (ibid.) by treasury officers. These relocations resulted in complaints from those concerned, so Maria Theresa ordered the presidency in Temesvár in 1765 to offer a proposal that would "meet the both the highest desires and the interests of the Rumanian people" (ibid.).

Upon the empress's request, the first civilian president of the land administration, count Perlas, prepared a memorandum. As the most important reason for the relocation he refers to the "safeguarding of German colonization, [emphasizing that] the German colonists are frightened and fear being settled in prediums lying among Rumanians" (Szentkláray 1891, 11). Among the count's arguments, there are bitter memories from the time of the Russian-Turkish war of 1737-39, almost thirty year earlier. In his opinion,

the German population in the Banat has suffered much more from the rebellious Rumanians and their wandering bands of robbers than from the Turkish enemy. During the war few German villages had seen living Turks, whereas the Rumanians laid waste to numerous German villages, razed them, killed many Germans or sold them as prisoners to the Turks.

These atrocities could happen again, as he argued, as “most German villages are built scattered among Rumanian villages” (Szentkláray 1891, 11) which was why the people living there could not rush to each other’s aid. In count Perlas’ opinion, what had happened in the past could happen again in the future, in the event of a potential Turkish attack.¹⁵ The aspect of re-catholization appears among the arguments, too, although less stressed than in the case of settlements. The count suggests that the deserted area between Temesvár and Arad should be populated with new German settlements which would result in “a chain of Catholic German villages from the River Maros down to Temesvár” (ibid.). However, besides the religious aspect count Perlas mentions another pragmatic, secular one: the linking of German villages so that they would be able to help each other “in case of need” (ibid.). The bitter memories of the extensively-mentioned Russian-Turkish War appear again in the memorandum, but in another context. Count Perlas now is not simply speaking of “rebel Rumanians” and “their bands of robbers”, but in effect is questioning the loyalty of the Rumanian population in the event of a Turkish attack (Szentkláray 1891, 12).¹⁶

The memorandum deals in detail with territorial issues of relocation. Count Perlas proposes the settlement of 1,500 German families in the Lippa and Temesvár districts to the areas occupied by relocated Rumanians (ibid.). For the Rumanians living here, those prediums were designated to where the Germans would have settled. Perlas has another proposal, however. He stresses that the prediums mentioned would mean significant income for the treasury and identifies which territories should be used for the relocation of the Rumanians if more appropriate land cannot be found. However, according to the count, there were such available territories in the Banat of Temes.

The count suggested that each Rumanian should receive 30 acres of land (ibid.). However, he added that based on the experience of earlier settlements, more Rumanian families could be relocated as more German families arrived in the same territory. German families could replace the relocated Rumanian families (Szentkláray 1891, 12). Therefore the treasury would benefit from it as well, as “emperor’s prediums” should not be excluded from cultivation, while the memorandum offers the perspective that “their lands will be better utilized and shall not be left unused, as was done so far” (Szentkláray 1891, 13).

The empress ordered that “each colonist should get 24 acres of plough land and 6 acres of meadow”; besides that, separate pasture and one acre of farmyard and garden should be provided (Szentkláray 1891, 13-14). She ordered that “in relocated Rumanian villages the same size of land shall be given to each family as in the settled German villages” (Szentkláray 1891, 14). She even decided in

detail in which villages the 2,000 German families arriving from the Rheinland in 1767 would be housed. She took care that craftsmen arriving with German colonists continue their crafts and that the preparation for the settlement should be executed by "those having skills in land surveying and civilian construction" (ibid.). The empress had her directives: the predium to be occupied shall be selected one year earlier, the deserted areas shall be surveyed "with geometrical precision", the dimensions of the roads, the distance between houses, the farmers be supplied with seeds etc. (Szentkláray 1891, 15).

The area for the German settlement, existing villages and yet-to-be-populated prediums were located around the Maros, the Tisza and the Béga rivers, while for the Rumanians, territories were sought out beyond the Béga. Here there were two deserted state prediums: Klek and Továk (ibid.). In Szentkláray's opinion there "was enough treasury land to distribute" (Szentkláray 1891, 16). The advantage of the land here was that it was lying "all in areas populated by Rumanians" (ibid.). The Rumanians living here were "a population that had survived Turkish rule", small in number and therefore – in Szentkláray's opinion -, "unable to harm anyone" (ibid.).

The relocation of the Rumanians followed a prepared plan. The idea of the court administration was to designate the Nagybecskerek area, called *Schiebung* at that time and mainly populated by Rumanians, for relocation (ibid.). The planner of earlier German settlements, the land engineer Johann Kostka, was assigned to measure and map the land necessary for relocation. The task of persuasion was given to counsellor Plasch, who allegedly performed the "calming persuasion" (Szentkláray 1891, 17) so successfully that "the Rumanian villages ordered to relocate usually signed the petition" (ibid.). The resolutions were passed for the execution of the relocation, based on counsellor Plasch's report. These resolutions were born in the spirit of enlightened absolutism. The municipalities in question had the right to speak out in defence of their interests, but the administration – due to the lack of any higher legal source - was entitled to act with full power, and therefore did not have to take into consideration the petitions of the villages (ibid.).

The conditions of relocation were regulated in detail. It had to be executed during the spring, or by mid-summer at the latest, on one hand so that the repatriated would have time to plough before the fall sowing, and on the other hand so that the Germans occupying the place of relocated Rumanians could occupy empty houses and start building their own (ibid.). Those relocating, as in the case of settlements, were given different provisional benefits.¹⁷ However, the administration gave no right of decision as to which predium to relocate to, or

to measure the land (Szentkláray 1891, 18). Under the terms of the empress's decision, they were obliged to accept 20 acres upon which to pasture their herds, although they had been used to doing so on land twice as large.

Plans changed at the last minute. The inhabitants of three villages (Sefdin, Kisfalud and Szakálháza) did not want to accept relocation. According to the original plan, the Rumanian population of two of these villages (Sefdin and Kisfalud) would have received land on the deserted area of Klek, but the people from Sefdin found the land they received to be insufficient, while the others (from Kisfalud) asked not to be settled together with the population of the other village in one settlement because "they are difficult to get on with, and are avoided by everyone" (*ibid.*). The population of the third village did not want to relocate at all. They offered a solution by settling only 200 families instead of 300, as a result of which they still had enough space for them to not give up their own farms. The village where 60 families lived stated in their petition that they had owned the village "since ancient times" (*ibid.*) where the church was built of hard material that could not be relocated to any other village (*ibid.*). In order to solve the problems, counsellor Plasch proposed two villages with the same name (that of Torák), separated by the River Béga, therefore the "thievish-natured" (*ibid.*) Rumanians from Sefdin could be separated from the Rumanians of the other village. The latter were not the people from Kisfalud, but people from Szakálháza, who wanted to remain where they were, and who had been promised compensation for their church from the German settlers. The predium in Klek was given to people from Kisfalud who had protested against the people of Sefdin.

In this way the predium in Klek would be too crowded for 100 families from Kisfalud, as they were entitled to 3,000 acres, as opposed to the 4,262 in the predium of Klek; consequently, for the remaining 1,264 acres those Rumanians from Rékas were intended to be relocated who were living mixed with the German population (Szentkláray 1891, 18-19). For the Rumanians in Szakálháza it was made clear that "under no circumstances can it be allowed that Rumanians live among Germans in Szakálháza" (Szentkláray 1891, 19). The cost of the relocation was covered by the state and timber and stone for building was provided by the treasury estate for the Rumanians.

5. The Relocation

The relocation was scheduled to start on St. George's Day in 1767, but the Rumanians were not ready by that time, and a cattle-plague erupted in the area where they were supposed to relocate. Finally, after missing even the final deadline, relocation had to be postponed until the end of July, and went slowly. The real nature of the relocation can be seen more clearly if we quote the chronicler: "The relocation of three hundred Rumanian families, totalling almost two thousand people, on five or six hundred wagons, with oxen, cows, herds of sheep and pigs, must have been an unusual sight, even in Southern Hungary in the last century, full of such typical examples of caravan life!" (ibid.).

The Germans moving to their designated locations immediately and successfully petitioned to change the name of the village. Thereby Sefdin became Schöndorf, while the old Kisfalud became Engelsbrunn (Szentkláray 1891, 20).

Although during the last days of August the building of the houses was in progress, the life of the relocated Rumanians was not ideal. The cattle-plague continued to cause devastation, drinking water was poisonous, the houses, built of mud, were damp and mouldy due to wet air and the people lacked food. Szentkláray, although lacking concrete data, even stated that the mortality rate among the relocated had risen at "an alarming pace" (ibid.). The problem turned even worse as the people from neighbouring Jankahida attacked them as well wishing to steal a significant piece of the land that they already considered insufficient.

In addition, the treasury officers showed no leniency when they forced them to cultivate the land. This made the situation even worse. A part of the relocated fled, leaving their houses and land behind. They took the money advances with them, causing warrants to be issued to arrest the fugitives – without much success. The sites became the property of the treasury, and they were either transferred to other settlements or planted with vines. The president of the settlement committee, Count Schlick, interpreting the situation in a somewhat original manner, reported to his superiors in March 1768 that "Rumanians cannot be convinced to undertake the cultivation of a single allotment that had been offered for a family. The Rumanians like large pieces of land, not for cultivation but to indulge in the herdsmen's idle (!) pleasures" (Szentkláray 1891, 21).

Count Schlick's report¹⁸ with its bucolic tone was followed by an intervention by the empress. Maria Theresa took the position that although a complete plot of land was equal to 31 acres, not every relocated person was entitled to get one.

Complete plots were given only to those who could cultivate them. Less wealthy Rumanians were given two-thirds or half of a plot, while craftsmen received a garden and three acres of pasture or meadowland.

In other words, one had to be thrifty with one's land. The empress therefore ordered that the land had to be remeasured, the farming reviewed and land taken back from those not wanting or unable to cultivate it (*ibid.*). The repossessed land had to be redistributed again, but only for those who could plough and plant the whole and meet this requirement for six months.

Maria Theresa's order was not really understood in Temesvár: for instance, they did not understand what the size of a half or two-thirds of a plot was, or what should happen to those vineyards owned by the treasury which settlers had taken possession of. It was to this end that the empress specified the size of the plots in question on the basis of the 31-acre unit. A two-thirds plot was equal to 21 acres, while half a plot was equal to 13 acres. The planting of vines was forbidden on flat areas, and was allowed only on those hilly parts which were not good enough for growing grain (Szentkláray 1891, 22).

However, this was Maria Theresa's last genuine action in the area of Rumanian relocation. Her attention was drawn away by other state issues. The assets in the Banat of Temes fell under the management of the Court Chamber, which did not concern itself with any further relocations of Rumanians (*ibid.*). In Szentkláray's view, Maria Theresa was hoping that she would be able to return to the management of this issue in more peaceful times (Szentkláray 1891, 24).

This did not happen. During the spring of 1768, Joseph II travelled across the Banat of Temes and visited the former Rumanian villages handed over to Germans, and Nagybecskerek and its neighbourhood populated by relocated Rumanians. The future emperor of Hungary was stunned by what he had seen, and he wrote the following in his diary: "Rumanians receive bad treatment, they are frequently forced to hand over their houses and plots to others and move elsewhere, and consequently they prefer to emigrate" (Szentkláray 1891, 24).¹⁹ It was evident that he came to the conclusion that the Banat of Temes, in the following year, should be "either placed under military administration or handed over to private landlords" (Szentkláray 1891, 24). However, the Banat of Temes was annexed to the Kingdom of Hungary in 1779.²⁰

6. The Balance of the Relocation

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Although Maria Theresa's German settlement process occurred during this period, the project of relocating Rumanians could not be considered as successful. First and foremost, it certainly was not a success from the viewpoint of the relocated Rumanians. They were treated as criminals for an event that had happened a quarter of century before, and which was no concern of theirs. Even their loyalty was questioned. Not everyone received the land that had been promised and they could pasture their animals on only half the land they had been used to. Their new living conditions were significantly worse than in their former home, both they and their cattle were decimated by plagues. But neither was it successful from the court's perspective, as in spite of such sacrifices, the plan for a single German-populated zone around Temesvár failed and the revenues of the treasury did not increase to the extent hoped for.

The memory of the relocation lived on in the collective memories of both peoples even in Szentkláray's day. At that time, the Germans knew that their villages had been inhabited by Rumanians and older Rumanians knew about their earlier location away from their ancestors (Szentkláray 1891, 5). We cannot know to what extent the Viennese Court's settlement policy, including the creation of a single German zone in Temes area, burdened the relationship between the Germans and the Rumanians, two peoples with totally different ways of life. We know well that the coming together of nomadic stock breeders and settled farmers has been full of conflicts for centuries, so if we discount the unpredictability element, then these conflicts were due to differences in ways of life.²¹ None of the ethnic groups can be accused of escalating the conflict, as the German settlers – as in other cases – simply wanted to exploit the opportunity to settle, hoping that their life would improve. The Rumanians living in the Temes Gap clung to their homes and traditional way of life.

Szentkláray did not examine the future of the relocated Rumanians, he simply made the remark that under Hungarian rule they were hurt "neither in their old homes, nor their ethnicity, nor language, nor religion" (Szentkláray. 1891, 25).²² One cannot underestimate these results, if we think of recent village destruction, contemporary punitive language laws, or atrocities carried out in the name of national identity, or genocides identified along religious lines.

We cannot consider the relocation a tragedy, for when Maria Theresa realized that the relocation of the Rumanians would do more harm than good, she did not enforce her erroneous ideas but changed her mind. It is true that she reigned by the grace of God, not by the will of others.

70 Notes

¹ The newest historical and demographic research supposes a slight rise in population between 1500 and 1720, as today the population of the Kingdom of Hungary in around 1500 is estimated to have been not 4 million, but only 3 – 3.5 million people (Katus 2010, 112).

² This study has been made within the framework of the Research Workgroup on Minorities of Pécs.

³ According to Domokos Kosáry's calculations, the number of Hungarians was approximately 3.5 million (Kosáry 1990, 59).

⁴ In Pesty's view, the term, Banat of Temes (which was unprecedented historically) was the creation of the Viennese Court's lack of knowledge, as when the 'Elyat of Temes', created during the second part of the 16th century, was simply renamed to the Temesvarer Banat, which was followed by the term Banat of Temes, when Prince Eugen von Savoyen conquered Temesvár (Pesty 1868, 23-26).

⁵ William O'Reilly described the Banat of Temes from a topographical perspective: "an area of approximately 28,500 km², it is bordered in the north by the river Maros, in the south by the Danube and in the west by the Tisza. Further to the north lies the county of Arad, to the south Serbia, to the west the county of Bács and to the east Transylvania and Wallachia" (O'Reilly 2003, 78). The area of the Banat of Temes is "now divided between Hungary, Romania and Serbia" (ibid.).

⁶ The most obvious reason for expulsion was deterrence. The historian István Szabó (1990, 147) claims that the Habsburg Empire "used the Banat for the purpose of deportation, as naval states used their overseas colonies and Russia used Siberia."

⁷ In Szabó's opinion (1990, 160), the most obvious reason for keeping the Hungarians away had some political considerations. In 1755, Bartenstein the state chancellor thought that it had always been dangerous for states to allow unsatisfied people to live along their borders – he considered Hungarians as such people (ibid.). For the settlement view of the reliability of settlers and unreliability of Hungarians see O'Reilly (2003, 81).

⁸ Among other Romanian historians, Aurel Tinta has studied the settlement into the Banat of Temes up until 1740.

⁹ According to some calculations, neither did the 200,000 forints set aside for settlement prove sufficient, and so between 1763 and 1773 the Court spent more than 3,000,000 forints to this end (Kulcsár 2004, 245).

¹⁰ Of late the Romanian historian Costin Fenesan has studied the cited criticism of Joseph II (Kulcsár 2004, 363). For further details related to the criticism see footnote 20 below. In 1977 the Romanian historian Ioan Pop published his work on the 1773 travel diary of Joseph II from the Romanian and Saxon viewpoints (Kulcsár 2004, 359).

¹¹ The proportionate population of Romanians in eighteenth-century Transylvania was for instance studied at the end of the 19th century by Nicolae Togan (see Togan 1898), at the beginning of the 20th century by Augustin Bunea (see Bunea 1901), between the two world wars by Virgil Ciobanu (see Ciobanu 1926), and in the 1960s and 1970s by Natalia Giurgiu (see for example Giurgiu 1966, 55-66; Giurgiu 1972).

¹² For different historic types of legitimacy see Ferrero (2001), for the interpretation of Ferrero's legitimacy-understanding see Bibó (1990, 313-316), and for the applications by Bibó of Ferrero's legitimacy-principles see Kupa (2009, 129-130).

¹³ For the topic of the one-hundredth anniversary of the Southern Hungarian counties that was celebrated in 1879, a monograph of 500 pages was published (Szentkláray 1879, XI). Szentkláray's relevant works on the Banat of Temes are still authentic. See O'Reilly (2003, 96 and 99).

¹⁴ The livestock theft theme of the Rumanian pastors has appeared upon numerous occasions in the century-old historic discourse. For this see Hunfalvy (1894, 204-207), Moldován (1913, 17-18), Moldován (1895, 241), Fekete Nagy (1941, 112), Makkai (1943, 416-417), Jakó (1943, 529), Berlász (1943, 589), Szabó (1990, 142), Gáldi-Makkai 1941, 42-43), Makkai (1989, 59). The livestock theft theme survived the Second World war and even the Cold War as well. See Mazower (2004, 63-64), and Prévelakis (2007, 177).

¹⁵ "Is it not the same type of danger that threatens the German settlers in case of frequent Turkish invasion, if they were left among Rumanians?" (Szentkláray 1891, 11).

¹⁶ István Szabó (1990, 142) referred to the Viennese Court's mistrust in connection with Rumanians in the Banat.

¹⁷ They were exempted from paying half of the royal taxes, the grain, sheep and calf tithe and farming and transporting wood for three years. They had to pay for seed grain in monthly instalments, and received 100 loads of hay for feeding animals. They were allowed to take the building material of the houses with them or could sell it and were allowed to take young fruit trees from the garden (Szentkláray 1891, 17).

¹⁸ There were problems with the early land cultivation of the German settlers in Banat. The settlers did not have skills for farming and the main organizer, Count Mercy, had to force them to cultivate land (Borovszky 1914, 305).

¹⁹ In another of his works Szentkláray (1879, 207) refers to Joseph II's opinion of 'Serbs and Rumanians as being unsympathetic towards the latter, and as even including cruel criticism. The emperor in his memoirs mentioned the Rumanian people's "indescribable ignorance" and "servile obedience", but in his opinion neither the Serbs nor the Rumanians had any knowledge of elementary education (ibid.). Joseph II's criticism survived and similar opinions could be encountered at the outbreak of World War I (Czirbusz 1913, 65). Krisztina Kulcsár (2004, 358-386) treats Joseph II's official reports (Relation) – and so also his criticism – in detail.

²⁰ Szentkláray (1879, 215-216) quotes a memorandum of Joseph II opposing the re-annexation of the Banat of Temes.

²¹ We could see that these fights occurred not only between the German and the Rumanian population, but among Rumanian villages.

²² There might have been a need for tolerance, because the population of the Banat of Temes comprised exclusively non-Hungarian ethnic groups. Lénárt Böhm (1867, 120) in his study on the Banat estimated the population to be 317,928 in total. More than half (181,639) were Rumanians, more than quarter (78,780) were Serbs, while Germans, along with Italians and French living there amounted to not even 15 percent (43,201).

72 References

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