

THE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF VIENNA AND ITS
CONNECTIONS TO SOUTHERN AND WESTERN EUROPE
BETWEEN 1812 AND 1857

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ABSTRACT

The article focuses on the history of the Viennese Agricultural Society, outlines its function in the promotion and dissemination of agriculture and agronomy studies, as well as in providing expert reports, and gives information about the social typology of its members. It also provides some data about its publications and other initiatives, among them the creation of a specialized library which also included several current journals (over twenty up to 1854), both national and international, on those topics. Moreover, the paper considers the network of book and letter exchanges that the Viennese Agricultural Society had with members of the Agricultural Societies of other Austrian regions and other European countries, in particular with French and Italian scholars.

Keywords: Agricultural Societies, network, agriculture studies, book exchanges, letter exchanges

LA SOCIETÀ AGRARIA DI VIENNA E LE SUE CONNESSIONI CON
L'EUROPA MERIDIONALE E OCCIDENTALE TRA IL 1812 E IL 1857

SINTESI

L'articolo traccia la storia della Società agraria viennese (rinata nel 1807 per iniziativa di Franz Ritter von Heintl), ne delinea la funzione avuta nella promozione e diffusione degli studi applicativi di agricoltura, oltre che nell'opera di consulenza, e fornisce dei dati sulla tipologia sociale dei suoi membri. Presta inoltre attenzione alle pubblicazioni e alle altre iniziative da essa promosse, fra cui la creazione di una biblioteca specializzata, che possedeva pure diversi periodici in materia, tanto nazionali che internazionali (oltre una ventina all'altezza del 1854). Si sofferma quindi sulla rete di scambi librari ed epistolari che la Società agraria viennese ebbe con membri delle Società agrarie delle altre regioni austriache e anche di altri Paesi europei, in particolare con studiosi francesi e italiani.

Parole chiave: Società agrarie, connessioni, studi di agricoltura, scambi librari, scambi epistolari

PRELIMINARY REMARK

When Peter Vodopivec asked me to write a paper on the subject “Pokrajine na ozemlju med Vzhodnimi Alpami in Jadranom v dialogu z drugimi kulturnimi področji (1740–1867)”, I recalled my research during the 1970s. At that time, I made use of the former library of the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture.¹ There I discovered a few books that had belonged to the old library of the former Agricultural Society of Vienna, founded in 1808 and closed in 1938. Societies of this sort would maintain close connections and send publications to each other. Therefore, I hoped to find many examples of contacts between the Viennese Society and similar societies in other parts of Europe. Meanwhile, the library of the Ministry of Agriculture merged with the so-called “*Cluster-Bibliothek*”, a more extensive library of certain Austrian ministries. A friendly female clerk showed me to an old cellar where we could only find a few books from the old library. Nothing else was left. Therefore, I had to resort to the archives – the archive of the Viennese Agricultural Society is a part of the “Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv” under the auspices of the “Österreichisches Staatsarchiv”.² Some of the society’s books and periodicals are kept in public libraries as well.

THE FOUNDING OF AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES

The first stage of the agricultural societies’ (*Ackerbaugesellschaften*) existence began in the 1760s and 1770s. They were founded by certain noble landlords, encouraged by Empress and Queen Maria Teresa. The societies undertook large-scale projects, but their members were neither interested nor educated in agricultural sciences. After a few years, the societies thus stopped operating. The first agricultural society in Lower Austria was founded in 1773 and disappeared in the 1780s (Bruckmüller, 1982).

As of 1800, new opportunities presented themselves for this kind of institutions. Between 1808 and 1845, new agricultural societies were founded – or those that still existed but were inactive were reactivated. In the so-called German-Slavic provinces (without Hungary), the following societies were founded and became active until 1847 (Cf. p. 102, Table 1; Blum, 1948, 292; Bruckmüller, 1977, 115–119; Hoffmann, 1952, 292).

As Jerome Blum wrote, “[...] the activities of these societies extended into every branch of agriculture that was found in the Monarchy. [...] Practically all of them published general agricultural journals, and also books and monographs dealing with some special subject or containing the prize-winning essay in contests sponsored by the society. The contents of their journals and occasional publications were marked by the desire to promote agriculture in order to derive greater profits from it. They were replete with reports of new products or new species of old ones,

1 I wrote a book belonging agricultural organisations in Austria (Bruckmüller, 1977).

2 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft.

Table 1: Memberships of agricultural societies, 1847.

Society	Year of foundation	Membership
Lower Austria (Vienna)	1807/1812	1644
Styria (Graz)	1819	3154
Upper Austria (Linz)	1845	2096 (1846)
Carinthia (Klagenfurt)	1764/65	633
Carniola (Ljubljana)	1767/1820	915
Littoral (Gorizia, Gorica)	1765/1816	494
Tyrol and Vorarlberg	1838	2011
Bohemia (patriot – econ. society)	1788	335
Moravia – Silesia	1770/1811	361

improved cattle breeds, new implements or machines, fertilizers, veterinary medicine, and so on. [...] Articles that had appeared in other journals and which gave information that was considered of value to members were reprinted in the society's own journal. The societies kept in touch with one another, exchanging information, and sending representatives to one another's meetings" (Blum, 1948, 139 f.).

At the initiative of Franz Ritter von Heintl (1769–1839),³ a very successful lawyer and landowner, the Agricultural Society of Vienna was founded for the second time. Emperor Franz II (I) approved this initiative on 20 October 1807. The wording of his approval was exceedingly positive: "[...] *mit vielem Vergnügen*" (with great pleasure). The new Society could thus be named the "*kaiserlich-königliche Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft in Wien*" (Schreibers, 1857; Richter, 1901; Häusler, 1933, 17; Kallbrunner, 1963; Bruckmüller, 1977; Bruckmüller, 1984).

The Viennese Society was supposed to be a sort of a central agricultural organisation – the most important agricultural society in the Habsburg Monarchy. Its members were indeed not only from Lower Austria, but from all the territories of the Habsburg Monarchy. The scope of its activities, however, was nevertheless limited to the crown land of Lower Austria. The initial list of its members included six princes (Esterhazy, Lichnowsky, Lobkowitz, Salm-Reifferscheid, Sinzendorf, and Schwarzenberg); 12 counts (Cavriani, Dietrichstein, Dietrichstein-Proskau, Esterhazy, Fünfkirchen, Hoyos, Larisch, Palffy, Pergen, Perlas, Ugarte, and Wrbna), two barons (Bartenstein and Schwitzen); a few knights and simple

3 Franz Ritter von Heintl was a successful lawyer and entrepreneur. In 1802, he bought two estates in Lower Austria, which he organised as model farms. As of 1806, he was engaged in the establishment of the Agrarian Society in Vienna, and afterwards he was a board member of the Society (cf. ÖBL, Vol. 2, 250–251).

noblemen, most often landowners (like the famous Franz Ritter von Heintl, etc.); and at last three bourgeois “commoners” – one of them a “doctor iuris”, another a “doctor” as well, while only the third one was an administrator of an estate (Schreibers, 1857, 7 f.). In 1812, the newly-organised Society elected Count Josef Dietrichstein as its president.⁴ Dietrichstein was a high-ranking nobleman and the so-called *Landmarschall*, the chief of the Lower Austrian territorial estates. Subsequently, the Society’s preferred membership included landlords as well as wealthier middle-class administrators, agriculturists, physicians, veterinaries, priests, as well as men who promoted the science of agriculture (Schreibers, 1857, 141).

A few years later, the structure of the Society’s membership was more in line with its expectations. In 1816, the Viennese Agricultural Society had 226 members. 93 or 41 % of them were landowners, mostly aristocrats (39 %). 8 % of the members were clergymen (important prelates, abbots, and provosts of numerous and economically strong monasteries. Thirty-seven men (or 16 % of members) were, in the broader sense, agricultural scientists; 13 % were public servants; while 12 % were servants at noble manors. This group would later expand. Peasants, however, could not become members (Schreibers, 1857, 148 f.; Bruckmüller, 1983, 67; Bruckmüller, 1984). If we compare the membership of the Viennese Society with that of the Agricultural Society of Carniola (*c.k. kranjska kmetijska družba*) in 1823, 38 of its 121 members were public servants; 27 noble landowners; 20 priests (most of them parsons); followed by 12 professors and teachers. These “erudite” individuals – together with 18 common landowners, manorial servants, bourgeois landowners, and freelancers – constituted the “bourgeois” part of the membership (Bruckmüller, 1984). Over the years, noble landowners lost their positions in all the societies, while the bourgeois part of the membership expanded. The functions in the societies, in particular, were assumed by the members hailing from the ranks of the bourgeoisie. The presidents of the Viennese Society, however, were always high-ranking aristocrats like Dietrichstein, Goëss, Colloredo-Mannsfeld, and Liechtenstein (Schreibers, 1857, 6–8).

THE VIENNESE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY IN ACTION

The Viennese Society opened a bureau in Vienna. After the renovation of the Niederösterreichisches Landhaus (around 1845), the Society acquired some facilities there, which also sufficed for a library and a museum. The society strived to ascertain the true state of agriculture in Lower Austria. In order to achieve this, it planned a so-called *Landesbeschreibung*: all parts of the land had to be described in detail. In 1816, the first descriptions of this sort, titled “*Verhandlungen der k. k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft in Wien*”, were published

4 ÖBL, Vol. 1, 185.

(Richter, 1901, 534). The Society engaged a Catholic priest, abbé Maximilian Harder, who constructed models of new agricultural machines. Today, many of those exquisite models can be seen in the *Technisches Museum* in Vienna. The Society did not stop at mere models, however: it had a mechanic build the harvesting machine invented by an Englishman named Smith. The mechanic constructed the machine following an article (complete with a design) published in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. In the summer of 1817, it turned out that this was a rather expensive machine (it cost 2478 florins). It could cope with the harvesting of rye and wheat, but could not handle oats (Schreibers, 1857, 40). The machine represented a fascinating initiative but was too complicated for broader use.

In 1818, a trial headed by Peter Jordan⁵ began in Vösendorf involving a new iron plough invented by the Lower-Austrian industrialist Severin Zugmayer (Schreibers, 1857, 41 f.). Jordan wrote a lengthy positive opinion, underlining its price in particular: Zugmayer's iron plough cost 30 florins W.W. (*Wiener Währung*),⁶ while the older "*gemeiner Bauernpflug*" (a common peasant plough) cost around 80 florins. In 1818, Zugmayer received an exclusive privilege for five years.⁷ In only a few years, Severin Zugmayer's hammer mill in the Lower Austrian Waldegg developed into a large factory (Sandgruber, 1989, 268 – a series of five pictures).

Furthermore, the Viennese Society focused on cattle and sheep exhibitions. Initially (in 1822), such exhibitions were only organised in Vienna, but after 1825, they also took place in many other towns and boroughs (Schreibers, 1857, 47, 50, 52, 53, 54). In 1832, the Society leased land in Breitensee (today in Vienna) for trials (Schreibers, 1857, 60 f.).

In 1817 and 1818, the Society discussed the possibility of establishing an agrarian school. A kind of school related to the imperial manor was located in Vösendorf, but it had to be renovated. The well-known agrarian school of Philipp Emanuel

5 Peter Jordan (1751–1827) was one of the most important agriculturalists in Austria, born into a poor family in Tyrol. The parson of his village, Sellrain, detected the rare intellectual capability of the young boy and educated him personally in the parish house. Jordan could thus study medicine in Göttingen. Afterwards he moved to Vienna, where he was a professor of natural sciences at the University of Vienna in 1783. In 1796, Jordan held the first lectures in rational agriculture. In 1806, Jordan was the director of two imperial manors near Vienna (Vösendorf and Laxenburg). As a member of the executive board of the Agricultural Society, he was engaged in many practical tests and wrote many opinions for the society. The fact that the Agricultural University of Vienna is located in the Peter-Jordan-Straße street is not an accident. Cf. Schreibers (1857, 2–5); ÖBL, Vol. III. 2, 132.

6 After the Napoleonic Wars, the Austrian Empire faced financial difficulties. Consequently, a double currency was introduced: 100 florins in coins (*Conventionsmünze* – CM) equalled 250 paper florins (*Wiener Währung* – WW).

7 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 13, Nr. 109: The *Commerz-Hofcommission* sent Zugmayer's letter to the Agricultural Society, requesting an opinion. Nr 121: The positive opinion of Peter Jordan. - *Ibd.*, Karton 14, 1819, Nr. 24: 1819, 3 March: The Lower Austrian Government wrote that His Majesty gave an exclusive privilege to Severin Zugmayer for a period of five years.

Fellenberg⁸ in Hofwyl (Switzerland) could serve as an example. The *Georgikon*, founded by Count Festetics in Keszthely (Hungary), represented yet another model. At that time, however, nobody believed that any of these schools had very much potential (Schreibers, 1857, 43). The very well-informed Society members regarded the project of an agricultural school for young peasants with scepticism. Nonetheless, Franz Ritter von Heintl instilled in the peasants a fine sense of economically beneficial things: if they could see their usefulness, they would imitate the innovations in the manorial fields.⁹

In 1818, the Viennese Society organised a few competitions. The first of these dealt with the so-called *Drehkrankheit*, a sheep disease (staggers); while the second competition focused on the lack of grasslands in Lower Austria (Schreibers, 1857, 49).

At that time, beet-based sugar production increased. In 1831, the Viennese Society sent Dr August Krause, a director in Dalmatia, to Germany and France to study the newest methods of beet cultivation and sugar production. In France, the Society bought 3.5 *Centner* (ca. 175 kg) of beet seeds. These were sown in the fields of the Staatz manor, owned by Count Colloredo-Mannsfeld, who was highly interested in agricultural innovations. The project represented the experimental base for Krause's book "*Darstellung der Fabrication des Zuckers aus Runkelrüben*" (Production of Sugar from Beets) (Schreibers, 1857, 57 f.).

In 1833, the Society discussed the question of whether wheat cultivation should surpass rye cultivation.¹⁰ At the time, winter crops consisted of 80 % rye and only 20 % wheat. The debate started because of the decreasing prices of rye. In the past, the price of rye had always amounted to around 70 % of the wheat price. Now the price of wheat was twice as high as the price of rye. This had resulted from the fact that in the years of steep rye prices between 1815 and 1817, potatoes had replaced rye bread as the most popular food of the people.

Corn cultivation was another question. In Lower Austria, corn cultivation was much rarer than in Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola, where it was more common. As wine production was widespread in Lower Austria, corn was bound to grow there as well. Count Colloredo regarded green corn as cattle feed – and only 150 years later, this would become a fact. As one of the Society members said, "*im Windischen*" (in the Slovenian-speaking lands, *na Slovenskem*), people had cultivated corn for a long time. However, one of the

8 Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg (1771–1844) was an agronomist and educator from Switzerland. In 1799, he bought the Hofwil manor near Bern together with his father. Fellenberg organised Hofwil as an example of modern agriculture. There he also founded various schools and educational institutions. Cf. https://www.bing.com/search?q=Fellenberg&src=IE-SearchBox&FORM=IESR4S&pc=EUPP_UE11 (26 January 2020) – Fellenberg was also a corresponding member of the Viennese Society (Schreibers, *Darstellung*, 153).

9 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 14, 1819, Nr. 44.

10 Verhandlungen der k. k. Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft, NF 3, Heft 1, 1835, 2 ff.

most renowned agriculturists Franz Ritter von Heintl stated that so much corn was cultivated and sold at modest prices in Hungary that this sort of cultivation could not be profitable in Lower Austria.¹¹

The Society founded new journals. As of 1838, it issued an economic calendar. These sorts of publications were exceedingly popular in the country, and almost all societies published such calendars (Schreibers, 1857, 74). As of 1845, the Society published the “*Landwirtschaftliches Wochenblatt*” (Agricultural Weekly). This periodical informed the people of the prices of crops, cattle, and the like in the most important towns with agricultural markets. It also wrote about the problems involved in introducing agricultural innovations to peasants. An administrator of the Altenburg monastery wrote that if the peasants who had to do compulsory work – the so-called *robot* – arrived with their old and unwieldy, heavy ploughs, he would let them use his new iron ploughs so that they could understand the advantages of this new technical achievement, in line with the saying “*verba docent exempla trahunt*” (Bruckmüller, 1977, 75).

SOCIETIES NETWORK

All agricultural societies promoted useful innovations, new crops, better livestock, cattle and sheep, new forms of cultivation, and buildings for peasants and livestock. For this reason, they would not only organise meetings for their members but also assemblies for peasants who were not members of societies. In some countries, such meetings were called “*Feldpredigt*” (field sermon, preaching in the field). On the other hand, societies had to find the most important innovations, which then needed to be examined and disseminated. Books, certain types of periodicals, libraries, museums, and meetings were the most common media of spreading innovations. The societies developed an information network to discover the most useful agricultural innovations, and they would send their publications to other societies. In this way – as well as by purchasing books and receiving donations from members – an extensive specialised library was soon assembled. It is not surprising that most of the books, calendars, yearbooks, and journals originated from the societies in the Habsburg Monarchy and the German Federation (Deutscher Bund). A lively exchange existed between Vienna and the societies in Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Saxonia, Moravia (Brno), Bohemia (Praha), as well as with Bavaria, Hesse, Celle, Silesia, etc.¹² General Consul Johann Acerbi even sent a rather exotic parcel from Alexandria: a seed from an unknown tree.¹³

11 Verhandlungen der k. k. Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft, NF 3, Heft 1, 1835, 9 ff.

12 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Band 108, Index Nr. 7, 17, 29, 88, 104, 1650, 194, 274, 287, 370, 402, 472 (Einladung zum Oktoberfest 1828 nach München!), 473, 483, 514, usw.

13 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Band 108, Index Nr. 330.

Naturally, the Carniolan Agricultural Society was a partner of the Viennese Society: they would keep exchanging publications. In 1828, the Carniolans sent a model of a Yorkshire kiln for burning lime, which represented a fine addition to the collection of models in Vienna.¹⁴ The Carniolans also sent their calendar for the year 1829, and the Viennese Society expressed its gratitude. In 1854, the “*Allgemeine Land- und forstwirtschaftliche Zeitung*”, the newspaper of the Viennese Society, reported on the May 1854 meeting of the Carniolan Society, where the drainage of the marshes near Ljubljana was discussed. It also distributed 2,000 copies of a book on agriculture in the language of Carniola: Slovenian. Until that time, such a book had been missing (“*da bis jetzt ein derartiges Werk gänzlich fehlte*”).¹⁵

It is impossible to enumerate all the examples of contacts between the Viennese Society and other agricultural societies. As an example, let us refer to a report of the ruling board (“*beständiger Ausschuß*”) of February 1844. The committee reported about the more or less interesting contacts with the government and other societies, as well as referred to a list of books and treatments, provided by other societies or individuals (Verhandlungen der k. k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft n. s. 1, 1844, 171–187). The list began with printed documents – the deliberations on the 4th meeting of Italian erudites in Padua (1842), sent by Professor Visiani in Padua.¹⁶ Books about Styrian viticulture and the handling of land registers were listed in the second and third place. The society received the new volumes of *Pomologie française*, edited by Poiteau, as a gift from Count Colloredo-Mannsfeld.¹⁷ After two Austrian publications, we come across the second French work: a book about the meeting of French wine producers in Bordeaux, sent by its author Mr Guillory, president of the industrial society in Angers (a well-known local entrepreneurial family). Abbé Francesco Zantedeschi¹⁸ from Venezia sent a booklet titled *Dell’influenza dei raggi solari rifratti dai vetri colorati sulla vegetazione delle piante e germinazione de semi*. Count Peter de Goëß sent four articles about horticulture and pomology in France, written by Jean-Paul Vibert from Angers.¹⁹ An article about agriculture in the Republic of San Marino, written by Captain Brizi and published in the Tuscan

14 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Band 108, Index f. d. Jahre 1828 und 1829.

15 Verhandlungen der k. k. Verhandlungen der k. k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft in Wien, als Beiblatt zur Nr. 14 der Allgemeinen Land- und Forstwirtschaftlichen Zeitung vom 15. 7. 1854, 54.

16 Roberto de Visiani a.k.a. Robert Visiani (1800 Šibenik – 1878 Padua) was a physician and botanist. Together with thirty collaborators, he founded the “Flora Dalmatica” – the greatest botanical collection regarding Dalmatia. It is kept in Padua. Cf. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roberto_de_Visiani.

17 Pierre Antoine Poiteau (1766–1854) was a French botanist who would make beautiful illustrations. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_Antoine_Poiteau.

18 Francesco Zantedeschi (1797–1873) was an Italian priest and physicist, eventually a professor in Padua. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francesco_Zantedeschi.

19 Jean Pierre Vibert (1777–1866) was a French rosarian, one of the founders of the Société d’Horticulture de Paris in 1827. In 1839, he moved his nursery to a warmer climate in Angers. Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Pierre_Vibert.

agricultural journal, arrived from Italy as well. More books and journals arrived from authors in Bohemia, Moravia, Bavaria, etc.

At the same time (1843–1844), the Viennese Society received 19 journals, calendars, etc., especially from the societies from Hungary, Carniola, Hesse, Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Prussian-Silesia, Moravia, St. Petersburg (the Imperial Russian Free Economic Society), Dijon (agricultural society *de la cote d'or*), Mecklenburg, the Grand Duchy of Baden, and Milan (*L'economista*, red. by Antonio Cattaneo).²⁰ In 1854, 23 “laufende Journale” (regular journals) were counted. One of these was from Paris (*Annales de l'agriculture française par Tesnier*, Paris 1852/53); two from England (*Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, Jg. 1853/54, and *The Farmers Magazine*, Jg. 1852/53); and one from Northern Italy, which was also part of the Habsburg Monarchy in those times (*Giornale agrario lombardo-veneto dell'anno 1852*). The others came from the various lands of the Monarchy or from the other member states of the German Federation (*Deutscher Bund*).²¹ In 1857, the library of the Viennese Society expanded: it now consisted of 3,227 books in 8,111 volumes (Schreibers, 1857, 293).

MEMBERS NETWORK

The new agricultural network was first established by the members of agricultural societies. The Viennese Society had two sorts of members: full members (“*wirkliche Mitglieder*”) and corresponding members (“*correspondierende Mitglieder*”). The Viennese Society’s list of full members after its reconstruction in 1812 included numerous princes (e.g. Liechtenstein, Metternich, Lobkowitz, Palffy, etc.), counts (Cavriani, Chorinsky, Colloredo, Dietrichstein, Festetics, etc.), other noblemen (the barons Bartenstein, Doblhoff-Dier, etc.), bishops, abbots and provosts, but also “bourgeois” directors of manors, professors, and other famous men. As an example, we should underline Johann Burger (1773–1842), a professor of agriculture in Klagenfurt (Celovec). He was a physician interested in agricultural innovations, and therefore he leased a small manor near Klagenfurt. After 1820, his function as a public servant took him to Trieste and other parts of Northern Italy. Eventually, he moved to Vienna. Similarly as Albrecht Thaer, Burger wrote the two-volume textbook titled “*Lehrbuch der Landwirtschaft*” (1819/21), which was translated into various European languages: Polish, Russian, Swedish, French, and English.²²

20 Antonio Cattaneo (1786–1845); pharmacist, lawyer, chemist, and editor of books and journals about economic problems, especially those related to agriculture. In 1842, he started publishing *L'Economista. Giornale di agricoltura teorico-pratica diragioneria, amministrazione, tecnologia, commercio, ecc.* Cf. [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-cattaneo_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/antonio-cattaneo_(Dizionario-Biografico)).

21 Verhandlungen der k. k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft in Wien, supplement Nr. 14 der Allgemeinen Land- und Forstwirtschaftlichen Zeitung vom 15. 7. 1854, 56 ff.

22 ÖBL Vol. 1, 2, 129.

Corresponding members network

The role of corresponding members in the new agricultural networks needs to be discussed as well. As of 1812, Albrecht Thaer, Germany's most famous agricultural scientist, was also a corresponding member of the Viennese Society (Schreibers, 1857, 153). Thaer (1752–1828) was an avid supporter of the humus theory of plant nutrition. Born in Celle, he completed medical studies in Göttingen. Afterwards, he practised as a physician in Celle. His agricultural studies began in his own garden. Eventually, he bought a larger field to perform experiments. He paid considerable attention to the cultivation of herbage feed, root crops, and especially potatoes; he would most vehemently defend the latter against numerous opponents and antagonists. His work on English husbandry, well received in Germany and England, was published soon thereafter. Thaer's fame as an agriculturist who put the science to practice spread all over Europe. In 1804, he went to Prussia, as King Frederick William III invited him to take up residence in his kingdom. There, his plan of founding a school, which attracted many distinguished visitors, was finally implemented. His written works further contributed to his fame, and the sovereigns of Russia, Prussia, and many others knighted him.²³ In 1857, his son Albrecht Philipp Thaer (1784–1863) was a corresponding member of the Viennese Society as well (Schreibers, 1857, 329).

The comparison between the list of members from 1812 with that of 1857 reveals that the number of corresponding members increased considerably, not only inside the Habsburg Monarchy but also abroad. As Austria presided over the *Deutscher Bund* (German Federation) between 1815 and 1866, numerous corresponding members hailed from German states like Prussia, Saxonia, Bavaria, Baden, etc.

In this article, however, we will take a closer look at the cultural connections between Central Europe, the South, and the West. As an example, let us examine the corresponding members of the Viennese Society in France. In 1857, the French corresponding members included the following (Schreibers, 1857, 327–330):

- Barral, editor of the *Journal d'agriculture* in Paris;²⁴
- Bryas, Charles (1820–1879), Marquis de, landowner of the Taillant domain;²⁵
- Crespel de Lisse, owner of a sugar production establishment in Arras;
- Daurier, August, director of the *Imperial domain* and sheep folds of Rambouillet;

23 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albrecht_Thaer (26 January 2020).

24 Jean-Augustin Barral, 1819–1884, was a French chemist, physician, and agronomist. One of his notable achievements was the analysis of the composition of nicotine (used in tobacco administration). Together with Jacques Alexandre Bixio, he founded the *Journal d'agriculture* in 1837. He also published numerous articles in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* magazine, etc. vgl. https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Augustin_Barral and https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Augustin_Barral (25 January 2020).

25 Published *Etudes pratiques sur l'art de Dessécher. Partie 4, Voyage en Angleterre en Irlande, en Écosse et dans le pays de Galles / par Charles Bryas* in 1857.

- Decaisne, professor of agriculture at the *Jardin des plantes* garden in Paris;²⁶
- Geoffroy St. Hilaire, Isidor, professor of zoology in the *musée des Jardins de plantes* museum in Paris, president of a new livestock society, etc.;²⁷
- Gourcy, Conrad, count, landowner in Paris. He wrote a few books describing his agricultural tours of various European countries;
- Guillory M, (senior), president of the Angers industrial society;
- Hardy, A., director of the Imperial Gardens in Algiers. As of 1832, A. Hardy planned the new botanical garden in Algiers;
- Hervé de Kergorlay, count, Member of Parliament, landowner in Paris;²⁸
- Moll, professor of agriculture at the conservatory of arts and crafts in Paris;
- Odart, count, honorary president of the wine production society in Angers and Bordeaux, landowner in Dorée near Tours;²⁹
- Robinet, member of the central society for agriculture in Paris;
- Vicaire, general director of the Imperial Domains in France;
- Vilmorin, chief of the house Vilmorins and Andrews in Paris;³⁰

Apparently, the corresponding members of the Viennese Society in France consisted of prominent agriculturalists, scientists, or entrepreneurs almost exclusively. French innovations arrived to Vienna as early as in the 1810s. The Austrian Government would often ask the Society for an opinion about the new French agricultural methods. In 1818, the government thus asked for an opinion about a proposition by B. Paisier in Paris. Paisier designed a special machine for making flour or meal from horse chestnuts. Paisier's proposal was motivated

26 Joseph Decaisne (1807–1882), French botanist. https://species.wikimedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Decaisne (25 January 2020).

27 Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire (1805–1861), French ethnologist and zoologist, M.D., *Propositions sur la monstruosité* (1829), teacher of zoology, etc., in the *École pratique des hautes études* school. In 1833, he was a member of the *Académie des sciences* academy in Paris. In 1840, he was the inspector of the *Académie des sciences*. In 1854, Isidore Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire founded the *Société nationale d'acclimation* society in Paris. In 1855, he was a member of the *Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher Leopoldina* academy; while in 1856, he was a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isidore_Geoffroy_Saint-Hilaire (25 January 2020).

28 Jean-Florian-Hervé, comte de Kergorlay (1803–1873), was a lawyer, agriculturalist, and French politician. Cf. https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herv%C3%A9_de_Kergorlay (25 January 2020).

29 Possibly Alexandre-Pierre Odart (1778–1866), a well-known enologist, also “Count Odart”.

30 Pierre-Philippe-André Levêque de Vilmorin (30 November 1776 – 21 March 1862), more commonly known as Philippe André de Vilmorin, was a renowned French horticulturist. He was the eldest son of Philippe-Victoire Levêque de Vilmorin (1746–1804), founder of a commercial agricultural establishment. He studied at the Pont-le-Voy college and subsequently in Paris, and he took over the company after the death of his father. His travels to England in 1810, 1814, and 1816 allowed him to personally witness the advances in English horticulture and agriculture and contributed to his active interest in cereals, vegetables, forestry, and ornamental as well as exotic plants. In 1815, Vilmorin established Vilmorin-Andrieux et Cie, which ultimately became one of the world's largest suppliers of plants. In 1821, he purchased the Domaine des Barres (measuring 283 hectares), where he created an experimental forest. Parts of that forest have now become the Arboretum National des Barres. Vilmorin died at Barres on 21 March 1862. Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippe_Andr%C3%A9_de_Vilmorin (26 January 2020).

by the overall price increase between 1815 and 1817. In 1818, the weather was once again normal, and the prices of cereals fell to more reasonable levels. Peter Jordan wrote not only about this fact but also about new machines – especially the one constructed by the Viennese mechanic Johann Josef Prechtel (1778–1854), who founded the new academy of technical studies (*Polytechnikum*), the first technical “university” in Central Europe.³¹ Jordan also cited a French essay by Gallot, published in 1776 in the “*Mémoires de la Société de médecine de Paris*”, unknown to (or not cited by) Paiser. Paiser’s petition for a monetary allowance was rejected.³² In 1819, the *Hofkriegsrat* (Ministry of War) sent a note from a commercial journal from Milan, stating that a Frenchman named Martin de Lyle had invented a new sowing machine and asking Jordan for an opinion. Initially, the Society had to inquire about the new machine in France. However, it was only a box with holes, worn by the sower. Through the holes, the seeds would fall to the ground. As Jordan soon established, sowing by hand was more economical.³³ The *Commerzien-Hofstelle* (Ministry of Commerce) published the work “*Mémoire sur la conversation des bles*” by Monsieur Artigues.³⁴ The *Hofkanzlei* (Ministry of the Interior) sent a communication about an agricultural improvement from the *Conseil d’agriculture* council in Paris (1819).³⁵ In 1819, the Society received a booklet from Paris, in which Monsieur Deseroisilles promoted a new kind of storage for cereals in an article titled “*Méthodes tres simple pour preserver les blés etc.*”. The author proposed towers twelve metres tall that opened at the bottom. Peter Jordan criticised Deseroisilles for his lack of knowledge about the storage of cereals in tubes. Monsieur Fagot had already proposed this method in the 18th century.³⁶ In 1820, the Society received a report about a new windmill called “*Vélovoile*”, which supposedly outperformed the windmills from the Netherlands.³⁷ Marquis de la Martiziere was named as the inventor.³⁸ In 1820, Monsieur Lévassieur requested an exclusive privilege for 15 years for the whole Habsburg Monarchy for the production of a new kind of artificial fertiliser. Monsieur Andelle from Paris intervened with the Austrian Government regarding the dissemination of his spinning machine for long wool, and the government asked the Viennese Society for an opinion.³⁹ Finally, Krause’s journey to France and its impact on sugar beet cultivation have been mentioned above.

The Society’s archives contain many documents about Italian affairs and personalities. In 1818, Giovanni Battista de Monaldi sent a special kind of “Turkish

31 Cf. ÖBL Vol. VIII, 251 f. Cf. also https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Joseph_von_Prechtel.

32 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 12, 1818, Nr. 30 und Nr. 53.

33 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 14, 1819, Nr. 40 (Zuschrift vom HKR vom 24. 4. 1819).

34 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Band 105, Index 1820 und 1821, Nr. 41 (1820).

35 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Band 105, Index 1820 und 1821 (zu 1820).

36 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 15 1819, Nr. 107.

37 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 15, 1819, Nr. 136.

38 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 15, 1819, N.

39 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Band 108, Index 1828/29, Nr. 141 (1829).

wheat” (corn) seeds, called “cinquantino” because of the variety’s short maturation time. Monaldi also sent *sorgo* (millet) seeds. In his detailed opinion of 6 June 1818, Heintl noted a climate problem – Lower Austria would be too cold for these crops.⁴⁰ In 1820, the Society received an essay written by Angelo Cesaris⁴¹ about the machine for breaking flax, invented by Christiani.⁴² In 1829, Count Giovanni Baroni-Corado sent an article on mulberry tree cultivation.⁴³

INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL NETWORKS: THE ROLE OF ENGLAND

The United Kingdom was the most advanced country in terms of agriculture. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the ties between the Society of Vienna and Great Britain. It is very interesting that the Viennese Society undertook and completed the German translation and publication of one of the most well-known books about English agriculture: John Sinclair’s “The Code of Agriculture”. In his pioneering work *Statistical Account of Scotland* in 21 volumes, Sir John Sinclair of Ulbster, 1st Baronet (1754–1835), was the first to use the word “statistics” in the English language. After studying law at the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow and Trinity College, Oxford, he completed his legal studies at Lincoln’s Inn in London in 1774. In 1770, he had inherited his father’s estates and had no financial need to work. In 1780, he was returned to the House of Commons (until 1811). In Edinburgh, he established a society for the improvement of British wool and was instrumental in the creation of the Board of Agriculture, of which he was the first president. Sinclair was a proponent of new agricultural methods, and large tracts of land on his Caithness estate were let out to tenants who kept new breeds of livestock such as Cheviot sheep. He was a member of most of the continental agricultural societies, a fellow of the Royal Society of London and the Royal Society of Edinburgh, a member and sometimes president of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, etc. He was the author of the books “Statistical Accounts of Scotland”; “History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire”, 1784; “The Code of Health and Longevity”, 1807; and “Code of Agriculture”, 1819. Sinclair, a corresponding member of the Viennese Society, encouraged a translation of his book into German.⁴⁴ It was eventually translated by Joseph von Schreibers and titled “*Grundgesetze des Ackerbaues, nebst Bemerkungen über Gartenbau, Obstbaumzucht, Forstkultur und Holzpflege, von Sir John Sinclair, Gründer der königlichen Gesellschaft des Ackerbaues in Großbritannien, auf*

40 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 12, 1818, Nr. 67.

41 Angelo Cesaris – Angelo Giovanni de Cesaris (1749–1832), Jesuit, Astronomer, in 1775 Begründer der Effemeridi di Milano – cf. https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelo_Cesaris.

42 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Band 105, Index 1820 und 121, Nr. 40.

43 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Band 108, Index 1828/29, Nr. 53 und 394 (zu 1829).

44 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 13, 1818, Nr. 111. Hier auch eine Liste der Subskribenten.

Veranlassung der k. k. Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft in Wien aus dem Englischen übersetzt von Joseph Ritter von Schreibers, Mitglied der Gesellschaft". Joseph Ludwig von Schreibers (1793–1873) was a junior member of the Viennese Society. The translation was discussed at the meeting on 6 June 1818.⁴⁵ The members gave comments, as Sinclair's book was based on the English experience and thus valid only for British agriculture, as Peter Jordan correctly noted.⁴⁶ Later, Schreibers was the first historiographer of the Viennese Society and also wrote the book "*Darstellung der Gründung und Entwicklung der k. k. Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft in Wien*" (Wien 1857).

At that time, the Viennese Society and England maintained close connections. In 1818, the English "Board of Agriculture" sent a few copies of the book "On the Use of Salt for Agricultural Purposes" by the Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair, Baronet, to the Viennese Society.⁴⁷ In 1819, Henry Oswald Weatherly (1770–1843), a corresponding member of the Viennese Society in London, sent a few publications, for example one about public streets and another about a new machine that could separate the more fibrous parts from the more ligneous parts of flax or hemp ("Decorticator").⁴⁸ In 1829, the Society discussed a new system of agriculture, invented by General Beatson.⁴⁹ In this regard, Schreibers wrote that this new system of agriculture "without dung, plough, and fallow" had to be regarded as "*Verirrungen des menschlichen Geistes*" (an aberration of the human spirit) (Schreibers, 1857, 57). In 1837, the Viennese Society published an important book by Vincenz Kollar, titled "*Belehrung über die gemeinschädlichen Insecten und über die Abhilfe der durch sie entstandenen Verheerungen*", followed by "*Naturgeschichte der schädlichen Insecten*", which was translated into different languages, including English

The aforementioned list of corresponding members in 1857 only includes the following men from England or Scotland:

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- 45 Joseph Ludwig von Schreibers, son of a military administrator and cousin of the great botanist J. F. de Jacquin, studied law and, as of 1814, agriculture with Peter Jordan in Vöslau. In 1817, he was elected as a full member of the Viennese Society. Between 1848 and 1850, he worked at the Ministry of Agriculture. Schreibers was also engaged in the promotion of *Wechselseitige Brandschadensversicherung*. Cf. ÖBL Vol. XI, 198–199.
- 46 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 13, 1818, Nr. 52 and 111. In August 1819, the completion of the book was discussed, cf. ÖStA, AVA, Karton 15, 1819, Nr. 132. Peter Jordan criticised the simple translation of Sinclair's book, as the English experience could not be directly applied to continental agriculture. Cf. also ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 15, Nr. 108.
- 47 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 13, 1818, Nr. 130.
- 48 ÖStA, AVA, Landwirtschaftsgesellschaft, Karton 15, 1819, Nr. 97.
- 49 Alexander Beatson (1758–1830) was an officer in the East India Company's service, governor of St. Helena, and an experimental agriculturist. He was the second son of Robert Beatson, Esq., of Kilrie, Fife County, Scotland, and a nephew or cousin of Robert Beatson. He attained the rank of colonel on 1 January 1801. After leaving India, Beatson was the governor of St. Helena from 1808 to 1813. After his return to England, he devoted much attention to agricultural experiments at Knole farm and Henley in Frant, Sussex, near Tunbridge Wells. He became major-general in July 1810, lieutenant-general in June 1814, and died on 15 October 1830. Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Beatson, 26 January 2020.

- Charles Gordon, secretary of the Scottish Agricultural Society in Edinburgh;
- The Duke of Richmond, president of the Scottish Agricultural Society in Edinburgh;⁵⁰
- Charles Sanderson, landowner and industrial entrepreneur in Sheffield, England;
- Wilson, professor of agriculture at the University of Edinburgh;⁵¹

As we can see, in 1857, the connections between the Viennese Society and Great Britain were no longer as close as they had been before.

CONCLUSION

The Agricultural Society of Vienna was the most famous and important agricultural society in the Habsburg Monarchy. Founded in 1807 but active only as of 1812, its primary task was to disseminate agricultural innovations: it had to search for new methods of agriculture and examine them. The Austrian Government often called on the Society to provide opinions about the innovations it was familiar with. This was a way of attaining knowledge about new crops, machines, and agricultural methods. The numerous books, booklets, calendars, and journals, which the other societies would send to the Viennese Society, represented sources of knowledge as well. In this way, the Viennese Society did not only gather information but also assembled a rapidly-growing library. Journals and books did not only arrive from the societies within the Habsburg Monarchy (and its Italian parts), but also from the other German states as well as from the Netherlands, Denmark, Russia, England, and France. A special bond between the many societies was forged by the members abroad – the so-called corresponding members. As we have outlined above, these members liked to send their works to the Viennese Society. Our look at the exceedingly interesting Viennese Society ends in 1857, when the relations with France were closer than with Great Britain.

50 Presumably, this was Charles Gordon-Lennox, the 5th Duke of Richmond, KG, PC (1791–1860), styled Earl of March until 1819, a British peer, soldier, politician, and a prominent Conservative. Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Gordon-Lennox,_5th_Duke_of_Richmond (26 January 2020).

51 Without his first name, it is impossible to identify the man with the surname “Wilson”.

DUNAJSKA KMETIJSKA DRUŽBA IN NJENE POVEZAVE Z JUŽNO IN ZAHODNO EVROPO MED 1812 IN 1857

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POVZETEK

*Avtor obravnava nastanek, razvoj, delovanje in domače ter mednarodne povezave Dunajske kmetijske družbe. Dunajska kmetijska družba je bila osrednja in najpomembnejša med kmetijskimi družbami v ne ogrskem delu habsburške monarhije v prvi polovici 19. stoletja. Podobne družbe so s namreč ustanovili tudi v številnih habsburških deželah, denimo na Kranjskem, Koroškem, Štajerskem, Tirolskem, Češkem, Moravskem in drugod. Nastajati so začele že v terezijanskem obdobju, vendar je njihovo delovanje zamrlo in so jih ponovno aktivirali v začetku 19. stoletja. Tako je bila dunajska ponovno aktivirana leta 1807, s svojim delom pa je zares začela leta 1812. Njeni ustanovni člani so pretežno sodili v visoko in srednje plemstvo. Nekaj članov je prihajalo tudi iz vrst izobraženega in relativno premožnega meščanstva. V poznejših desetletjih pa se ji je pridružilo tudi več zemljiških posestnikov, ki so si prizadevali za modernizacijo kmetijske proizvodnje. Prav pospeševanje in modernizacija kmetijstva sta bila tudi glavna cilja kmetijskih družb. Med pomembne dejavnosti Dunajske kmetijske družbe so sodili: ugotavljanje stanja kmetijstva v Spodnji Avstriji in drugod v habsburških deželah, izboljševanje orodij in mehaničnih naprav, prirejanje živinorejskih razstav, izobraževalna potovanja članov v zvezi z inovacijami v kmetijstvu, uvajanje in promocija novih rastlin, denimo sladkorne repe in koruze, ter boljših pasem živine in seznanjanje z novimi pridelovalnimi metodami in tehnikami. Med najpomembnejše naloge je sodilo tudi širjenje nove vednosti. V tej zvezi so v družbi zbirali in prevajali agronomsko literaturo, recimo eno najpomembnejših agronomskih del prve polovice 19. stoletja *The Code of Agriculture* Johna Sinclaira, in izdajali ter z drugimi podobnimi družbami izmenjevali agronomske časopise. Agronomska literatura je prihajala tako iz nemškega, francoskega, angleškega kot tudi danskega in ruskega prostora. Dunajska kmetijska družba torej ni gojila živahnih stikov le z družbami iz habsburškega in nemškega prostora, temveč tudi s širšim evropskim prostorom, zlasti s Francijo in Anglijo. Zato med njenimi dopisnimi člani najdemo vrsto znanih francoskih in angleških agronomov.*

Ključne besede: kmetijske družbe, člani, kmetijski časopisi, inovacije, izmenjave

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