

# *Insecure boundaries*

## **Medical experts and the returning dead on the Southern Habsburg borderland**

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CERTIFICATE OF RESEARCH

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# Introduction

Let us start with three incidents.

While the great plague of 1738 was raging in the country, a surgeon denounced another surgeon at the Vienna Sanitary Court Commission for authorizing the posthumous execution of a vampire. The penalty for this 'superstitious' act was not small: guided by local militiamen, he was led to the quarantine station at Uypalanka, and was sentenced to serve there, in its frequented plague-hospital as long as the epidemic lasted.

Fifteen years later, around 250 kilometres from each other, two surgical commissions were filing their reports on the dead bodies they have just examined. While one of the reports went into great lengths disproving that vampires exist at all, the other attested to the guiltiness of the culprit corpse and contributed to its public execution on the towns' square.

An era and region which made it possible for such blatant oppositions to coexist within a single trade promises the researcher intensive conflicts, surprising strategies and agile manoeuvres as well as a pinch of the thrill of the bizarre. As it will be argued in this essay, the southern borderland area of the Habsburg Monarchy in the first half of the 18th century was exactly such a place and age. While the belief in returning dead and the ritual/social practices related to it had already had a many-centuries-old, established tradition, it was the special relations of the borderland region which made them visible and problematized them for different officials of the state administration. At the same time, these same relations posed considerable difficulties for these functionaries to fulfil their respective tasks by essentially leaving them alone, baffled in the face of strange phenomena, which they nevertheless had to interpret and react to. Focusing foremost on medical experts in some form of state-service, the present essay seeks to map the power-relations of different parts of this distressing but exciting world, to which western culture's perpetual fascination with vampirism owes its existence.

## Context

With the reconquest of the Hungarian Kingdom against the Turks has been coming to an end, the Habsburg Empire's southern border, roughly along the rivers Una, Sava, Danube and Cerna, became established. It was in this territory, inhabited mostly by Serbian, Romanian and to a lesser extent, German and Hungarian settlers, from which the first disturbing news about a series of strange deaths, attributed by locals to the activity of vampires, reached the central government. The reports concerned mostly Slavic communities, and narrated not only about an unknown, possibly contagious disease which had a rapid and fatal course, but local rites as well, in which corpses believed to be vampires were dug up, and if found in a healthy condition instead of corruption, were then executed posthumously in various ways.

Starting out in the 1720's as localized problems of the borderland, subsequent cases rapidly became known to wider and wider audiences: by the next decade, the vampire became not only a subject of ardent scientific debates, but one of the favourite topics of intellectual salons across Europe, while articles appeared about them in major European scientific and news-journals. In the texts which dealt with vampirism, various issues emerged: medical (e.g. the distinction between life and death or the aetiology of diseases) and theological ones (the power of the devil on Earth, the relation of vampires to questions of resurrection and uncorrupted saintly bodies etc.) as well as political matters, like the superstitious mindset of undereducated subjects.

## Literature overview

The secondary literature on 18th century vampirism is vast, and general accounts about the development of the historical, folkloric and literary figure of the vampire in European thought have been being published for decades now.<sup>1</sup> The studies of Gábor Klaniczay and Peter Mario Kreuter however, are especially valuable for us, since they give an overview of the cultural, intellectual and political context in which the theme of vampirism appeared and developed in 18th-century Habsburg Empire.<sup>2</sup> Within the specialized literature on the vampires of the Habsburg Monarchy, we may identify three main approaches: folkloric, medical and political.

Representatives of historical ethnography have long been dealing with folkloric creatures of different Slavic peoples, and have made observations on how they contributed to the figure of the vampire as it emerged in the Enlightenment. Since the early studies by Agnes Murdoci on Romanian folklore,<sup>3</sup> the most authoritative general dealing with the folkloric vampire is that of Peter Barber, but Peter Kreuter and Éva Pócs have also researched the topic in great depth, the latter especially focusing on its relation to demonic possession.<sup>4</sup>

Among the studies focusing on the medical aspects of the vampire-cases, some are interested

<sup>1</sup> Schroeder 1973.; Harmening 1983.; Pütz 1992.; Lecouteux 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Klaniczay 1990.; Klaniczay 2005.; Kreuter 2001/02.

<sup>3</sup> Murgoci 1919; 1926.;

<sup>4</sup> Barber 1988; Pócs 1997, 2001, 2012.; Kreuter 2001, 2005.;

in the relations of the reported cases to reality, and try to determine the actual biological-geological causes behind the uncorrupted state of corpses on the one hand and make an attempt to identify the possible disease which caused the reported deaths on the other.<sup>5</sup> The works of Magyar László András, a historian of medicine, are notable, because he positioned the different views expressed by 18th century participants of the (mostly German) medical debates about vampirism within their historical environment and has shown that the vampire offered an excellent battleground for two competing trends of medical theory, vitalism and the chemical approach.<sup>6</sup>

More relevant to our case are the studies which attempted to interpret vampirism within the frames of a discourse of colonisation. Jutta Nowosadtko emphasised that the emergence of vampires was a phenomenon of occupation in the sense that it was the occupying administrative structure of the Habsburg Empire which provided way for cases of revenants to become known.<sup>7</sup> Peter Kreuter has focused on the representations of vampires as ethnic minorities and noted tendencies of othering.<sup>8</sup> Peter Bräunlein summarized much of these concepts and reaffirmed the concept of 18th century vampirism as a markedly frontier-phenomenon.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Daniel Arlaud interpreted the vampire-hunting mission of the surgeon Georg Tallar in the middle of the century as an element in the broader policy of the enlightened state.<sup>10</sup>

It is visible from this brief literature overview that considerably more attention has been paid to the findings of the medical reports than to the authors themselves. The factors which influenced the way they constructed their own role and formulated their reports have not been researched in depth. Taking the studies mentioned last as a departing point, the present essay makes an attempt at applying a magnifying glass on this frontier-region and investigate the specific spheres of power and authority which shaped the formulation of the reports on vampirism. The exact mapping of these relations is a valid task, because much confusion exists even in the above mentioned literature dealing specifically with the topic of politics and vampires. It seems that basic, factual matters have to be cleared, otherwise the scholarly gaze on vampirism and state will remain hazy.<sup>11</sup>

The focus of the essay shall be two case studies, one centring on vampirism cases on Habsburg Serbia, the other on the Banat of the 1750's when Georg Tallar pursued his investigations. In order to get a closer picture of the circumstances of these reports, a minute reconstruction of the provenance of the documents will be carried out together with a careful analysis of the persons, places, administrative organs involved. In the course of writing, published collections of documents relating to vampirism as well as archival materials in the Vienna State Archives and the Hungarian National Archives have been used.

<sup>5</sup> Barber 1987.; and see especially articles written by physicians interested in medical history: Gómez-Alonso 1998.; Théodoridés 1998.; Reiter 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Magyar 1999. The author also published a short analysis of the activities of the surgeon Georg Tallar. Magyar 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Nowosadtko 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Kreuter 2002.;

<sup>9</sup> Bräunlein 2012.

<sup>10</sup> Arlaud 2007.

<sup>11</sup> Only to point out the bluntest of misconceptions: Arlaud 2007, dealing with Tallar's mission in the Banat assumes that it served van Swieten's famed tract on vampirism with the raw material of cases. In fact, van Swieten only relied on cases in Moravia, and nowhere does he make mention of Banat cases.

## Power through expertise: aspects of 18th century Habsburg statecraft

If one intends to interpret vampirism as a problem of ordering for Habsburg statecraft, the theory of ‘governmentality’, which has been articulated most prominently by Michel Foucault, is useful.<sup>1</sup> As it has been convincingly argued by several scholars since then, the 18th century was the age when ideas about the crucial role of economics and state science in social disciplining went into full blossom. Ordering and administering the state through knowledge and diligence were deemed to be key values by theoreticians of governance. In accommodating this theory to the Habsburg Monarchy, and more specifically to the reorganisation of the Hungarian Kingdom after the expulsion of the Turks, there are certain indispensable concepts, which have to be reflected upon. Notions such as *Einrichtungswerk*, cameralism and Polizey are all related to possible ways of ordering the stately institutions. The issue of how to reorganise the Hungarian Kingdom in an efficient and rational way already became an issue in court circles after the failed Ottoman siege of Vienna in 1683, when the hope of gaining the upper hand over the weakening Turkish Empire emerged. With the reconquest steadily going on, King Leopold II entrusted a court committee in 1688 with devising a plan for the reorganisation process. The committee was led by Leopold Kollonich, archbishop of Esztergom, leader of the Hungarian, later on the Aulic Treasury and secret advisor of the king; they handed in their report, the *Einrichtungswerk des Königreichs Hungarns* (The organisation of the Kingdom of Hungary) in 1689.<sup>2</sup>

The *Einrichtungswerk* was received with a fair amount of opposition on the part of Hungarian nobility for its disregard of local traditions, perhaps most importantly the taxation of the nobility, the propagation of the German language and a strict program of counter-reformation.<sup>3</sup> The plan never became implemented as a unified program, however, it was not this opposition which impeded its realisation, but the resistance of military court circles centred around the

<sup>1</sup> Foucault 1980.

<sup>2</sup> See the full text of the *Einrichtungswerk* in German with introductory essays in: Kalmár & Varga 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Evans 2006. 5.

Aulic War Council and General Caraffa, the governor of Transylvania. This circle found the measures advised by the committee insufficient and argued for a greater central control over the newly acquired lands and an enhanced role of the military in its organisation.<sup>4</sup>

Certain proposals of the *Einrichtungswerk* nevertheless did become realized, such as the re-organisation on the Hungarian Chancellery or certain economic measures, which were largely influenced by the contemporary German school of cameralism. Based to some extent on French mercantilist ideas, this school emphasised the role of the economy and more specifically the treasury (hence the name *cameral*) in developing an efficient state government. The importance of raising the incomes of the royal treasury, relying on trade (and reaching a positive balance), supporting urban industry and the need to reconstruct the economy and population of post-war territories were core cameralist programs devised to improve the situation in the Holy Roman Empire after the 30-years-war. Transmitted by German émigrés in Vienna, such as Wilhelm von Schröder (1640-88) and Johann Joachim Becher (1635-82) the applicability of these ideas on the devastated Hungarian economy after the Ottoman wars quickly gained popularity within Austrian cameral circles, to which Kollonich belonged.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, the exploitation of salt and metal mines, the incomes of which have always been major treasury incomes started immediately after the expulsion of the Turks, just like the programs of populating the deserted land with settlers of Slavic and German origins.<sup>6</sup>

The pursuit of mercantilism, a markedly imperialist economic theory was linked to the general imperialist mode in which Habsburgs monarchs conceived of the legitimacy of their rule. According to Evans,<sup>7</sup> this stoutly imperialist program was ill-fitted on the actual realities of the Hungarian Kingdom, which was not part of the Holy Roman Empire. The mismatch between the imperialist agenda and the Hungarian political tradition caused such resistance (culminating in the Rákóczi rebellion) that it basically impeded any real reforms towards an efficient government in the region. An important step towards strengthening the legitimacy of Habsburg rule came when the Hungarian diet accepted the 1723 *Pragmatica Sanctio*, which stated the tight relationship ('indivisibiliter ac separabiliter') of Hungary and the rest of the Habsburg monarchy, and also pronounced the legitimacy of the inheritance through the female line. With this act, the relations of the Austrian and the Hungarian states became more solid than in the previous decades, and it opened the way for the slow and gradual revisiting of certain parts of the *Einrichtungswerk*: the Hungarian diet also started to propose changes in a cameralist direction. Though no true reforms followed this cautious groping about, its role in paving the way for a favourable acceptance of the new monarch's plans in 1740 is undeniable.

The final success of Maria Theresa's reforms rested on the change in royal political tone: the queen's promise of tolerance, emphasis of the multinational nature of the realm and the respecting of local traditions gave her enough popularity among the Hungarian nobility to support her in the War of Austrian Succession and to give the initial support which her modernising plans

<sup>4</sup> Kalmár 1991. 496.

<sup>5</sup> Ingaro 2003. 92.

<sup>6</sup> Kalmár 1991. 489.

<sup>7</sup> Evans 2006. 11.

needed to get started. After the first timid steps, these plans gained momentum in the 1750's and especially the 1760's. The queen's governance, hailed by many as the start of modern state government in the Habsburg monarchy was again based on contemporary German cameralist state sciences, most notably the universities of Halle and Frankfurt, where cameralism was taught as a discipline. At the political-social level, the reforms entailed that 'the aristocratic and provincial oligarchy be supplemented by and reorientated as a centrally directed and standardized state service' with extended bureaucratic organisation and the heavy reliance on written forms.<sup>8</sup> The idea that social discipline should be reached not so much by the judiciary, as through governmental actions of policing (*Polizey*) was also part of this intellectual package. Policing meant a general way of good ordering to ensure the happiness and feeling of well-being among subjects of the realm: it included a great variety of fields, such as rationalizing local administration, tending for population politics, religious and education-related issues as well as supplying the subjects with enough bread and beer.<sup>9</sup>

The tension implied by the expression 'enlightened absolutism' (or even enlightened despotism), and the growing Hungarian resistance to the idea points at the difficulty of finding a solid source of legitimacy for such a system; in this respect, the work of Johann Sonnenfels (1733-1817) professor of *Polizey- und Kameralwissenschaften* at the Vienna University, later secret councillor of the queen, is notable. According to him, the legitimacy of the monarch is exactly rooted in his/her ability of good policing, that is, guaranteeing the convenience and safety of the subjects and thereby inspiring a love of fatherland them.<sup>10</sup> The need to locate the source of legitimacy was especially pressing from the 1760's onwards, since as a parallel process with the formation of Habsburg enlightened absolutism, its popularity among Hungarian nobility became almost entirely lost, culminating in total resistance to its most full-fledged and most harshly implemented form under Joseph II's rule.<sup>11</sup>

Be they related to the largely unfruitful early attempts of the *Einrichtungswerk*, or Maria Theresa's successful enlightened absolutist reforms, Habsburg attempts of ordering always paid stressed attention to the southern border-territories. The key-role of the region in state organisation was realised early on, and as another proposition of the *Einrichtungswerk*, which became realized - Kollonich already argued for its establishment as a separate militarized region in order to keep check not only on the Ottomans, but on the unruly Hungarian nobility as well.<sup>12</sup> The military frontier as an analytical tool has received considerable attention since Turner's original 1893 essay, 'The significance of the frontier in American history'.<sup>13</sup> As Jeremy Black, a leading military historian stated, frontier regions have proven to be of interest for military historians just as much for scholars of social and administrative history because 'they are places of compliance as well as control, opportunities for eliciting co-operation as well as for asserting power, for achieving success as well as waging war'.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Evans 2006. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Tribe 1984. 266-267.

<sup>10</sup> Kontler 2012. 89.

<sup>11</sup> Evans 2006. 14-18.

<sup>12</sup> Evans 2006- 12.

<sup>13</sup> Turner 1893.

<sup>14</sup> Black 2008.; Ellis & Eßer 2006. At this point the terminological usage has to be clarified. Throughout the essay, 'frontier' will be used to denote

From the point of view of stately control, the southern Habsburg borderland was fairly special, and though its different parts have shown a great range of diversity, the interesting mixture of direct central control and local autonomy seems to be a unifying factor. With the elimination of intermediary administrative and judiciary organs (private landlords, counties, Hungarian Treasury, Chancellery etc.) in the borderlands, the more direct control of the central institutions over these areas promised greater efficiency and hence could even prove to be suitable areas for experimenting with different administrative systems.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, exactly because of this more direct control, common people and in general, popular culture gained a greater visibility in the eyes of central authorities, and in turn, individuals of lower ranks could get into contact with higher administrative organs more easily.

As a further, and equally important aspect, the characteristic of borderlands as contact-zones not only worked between popular and elite culture and across ethnic cultures. The importance of 'contact zones' has recently been emphasised by historians of science as well: as it has been convincingly argued by Kapil Raj among others, the production of science is not restricted to the centres (be they geographical or intellectual): the digestion and classification of raw knowledge starts already there, on the contacts zones between cultures, where new information is first met, and the exact physical, intellectual, political circumstances within which encounter happens shapes the produced knowledge sent to the centres to a great extent.<sup>16</sup> In simple terms, not even primary observations are innocent. As it shall be shown in the essay, it was these special relations of the borderland region which helped the cases of vampirism gain their notoriety by annoying (and fascinating) both administrative (civil and military) organs and the general sensitivities of learned enlightenedness.

In relation to the production and spreading of knowledge, the role of personal networks also has to be mentioned.<sup>17</sup> Scholars of the Habsburg Enlightenment have shown that certain ideas of the *Aufklärung*, before it became a centrally supported agenda under Maria Theresa, had already been current along personal linkages, mostly in the form of a general anti-Baroque sentiment.<sup>18</sup> A characteristic group of the members of these personal networks have been people who had to travel a lot to reach the subject matter of their expertise: scientists (such as the theologian, state servant, physician and naturalist Samuel Köleseri the younger /1663-1732/), engineers engaged in industries (for example the mining-specialist Ignaz von Born /1742-91/), commercial agents (as the cartographer, naturalist and Venetian statesman Alberto Fortis /1741-1803/), as well as military officers (such as among others Joseph von Sonnenfels used to be). Leaving aside the fact that three out of these four personalities have published data on the history of vampirism<sup>19</sup> (and ascribing it to the bias of the author of the present essay), what is more to the point is the open-mindedness and critical gaze associated to travellers. People who have seen and experienced

the zones of the Habsburg Militärgrenze, the actual territories where frontier law was applied. At the same time, the expression 'borderlands' is a wider category comprising not only the military frontier proper, but all provinces along the 'border line' separating the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Monarchy, where some sort of special administration was enacted.

<sup>15</sup> See Kalmár 1991. and Marjanucz 2013. for the case of the Banat.

<sup>16</sup> Raj 2010. 11.

<sup>17</sup> For the role of different types of personal linkages and networks in the production of science see among others: Biagioli 1993.; Harris 1996.; Cook 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Evans 2006. 41-43.

<sup>19</sup> Köleséri 1709: 111-126.; Born 1774: 14.; Fortis [1774] 1778: 61-2.

many different things can take up the stance of the outsider and look at puzzling happenings more soberly. This must have been a factor on the level of the average soldier, or more importantly for our case, military surgeons as well.

Commerce, mining and waging war all made extensive use of cartography, and ‘mapping’ seems to be a recurring and useful concept in handling surgical examinations of vampires as well. Having initiated this chapter with Foucault, it so happens that he is revisited in the end: the French thinker pointed out that the anatomical ideas of the period in which our vampire cases happened (the first half of the 18th century) were based on the essentially ‘cartographic’ view of Morgagni, the Italian anatomist: the dissecting gaze of the pathological anatomist was looking for seats of disease in organs and tried to map the dissemination of the disease from there from organ to organ through arteries, ligaments, nerves etc. within the body. This view was different from the individualism of Galenic pathology<sup>20</sup> and its focus on humours and imbalances, and differed from that age also in the sense that surgical schools and anatomist did not lack corpses anymore. At the same time, it was also markedly different from the late 18th century practice, which was looking for small, uniform units of the body (tissues, membranes), and went about gathering knowledge about the body in a systematic way, and producing quantifiable, comparable knowledge of anatomy and pathology.<sup>21</sup>

The clinical turn and its close association with the state gaining control over the body of subjects<sup>22</sup> is hence a later development than our age. In the Hungarian Kingdom, the initiatives of medical policing (relying heavily on Sonnenfels's ideas) happened only in the second half of the century: in 1752 the fight against ‘quacks’ gained momentum with the establishment of the municipal health officer system, while the practice of midwives, physicians and surgeons became bound to exams/diplomas in 1748, 1754 and 1761 respectively.<sup>23</sup> In spite of all this, if it can be stated bluntly that cartography is not an innocent science,<sup>24</sup> then neither should we suppose that the pathological anatomy carried out by the investigators of vampire cases was immaculate as a newborn lamb: the examinations did happen under various influences of power, it is just that these pursued different agendas.

<sup>20</sup> According to Galenic pathology, disease as entity does not exist, and all sicknesses are products of an imbalance of bodily humours tailored for the individual patient.

<sup>21</sup> Foucault [1963] 2003. See especially *Chapter 8: Open up a few corpses*. 152-214.

<sup>22</sup> Foucault [1963] 2003.; Duden 1991., Lindemann 1999., French 2003.

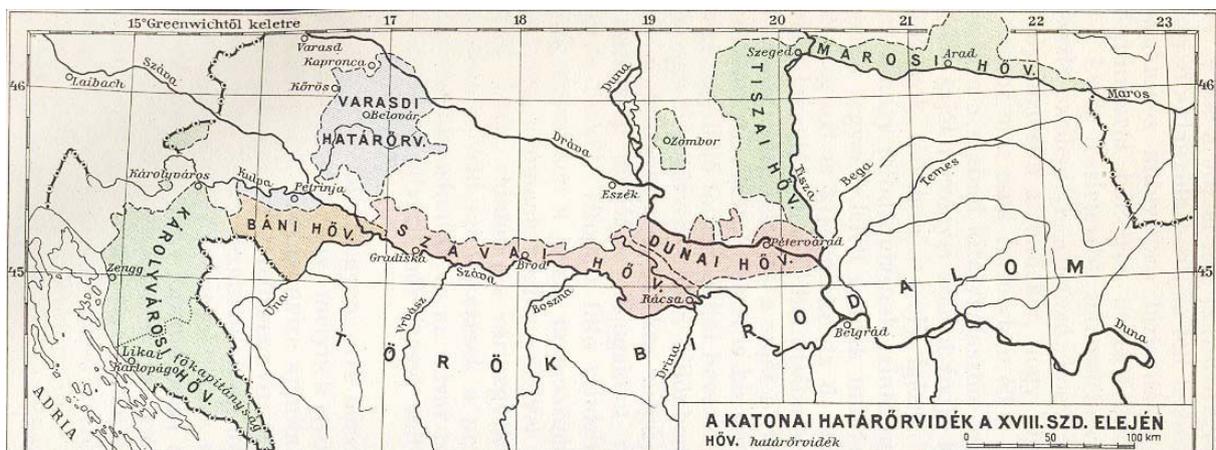
<sup>23</sup> To the issue of state control over healthcare in 18th century Hungary see for instance: Krász 2003, Simon 2005, Schulteis 2010.

<sup>24</sup> Evans 2006. 120-121. Evans calls it the ‘handmaiden of state authority’.

# The space of action: Administrative plasticity on the Habsburg borderland

A number of paragraphs have been devoted in the previous chapter to the notion of the frontier, an idea which became a highly topical issue after the expulsion of the Turks from the Hungarian Kingdom. The reconquest meant a substantial territorial gain to the Habsburg government: with the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz,<sup>25</sup> the Ottomans had to hand over Transylvania, as well as most of Hungary and Croatia to the Habsburgs. The organisation of the new territories however presented the government with a greatly complex administrative task and there was an especially pressing need to create a new border-defence system along the new southern limits of the empire, which now roughly followed the rivers Una, Sava, Tisza and Maros and the Eastern Carpathian rim toward the east (see fig.1.).<sup>26</sup> In the War Council of Leopold I. (1658-1705), there were long disputes about the exact nature of the border defence system that should be

1. Figure: The military frontier at the beginning of the 18th century



<sup>25</sup> Today: Sremski Karlovci.  
<sup>26</sup> Hóman & Szekfű [1935] 1990.

employed against the Ottomans; finally, it was the model of the old Croatian-Slavonian military frontier which was decided upon.

In order to understand what this exactly meant, the present chapter will be devoted to introducing the concept of the military frontier and to describing the general relations of the Habsburg borderland. The aim is to show that the medical experts who had to face vampires were not acting in a power vacuum: their space of action was determined by a variety of forces. While trying to map these forces, great emphasis will be laid on the fact that this space of action was not at all rigid or static: relations on the Habsburg neoacquistica remained in flux during most of the 18th century.

## The concept of the military frontier

The concept of the military frontier (*Militärgrenze*, *Konfin*, *Voina Krajina*), that is, a privileged militarized zone totally under control of the central administration had its origins in the 16th century wars against the Ottomans. During these wars, Habsburg rulers gradually created two such territories, one in the Kreutz-Kopreinitz-Belowar<sup>27</sup> region of Slavonia between the rivers Drava and Sava and the other in the territory between the Una and Kulpa rivers in Croatia. These two areas (from the 17th century on called *Generalcies*), had their seats in Warasdin and Karlstadt<sup>28</sup> respectively, and became wholly removed from the authority of the ban. The ban, who had been the royal governor of Croatia-Slavonia from the Middle Ages, kept his authority only over the civilian hinterlands, while the Warasdin and Karstadt regions were governed by a separate War Council in Graz, and later by the Aulic War Council in Vienna.<sup>29</sup>

It has to be noted however, that the authority of the War Council was not unchallenged. The organisation of the military frontier was a costly enterprise, and the council, having limited financial authority, needed the support of the Aulic Treasury, for instance in order to complete the necessary fortifications, such as Warasdin, Ivanic and Sankt Georgwar<sup>30</sup> in the Slavonian, and Karstadt, Sissek and Petrinia<sup>31</sup> the Croatian district.<sup>32</sup> The treasury in turn had substantial say in the organisation and maintenance of the frontier, and clashes of interests between these two bodies accompanied the history of not only the Croatian-Slavonian, but the whole Habsburg military frontier all the way through up to the 19th century.

The 'militarized' nature of the frontier not only meant a net of fortifications and stationed imperial troops, but also entailed a special local land militia, whose members enjoyed substantial privileges. In return for their obligation to do life-long (paid or unpaid) military service, their plots of lands (whose landlord was the emperor himself) were wholly or partially exempt from the usual taxes, fees and services of serfdom. The exact legal conditions of frontiersmen (*Gren-*

<sup>27</sup> Today: Krizevci, Koprivnica and Bjelovar respectively.

<sup>28</sup> Today: Varaždin and Karlovac.

<sup>29</sup> Wessely 1974. 57.; Soós 2011. 36.

<sup>30</sup> Today: Ivanić Grad and Djurdjevac.

<sup>31</sup> Today: Sisak and Petrinja.

<sup>32</sup> Bazala 1976. 527.

zer, Krajišnici or Graničari) varied from place to place and were subject to multiple challenges during time, but the basis was the so-called *Statuta Valachorum* of 1630 in which Emperor Ferdinand II. (1619-1637) settled the situation of the frontiersmen of the Croatian-Slavonian military frontier.<sup>33</sup>

According to this document, the frontiersmen received plots of land as a *feudum*, which was free of taxes, but in return for which they had to do military service (even in campaigns in foreign lands) from the age of 17 years up, and they had to take care of their own vestiges and weapons. Their military payment depended on the service they were assigned to: those communities living next to the border were paid a regular sum for border watch, while those in the inner parts had the obligation to answer calls into arms anytime and immediately. They were obliged to do service for free for 14 days on this side of the border, and for 8 days in external campaigns, after which periods they could receive the regular trooper's payment. Inhabitants of the frontier were at the same time granted a high level of jurisdictional and cultural autonomy: they could keep their orthodox religion and could remain under the leadership of their own elected leaders (knez). It was also in the same statute that the exact territorial limits of the military frontier were set, which is why this statute can be seen as the founding document of this special military institution: a well-delineated, fully militarized border territory of free soldier peasants.<sup>34</sup>

At this point, it is instructive to briefly analyse the title 'Statuta Valachorum' itself. Referring to the frontiersmen collectively as 'Vlachs' was not limited to 17th century Croatia-Slavonia, but was a general practice in connection with the prevailing Habsburg military frontier. At the same time, the term had various meanings in the 17th and 18th centuries, and its exact identification with religious, ethnic or legal communities has incited ardent debates in scholarship not the least because of its relevance for modern nationalist ideas.<sup>35</sup> What seems to be sure is that 'Vlachs' of the Habsburg military frontier were generally refugees from the Turkish side, most of them Christians (mostly Orthodox Christians), and were settled by the government on the frontier region.<sup>36</sup> In the eyes of the Habsburg government, the creation of loyal, privileged, militarized settlements out of these refugees was not only useful against possible Turkish attacks, but it was also a means to keep local Croatian and Hungarian nobility in check, whose loyalty during the Turkish wars was not seen very reliable. It is no wonder that Ferdinand II. could only pass it as a royal statute, and the Croatian and Hungarian diets never ceased to repeat this injury (*gravamen*) and voice their views that the militarized zones should be reincorporated into the civilian body of the Kingdom.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Wessely 1970. 92.

<sup>34</sup> Sokol 1967. 14.

<sup>35</sup> For a recent overview of this still unsettled issue, see for instance: Bracewell 2006.

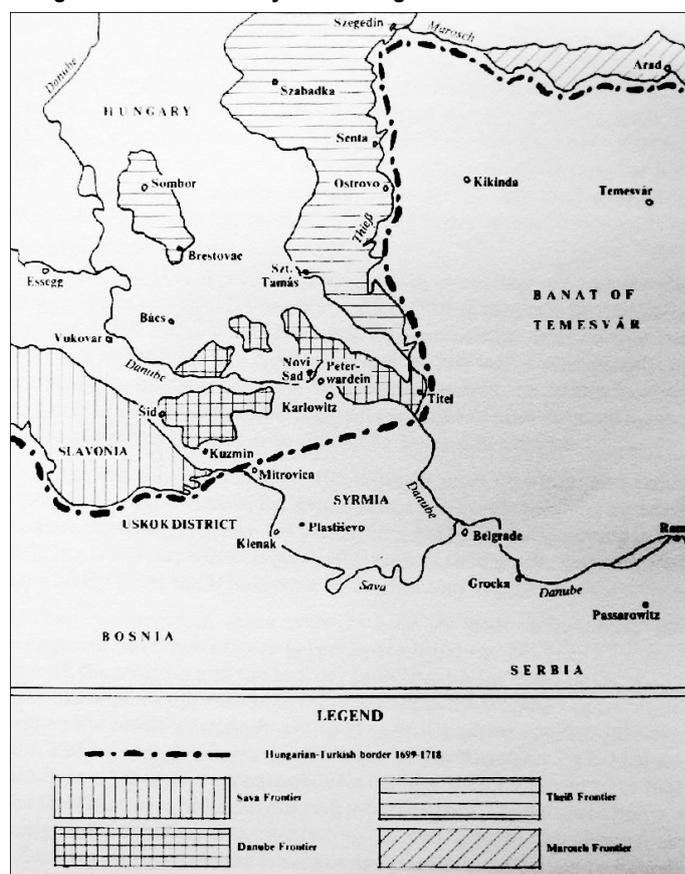
<sup>36</sup> In the present paper, the term 'Vlach' will be used in this sense, and the distinction upon which the fieriest debate is centred, that is, the distinction between the Southern Slavic Rascians (German Răczisch or Hungarian rác, forming the future Serbian nation) and the Romance-tongued Vlachs (later to become Romanians) will only be made where the sources themselves make it unambiguous.

<sup>37</sup> Sokol 1967. 16.

## The Habsburg military frontier, 1699-1718

All these interests and counter-interests which were strongly attached to the Croatian-Slavonian military frontier were replicated after the Treaty of Karlowitz in the early 1700's with the institution of this special border-defence system on the newly acquired lands of the Habsburg Monarchy after the expulsion of the Turks. The creation of new frontier territories however was not at all simple: their establishment was detained by a number of factors. In these years, the War of Spanish Succession (1701-14) and the Rákóczi Uprising (1703-11) absorbed the attention of the court, though the kuruc wars at the same time strengthened the distrust with which Hungarian nobility was treated in the government and accordingly could have made the idea of the

2. Figure: The new military frontier region in 1717



military frontier as a royal stronghold even more appealing.

Though the central administration's interest in creating the frontier seems to be straightforward, in fact strong disputes delayed their establishment and hindered their functioning throughout the century. A major reason for this is the already mentioned characteristic of the frontier that it was run by two central organs simultaneously: the Aulic Treasury and the Aulic War Council. Thus, it was not only neighbouring Hungarian landlords, who kept arguing for the decrease of frontier privileges and their gradual incorporation into civilian administration, but the Aulic Treasury was also usually pressing the issue in this direction. However, while the former strived to reincorporate the territories into the Hungarian Kingdom, and hence into their own lands,

the Treasury obviously lobbied for maintaining the landlordship of the emperor, but extending civilian, cameral administration, so that the incomes of the soldier-peasants' lands would enrich the treasury, and not the military. The War Council naturally argued for the maintaining of military administration and supported the privileges of the frontier communities, though only to an extent which allowed control over them to ensure efficient functioning.<sup>38</sup>

The debates here, just like a century earlier in the Croatian frontier centred around the exact delineation of fields of authority and the extent of privileges enjoyed by the population. A popu-

<sup>38</sup> Wesely 1974. 58-60.

lation, which was essentially unruly and mobile in nature, always anxious to keep their privileges and many times even extending it. Civilian communities and county administration frequently complained about the physical aggression, and different encroachments committed by military communities. Adding to the confusion, which characterised the everyday functioning of the frontier is the fact that, as one can see on a more detailed map of the region (see fig.2., p.16.),<sup>39</sup> the territory of the frontier was not at all contiguous, a situation which further enhanced the possibility of conflict with civilian population. These problems were endemic in the new border area, though with special local variations depending on the given local power relations.

New waves of Vlach settlers were directed to the old Warasdin and Karlstadt Generalcies, the privileges of which essentially remained unchanged, in spite of the fact that the Warasdin frontier was no longer situated on the border (see fig.1., p.13.). This situation naturally incited local nobility to voice the reinstatement of civilian administration with renewed force, to no avail. The Karlstadt frontier was enlarged with the southern territory of Lika and towards the east, though not reaching the river Una yet. The small isolated region visible on the map north of Karlstadt is the Sichelberg Uskok captaincy, a region which formerly belonged to Crain, where Vlachs from Bosnia settled as early as the first half of the 16th century; the territory was later incorporated into the Karlstadt frontier,<sup>40</sup> again in spite of the fact that they were never strictly speaking on the borders of the empire. Between the rivers Kulpa and Una, east of Karlstadt lied the Banal frontier, which began its formation in the 17th century but got only established after the Treaty of Karlowitz in 1699. This region was a military frontier with all its privileges, but was exceptionally assigned not under the Aulic War Council but the ban himself.

3. Figure: Map showing the Habsburg acquisitions 1717–1739



<sup>39</sup> Wessely 1974, 59.  
<sup>40</sup> Hóman&Szekfű [1935] 1990.

The majority of Vlach settlers (numbers reach several ten-thousands), however were settled on the scarcely populated or even deserted lands in Slavonia, Syrmia and Bachka; most of them were Orthodox except the Bunjevac and Sokac minority of Catholics, who occupied the region around Sombor and Zabadka (see fig.2., p.16.).<sup>41</sup> The land of Slavonia and Syrmia (between the Drava, the *Sava* and the *Danube*, east of the Warasdin frontier) was divided into a civilian and a military part. In the former, the usual comitat-system was introduced with the Aulic Treasury being the chief landlord; the population had to pay their taxes as well as had to do certain (but not all) duties, like taking part in fortification works. The fully militarized region (under the authority of the Aulic War Council) was made up of two military frontiers: the *Sava* one, governed from Esseg and the *Danube* one with Peterwardein as its centre.<sup>42</sup> The only substantial territory of the former Hungarian Kingdom, which remained under Turkish control after 1699 was the Banat. Hence, frontier institutions along the borders of this region, the rivers Danube and the Maros were also in the making; the *Tisza* and the *Maros* frontiers with their common seat in Segedin.<sup>43</sup>

The formation of these new frontier zones (the *Sava*, the *Danube*, the *Tisza* and the *Maros*) was extremely slow and it was only after decades of negotiation and confused relations that the central administration finally managed to create something resembling order in the duties fulfilled by the settlers of these frontiers.<sup>44</sup> The creation of the frontier was also delayed because of the territorial gains of the 1716-18 war: with the Treaty of Passarowitz<sup>45</sup> in 1718, the Habsburg monarchy gained sizeable territories from the Ottomans, a situation which pushed the border further south, and made the forming military frontier essentially superfluous before it could have been fully developed. In 1718, the Habsburgs permanently gained the Banat and the rest of Syrmia. Furthermore, they also occupied three regions: *little Wallachia* (between Wallachia and the Danube), a large strip of land along the right bank of the *Sava* and the *Danube* in *northern Bosnia and Serbia* with Belgrade, as well as the *Uskok* region south of Lika on the Adriatic coast (see fig.3., p.17.).<sup>46</sup>

However, these latter three regions only remained under Habsburg control until the 1737-39 war, after which, with the Treaty of Belgrade, they were permanently given back to the Ottoman Empire. Between 1718 and 1739, the military frontier was thus moved to northern Bosnia and Serbia, while the older frontier regions largely lost their relevance; as a consequence, voices urging their incorporation into (some sort of) civilian administration strengthened, but nevertheless, their population supported by the War Council managed to maintain its privileged status. This way, several frontier zones of different privileges and levels of legitimacy existed, many times wedged into civilian areas. This situation, together with the previously mentioned clashes of interests between power centres of landlords, treasury, military and local populations contributed to the speciality frontier-life. While central control could take effect more directly due to the lack of intermediary organs (like landlords or Hungarian institutions), there was substantial

<sup>41</sup> Today: Sombor and Subotica. Wessely 1973. 36-40.

<sup>42</sup> Today: Osijek and Petrovaradin. Wessely 1974. 65-66.

<sup>43</sup> Today: Szeged.

<sup>44</sup> Wessely 1974. 85-87.

<sup>45</sup> Today: Pozarevac.

<sup>46</sup> Lendl&Wagner 1963.

freedom and space of movement for individual actors, be they treasury officials, military commanders or local Vlach leaders: personal talent and agility could have a greater influence on the fortunes of life than in other regions.

The next chapter discusses two groups of vampire cases, one of which happened in occupied Serbia in the 1720's and 1730's, while the other in the 1750's in the Banat. Accordingly, each of them will be introduced by mapping the spheres of the administrative and medical authorities which were active at the given time and place of these cases. In the first block, the functions and inner organisation of the military frontier in Habsburg Serbia will be dealt with followed by the analysis of the medical reports on the Kisilova and Medvedia vampire cases. In the second block, the special administrative features of the 1750's Banat will precede the examination of Georg Tallar's report on vampirism. In both cases special emphasis will be laid on the medical institutions and relations of the area, so that the role and general frames in which the medical experts investigated vampirism become visible.

# Case studies: medical experts and their reports about revenants

## Medical experts and the vampires of Habsburg Serbia

### Habsburg Serbia (1718-39): military frontier and plague cordon

In the Uskok-region and little Wallachia, little attempts were made at creating an efficient border system, mostly because based on past experience, the main point of attack was expected against Belgrade along the Danube.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, Northern Serbia with Belgrade at its centre was a crucial territory and needed careful defence. Together with the other newly acquired lands,<sup>48</sup> Serbia was administered by the Aulic Treasury and the Aulic War Council. The contact zone of these two organs was the *Neoacquistica Commissio* in Vienna, where leaders of the two court organs divided and handled the issues belonging to their field of speciality.<sup>49</sup>

Directed by Graf Mercy, the cavalry general who led the occupation of the region, the creation of the local government was carried out on the model of the 1718 Banat Provincial Administration: the Serbian Provincial Administration was set up in 1720.<sup>50</sup> Seated in Belgrade, the Administration, a mixed cameral and military organisation, was led by a president, who was the military commander general of the region and a council of 2 treasury and 2 military officials.<sup>51</sup> This way, the dominance of the military was ensured already at the organisational level, and

<sup>47</sup> Wessely 1974. 90.

<sup>48</sup> Uskok region, Wallachia, Slavonia and the Banat.

<sup>49</sup> This way, the Commissio was not an organ at its own right (Hofstelle), but one comprised of members of other organs, a so-called *Mittelstelle*. Kallbrunner 1958. 24.

<sup>50</sup> Until then, the military acted as sole administrator in all matters including economics. Langer 1889. 164.

<sup>51</sup> Langer 1889. 185. In 1720, the military officials were Obrist Feld Wachtmeister Graf von o'Dwyer and Ober Kriegs Commissarius Ackerman. The cameral officers were Rosenberg and Borschek.

legitimized further by the strategic importance of Habsburg Serbia.<sup>52</sup> Almost during the whole existence of the province, the position of the president was held by Field Marshall Prince Carl Alexander von Württemberg (1720-37), after whose death General de Marulli, Bailli of the Order of Malta became the commander general until the loss of Serbia to the Turks in 1738.

The executive officials of the Administration were cameral officials (though they frequently were previous military officers) called 'district provisors' (*Distriktverwalter*). The province of Serbia, with the exclusion of the city of Belgrade, which was commanded separately by military administration, was divided into 15 districts (see fig. 5., p.23.).<sup>53</sup> The districts were led by 11 provisors, whose work was aided by 1-1 ispans and 2-2 so-called *Überreiter*s, officials whose duty was to 'ride through' the province and carry instructions of the provisor as well as communicate his messages to neighbouring districts.<sup>54</sup> The jurisdiction of the 11 provisors and the number of villages belonging there around 1720 is listed in the table to the right.<sup>55</sup>

The easternmost part of Serbia, which lies east of the Gradiska district, and south of the Danube, roughly between the rivers Pieck (Pek) and Timok was assigned under the Banat Provincial Administration.<sup>56</sup>

In the military force of the region, the battle-hardened regular imperial troops stationed in barracks in Belgrade represented the greatest value; the regiments Merulli, Alexander Württemberg, Neiperg and Lothringen represented the core of the Serbian regular troops.<sup>57</sup> The mostly German, uniformed, paid soldiers (see fig.6. p.25.)<sup>58</sup> looked greatly different from members of the local national militia, the other military force present in the region. The jurisdiction of the cameral provisors only extended over the civilian population, which (theoretically at least) was separated from military settlements of the militia.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, given the great influence of the military in the region, provisors frequently complained about having to subordinate themselves to military interests even within their own jurisdiction, and felt it injurious that the military settlements occupied the best, most fertile lands, even though they were not even situated strictly on the border.<sup>60</sup>

**Discript and villages in Habsburg Serbia**

Provisor	Number of villages
Sabadsch & Leschniz	81
Vailova	76
Palesch	73
Belgrad	42
Rudnick	39
Ram & Gradiska	35
Baragin & Ressava	28
Semendria	19
Grocka	18
Iajodin & Kragoiwatz	18
Poscharowiz	14

<sup>52</sup> Wessely 1974. 93-97.

<sup>53</sup> Langer 1889. Appendix.

<sup>54</sup> Langer 1889. 200. The exact role of the district ispan is unclear at this stage of the research, not the least because no other work beside Langer's mentions them, and neither have I met this position in my sources.

<sup>55</sup> Serbian names respectively: Šabac & Jad, Valjevo, Paleš (between Belgrad and Šabac districts), Belgrad, Rudnik, Ram & Gradiska, Pračin & Resava, Semendria, Grocka, Jagodina & Kragujevac, Passarovic

<sup>56</sup> There seem to have been 5 such districts. On Langer's map the following figure: Medenipieck, Kreina, Crivivir, Homul, and Boretsch. Anton von Hammer in his history of the great plague of 1738 lists Klucz, Kraina & Krisina, Klotschein, Kolumbaz and Omloli & Boriczka Reka. Hammer 1889. 24-25.

<sup>57</sup> Wessely 1974. 93-97.; Langer 1889. 211. lists the following regiments (with the number of houses they occupied in the barracks around 1728) stationed in Belgrade: Merulli (176), Alexander Württemberg (90), Neiperg (86), Lothringen (69), Pálffy (12), Harrach (6) and Alcaudete (3). To these 45 houses of the fortress artillery has to be added.

<sup>58</sup> Left: Funcken 1978. 93. Right: Donath 1967-70.

<sup>59</sup> Langer 1889. 244-247. The author even gives an incomplete list of cameral and military villages. In certain areas, for example in Poscharowiz or Vailova, this separation was not carried out.

<sup>60</sup> Langer 1889. 199.



On the level of settlements, Vlachs were settled in their traditional house-communities under their own, elected leaders, called *knes*, who functioned as village judges within their community.<sup>61</sup> Schwicker<sup>62</sup> described their role in the cameral administration on the example of the Banat, but in the absence of contravening evidence, we may suppose it to be valid on the Serbian relations as well. While each settlement had their *knes*, more settlements were led by a chief *knes* (*Oberknes*). Importantly, they were both considered to be cameral officials (*Beamter*). The chief *knes* even got payment from the district administration, while the *knes* only received certain privileges. At the same time, they were elected from among their people, and were mostly illiterate. We can see their role as intermediaries between the central administration and the local population, and which side they took in a conflict could vary from case to case. In the 1755 rebellion of the Warsdin frontier militia for instance, the *knes* ordered the people to seize (if necessary by force) their (also Vlach) military officers and join the rebellion; at the same time, it was

5. Figure: A regular soldier (Fusilier) of the k.k. army around 1710 and the colour variations of the Alexander Württemberg regiment's sergeants (Feldwebel) and corporals (Gefreiter) the private's uniform resembled that of the latter



for example the *knes* of Topowatz who saved the German captain of the company (called Schellhorn) from being beaten to death by the frontier soldiers.<sup>63</sup>

The local militia was set up already in 1718 on the model of the Vlach frontier-privileges, and were divided into 13 companies under the commandment of 2 chief captains (*Oberkapitan*), who were responsible to the commander general. In 1729, the militia was reorganised and plans for recruiting 4500 soldiers into 18 companies under 4 chief captains (with headquarters in Sabadsch, Semendria, Iajodin and Rudnick) were settled. In reality, only 2000-2500

men (settlers) were drafted. Again, according to the plans, each company was led by a captain and consisted of 250 men: 150 infantrymen (*Hayduks*), 50 cavalrymen (*Hussars*) and 50 assistants. The *Hayduks* had a lieutenant (*Hadnak*), a band leader (*Harambascha*), an ensign (*Barjaktar*) and a sergeant (*Stražameister*) as officers as well as 5 corporals who led the 5 subgroups of the infantry. The *Hussars* were led by a *Hadnak*, a *Barjaktar*, a *Stražameister* and one corporal. Out of the 18 companies, 14 were stationed along the border,<sup>64</sup> 3 companies had to watch the

<sup>61</sup> Sokol 1967. 26.; Wessely 1970. 93.

<sup>62</sup> Schwicker 1861. 314-316.

<sup>63</sup> N.a. 1897. 127.

<sup>64</sup> Langer names the following posts: Cernabara, Berniovar, Zikote/Novyvaros, Belacerkva, Valjevo, Osenica, Bronjary, Čačak, Zverka, Kragujevac, Milanovac, Stalaty, Paračin and Resava.

important road between Belgrad and Baragin,<sup>65</sup> and one further company was assigned to guard the fortifications and to fight bandits in the districts of Passarowitz, Rahm and Gradiska.<sup>66</sup>

The frontiersmen stationed at the border not only had to watch out for enemy troops but for smugglers as well. Furthermore, it was realised early on that the beneficial opening of the border to commerce with the Ottomans also increased the danger of introducing epidemics, worst of all the plague, into the Habsburg Monarchy. Starting out as a minor side-task of frontiersmen, the fighting off of epidemics became the major function of the military frontier by the end of the 18th century.<sup>67</sup> The formation of the Habsburg plague cordon, the longest permanent land-cordon in European history (roughly 1900 km extending along the southern and eastern border of Habsburg Hungary and Transylvania) resulted in a unique system of frontier soldiers, quarantine officials and medical experts.<sup>68</sup>

The fact that physicians had been unable to come up with any efficient cure to the plague for centuries meant that the only way to control the disease was the quarantine (from Italian 'quarantina' referring to the 40 days to be spent isolated), a practice which had its origins in 14th century Italy and France. The early Habsburg plague patents were ad-hoc orders aiming at localizing the spread of the epidemic within the empire and most of the times relied on the local civilian administration to enforce the strict measures.<sup>69</sup> The association of anti-plague measures with the military frontier happened only gradually from the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries.

It was the Plague Patent of 1710 in which the Aulic War Council first described in detail the tasks to be performed by the frontier troops in relation to the devastating plague of 1708-13, which was raging at the time in both Hungary and Austria.<sup>70</sup> The patent was directed at the commanders of the Karlstadt and the Danube Frontiers and stipulated that frontier guards have to raise more watch-posts along the border, go on frequent patrols between the posts and block secret pathways through which carriers of the plague miasma could enter. Furthermore, they should immediately report inland suspicious infection cases directly to the War Council, harmonize their actions with neighbouring frontiers and should also be able to provide border officers and imperial garrison troops returning home from service with information on plague-free routes back to Niederösterreich. A whole range of new duties were this way added to the service of the local militia of the frontiers. A further important element of the patent is that it orders the frontier commanders to cooperate and help the plague-commissions and delegates (*Sanitätsüberreiter*) sent directly by the government or by the provincial administration.<sup>71</sup> As Erna Lesky points it out, the importance of this patent is that with it a new player enters the power-relations of the frontier: the Aulic Sanitary Commission (*Sanitätshofkommission*), the highest sanitary organ of the empire.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Stationed in Grocka, Hassan-Bassa-Palanka and Ravna.

<sup>66</sup> Langer 1889. 218-220.

<sup>67</sup> The process has been described most prominently by Erna Lesky (Lesky 1957); later discussions of the topic (such as e.g. Bazala 1974., Balazs 2010) heavily rely on her work.

<sup>68</sup> Lesky 1957. 83.

<sup>69</sup> Linzbauer 1852-56. gives no less than 20 imperial plague/infection orders between 1550 and 1710.

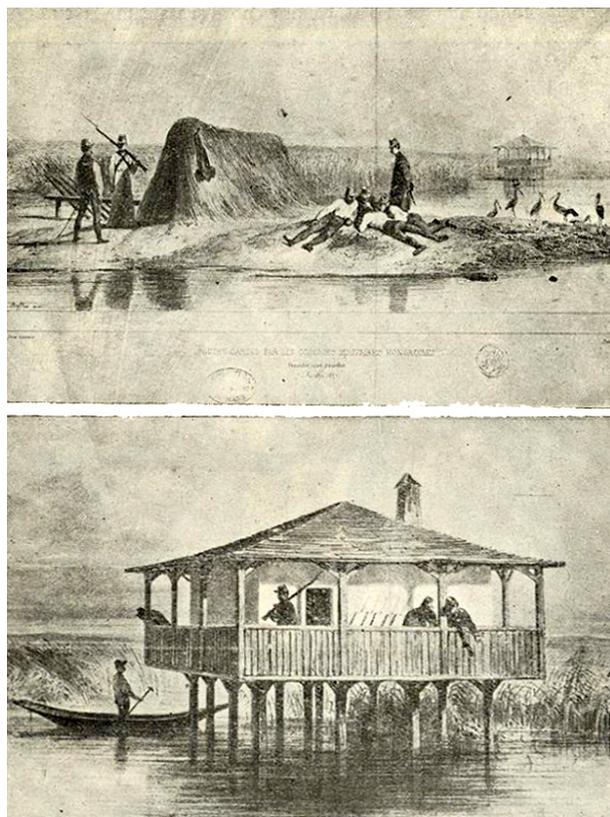
<sup>70</sup> Such stations were Rakovica in the Karlstadt-, Kostainica in the Banal, Semlin and Brod in the Sava frontier, while the line continued towards the east on the Transylvanian-Wallachian border with Vadudil, Orahova, Izlaz, Slatina, Rimnik and Straßburg. Vaniček 1875. 405., Lesky 1957 86.

<sup>71</sup> Vaniček 1875. 162-163.

<sup>72</sup> Lesky 1957. 86.

The first idea to erect a permanent ‘immerwährendes’ cordon (that is, one which functions regardless of the presence of an epidemic) against the Ottoman Empire, where plague was endemic,<sup>73</sup> came with the 1728 patent of Charles VI. entitled ‘against the Turkish territories and provinces because of the there constantly menacing danger of infection.’<sup>74</sup> On the one hand, the cordon relied on the military watchposts (called *Tschardaks*; see fig.7.)<sup>75</sup> placed along

**6. Figure: Tschardak house (below) and near otpost (above) on the Banat military frontier in the 19th century**



the borderline itself and their guards, whose duty was to impede illegal border-crossing. The *Tschardaks*, of which in Serbia there were 70, were usually placed in roughly half/one hour-walking distance from each other, and were ideally manned by 30 soldiers (at least on the Sava and Danube frontiers).<sup>76</sup> In Serbia, as we have mentioned above, 14 companies were planned to oversee the border. Since the illustration given above was made in the 19th century, the guards are in uniforms and carry uniform bayoneted muskets; in the first half of the 18th century however, these guards were responsible for their own equipment and probably resembled much more the modern reconstruction on fig. 8.<sup>77</sup>

On the other hand, there were the quarantine stations (*Kontumazstation*) built at the frontier crossing points. Early quarantine stations were erected along the southern frontier (Rakovica in the Karlstadt, Kostainica in the Banal, Semlin and Brod in the Sava

frontier) as early as 1710, however, these were basically only primitive wooden huts.<sup>78</sup> In 1728 however, the building of permanent quarantine stations along the new frontier gained new momentum with the royal patent: among others stations in Baragin, Krajova and Belgrade in Serbia, Vetudil, Slatina and Ribnik on the border of little Wallachia were established.<sup>79</sup> The patent of 1730 gave detailed instructions on the tasks of the quarantine station's staff: the procedures

<sup>73</sup> In the European discourse of the age, Muslim fanaticism was blamed for the constant presence of the disease in Turkish lands: it was said that Ottomans accepted the plague as given by Allah, and did not try to devise measures against it. Lesky 1957. 83. Interestingly, similar questions about the proper behaviour during plague (if one is allowed to flee, or take medicine etc.) were constantly debated in Christian plague-tracts and plague-sermons of the age. For the Hungarian case see Tóth 2005. On the other hand, the association of the Ottomans, the arch enemy of Christianity with the plague was so strong that František Vaniček, writing as late as 1875, in his fundamental work on the military frontier still referred to the plague in very strong terms as 'that murderous miasma which the East sent out against Central Europe' ['einen anderen Würgengel, die Pest, deren menschenmörderische Miasmen der Orient gegen Mitteleuropa aussandte'] Vaniček 1875. 106.

<sup>74</sup> □ gegen das Türkische Gebiet und Länder wegen daher allzeit bedrohlicher Infections-Gefähr' Lesky 1957. 84.

<sup>75</sup> This illustration was included in the travelogue of Anton Davidov, a Russian aristocrat, who travelled int he 1830's from Paris through Hungary and Wallachia to the Krim region. Bugariu 1930. 14-15.

<sup>76</sup> Wessely 1970. 93.

<sup>77</sup> Hollins 2005. 24.

<sup>78</sup> Vaniček 1875. 405.

<sup>79</sup> Lesky 1957. 86.

of medical examination, segregation and disinfection in case of people, animals and goods were all thoroughly described.<sup>80</sup>

The station was led by the quarantine director (Kontumazdirektor), an official, whose duty was to oversee that all measures are strictly observed. The enforcement of these measures was

**7. Figure: Slavic land militia at the Croatian–Slavonian military frontier around 1740**



aided by military: in 1740 in one of the stations along the Danube for instance 30 Hussars were stationed led by a Hadnak.<sup>81</sup> The soldiers had to keep watch day and night: fig.9.<sup>82</sup> shows a Syrmian quarantine station at the end of the century, where the huts highlighted by red circles are the military watchposts situated around the station. Frontiersmen were given orders not to let anyone without a pass in or out. The severity of punishments for trespassers might have varied in space and time, but it is sure that even a later, 1766 royal plague patent orders frontiersmen to shoot down anyone who does not answer their call.<sup>83</sup>

When people arrived at the station, the so-called contagions physicus (who in fact was usually not a university-trained physician, but only a surgeon), had to examine them rightaway. Those found to be suspicious were instantly sent to the lazaret (the

plague-hospital, marked II. on fig 9.), which of course rather served as a place of segregation than of healing. Healthy-looking people were directed to the quarantine houses (earthen lodges in fact; marked I.),<sup>84</sup> which they were forbidden to leave during the quarantine time, which usu-

<sup>80</sup> Vaniček 1875. 405-6. Letters for instance had to be disinfected by opening and being held above vinegar steam, whereas paper packaging of goods had to be burnt; goods depending on their ability to absorb miasmas had to be aired for weeks, clothes and leatherwear even washed and rinsed in soapy water.

<sup>81</sup> Lesky 1957. 87.

<sup>82</sup> Schraud 1801. 178. and Appendix.

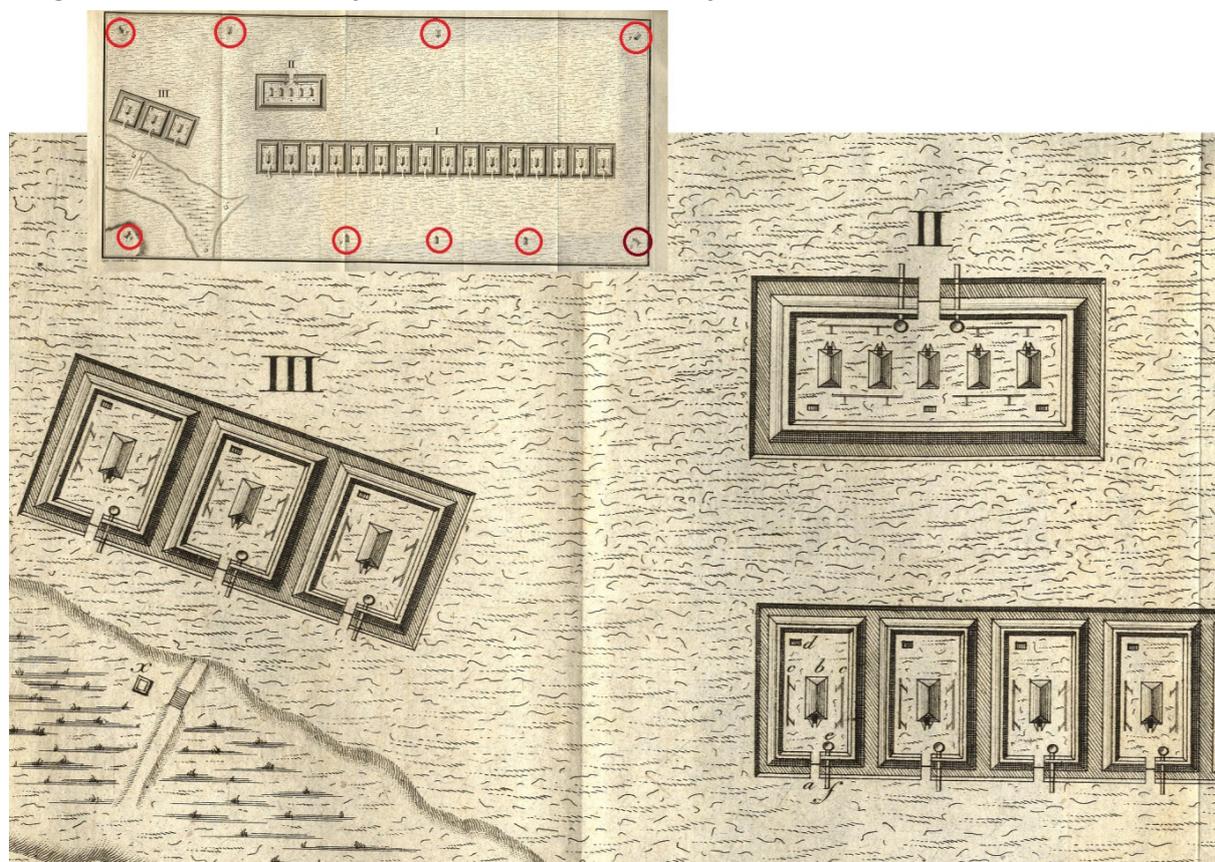
<sup>83</sup> Lesky 1957. 89.

<sup>84</sup> The parts of the quarantine marked with letters are the following: a) entrance b) earth lodge in the middle of the courtyard c) bars to hang clothes on d) latrine e) and f) water pipe through which the quarantined are given water. x) is a well.

ally lasted more than a month. If someone in the quarantine was taken ill, he/she was immediately taken to the lazaret, while the quarantine time restarted for the others. Servants (usually women) helped the work of the contagion surgeon in providing food and water for the quarantined. Those who survived the plague in the lazaret were then sent to a third area (marked III.), where they had to spend their quarantine time.

The severity of quarantine measures, the military support and the patent of 1710 all point to the fact that the figure of the contagion surgeon had substantial authority behind him. When he arrived at a place to investigate a possible case of inland infection, he probably was accompanied by frontier soldiers, and his report could have far-reaching consequences, since he was ultimately responsible to the Aulic Sanitary Commission in Vienna. His role was further augmented by the relative scarcity of medical professionals in Habsburg Serbia. Through in the second half of the century, all frontier regiments were supposed to have an extensive medical staff of their own consisting of physicians and surgeons of various ranks,<sup>85</sup> and in other border regions, bigger towns and cameral districts usually had at least a surgeon, the situation was obviously worse in 1720-30's Serbia. This is shown by the fact that even in the administrative centre, Belgrade, a 1723 survey of professions only list two surgeons and no physicians or apothecaries.<sup>86</sup> In such a situation, the trained medical experts of the region were either contagion surgeons or military

8. Figure: Quarantine Station in Syrmia at the end of the 18th century



<sup>85</sup> Bazala 1976. 528.

<sup>86</sup> Langer 1889. 212.

surgeons (*Feldscherer*) stationed with the regular imperial troops in Belgrade. The healthcare of the population was this way mostly in the hands of wives, village healers, midwives and traveling healers.

All the careful organisation of the military frontier / plague cordon could not prevent the Habsburg military failure in the 1737-39 war against the Ottomans and the outbreak of the most devastating plague epidemic of the century. In fact, the two went hand in hand: the regular troops coming back from their campaigns brought home the plague from the Ottoman side. The Uskok region, Little Wallachia and northern Serbia were lost with the Treaty of Belgrade, and the military frontier/permanent plague cordon had to be reorganised along the old/new border of the Una-Sava-Danube line.

### Spheres of authority: reports of the Kisilova and Medvedia vampire cases

Histories of vampirism usually start with the 1725 case of the Rascian vampire, Peter Plogojwitz, to whom his fellow villagers of Kisilova attributed the deaths of 9 people. The case was investigated by a cameral provisor named Frombald, whose report was the first account about vampirism in the neoacquistica which reached wider publicity through its publication in a Vienna newspaper. Notwithstanding the notoriety of this report in secondary literature, considerable confusion exists about the exact placement of the happenings in space and time.

#### Kisilova, 1724/25

What we know from the report is that Frombald, the cameral provisor of *Gradiska district* was visited by inhabitants of Kisilova, a village in the neighbouring *Ram district*. The villagers asked him to oversee (that is, legitimize) the exhumation of Peter Plogojwitz, and the execution rites which should follow if he is recognized as a vampire. Even though Frombald tried to

9. Figure: Northern Serbia and the Ram and the Gradiska districts around 1720



convince them to postpone the actions and wait for an authorization *from Belgrade*, the villagers stated that they would rather leave the village and resettle somewhere else than wait for the authorization: by the time it would arrive, they feared, they would all be dead. Frombald was hence forced to act on his own authority and together with the Orthodox pope of Gradiska, who was also sought out by the villagers, they went to Kisolova, and attended the exhumation. There, at his surprise, the more than 10-weeks-old corpse looked life-like, fresh blood was flowing from its mouth, and other strange symptoms were also present; upon seeing this, the villagers recognized the corpse to be a vampire and executed it with a stake. Not feeling sure if he proceeded in the proper way, Frombald wrote his report to the Most-Praiseworthy Administration (*Hochlöbliche Administration*) asking them to ascribe any mistakes which might have been committed not to him, but to the villagers who were maddened by fear.<sup>87</sup>

First, it has to be noted that contrary to what much of secondary literature holds,<sup>88</sup> Kisilova is not situated on the banks of the Sava, and the Gradiska district is not the Gradiska frontier regiment in Slavonia: as we have seen, Slavonia formed part of the Sava military frontier with its centre in Esseg, not in Belgrade, the seat of Habsburg Serbia. It is clear that Kisilova (today: Kisiljevo) is in northern-Serbia on the bank of the Danube, and at the time belonged to the Ram cameral district (see fig.9., p.28.).<sup>89</sup> As we have seen in the previous chapter, Ram&Gradiska was overseen by one provisor, whose seat was in Gradiska. Langer also informs us that Kisilova was a cameral, that is, a civilian village, not a Hayduk settlement,<sup>90</sup> this is the reason why the inhabitants of Kisilova contacted Frombald, and not the military commander of the Ram fortress, the centre of their own district.

The reconstruction of the flow of information about the vampire Peter Plogojowitz within Habsburg administration is not at all simple. Let us see first the facts in chronological order:

- 1) Frombald's original report is either lost or at present unknown.
- 2) Only a copy exists in Vienna, in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, in the stand Türkei (Turcica), entitled '*Copy of the letter dated 1725 of the imperial cameral provisor of Gradiska district in the Kingdom of Serbia, Mr. Frombald, which relates to the so-called vampiri or blood-suckers, which were notorious in the Kingdom of Serbia in those times*'.<sup>91</sup> The undated copy is filed into the documents relating to 1725. January-February.<sup>92</sup>
- 3) The report was published without comment in the 21.07.1725. issue of the *Wienerisches Diarium* under the modified and fairly uninteresting title '*Copy of a writing from the Gradiska District in Hungary*'.<sup>93</sup>
- 4) In the outgoing protocol-book of the Aulic War Council, under the date 25.07.1725., it is mentioned that further investigations have to be made into the case of Peter Plogojowitz of Kisilova; the entry in the protocol is crossed with red, meaning that all further materials belonging to the case have been discarded<sup>94</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Hamberger 1992. 43-45.

<sup>88</sup> Hamberger 1992. 20.; Nowosadtko 2004. 157.; Braunline 2012. 712.

<sup>89</sup> Langer 1889.

<sup>90</sup> Langer 1889. 246.

<sup>91</sup> 'Copia des vom Herrn Frombald kayserlichen Cameral Provisore zu Gradiska im Königreich Servien erlassenen Briefes anno 1725, Die im Königreich Servien damals im Schwung gegangenen sogenannten vampiri oder Blutsauger betreffend'. Frombald 1725.a.

<sup>92</sup> Lukacs 2010. 60.

<sup>93</sup> 'Copia eines Schreibens aus dem Gradisker District in Ungarn.' Frombald 1725b. According to Hamberger, not long after the article, a leaflet was aslo published in Vienna titled 'Entsetzliche Begebenheit, welche sich in dem Dorf Kisolova in Ober.Ungarn, vor einigen Tagen zugetragen' The author gave the following reference to the leaflet: [Austria, Jg. 1843, 135.], a reference which I could not verify. Hamberger 1992. 45.

<sup>94</sup> Schroeder 1973. 44. 'Communicatur zur weiterer Untersuchung'

- 5) In the same protocol-book, under 02.08.1725., it is stated that the provincial commander of Serbia, Alexander Württemberg handed in his report on the case<sup>95</sup>

Since the usual occurrence of vampire cases falls into the winter season,<sup>96</sup> and the copy of the report is filed into the January-February section in the Turcica, it seems probable that events happened in the winter of 1724/25. However, there are several enigmas in this story. The Turcica stand contains the documents of the Vienna chancelleries (the Imperial-, the State- and the Austrian Chancellery) relating to foreign affairs with the Ottoman Empire; it is a fairly unusual place for inner matters of Habsburg Serbia directed by the Neoacquistica Commission and through it the Aulic War Council and the Aulic Treasury. Though it is known that a reorganization of archival materials did happen in Vienna, in which documents of the Aulic War Council relating to Turkish issues were filed into the papers of the chancellery,<sup>97</sup> it is still unclear, why this report was considered to be related to Turkish issues. Nevertheless, accepting this route, Kreuter and Schroeder seems to be right in assuming that the report was originally sent straight to the Neoacquistica Commissio with the evasion of the Belgrade Provincial Administration.<sup>98</sup> If the report had gone through Belgrade, some comments of commander Württemberg should have been attached to it. The hypothesis is further supported by Frombald's word use: in his last paragraph, he addresses his report to the Most-Praiseworthy Administration (*Hochlöblichen Administration*), while when referring to the Provincial Administration, the expression is simply 'Praiseworthy Administration'. According to Schroeder, the Belgrade Administration first got word of the case when the War Council ordered commander Württemberg to investigate the issue in the summer.<sup>99</sup>

All this hair-splitting about the provenance of the report is crucial, because the normal route from the Gradiska district would have been first Belgrade, and if Frombald indeed avoided the provincial administration and turned straight to its superior authority in Vienna, this can be seen as a personal strategy of securing his position. As he says, he was anxious about the gruesome rite which he authorized by his presence, and fearing a possibly condemning decision on the part of the provincial administration, he could have chosen to gain the sympathy of the highest circles. Though future research in the Belgrade archives should be carried out to verify this theory, it seems to be a nice example of how the special nature of the military frontier made it possible for a simple cameral provisor to get into contact with the highest circles and utilize this contact in his own power-plays. At the same time, the possibility of such direct contact made the most intimate fears of distant Rascian peasants provoke an answer from the central authorities as well as from the learned Viennese public always hungry for bizarre stories.

In assessing Frombald's role, it is important to note that though he handed in a quasi-medical report going into details about the physical features of the corpse, he was not a medical expert;

<sup>95</sup> Schroeder 1973. 45. Though Schroeder does not mention it, I assume, this entry is also crossed with red.

<sup>96</sup> Tallar 1784. 19-20. Tallar ascribes this phenomenon to the strict fasting habits of Vlachs, which are particularly strong around the end of the year and weaken the health of people to a dangerous extent.

<sup>97</sup> Szekfű 1924. 24.

<sup>98</sup> Schroeder 1973. 41. note 10.; Kreuter 2001. 83.

<sup>99</sup> A further mystery is how did the Vienna newspaper get hold of the report and why did the War Council react only 4 days later with ordering another investigation. The eventual ending of the case is also unknown: what did Württemberg's report contain (especially in connection with Frombald's role), and how was the commander able to accomplish all the followings within a week: receive the Vienna Council's order in Belgrade, carry out the investigation, write the report and send it back to Vienna so that it arrived by 2nd August.

what is more, there were no such specialists with him at the investigations. The general lack of physicians and surgeons in Habsburg Serbia has already been noted, and if even Belgrade only had 2 surgeons around this time, it is possible that there was simply no surgeon in the village of Gradiska in spite of its position of district seat. However, the fact that a civilian official and a clergyman figured as authoritative personalities at the exhumation falls in line with the centuries-old tradition of doing away with the returning dead.

The continuity of corpse-executions and the belief in revenants in Europe since at least early medieval times has been amply proven by archaeology and historical ethnography.<sup>100</sup> Historical sources also show, that exhumations and executions were being carried out as an established practice within the Habsburg Monarchy for centuries. Josef Zukal lists a dozen cases which happened in Gross-Herrlitz, in Austrian Silesia in the first half of the 18th century, where led by the local clergy (once even including the Bishop), villagers as well as townsfolk performed such rites on corpses thought to had been magicians (Zauberer), and still continuing their maleficium after their death (magia posthuma).<sup>101</sup> Evidence from Northern Hungary<sup>102</sup> and Transylvania<sup>103</sup> in the 17th and 18th centuries is also available. The prevalence of these practices among Orthodox Rascians of the Balkans under Ottoman rule is also indicated: thanks to Markus Köhlbach and more recently Elvira Bijedić, several cases are known, where the locals turn to the Turkish *kadi* for permission to execute certain corpses.<sup>104</sup> In one instance, dated 1662, in the occupied town of Gyöngyös, Northern Hungary, the kadi authorizes the rite to be performed on a dead witch with the justification, that in fact it does not matter what Christians do to their corpses, they will all go to Hell anyway.<sup>105</sup>

While among the motivations which locals bring up in these cases, the chewing of the shroud (masticatio mortuorum) and thereby causing diseases is also attested to, many times the activity of the revenants is interpreted within the frames of (posthumous) witchcraft. This way the ritual became backed up by full legal support:<sup>106</sup> witchcraft trials in the Hungarian Kingdom were not abolished until 1766.<sup>107</sup> It is also notable that these cases always remained at the local (municipal) level: the personalities authorizing the rites were town or county magistrates and clergymen. The significance of all this in the interpretation of provisor Frombald's case is that contrary to what Frombald thought of himself, for the villagers, the provisor and the pope were the two straightforward authorities to turn to in cases of vampirism.

Though surgeons and physicians do turn up here and there in earlier cases as well,<sup>108</sup> in the proc-

<sup>100</sup> Revenants and their related creatures (dead witches, nighttime demons, werewolves etc.) include among others vampir in Southern Slavic, moroi in Vlach and Polish, vukodlak in the Balkans, gonoszok in Hungarian, Nachzehrer/Wiedergänger in Germanic realms etc. See Kreuter 2001., Pócs 2001. For archeological remains of measures against the dead from early medieval times up to the 19th century, see Krumphanzlová 1961., Krumphanzlová 1966. 288, 319.; Nuzzolese & Borrini 2010.; Cesky Krumlov 2002.; Tucker 2012.

<sup>101</sup> Zukal 1907/8.

<sup>102</sup> The most well-known case is that of Mihail Kaszparek in Lubló, 1718.18. Prodomus 1723. Lib.2. 108.; see also Komáromi 1664. 60.; Buchholz 1724. 635.

<sup>103</sup> Köleséri 1709. 121-126.; Quellen 1903. 146, 409, 468.; Anon. 1732. 147-148.

<sup>104</sup> Köhlbach 1979., Bijedić 2001.

<sup>105</sup> Sugár 1987. 23.

<sup>106</sup> Lambrecht 1994 noted the strong connections between belief in revenants and witches, while Klaniczay 1990., and 2004. has noted the role of vampire-scandals in bringing witchcraft-persecutions to an end.

<sup>107</sup> Klaniczay 1986.

<sup>108</sup> In this sense the 1575 case of a revenant in Bolkenhain (today: Bolków), in Silesia is instructive. At the examination of the corpse surgeons were also present and they decided that in fact the man was in the medical condition of fake death. The magistrates however disregarded their opinion and ordered the execution of the corpse. The 18th century publisher of this protocol-entry lamentingly adds that 'Our contemporaries would have behaved better in this situation and would have taken heed of the surgeons' opinion.' (Unsere Zeitgenossen würden sich hierbei besser benommen und den Antrag der Chirurgorum aufs beste unterstützt haben.) Steige 1795. 136-139.

ess of the medicalization of vampirism,<sup>109</sup> at the culmination of which the 1766 statute of Maria Theresa recommends everyone who believes in ghosts and revenants to the care of a physician,<sup>110</sup> the case of Kisilova was probably crucial. It was the nature of the frontier zone that enabled this local matter to go straight up to the War Council and provoke an answer, namely ordering Württemberg to carry out further investigations in the matter. Though we have no information on his visit, it is probable that he did bring surgeons with him. The role of medical professionals in early cases of vampirism can be shown on the example of the Medvedia vampires, the case which swung the topic of vampirism on its world-conquering course.

### Medvedia, 1731/32

It was the case of the infamous Hayduk, Arnold Paole, which started the Europe-wide interest in vampirism, not only among the wider public, but in the learned elite of Europe as well. Information about the case rapidly reached physicians, university professors and emperors as well first via personal networks in the forms of letters and then in print also.

Again, let us start with the facts, which this time are fortunately fairly clear. Medvedia is situated near the river Morava, in the southernmost corner of Habsburg Serbia, in the Iajodina cameral district (see fig.10.),<sup>111</sup> in contrast to Kisilova however, it is a military settlement, a Hayduk village.<sup>112</sup>

The events<sup>113</sup> started when a series of deaths happened in the village, and taking note of these, the commander of Jagodina, lieutenant-colonel Schnepper sent Glaser, the contagion

10. Figure: The Iajodina district and its environs around 1720



<sup>109</sup> See among others Magyar 1999.

<sup>110</sup> Linzbauer 1852. 785.

<sup>111</sup> Langer 1889.

<sup>112</sup> Langer 1889. 245.

<sup>113</sup> Hamberger 1992. 46-49.

physician of Baragin (the seat of the neighbouring district) to the place to investigate if there is a threat of epidemic on 12th December 1731. He found only non-contagious diseases (tertian and quartan fevers), according to him caused by the extreme fasting habits of the Rasians. However, locals stated that a vampire is to blame and they told Glaser that either they get permission from the authority (löbliche Obrigkeit) to perform the usual ritual or they will move away or all die. Glaser, the military commander of Kragoiwatz and corporals of Stalata (who were ordered to accompany Glaser) could not convince the locals and finally consented to the exhumation of 10 people, many of whom were not decaying as they should have been. The report ends with the locals asking the authority through Glaser to give them permission to execute the bodies, and Glaser also advises the same to calm down the village, for as he says, it is quite a big village.

Schnepper sent Glaser's report to the Belgrade headquarters, to Marquis Botta d'Adorno, (the commander of the province in the absence of von Württemberg) from where a whole commission was sent to the village consisting of the followings:<sup>114</sup>

- 1) military surgeons of the imperial regiments stationed in Belgrade:
  - Johann Flückinger, chief surgeon (Regimentsfeldscherer) of the Baron Fürstenbusch Infantry Regiment<sup>115</sup>
  - Siegele, subordinate surgeon (Unterfeldscherer) at the Marulli Regiment<sup>116</sup>
  - Johann Friedrich Baumgarten, subordinate surgeon at the Baron Fürstenbusch Infantry Regiment
- 2) military officers of the major imperial regiment stationed in Belgrade
  - Büttner, lieutenant (Oberleutnant) of the Alexander Württemberg Regiment<sup>117</sup>
  - J.H. von Lindenfels, Ensign (Fähnrich) at the Alexander Württemberg Regiment
- 3) senior officers of the Stalata frontier company (who probably joined them on their way to Medvedia)
  - the captain, the hadnak and the barjactar

Flückinger examined and dissected the bodies (which had probably been kept under watch since Glaser had left), and found that with the exception of 5 corpses, they were in a 'vampire state'. The corpses were then beheaded by local gipsies.

Two sources serve as the fundamentals of this case:<sup>118</sup>

- 1) Glaser's undated report to the Iajodina district
- 2) Flückinger's detailed report, the 'Visum et repertum' sent to the Belgrade headquarters dated 26.01.1732.

What strikes the reader as compared to the Kisilova case is the extreme mobilization which the case triggered (*see fig.10., p.32. and the places from which commissioners were sent highlighted*). The reason for this is geography. Medvedia was situated right on the border, and the local Hayduks were certainly applied to do service in Tschardak houses, patrol between them and watch for illegal border crossers, who could introduce the plague into the realm. Hence,

<sup>114</sup> Haberer 1992. 49-54.

<sup>115</sup> Infanterieregiment No. 35, founded in 1683, also called 'Württemberg zu Fuss', at the time led by Daniel von Fürstenbusch.

<sup>116</sup> I was not able to identify this regiment.

<sup>117</sup> Infanterieregiment No. 17, founded in 1681, it was the Belgrade commander von Württemberg's own regiment.

<sup>118</sup> Glaser's report together with a number of short complementary sources, such as communication between the War Council, the Treasury and the Belgrade provincial headquarters about the remuneration of the surgeons, are to be found in the Vienna Hofkammerarchiv: Hoffinanz Ungarn, r.Nr. 654, fol.1.131-1.136 and 1142-1143, and in transcript in the Hofkammerarchiv, Sonderbestände, Kuriosa, Fasc. Vampir 1, 2. Flückinger's report has to be in the Kriegsarchiv, but I was not able to locate it yet.

the importance of this village from an administrative point of view was much greater than that of Kisilova:<sup>119</sup> the fear of plague mobilized much greater forces on the border than in the inner parts of Serbia.

The two missions have to be separated. Glaser's duty, as he makes it clear in his report, was to investigate if the disease is contagious or not: as member of the Baragin quarantine station, his task was restricted to this matter, and that is why he did not and could not decide on the authorization of the executions. This decision of course resulted in the strange situation for more than a month, between 12.12.1731 and 26.01.1732, the corpses probably have been kept unburied, and watchmen were stationed next to them. Evidence which supports this practice comes from a 1725 vampire case in the Banat, where the cameral provisor of the Lugosch&Facset district was similarly unable to decide if it is a good idea to legitimize the executions, and until decisions were made by the Temesvar Provincial administration, the bodies were kept under watch.<sup>120</sup> As imaginable, tensions within the village must have gone extreme during this time.

Glaser's interests were the disease, and the welfare of the rest of the kingdom, for which reason, even though commanded by the military commander to investigate the issue, his report finally arrived to the highest cameral authority, the Aulic Treasury where it is to be found now. By contrast, Flückinger's task was markedly different. He went there with a huge and high-ranking military entourage, and did not spend one minute on the victims of the vampires (at least he did not report about it). Their attention was solely focused on the corpses themselves, that is, the seats of the problem causing the unrest among the villagers, who were threatening the administration with leaving their post.

That he interpreted the problem as one of ordering is obvious from the fact that in the end he authorized the executions. Frombald, Glaser and Flückinger basically all legitimized the local rites of killing the dead, and there are two sides to this issue: one is that the local community exerted considerable pressure on the officials, which it could do because of the great need for settlers (both military and cameral) on the frontier lands. On the other hand, the officials practically could not pose any powerful arguments against these rites, since the highest authorities did not provide them with any: until Maria Theresa's prohibition of these rites in 1755, there is no high legislation or theory which would orientate local officers. This is all the more interesting, because thanks to the more direct control over the borderlands, and the erection of the plague cordon, several cases reached the highest government circles,<sup>121</sup> and they did not act; not even after Glaser's and Flückinger's report became printed and re-printed several times from 1732 on, and whole Europe resounded with the Habsburg vampires: elite salons, medical journals, newspapers, treatises, papal and imperial orders dealt with the issue in great detail.<sup>122</sup> It seems that it needed the enlightened sensitivity of Maria Theresa to prompt her to action, but until then, as things stood, local officials were left on their own.

<sup>119</sup> The relative unimportance of Kisilova is also shown by the fact that only 1 company was thought enough to oversee the three districts of Pos-sarowitz, Ram and Gradiska. In keeping control over the river Danube, the leading role was probably assigned to the other side of the river: to the Banat fortress, quarantine station and town of Ujpalanka.

<sup>120</sup> Baróti 1900-19002. 135. 'Oberverwalter Racz bestätigt die ausgegrabene Zauberin als einen Blutsauger, und erbittet sich die Weisung, was mit diesem Körper, bei welchem eine Wache beige stellt ist, zu geschehen habe?'

<sup>121</sup> Kisilova 1725, Medvedia 1732, Ujpalanka 1738, Kapnikbánya 1753, Banat 1753. These latter three will be mentioned below.

<sup>122</sup> Magyar 1999.

In this situation, the outcomes of vampire cases depended on local relations and actors could choose between a great variety of arguments and practices to follow, and individual skills of persuasion were also given greater room. ‘Inhumanity’ or the like concepts were not very applicable, for the government itself ruled many times that the corpses of plague-victims were dangerous and have to be burnt.<sup>123</sup> The idea of superstition was brought out sometimes. An especially interesting case in this respect is that of an Uypalanker surgeon, who authorized anti-vampire measures during the great 1738 plague. His actions were strictly condemned as being superstitious by the Sanitätshofcommissio and as a penalty, he was ordered to be taken by militiamen to serve in the plague hospital of Uypalnka until the plague lasted.<sup>124</sup> However, the charge of superstition was not a powerful weapon enough: it has to be remembered that the witchcraft-trials have been still going on at the time, and the this-worldly activity of the devil was far from being denied. In accordance with this, the commission consisting of leading surgeons and officials (all of them German) of the Máramaros miner cities (Felsőbánya and Nagybánya) could state in their report to the aulic mining commission (the Münz- und Bergwesens Directionshofkollegium) that after a careful medical and legal examination, the corpse of a certain Dorothea Pihsin was found guilty of magic and blood-sucking, and was therefore executed by the hangman. All this happened as late as 1753.<sup>125</sup> The same case sheds light on the fact that occasionally even economic interests could support a diagnosis of vampirism. The mining officials were anxious to send reports of their findings to the neighbouring counties in order to prove that there was no epidemic plaguing the cities; because of rumours about a possible epidemic, quarantine was levied around the cities, which naturally impeded all commercial activity.

Apart from sheer economic interests, the need to maintain order was also a powerful and useful concept. While we have some instances of penalizing these rites by arrest,<sup>126</sup> it is instructive, that successfully arguing for the maintenance of order was possible as late as 1751.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, at least once it is made clear, that it was not the act of execution, but the fact that it was carried out without official (cameral) consent which is penalized. Similarly, while – as it has been shown above – orthodox popes frequently participated in these rituals, they penalized communities which acted without a pope being present. Villages in the Banat were several times excommunicated by the pope for unauthorized vampire-killing, and in these cases it was the cameral provisor, who pleaded the provincial administration to mediate and appease the pope. Obviously, the unrest caused by excommunication was what worried the provisors.<sup>128</sup>

Many of the examples for the variety of interests and agendas which have just been mentioned pertained to the Banat region. Though not a military frontier in the strict sense, as it will be shown, the Banat had several of the characteristic borderland-features, and incidentally, this was the region where the most thorough report on vampirism, namely Georg Tallar's *Visum*

<sup>123</sup> An example is the Treasury's order for the Banat in 1738. Baróti 1893-96. 43.

<sup>124</sup> Magyar Országos Levéltár, Magyar Kancellária Levéltára. A109 Protocolla Commissionis Sanitatis, 1.Fas. Protocollum 1738. nov.21 24.

<sup>125</sup> Hamberger 1992. 88-92.; for the attestatum of the surgeons attached to the report see: Vienna, Hofkammerarchiv, Münz- und Bergwesen, r.Nr. 90. fol. 6-13., 20. and the transcript in the Hofkammerarchiv, Sonderbestände, Kuriosa, Fasc. Vampir 1, 2.

<sup>126</sup> Baróti 1893-96. 381., 485.; 436.

<sup>127</sup> Baróti 1893-96. 379.

<sup>128</sup> Baróti 1900-1902. 135., 140.

repertum was written in the 1750's. In his report, he did not side with those arguing for the maintenance of order, but managed to provide a case for the cessation of the post-mortem execution practices based on hygienic considerations and to link it to the economic interests of the provincial administration at the same time. In the next section, attention shall be turned to the work of Georg Tallar and the vampires of the Banat.

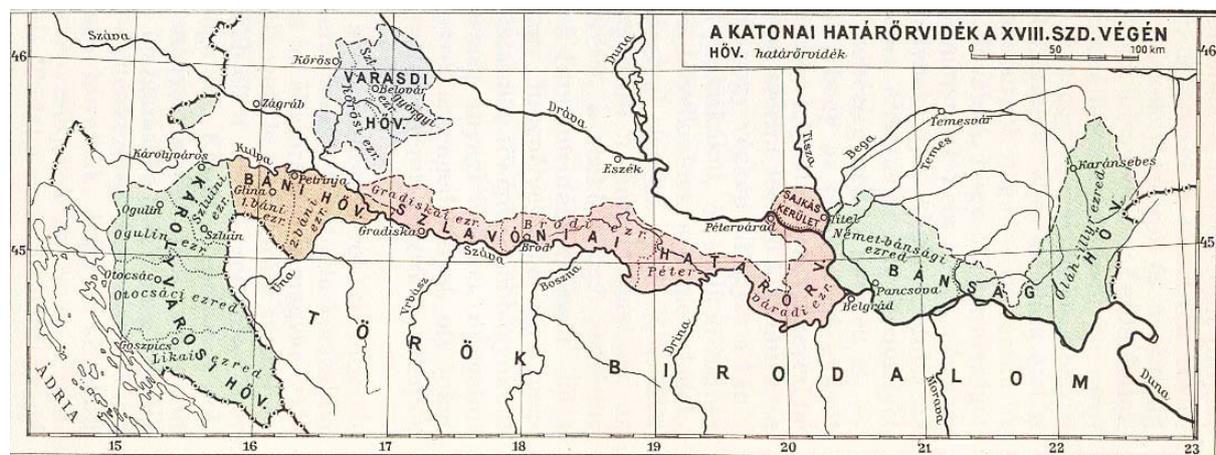
## Georg Tallar and the vampires of the Banat in the 1750's

### The Banat: medical and administrative institutions in the mid-18th century

The territorial ordering of the Belgrade treaty proved to be permanent, and the Habsburg-Ottoman border settled along the rivers Una, Sava and Danube as far as Orsova,<sup>129</sup> from there following the eastern Carpathian rim towards the east (see fig.11.).<sup>130</sup> During Maria Theresa's reign (1740-80), next to the older military frontiers of Karlstad, the Banal region, Warasdin and Slavonia (in this era it came to mean the former Sava and Danube frontiers) new ones were established by the 1760's towards the east: the Banat and the Transylvanian military frontiers (see fig.3., p.17.). The idea of the permanent plague cordon was also revived and enforced with great vigour, a situation which increasingly drove trade-routes away towards the Adriatic.

Especially from the 1750's onwards<sup>131</sup> the government's politics brought about substantial changes in the borderlands, which might be summarized as centralization, uniformization and Germanization. The empress strived to liven up economic life in the frontier by supporting new

11. Figure: The Southern military frontier at the end of the 18th century



<sup>129</sup> Today: Orsova.

<sup>130</sup> Hóman & Szekfű [1935] 1990.

<sup>131</sup> The Wars of the Austrian Succession (1740-48) probably directed the attention of the central administration away from the Ottoman border towards European enemies in the first decade of the empress's reign.

settlers (most of the Germans), developing infrastructure and industry, a program which was new compared to previous central policies trying to maintain the purely military nature of the frontier. At the same time, the local land militia was gradually transformed into, or at least likened to the Habsburg regular army: the jurisdictional and policing functions of the knes were translated to the military officers, uniforms and regiment-divisions were introduced and the payment of the frontier soldiers was also neared to that of the regulars. The realization of these changes was far from smooth: several mutinies (such as the one already mentioned in 1755 War-

12. Figure: The Banat 1723-1725



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asdin) ensued, and were repressed; the one in Madéfalva, Transylvania in 1764 was especially bloodily avenged.<sup>132</sup>

In these processes, the Temesvar Banat (bordered by the Danube, the Tisza, the Maros and Transylvania in the east) presented a special case. Even though the Banat was not a border region when the Habsburgs got hold of it in 1718, it was not reincorporated into the territory of the Hungarian Kingdom, an injury which the Hungarian diets constantly emphasised until 1778, when the civilian districts became assigned under Hungarian administration. Until then, the region was a royal province (like Habsburg Serbia) with mixed cameral and military government. A reason for the court's adherence to the Banat was the rich metal mines (copper, lead, gold and silver) of the eastern Banat, the exploitation of which started early on with the help of mostly German (as well as some Italian and Spanish) settlers.<sup>133</sup>

The administrative organisation of the Banat was created was already in 1718, and similarly to Habsburg Serbia, its highest organ was the Neoacquistica Commissio, in which leaders of the Aulic Treasury and the Hofkriegsrat met and handled the issues of the Banat. The commission received the reports of the provincial administration, which dealt with all issues except the purely military ones. The administration was led by the commander general of the region (Graf Mercy at first), in the frequent absence of whom the commander of Temesvar (Stadtscendant) directed matters. Next to them, the council consisted of an Oberkriegskommissär and two cameral officers.<sup>134</sup>

Even though the province was led by a military commander, and was seen as part of the defensive structures against the Ottomans,<sup>135</sup> on the pressure of the Treasury, there were no military frontier institutions established in the region. The population could remain under the leadership of their knes, but these (and the oberknes) were handled as cameral officers responsible for maintaining order. The latter had a yearly salary of 120fl and the former enjoyed the privilege of being tax-free. The population farmed lands and paid taxes to the only landlord in the region, the Treasury.<sup>136</sup>

The Banat was divided into 11 cameral districts on the left and 5 on the right side of the Danube (see fig.11., p.36.)<sup>137</sup>: Temesvar, Csanad, Csakova, Betskerék, Panczova, Werschez, Uypallanka, Lippova, Lugos&Faczet, Caransebes, Orsova&Almas and the 5 Serbian districts mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>138</sup> The district provisor (Distriktverwalter or Oberverwalter) was the head of the district from economic, political and jurisdictional point of view as well. In bigger towns, subordinate provisors (Unterverwalter) were also working. Most of these cameral officials were Germans,<sup>139</sup> but occasionally locals too can be found among them.<sup>140</sup>

With the loss of northern Serbia in 1739, the issue of the basically redundant Tisza and Maros military frontiers (which bordered the Banat in the north and the west) had to be dealt with.

<sup>132</sup> Sokol 1967. 29-32.

<sup>133</sup> Gráf 1997. 81.; Schwicker 1861. 317.

<sup>134</sup> Kallbrunner 1958. 24.

<sup>135</sup> Kallbrunner 1958. 24.

<sup>136</sup> Wesely 1974. 72-74.; Schwicker 1861. 316.

<sup>137</sup> Kallbrunner. 1958. Appendix.

<sup>138</sup> Hammer [1839] 1889. 24-25.; Baróti 1893-1907.

<sup>139</sup> Kallbrunner 1958. 25.

<sup>140</sup> The district provisor of Lugos&Faczet in 1726 for instance, was called Rácz (Baróti 1900-1902. 136.), and even though one has to be wary with drawing far-reaching conclusions from names, it might not be far-fetched to assume that he was of Rascian origins.

These frontiers were dissolved in 1746-47, and the frontiersmen were given the opportunity to resettle (and hence retain their privileges) in the southern strip of the Banat, where a new, proper military frontier was in the making.<sup>141</sup> However, the actual formation of the Banat frontier was slow and dragged on for almost 20 years: the actual establishment of a proper military frontier in the southern part of the Banat was only realised in 1764.<sup>142</sup>

Among the gradual steps taken in this direction an important one happened in 1751, when Maria Theresa divided the Banat into a pure civilian and a pure military zone. She took 8 out of the 11 districts and assigned them under the civil administration of the Treasury, while the remaining three districts (the southern ones: Panczova, Uypallanka, Orsova&Almas with parts of Caransebes and a small region in Betskerék district around the town of Kikinda) belonged to the War Council, with their population enjoying the frontier-privileges. The new civilian provincial administration consisted of a president and six councillors and was seated in Temesvar, while the military region was commanded from Jasenovo.<sup>143</sup>

The time between 1751 and 1753 was a period of transition, and not only because of the natural slowness of the actual realization of these administrative reforms. When in 1751 the provincial administration of civilian Banat was created, it was the pre-1751 military governor of the region, F.A.L. Ponz Freiherr von Engelshofen, field marshal second lieutenant (Feldmarschallleutnant) who became the civilian governor, and remained such until 1753. Then, for the first time, a civilian, F.P.R. Graf Villana-Perlas, Marchese de Rialpo became the governor of the Banat and held his position until 1768.<sup>144</sup>

As a final remark on the administrative relations of the Banat in the 1750's, it has to be noted that certain communities had special positions in the system. All issues relating to the Rascian (Serb) culture and religion were treated by a special court committee, the Hofdeputation in Banaticis et Illiricis.<sup>145</sup> On the other hand, the miner communities in the east Banat were divided into four districts led by four Mountain Councils (Bergamt) in Orawitza, Dognaschka, Saska and Bokschan. These in turn were subordinated to a Chief Mountain Council (Oberbergamt, founded in 1723, later on renamed as Banater Bergdeputation) consisting of two councillors, who advised the governor directly. The seat of this council was in Temesvar until 1747, when it was moved to Orawitza to stay there permanently. At the highest level, the Banat mining issues, together with those of other provinces were assigned under a Vienna court deputation called the Hofdeputation in Münz- und Bergwesen.<sup>146</sup>

The sanitary picture of the Banat is uneven: on the one hand, the region has earned the title 'the grave of Germans' early on because of the high mortality rate among German settlers.<sup>147</sup> The ratio of baptisms and deaths among Germans of Temesvar is indeed dire: between 1726 and 1735, 1365 births and 4891 deaths happened, while in the years 1746-55 this ratio is 1670 to

<sup>141</sup> Sokol 1967. 29.

<sup>142</sup> Wessely 1974. 90.

<sup>143</sup> Milleker 1937. 4.; Schwicker 1861. 367-368.

<sup>144</sup> Petri 1982. 1., 4.

<sup>145</sup> Schwicker 1861. 368.; Vucinich 1967.

<sup>146</sup> Schwicker 1861. 364.; Gräf 1997. 81.

<sup>147</sup> Schwicker 1861. 317.

3954.<sup>148</sup> These numbers are especially striking since they relate to plague-free times, and though Turkish raids might account for a certain part of them, the unhealthy climate of the damp Banat marshlands can also be held responsible, especially considering that most settlers coming from mountainous areas (such as Baden-Württemberg) were not accustomed to it.

On the other hand however, in terms of medical institutions, the Banat was in a much better situation than Habsburg Serbia. From the 1718 expulsion of the Turks onwards, there were military physicians stationed in the fortress of Temesvar. These military physicians had been from the earliest times on referred to as *protomedicus*, and stood at the head of provincial healthcare as many times the only university-trained doctors in the Banat. After the introduction of civilian administration in 1751, the protomedicuses were also more frequently civilians.<sup>149</sup> Bigger towns had several surgeons at a time, but there was always a town surgeon leading the local healthcare. In Temesvar, from 1745 to 1757 for instance, the position was occupied by a certain Johann Pätzl. The garrison of Temesvar and the cameral administration both had their own medical assistance: the military led by a *Stabschirurg*, the civilian by a *cameral surgeon*. The districts also had their own surgeons (*Distriktschirurg*), just like the miner settlements, whose surgeons were subordinated to the *Orawitza Ober- and Unterchirurg*.<sup>150</sup> Glancing through the names of the medical professionals of the Banat from surgeons to the protomedicuses, it is evident, that almost all of them were of German origin.

Another branch of medical institutions, just as in Habsburg Serbia, was the plague cordon. Already in 1738, as a countermeasure to the plague that was raging at the time, a Sanitary Commission was set up in Temesvar, as a filial institution of the Vienna Sanitäts Hofcommission. The Banat sanitary commission basically consisted of the protomedicus of the Temesvar garrison and his assistants, and functioned as a medium between Vienna and the plague front. Quarantine stations were set up in Panchova and Orsova (Schupanek) already in the 1740's, to which Kubin and Uypallanka were added in 1751. However, it should be noted that these stations were not permanent until the 1760's in the sense that they only enforced quarantine measures in plague-threatened times.<sup>151</sup>

The commission collected all epidemic-related information not only from the quarantine stations, but from the province itself as well as from foreign lands. They sent out medical personnel to given points of the cordon, the province (many time referred to as *Sanitätsüberreiter*), and to central Balkan towns, like Bucharest or Istanbul (called *Sanitätsspion*, *Emissary* or *Sanitätsskommisär*). Then, upon receiving their visitation reports, discussed them and sent them with their standpoints to Vienna. These 'arms' which the commission stretched out were crucial, for it had to be made sure that simple diseases are not mistaken for epidemics, or that rumours are not spread intentionally. Reasons to do so could be that plague-stricken territories were many times exempted from taxation; also, a quarantine levied on a given region brought local merchants into a very difficult situation while giving more room for traders of other places.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>148</sup> Petri 1988. 45-46.

<sup>149</sup> Petri 1988. 151-2.

<sup>150</sup> Petri 1988. 93-94., 138-150. Petri gives the names of the known medical officers as well.

<sup>151</sup> Lesky 1957. 88.

<sup>152</sup> Lesky 1957. 90-93.; Schwicker 1861. 368.

In spite of this impressive variety of medical institutions, the majority of the population still had to resort to traditional ways of healing. Being cured by trained medical professionals was expensive, and in fact much of these experts only dealt with special matters, like epidemics or in the case of military surgeons, soldiers and their families.<sup>153</sup> On the Michael Stadler, a cameral physician in Werschez gave a resigned report in 1778 on the health-situation of the province. According to him, people did not require physicians: they had themselves cured by prayer and local wise-women, as a next step (that is, if the problem still prevailed) they visited witches from neighbouring villages, healing men and popes and kalugyers who performed various rituals from smoking to exorcism. As Stadler relates, even the German settlers avoid physicians, and go instead to Franciscan friars or at best to military surgeons, saying that ‘The doctor belongs to great lords, not to peasants.’<sup>154</sup>

## Georg Tallar and his *Visum Repertum(s)*

Having drawn up the wider frames within which the Banat vampire-cases and their investigations took place, the focus of the present chapter shall be the military surgeon Georg Tallar and his *Visum repertum*, one of the most basic first-hand reports in the study of vampirism in the 18th century. After locating the author in the Banat of the 1750's, where he was pursuing his vampire-dissections, some fairly problematic textual matters will be dealt with, which have for the most part avoided the attention of relevant scholarship. In the end, a comparison of the two extant versions of his work, the manuscript and the printed one will be conducted, and some notable changes made to the text will be pointed out which could affect the interpretation of Tallar's vampire-report.

### Georg Tallar

Georg Tallar is an enigmatic figure. Though he has written the lengthiest report on vampirism so-far known to us, all the scarce data scholarship has about his life come from the dedicatory letter of his report.<sup>155</sup> It is supposed that he was of German origin,<sup>156</sup> even though the only thing supporting this hypothesis is that he studied at the University of Mainz. He probably has taken part in the 3-year surgery program of the university, for he always appears as a surgeon, never as physician. Afterwards – as he relates – he studied in Strasbourg, in the Salzmann College. The prestigious medical academy of Strasbourg was founded in 1585, with both theoretical and practical chairs.<sup>157</sup> At the academy, generations of Salzmanns had been teaching surgery and anatomy from the beginnings, hence the name of the College Tallar referred to. He must have been studying there sometime in the 1710's,<sup>158</sup> when Jean Salzmann (1679-1738) held the chair of anatomy and surgery. Salzmann made regular dissections compulsory for medical and

<sup>153</sup> Balla & Hegedűs 1990. 87.

<sup>154</sup> ‘Der Doktor gehöre nur für grosse Herren, nicht für Bauern!’. Balla & Hegedűs 1990. 74-75.

<sup>155</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 2r.

<sup>156</sup> Magyar 2002. 163.

<sup>157</sup> Koenig 2011. 47-48.

<sup>158</sup> In 1724, he was already facing his first vampire-case in the k.k. army, therefore his studies in Strasbourg ought to have happened sometime before that, in the 1710's or early 1720's.

surgery students in 1708: they had to participate in (theoretically at least) 4 dissections per week, after which they also had to take part in professorial public anatomy demonstrations in the afternoon. In the winter of 1725 for instance (Tallar was already a practicing military surgeon in the Habsburg army at the time), 30 corpses were dissected at the academy.<sup>159</sup>

After his studies, he entered the k.k. army and served in various regiments as military surgeon (Feldscherer). He took part in French and Turkish wars as well, and in 1724 he was stationed in Transylvania with the Gayer Infantry Regiment,<sup>160</sup> in 1728 he was surgeon at the Vetterani Cavalry Regiment in Wallachia,<sup>161</sup> but he also served under Fürst Lobkowitz in Transylvania. Johann Georg Christian Lobkowitz (1688-1755) was a cavalry general and governor of Lombardy before he was assigned to the Transylvanian border because of the Turkish attack in 1737.<sup>162</sup> The war ended in 1739 with the treaty of Belgrad and Lobkowitz was reassigned to Bohemia where he appears as field marshal in 1741; this means that Tallar must have served under him sometime between 1737 and 1741. Finally, after these long years of miserable service,<sup>163</sup> he was contracted by the Banat Provincial Administration to join a special commission and carry out research on vampirism in the area.<sup>164</sup> How Tallar came into the visual field of the Banat administration is unknown, he himself writes that he drifted there as a stone drifts to random places in the river.<sup>165</sup> As it was shown in the previous chapter, both general and administrative relations of the Banat in the 1740's and early 1750's were so much in flux that it easily could have contributed to his feeling of being drifted aimlessly.

Frontiersmen of the dissolved Tisza and Maros frontiers were probably wandering inside the Banat and possibly causing conflicts with both civilian population and cameral administration. The transitive period which followed the 1751 strict separation of the zones under military and civilian administration, and particularly the years between 1751 and 1753, when the newly formed civilian administration was still led by a military general (field marshal von Engelshofen) could especially have been perplexing.

It is this larger framework within which Tallar had to settle, and probably he was not the only one who felt like drifting about. It is unknown when he was finally contracted by the Banat Administration: before, during or after the reforms, and when exactly was he commissioned to take part in the vampire-investigations. What is known, is that the investigations were carried out in a number of villages by a specially delegated commission constituted by Tallar, a theologian and a physician. It will become evident, that dating their field-trip and Tallar's report thereof is not at all simple, not the least because the report is the last known trace of his life.

<sup>159</sup> Koenig 2011. 53.

<sup>160</sup> Tallar probably means the Infanterieregiment No. 43, a German regiment founded in 1715 under Franz Paul von Wallis, and hence called the Jung-Wallis Regiment. Ferdinand von Geyer was commander of the regiment from 1718 to 1725, when Erasmus von Starhemberg took his place.

<sup>161</sup> The Veterani-Cürassiere Regiment (Kürassierregiment K 4) was founded in 1682; it was transformed into Cavallerie-Regiment Nr. 10 under Stampach in 1769.

<sup>162</sup> Wurzbach, 1866. 343.

<sup>163</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 2v. 'mit viehl myserie'

<sup>164</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 3r. He describes the 'Inquisitions Commission, bestehend auß einem Theologo, Cameral, und Provincial physico, dann einem chyrurgo'

<sup>165</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 2r.

## The Visum Repertum(s)

### The manuscript

The exact circumstances of Tallar's investigation are somewhat hazy. The handwritten report, the *Visum repertum anatomico-chirurgicum* is dated 1756, though by a later hand; furthermore, the introductory letter of its 1784 printed edition is appended to the document. Inside the original report however, Tallar writes that the research itself was carried out in 1753.<sup>166</sup> One might wonder if this date is only a mistake for 1755 or 1756, or it really took him 3 years to finish the report. The report not only contains field-observations, but theoretical ('ethnographic' and medical) chapters as well, which might have required more time to complete; on the other hand however, the text does not have a single reference or footnote apart from in-text mentions of Malpighi and van Swieten: should Tallar have spent much time on writing his theoretical chapters, he probably would have referenced his work more carefully.<sup>167</sup>

Another aspect to consider is the relation of Tallar's investigation to a vampire-research carried out by Dr.med. Paul Adam Kömovesch in 1753. He figures in a remuneration-petition (dated 1753.03.27.) to Maria Theresa to compensate his expenses during his investigation:

*[...] the local provincial and cameral physician Paul Adam Kömovesch was ordered to investigate on the spot a case of vampires or bloodsuckers triggered by local subjects in certain villages, and here he calmed down the anxiety of the superstitious folk without anyone else beside him, totally alone; afterwards he has written his report, and now most humbly asks his change expenses, conveyance charges and horse portions either in nature or in money to be repaid [...]*<sup>168</sup>

Tallar also refers to the anonymous physician-member of his committee as 'provincial and cameral physicus'. The term is interesting, because the provincial physicus denotes the office of the protomedicus of the Banat, who – as mentioned in the previous chapter – was originally the military physician of Temesvar. By adding the word 'cameral' it is emphasised that since 1751, the protomedicus no longer belongs to the military, but is an official of the treasury. Since at one time, there was always only one protomedicus in the Banat, it is tempting to identify the physician mentioned by Tallar with Kömovesch: it is known that the mentioned position was occupied by Dr. Elias Reinhard (Anton), Freiherr von Engl from 1752 to 1753, when Dr. Kömovesch (in fact Kőműves) took his place and retained it until 1777.<sup>169</sup>

Supposing that Tallar's investigations happened in 1756 (and the in-text reference to 1753 is only a mistake), it is evident that Kőműves was the other medical member of the commission.

<sup>166</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 4v.

<sup>167</sup> It is however a question, what medical books (if any) were at his disposal at the centre of the Banat administration in Temesvar. Further research in this direction is needed.

<sup>168</sup> Kreuter 2001. 93. '[& ] hiesiger Provincial- und Cameralphysicus Paul Adam Kömovesch wegen einen von denen hiesigen Landesunterthanen in ein- so andere Ortschaften vorgebrochens Vampyr, oder Blutsaugers ergebenen Vorfall in facie loci zu untersuchen beordnet worden seye, und nachdeme dieser in bemeldeter Anligenheit, an welcher nichts ware, sondern bloß allein, denen superstitiosen Leuthen ihren Argwohn zu benehmen, seinen Bericht erstattet, hat selben zugleich um die ausgelegte Cambiatursspeesen nebst denen Liefergeldern, und gnädigst verwilligten Tierferdportionen, in natura vel in pretio, abreichen zu lassen gebetten [& ]' The original document cited by Kreuter is to be found: HKAW, Banater Akten, r.Nr. 37. f.92f. and was published in transcript in Hamberger 1992. 92-93.

<sup>169</sup> Dr KQmqves was born in Széplak, Hungary in 1719, received his doctorate at the University of Vienna in 1752, and only one year later he was already appointed by the queen to lead the medical administration of the Banat, a fast career indeed. However, the Banat would not release him easily: he became assessor in the Sanitary Commission of the Banat, and though he wished to leave the region already in 1771 because of its unhealthy climate, the Treasury would only grant him the favour six years later. Retired, he moved to Ödenburg, then to Vienna and finally to Bratislava, where he died in 1793. Petri 1988. 152., 157-158.

If however it really happened in 1753 as Tallar wrote, then both Engl and Kómúves are possible candidates, though it would seem unlikely that both protomedicuses conducted a vampire-hunt in the same year.<sup>170</sup> Either way, the question arises, that if Kómúves, the university-trained provincial physician has already written his report to the administration in 1753 (as his petition claims), why would there be a need for Tallar, a military surgeon to write another one. An answer could be that though the three men (the theologian, the physician and the surgeon) constituted a commission, they did not work together. This would also explain why Kómúves was ‘totally alone’; Tallar also mentions in his report that there was one village at least (Kallatsa), where he went alone.<sup>171</sup>

One further issue might help to clarify the case. At the time when Tallar allegedly submitted his report in 1756, Maria Theresa's court was currently being outraged by another vampire-case, which happened this time not in a far-away obscure province such as the Banat, but in Moravia, in the Olmütz district in Hermsdorf, and involved the exhumation and posthumous execution of a corpse with the participation of the local Catholic clergy and the consent of the Bishop of Olmütz. The queen sent two of her court-physicians, Wabst and Gasser to investigate the case. It was based on their report that van Swieten wrote his tract on vampirism in 1756.<sup>172</sup> The queen issued a statute dated 1755.02.09. in which she prohibits the clergy to intervene into vampire-cases without the consent of political authority; at the same time makes it compulsory to consult medical specialists in such cases and also orders the translation of van Swieten's French treatise into Latin and German.<sup>173</sup>

One might wonder if this Moravian case had any connection to Tallar's report. Hypothetically, it might be conjectured, that Tallar handed in his report to the Banat Provincial Administration in 1753, right after he finished his investigation, just as his fellow-commissioner, Kömovesch did. Then, when the Hermsdorf-scandal popped out, the central administration wanted to collect materials about vampirism and asked the Banat Administration to send all documents they have on the issue. This scenario would explain why the report is dated 1756: it was written on it when the Aulic Treasury (Hofkammer) received the document three years after the report was actually finished. It would also explain why the report is now in the Archives of the Aulic Treasury (Hofkammer Archiv), and why the text does not mention any authority higher than the Banat Provincial Administration. Nevertheless, until further sources emerge, the issue has to be left unanswered.

### The print

The story of Tallar's report however does not end in the Treasury. In 1784, Johann Georg Mößle, owner of a publishing house in Vienna came across the report ‘by chance’ as he writes in his preface to the work, and published it because of two reasons: first, because it sheds light on an issue, which was greatly popular once but still remained in mystery, and second, because it

<sup>170</sup> As a compromise, it might be imagined that the investigations started under Engl but were taken over by Kömovesch.

<sup>171</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 19r.

<sup>172</sup> van Swieten 1756.

<sup>173</sup> Linzbauer 1852. 720.

is a story which deserves to be remembered.<sup>174</sup> Now, one might wonder how Herr Mößle could bump into a 30-year-old manuscript kept in the archives of the Hofkammer by accident. In our opinion (though again, further investigation is needed), the publication of the report has something to do with another vampire scandal, one which secondary literature does not yet know of (in fact neither do we). What points nevertheless in this direction is a royal statute of Joseph II., dated 1784.11.02., in which the king warns the Orthodox Church to take active part in the fight against vampire-beliefs.<sup>175</sup> Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to suppose that Mößle was advised (if not ordered) by government-circles to publish Tallar's report which became topical once more (and for the last time, never to be published again).<sup>176</sup> The report might have seemed to be especially suitable for publication, since it involved Orthodox Vlachs, and Tallar repeatedly scourges the local clergy for contributing to the superstitious beliefs of the people.<sup>177</sup>

It is instructive to look at how Tallar's work fits into the other publications of J.G. Mößle.<sup>178</sup> Apart from literature and joke-books, Mößle seems to have been specialized in law and religion. For instance, he published the illustrious, 8-volume law-collection of Joseph Kropatschek (died 1809), who held positions in the Aulic War Council before becoming court secretary at the Aulic Treasury for Mining and Minting.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, Mößle published a number of handbooks and document-collections for lawyers and judges.<sup>180</sup> At the same time, he issued a good number of religious (Catholic) works: sermons, saint-legends, Tridentine regulations, a collection of royal religion-related laws and importantly for our case, a polemic against superstitions in 1783, only a year before Tallar's work.<sup>181</sup> A further frequent type of book is that of enlightening handbooks in a broad sense. Titles involve what to think about religion, merchants or freemasons.<sup>182</sup> All these works show that Mößle's publishing house had a considerable share in communicating the image and messages of the government, and aiding its working as well, a fact which might prompt us to doubt the innocent motivations of the publication of Tallar's report.

At the same time, Mößle was also keen on answering the public's hunger for curiosities: there is for instance a work on certain rarities about Vienna's 1683 siege by the Turks, a book called 'Der steyerische Robinson' about an Austrian traveller along the coast of Brazil and a biography of Mohammed.<sup>183</sup> Accordingly, a tract on vampirism among Vlachs of the frontier region is of course also (and maybe for most of the public) a wondrous, juicy story which one can discuss with others horrified and delighting in its strangeness at the same time, while being reassured of one's own values and civilized state. Naturally, one must not forget about the medical side of the treatise: after all, it is a story about the fight and triumph of enlightened science not only over barbarism and superstition but essentially over sickness. Unsurprisingly, Mößle published other books of similar nature too: one on the skills of surgeons and another on the 'World of wisdom

<sup>174</sup> Tallar 1784. 7. 'Einem ungefähren Zufall hab ich es zu danken, daß mir diese Schrift zu Handen kam'

<sup>175</sup> Linzbauer 1853. 122., No. 879.

<sup>176</sup> One might even conjecture that it were cameral officers who attached Mößle's 1784 preface to the manuscript.

<sup>177</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 3v, 6v, 19v.

<sup>178</sup> See Appendix for an incomplete list of J.G.Mößle's publications in the second half of the 18th century.

<sup>179</sup> Kropatschek 1786. He was Registratur-Assistent, then Concipist in the Hofkriegsrat, and Hofsecretär at the Hofkammer in Münz- und Bergwesen.

<sup>180</sup> Von dem [& ] 1790.; von Martini 1799.

<sup>181</sup> Lippovitz 1790.; Richter 1784.; von Geissau 1786.; Schwerdling 1789.; Bartholotti 1783.

<sup>182</sup> Meisel 1783.; Sommfels 1783; Die Freyäurer [& ] 1793.

<sup>183</sup> Huhn 1783.; Müller 1791.; Leben [& ] 1788.

and medical skills of physicians, based on the latest improvements in chemistry.<sup>184</sup> It was worth surveying these other works of the publisher, because they help us understand how ideal Tallar's report was for carrying governmental messages.

#### Changes to the text

Compared to the fact that the publisher had a quite obsolete and old manuscript in hand, which probably no-one would have compared with the printed version, Mößle was surprisingly faithful to the original text. He omitted Tallar's dedicatory letter to the Banat administration in which the few biographical facts about his life figure, and the first paragraph of the text in which Tallar basically summarizes what he and the investigative commission were set to do. He also cuts the last paragraph of the text in which Tallar again turns to the provincial administration thanking the trust they put in him. By doing so, Mößler severed important roots which linked the report to its original circumstances,<sup>185</sup> and at the same time managed to elevate the report to a more general level of the enlightenment fighting the forces of darkness, be they superstitions or illnesses.

Interestingly, when Mößle introduces the work in his preface, he makes himself appear as if he knew Tallar's life in great details, it is just that he does not want to go more deeply into the issue:

*'I do not want to mention anything about the diligence with which he devoted himself to the sciences at the high school of Mainz [and here he lists those and only those events which he read in Tallar's dedicatory letter], but rather his work itself should stand for itself [...]'*<sup>186</sup>

Obviously, he could not say more about the author even if he wanted to. However, the structure of this sentence may remind one of that folktale-template, where the storyteller implies that the tale one is listening to is just one of many, interconnected narratives: 'Oh, I could tell many adventurous deeds about him, but that would be another story...' A number of other features of Mößle's edition suggest that he intentionally tried to create the atmosphere of story-telling to ease the reader into the text. At a dramatic point of the narrative for instance, when Tallar describes the people's reactions when they glimpsed the dark liquid oozing out of the mouth of the corpse which they have exhumed, 'There was great happiness among the people and the cry, this is a bloodsucker.'<sup>187</sup> Mößle however decided to increase the dramatic effect and made it into a quotation after colons, added a question mark and duplicated the cry: '... and what a happiness this caused to the people? everyone cried: This is a bloodsucker, this is a bloodsucker.'<sup>188</sup>

Another feature of the printed text is the self-consistent translation of Tallar's mostly Latin-stemmed technical vocabulary into German. In fact, there are some instances, where Mößle spares the readers from technicalities and simply omits sentences: this happens to the *vacuum*

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<sup>184</sup> Plenck 1799.; Scopoli 1786.

<sup>185</sup> These roots will be revisited in the next chapter.

<sup>186</sup> Tallar 1784. 6. 'Ich will nichts von seinem Fleiße melden, mit dem er sich den Wissenschaften auf der hohen Schule zu Mainz ergab, [& ] sondern sein Werk selbst [& ]'

<sup>187</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 15r. 'Da ware schon Freide bey allem Volk und das geschrey, dieße sind Bluthsauger.'

<sup>188</sup> Tallar 1784. 63. '& und was verursachte dieß für eine Freude bey dem Volk? alles schrie: Das sind Blutsäuger, das sind Blutsäuger.'

*rusticum*,<sup>189</sup> and to the expression *Materie reduci*ret.<sup>190</sup> In both cases there remained sufficient explanation for the text to retain its meaning. In most cases the editor substituted the words (even in cases where obviously well-known words of Latin origin occurred) with a savoury German expression as in *abscheulich* for ‘horrend’, *wurmähnlich* for ‘peristaltisch’, *Blutreicher* for ‘Sanguinaeus’, *Beschaffenheit* for ‘Temperament’ and *heftigste Zückungen* instead of ‘Vehementeste Convulsiones’.<sup>191</sup>

In one instance at least, the translation even deduces from the original meaning: Tallar's *artificiente, Magische, prater natürliche Operation* becomes ‘künstliche, zauberische, übernatürliche Wirkung’ in Mößle's presentation.<sup>192</sup> The special meaning of *preter naturam* is crucial exactly in issues where magic and the devil are involved: according to the tripartite division of natural philosophy, there are natural, preter natural and supernatural phenomena in the world. ‘Natural’ meant ‘normal’, ‘according to the usual course of nature’, whereas ‘preternatural’ stood for phenomena which were somehow unusual, exceptional, strange or abnormal, but were still in accordance with the general logic of universal nature. This was the border of demonic and magical activity: no demon or magician, in fact, no one but God himself could transcend this border and do supernatural phenomena, which go counter to nature's laws,<sup>193</sup> and this is exactly the meaning which is lost by translating *preter naturam* into ‘übernatürlich’.

Apart from these hair-splitting technicalities, the printed edition truly follows the manuscript version, which makes the one issue where it does not even more blatant. This issue is the religious layer. In general, Tallar makes it obvious that he does not see any preternatural activity in these cases, and that everything can be explained with the help of reason, medicine, chemistry and a pinch of ‘psychology’. However, every now and then, there appears a voice in the text – albeit faintly and awkwardly – which addresses issues of demonic activity and morals and their consequences. The textual position of these instances is usually strange enough, but it is interesting to see how consistently these parts of the original are either severely cut or wholly deleted in the printed version.

At the end of the work (the last paragraph before the closing remarks), there is a reference back to the introduction, where the question of why do German and Rascian soldiers and settlers never get attacked by vampires is posed. The last paragraph readdresses the question and proposes an answer; the interesting thing is that it has already been sufficiently answered by Tallar in the text. He has devoted a lengthy discussion to prove that it is the culture-specific eating habits of Vlach people which makes them sick, start phantasizing and die eventually because of the sickness. Then, after this simple logical structure which Tallar built up, there comes the last paragraph which starts by stating curtly that the problem has not been satisfactorily answered.

Below, I am giving the text of the paragraph in a format which shows the differences between the original 1753/6 version (in normal and **bold** letters), and the printed 1784, where the **bold** letters were substituted with [grey] ones:

<sup>189</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 16r.

<sup>190</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 15v.

<sup>191</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 16r., 15v., 17v.

<sup>192</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 20r.

<sup>193</sup> MacLean 2000. 232 233.

*'so it should be added that the soldiers and the Germans, through their beliefs and their pastors, already in their youths through Christian learning are **trained against the cunningness of Satan ripped out of the unhealthy desert of Satanic slavery** and faulty superstition and are planted into the loved Land, namely into the healthy **herbal herbfull** garden of knowledge, and laugh at the unproductive fables **and the harms of those dead** and entrust themselves to the **incomprehensibly wonderful goods aids** of their Saviour, and remain uninjured **and even if many of them are gullible, their pastors are apt to teach them**'<sup>194</sup>*

The argument is linked to the previous argumentation in such an inorganic way, and its vocabulary is so different from the dry simplicity of the rest of the text, that it gives one the feeling that it is not really Tallar's voice. A plausible explanation would be that these moralizing parts were the suggestions of the anonymous *Theologus*, who was also part of the investigative commission. The atmosphere of the wording of the original 1753/6 text (normal and **bold** letters) is recognisably that of a sermon with the usual Biblical imagery of rotting out weed and a reinforcement of the skills of pastors at the end. At the same time, this sermon-like feeling is greatly diminished in the 1784 version, which deleted these expressions and substituted them with shorter and less elevated wording.

If Mößle did not like pathetic wording,<sup>195</sup> his rejection of demonological discussions is even more obvious. There are two instances<sup>196</sup> where almost a whole paragraph of the *Theologus*'s theorizing is completely deleted. At one place Tallar discusses the origins of small round holes in the graves, which the locals take for the tunnels through which the bloodsuckers come and leave. He proves that these were caused by a local funeral rite in which the young men stab the graves with their clubs to prevent the returning of the dead. After this, again awkwardly, comes a theorizing part saying that

*'should Satan be able to condense the corpse so much that it fits through these small holes, but not as small as to get it through the pores of the loose soil, then a single strong surface [that of the coffin-lid] would certainly prevent him from coming out.'*<sup>197</sup>

The argument's logic is the following:

- 3) the locals argue that those holes make it possible for the bloodsuckers to come out
- 4) this also means that without the holes the corpse would not be able to come out, oozing through the loose soil
- 5) but if it can't get through the soil, then it obviously cannot get through the coffin lid in the first place and reach the holes in the soil
- 6) as a consequence, the theory is false.

This, by demonological standards perfectly sound argumentation does not fit into Tallar's

<sup>194</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 19v.; 1784. 83. 'so füge hinzu das das Militare, durch den glauben und ihre sehl sorge, samt deren teitschen, schon in der jugend durch christen Lehr, auf wider die List des Satans und aus der irr-aber glaube- abgehärtet und unkraut vollen Wüsten der Sattanischen Slaverey ausgerißen und in das gelobte Land, nemblich in den heilsamen Kreuter vollen garten der erkantniß vest, gepflanzet, verlachen das nichts Kommende fablern und schaden deren toten, und verlassen sich auf die **anbegreiflich** wundervolle **hülfsmittel** Güte ihres heilands, und bleiben unbeschadigt, **und wann schon viele darueber einfältige, so seind ihre sehl sorgter sie zu Lehren Aptirt.**'

<sup>195</sup> His reasons are not clear for us at the moment. The big number of religious works he published would argue for a more zealous personality.

<sup>196</sup> Only one of them shall be discussed here; the other, more obscure text so-far has eluded my attempts at understanding it.

<sup>197</sup> Tallar 1756[?]. 14.v. 'Solte aber Sattan den Körper so Compact Condensiren, da ser zu einem kleinen runden loch herauß mieße und nicht auch so Extenuiren kennen, da ser durch die sehr weite poros der erden herauß penetriren kinne, so möchte ihm wohl ein einziger starker Plaz wegen durch zu flößung des Loches das künstliche handwerk verbieten. '; cf. 1784. 63.

line of thought, he does not need demonological considerations for his argumentation to work. At the same time, it did not appeal to the publisher and did not get into the printed version. Even though Mößle published saints lives, this harsh corporality of Satan's this-worldly activity was unacceptable for his Enlightened Catholic taste.<sup>198</sup>

Another example of Mößle's rejection of mixing religious authority with medical/chemical authority is of lesser scale but equally interesting. When Tallar discusses the working of the blood-circuit and how it can cause death,<sup>199</sup> he cites (in brackets) King Solomon, the Ecclesiastes 12:6, which reads

*'6When the silver cord is severed,  
the golden vessel is broken,  
the pitcher is shattered at the fountain,  
and the wheel is broken at the cistern,  
(7then man's dust will go back to the earth,  
returning to what it was,')*

Apart from the eerie applicability of the whole Biblical chapter about the fear of death to the vampire issue (which however Tallar does not exploit), Tallar only cites this passage to support his claim with Biblical authority. If this interpolation (the only Biblical reference throughout the book) was the suggestion of the Theologus or Tallar himself is not clear. The applicability of the metaphors to the actual workings of the blood-circuit discovered by William Harvey in 1628 has caught the attention of some of the physicians, like in Dr. John Smith's: *The pourtract of old age wherein is contained a sacred anatomy both of soul, and body, and a perfect account of the infirmities of age incident to them both: being a paraphrase upon the six former verses of the 12. chapter of Ecclesiastes* (London, 1676); and in Moses Mendelssohn's 1770 commentary on the same chapter.<sup>200</sup> Nevertheless, to what extent was it a standard reference in medical literature of the era is not clear to us. Anyhow, this reference was also deleted by Mößle.

What this chapter tried to achieve on the one hand is to clear up certain textual relations between different versions of Tallar's tract. It was a necessary endeavour, for without it, it would be impossible to situate Georg Tallar and his investigation back into its original circumstances. As our next chapter shall deal with identifying textual locations where the power spheres of different authorities can be felt, gathering precise information on the formative conditions of the texts was indispensable. Furthermore, a number of instructive changes which were made to the text in its printed version were pointed out. These changes are not only interesting because they draw attention the losses which secondary literature on vampirism suffers if it relies only on the 1784 version of Tallar's report, but because they show how the publisher's, and through him most probably the Habsburg government's agendas took effect. Attention now will be turned to the original text and the power-relations, expectations and interests which shaped Tallar's investigations and his formulation of his report will be investigated.

<sup>198</sup> The Enlightened church's increasing impatience towards demonology, more specifically exorcism is dealt with for instance in Midelfort 2005.

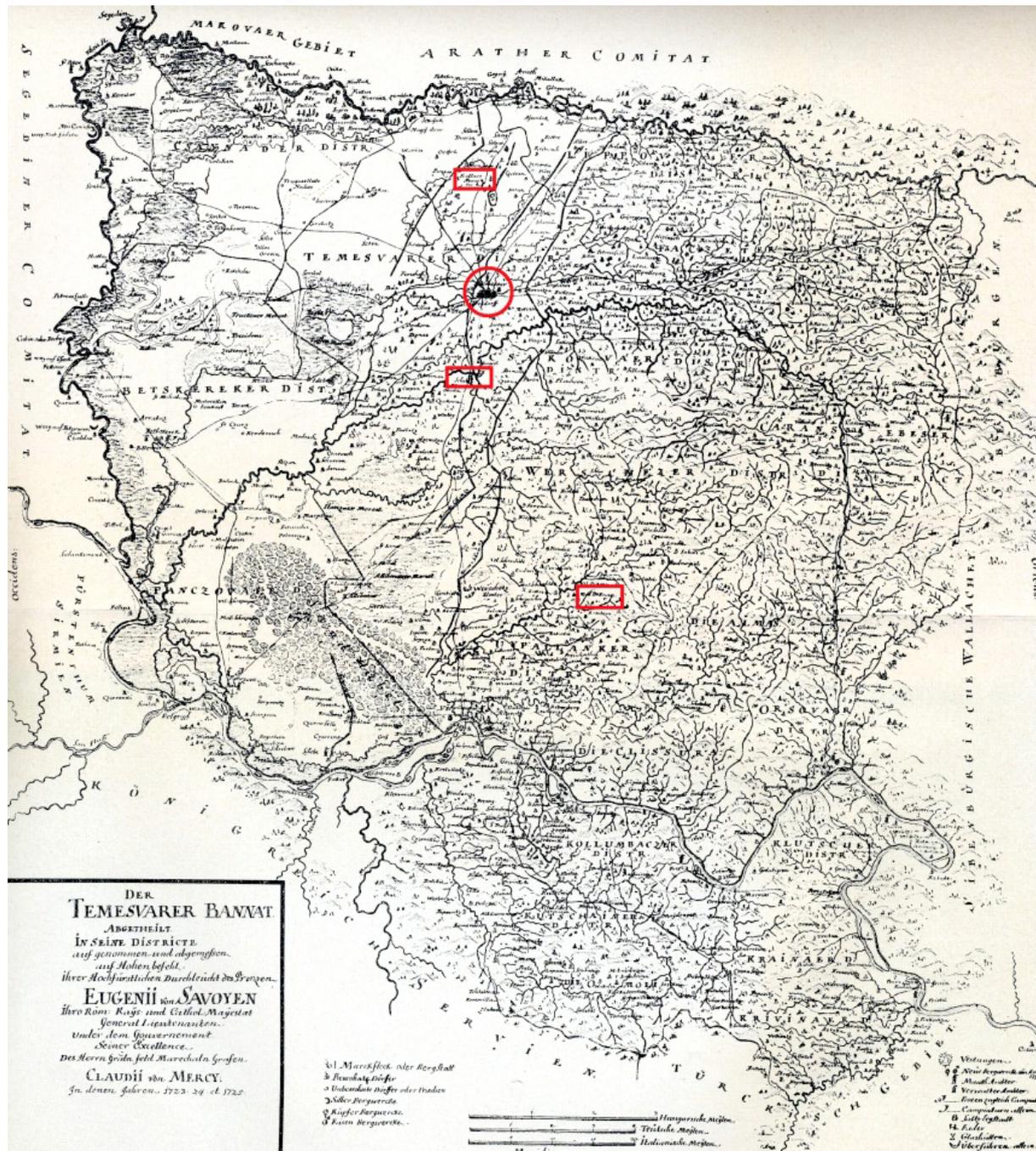
<sup>199</sup> Tallar 1756[?], 14r.

<sup>200</sup> Christianson 2007. 229-230.

## Spheres of authority: the taxpayer and the kobold

The section on the Serbian cases of Ksilova and Medvedia ended with a series of reflections on the wide range of possibilities, agendas and practices which were at the disposal of the actors who interpreted and treated cases of vampirism in the borderlands. It has also been mentioned that many times it was difficult to find arguments for forbidding these rituals, and that the work of Georg Tallar has accomplished to serve the administration with such a backing. Tallar starts his work in the Introduction (*Vorbericht*) with lamenting that the local Vlachs exhume the dead

13. Figure: The Banat and the villages visited by Tallar

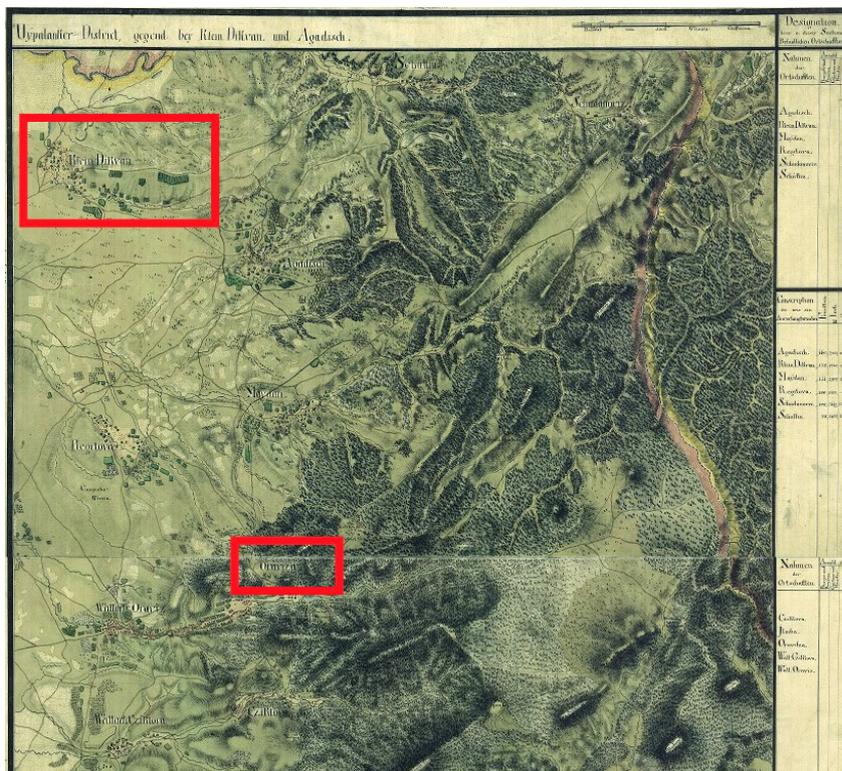


‘against all provisorial prohibitions, arbitrarily as a community’,<sup>201</sup> thereby showing that the core of the problem is that there is no administrative control over the local population. On the next page, he gives the reasons why the belief in vampirism is such a damaging superstition: he states (probably somewhat exaggeratingly), that each year the Aulic Treasury loses around one hundred taxpayers because of vampirism.<sup>202</sup> It is this way made clear that the administration has firm interest in eliminating the cause of these deaths.

In the contemporary medical literature on vampirism, the most widespread reason given for the deaths was the fasting habits of the locals, which occasionally could become so severe, that the person died. Both Tallar and Glaser gave this as a crucial element in the disease, though interestingly enough, Tallar maintains that as opposed to Vlachs, Rascians do not get frequently attacked by vampires because of the excessive hot-natured food their cuisine contains.<sup>203</sup> One might wonder if Glaser and Flückinger would have approved of this statement.

The attack on fasting habits as part of an overzealous religiosity fell in line with the anti-Baroque mentality which was increasingly getting strength in Maria Theresa's administration,<sup>204</sup> however the problem was that it was unable to serve as a reason to efficiently prohibit exhumation rituals: if the cause of deaths was unrelated to the corpses, why not let the locals dig them

14. Figure: Klein Dikvan and Orawitza in the map of the Josephinische Landesaufnahme



up in order to maintain calmness? Because of this, Tallar also built up another argument to account for the deaths, and states that in fact, it is the habit of smearing vampire-blood on oneself (to delay being tuned into one) which causes the epidemic-like spread of the ‘disease’ and the lots of deaths.<sup>205</sup> At the cost of double causation, by linking the smearing of blood to the interests of the Treasury, he managed to give a fairly strong support for the banning of exhumation rituals.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>201</sup> Tallar 1756[?] 3v. 'gegen allen Verwalter amtl. Verbott Eigen mächtig, meistens gesamer hand'

<sup>202</sup> Tallar 1756[?] 4r-4v. 'dem allerhöchsten Aerario öfters in so viehlen ortschafthen auf ein mahl etliche hundert Contribuenten, auch fast jährlich [& ] erschrocken'

<sup>203</sup> Tallar 1756[?] 19r.

<sup>204</sup> Evans 2006. 18.

<sup>205</sup> Tallar 1756[?] 6v.

<sup>206</sup> Further research into the archives of the Temesvar provincial administration could serve information on whether the policy of cameral provisors

Next to the Treasury, another aulic organ also figures in Tallar's report, albeit in an indirect way: the *Münz- und Bergwesens Directionshofkollegium*. It has been stated before, that a major interest of the court in keeping the Banat as a royal province were the metal mines in the eastern mountainous areas. In the dedicatory letter and the last paragraph of the Epilogue (which were by the way omitted by Mößle in the printed version), Tallar plays with metaphors related to mining. In the dedicatory letter, he likens his own fortunate acceptance into the service of the provincial administration to that of the mineral stone, which is accidentally washed into the way of the Chemist, who, cleaning it, finds it useful.<sup>207</sup> What Tallar most probably means by this is that the Chemist can trace its provenance and find a rich mine.

In the ending paragraph, he returns to mine craft and this time likens vampirism to mistaking cobalt with ore,<sup>208</sup> thereby likening his role to that of the chemist who reveals the truth through expertise. It was not by chance that Tallar chose the issue of the cobalt: it was a highly topical and grave issue in the science of the era. Its discovery as a separate type of metal, and the explanation of why do many miners get sick or die because of continuous close contact with cobalt (due to its arsenic-containment) were the work of Georg Brandt (1694-1768), a Swedish chemist and mining-specialist. He alluded to his findings in 1735 in an article in the *Journal of Swedish Literature and Sciences* and expounded the theory more punctually in 1748 in the *Journal of the Royal Scientific Society of Uppsala*.<sup>209</sup>

Tallar's allusions are not just pleasant niceties towards the Chief Mountain Council of the Banat, the body which oversaw the mining cities and territories in the province.<sup>210</sup> Tallar's vampire-hunt took place in three villages: in Sebell (Tsakovaer district), in Kallatsa (Temeswarer district) and in Klein Dikvan (Uypalanker district) (see fig.13., p.50.)<sup>211</sup> with these locations highlighted.) The first two are located in the central flatlands of the province, Klein Dikvan however is a small village at the feet of the eastern mountains, where metal mining was carried out. If one looks at fig.14., p.51.,<sup>212</sup> it becomes clear that the village is only around two kilometres away from the greatest mining city, Orawitza, and its inhabitants possibly had been employed as workers in the mining and metallurgy industry or involved in the commerce of copper. Given that no less than thirty deaths have happened in the year 1753 attributed to vampirism in the small village,<sup>213</sup> getting rid of vampires could have been a question of great importance to the city of Orawitza. In fact, just as much as it was for the Nagybánya and Felsőbánya mining cities of Máramaros county in the same year.<sup>214</sup> It is interesting to see two mining regions, which have fought vampires in the same year and have treated the problem in two different ways.

As a final remark, it may also worth noting that Tallar was also writing within the power

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changed or not after Tallar's report.

<sup>207</sup> Tallar 1756[?] 2r.

<sup>208</sup> Tallar 1756[?] 20r. 'Kobolt und Arsenikalische Süttenrauch weren vor örz räuber behalten' the metaphor is all the more compelling, if we consider that the creature of the Kobold in German folklore originates from this metal.

<sup>209</sup> Brandt 1735., 1748.

<sup>210</sup> Gráf 1997. 81. According to Gráf the seat of this body was moved to Orawitza from Temesvar in 1747; this information should however be checked in archival sources, since it seems more likely (judging solely by Tallar's metaphors) that it still resided in Temesvar in 1753.

<sup>211</sup> Kallbrunner 1958, Appendix.

<sup>212</sup> Josephinische Landesaufnahme 1763-87.

<sup>213</sup> Baróti 1900-1902. 50. 'Uypalanker Verwalteramt berichtet, dass zu Klein-Dikvan in einer kurzen Zeit dreissig, und zu Rakasdia zwanzig Personen muthmasslich wegen den Wampirs (sic) verstorben sind, und bittet in Sachen das Erforderliche einzuleiten.'

<sup>214</sup> As it has been mentioned in the section on Serbia already.

field of the medical community. Albeit improper and clumsy, his references to van Swieten and Malpighi, the ordering of his text into numbered 'observations' and 'remarks,' as well as the long medical theorizing parts of the work point to the possibility that Tallar meant his work to be published. This way, while writing, he was constantly aware of the fact that a wide audience of savants will read his words. Given that the 18th century Banat produced only one medical author who published something at all (József Büky's plague treatise from the end of the century),<sup>215</sup> Tallar's report might be elevated to the company of Büky's work. The two tracts, one on plague, the other on vampirism give a grim but intensive patch of colour to our picture of what life was like on the Habsburg borderlands.

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<sup>215</sup> Balla&Hegedűs 1990. 122.

## Conclusion

Probably the most frequently evoked element in this essay is the ‘map’ and its various cognates. Right after ‘vampire’ of course. In fact, this was the first half of the aim the paper initially set out to accomplish. In a somewhat similar fashion to the protagonists who struggled with ordering, policing vampirism within their world and overcoming the baffling nature of the issue, so did this paper depart from a perceived fogginess of secondary literature stemming either from disregard of, or sometimes straight misconceptions about the actual relations which were at play on the Habsburg borderland. Establishing the basic points of reference by delineating fields of authority, function and expertise, and their changes in space and time, serve as indispensable foundations for any kind of research into the topic of policing vampirism.

As instant gains, some of the little kobolds of this subject matter have been found out, such as the dating of Tallar’s report, its association with Kömovesch’s investigations, the changes made by Mößle to the original text or the exact location of the village of Kisilova. Furthermore, it also turned out that the borderland was not at all the static, unchanging and unequivocal ‘background’ or ‘frame’ which a map could convey. Plasticity, variety and insecurity were shown to be some of its crucial characteristics. This situation was a consequence of the double nature of its administration. On the one hand, the elimination of intermediary institutions theoretically allowed central authority to exert its will in a more efficient and direct way. This fuller control however did not get truly realised because of the privileges and autonomy of the settled population and the inadequacy of governmental programs. This was especially visible in the case of policing vampirism, where without any stately support or backing, the officials had to face the strong will of the populace basically alone.

At the same time, this meant an enhanced freedom of action, where various local agendas, such as statements of expertise, economic interest, need of tranquillity and order as well as aspects of hygiene and anti-superstition sensitivities could and were articulated. The directness by which even commoners could get into contact with high circles increased their visibility and

thereby also made age-old beliefs and habits susceptible to challenge. The exact interplay of these factors was always a local matter, and though the present paper made attempts at flashing up certain variations, it should be seen as marking the foundation and outset of further research: the archives of local administrative centres promise a richer view into the matters which shaped the perception, interpretation and treatment of vampirism.

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## Appendix

### An incomplete list of works published by Johann Georg Mößle in chronological order

- Anton von Zach (et al.):** Vorlesungen über die Feldbefestigung, Vertheidigung und Angriff. Wien, 1783.
- Mendelssohn, Moses:** Opera philosophica, quae e Germanico in Latinum traduxit – -. Tom. 1–2. Wien & Leipzig, 1784.
- Gründliche Anleitung Situations-Plane zu zeichnen :** zum Gebrauche der k.k. Ingenieur-Akademie, wie auch jener, die sich den Mappirungs-Geschäften widmen. Wien, 1783.
- Sommfels, J.:** Was ist vom Bürger, jungen Künstler und Kaufmann zu halten? Wien, 1783.

- Meisel:** Was ist von der Religion, und von den Pflichten gegen Gott &c. zu halten? Wien, 1783.
- La Grange-Chancel, Joseph:** Amasis. Ein Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen., Wien, 1783.
- Eisenhardt:** Pif--Puf! oder, Eins nach dem andern. Wien, 1783.
- Bartholotti, Johann Nepomuk & Kreil, A.:** Streitschrift wider die verschiedenen Gattungen des Aberglaubens : Gesammelt aus den görzischen Diktaten. Wien, 1783.
- Huhn, Christian Wilhelm:** Raritäten oder umständliche Beschreibung, was Anno 1683 vor, bey, und in der denkwürdigen türkischen Belagerung Wien, vom 7. Julii bis 12. September täglich vorgelaufen. Wien, 1783.
- Moßfleck, H.:** Der Spaßmacher. 1-6. Bände. Wien & Leipzig, 1783-1785.
- Tallar, Georg:** Visum Repertum Anatomico-Chirurgicum oder Gründlicher Bericht von den sogenannten Blutsäugern, Vampier, oder in der wallachischen Sprache Moroi, in der Walachey, Siebenbürgen, und Banat : welchen eine eigends dahin abgeordnete Untersuchungskommission der löbl. k. k. Administration im Jahre 1756 erstattet hat. Wien & Leipzig 1784.
- Richter, Joseph & von Steinsberg, Karl Franz Guolfinger:** Anhang zur neuen Legende der Heiligen. Wien, 1784.
- Pratt, Mr.:** Karl und Charlotte. Wien, 1784.
- Friedrich Bernhard Albinus:** Von der Natur des Menschen. Wien, 1784.
- Werner, Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias:** Werners lyrische Gedichte samt Oden aus dem Horaz. Wien, 1785.
- Voltaire:** Der unwissende Philosoph. Wien & Leipzig & Wien, 1785.
- Leben, Meinungen, Tod und Begräbniss der Jungfer Susanna Dummpffaffin :** eine Geschichte aus den neuen Zeiten der Aufklärung. Wien, 1785.
- Kropatschek, Joseph:** Sammlung aller k. k. Verordnungen und Gesetze vom Jahre 1740... zu dem Handbuche aller unter der Regierung des Kaisers Joseph des II... : 1-8. Bände. Wien, 1786.
- Sommfels, J.:** Neuester Briefsteller auf alle Fälle : nebst einem Anhang von einem deutsch-, latein- und französischen Titularbuche, auch einem Verzeichnisse von den Namen der Personen und vornehmsten Städte. Wien, 1786.
- von Geissau, Anton Ferdinand:** Des heiligen allgemeinen Kirchenraths zu Trient : Schlüsse und Glaubensregeln welche die Katholische Lehre betreffen. Wien, 1786.
- Scopoli, Giovanni Antonio:** Der Weltweisheit und Arzneikunst Doktors ... Anfangsgründe der Chemie : zum Gebrauche seiner Vorlesungen. Wien, 1786.
- Huber, F. X. .:** Franklins freier Wille; ein Wink für denkende Menschen über die Macht des Zufalls. Wien, 1787.
- Voltaire:** Die endlich einmal von vielen Almosenpflegern S.M. d. Kön. v. Preussen erklärte Bibel. Wien & London, 1787.
- Voltaire:** Der Greis vom Berge Kaukasus, und der Preis der Menschlichkeit und Gerechtigkeit. Wien & London, [1787?]
- Leben und Geschichte Mohammeds :** enthaltend einen vollständigen Abriss der Gründung und Fortpflanzung der von ihm ausgedachten Religion, seiner Kriege und der merkwürdigsten dabey sich ereigneten Vorfälle. Wien, 1788.
- Schwerdling, Johann:** Practische Anwendung aller k. k. Verordnungen in Gesittlichen Sachen... vom Antritte

der Regierung weiland Marien Theresien, bis zum Tode weiland Joseph II. nämlich vom Jahre 1740 bis 1790. Wien, 1789.

**Voltaire:** Der schwarze Prinz. Wien, 1789.

**Von dem Verfahren wider Kriminalverbrecher :** ein Handbuch für Bannrichter, Landgerichtsverwalter und alle die sich in den k.k. Staaten mit der Ausübung der Kriminalgerichtsbarkeit beschäftigen. Wien, 1790.

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**Tartler, Johann:** Das Recht des Eigenthums der sächsischen Nation in Siebenbürgen auf dem ihr mehr als 600 Jahren von ungrischen Königen verliehenen Grund und Boden, ... von den Repräsentanten der Nation. Wien, 1791.

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**Plenk, Joseph Jakob:** Der Wundarzneykunst Doktors ... Lehre von den Augenkrankheiten. Wien, 1799.