

# THE AUSTRIAN CENTENNIAL OF EMPEROR JOSEPH II IN 1880

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## Abstract

This thesis aims to cover a substantial bibliographic lacuna in the field of 19<sup>th</sup> century Josephinism in the Habsburg Empire, i.e. the centennial of Joseph II in 1880. The essay wishes to revisit the traditional view, which tended to see the end of Josephinism in the period after 1848, to mark the 1880 centennial as a turning point in the history of Josephinism and to draft a typology of the Josephinian and anti-Josephinian forces in 1880. In the first part, the evolution of the Josephinian remembrance from 1848 to 1880 is studied as a preface to the actual centennial. The key points under consideration are the 1848 revolution, the 1860s and the 1870s and the blossom that the Josephinian memory experienced then under the influence of the contemporary public issues (emancipation from oppression, confessional struggles). Various social groups are studied regarding their attitude in favor or against the late emperor, like the 1848 revolutionaries, the liberal politicians of the constitutional era, the imperial bureaucracy, the clergy and the dynasty. In the second part, after a brief introduction on dynastic celebrations in general, the political motivation, protagonists and events of the centennial are studied. Initially the focus lies on the festivities of Vienna, the way that the newspapers covered the event and the commemorative literature published then. After that the point of view of the centennial-hostile power is studied (government, clergy, dynasty). Subsequently, the scope is moved towards the celebrations in the Alpine lands, Bohemia, Moravia and Galicia. Particular attention is given to the rise of German nationalism in relation to the Josephinian memory and how Joseph II was seen increasingly as the monarch of the Austro-Germans alone against most other nationalities and also the Taaffe ministry. Finally, in the epilogue, after a brief narration of the post-1880 Josephinism, the gathered evidence is concentrated and it is concluded that the centennial was indeed a turning point as there is a clear difference between the liberal secularizer of the 1860s and 1870s from the more aggressive nationally-motivated centralizer of the 1880s onwards. At the end, four social categories are formulated according to their attitude towards Joseph II: A) the German liberals (positive); B) the dynasty and the civil service (positive under terms or ambivalent); C) the clergy (negative) and D) the non-German nationalities that can be divided into categories: Czechs (still positive in the 1860s but increasingly negative after 1880) and Ruthenians (positive).

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## Introduction

“What is this notion of Josephinism? Each party gives a different answer to this question. The Liberals say that it has to do with Liberalism, the anti-Liberals the opposite; the first say that it was Enlightened Despotism, the other that it was free humanity.”<sup>1</sup>

In the passage cited above the well-known Austro-German author of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Richard von Kralik mentions his theoretical trouble regarding the very essence and characteristics of Josephinism. The latter, which is in close correspondence with the broader concept of European Enlightened Absolutism, is an intellectual trend that holds its origins to the reign of the Habsburg enlightened monarch Joseph II (1741-1790, r.1765/80-1790) and his reformist activity in the Austrian monarchy in the 1780s<sup>2</sup>. More precisely, the series of daring measures that Joseph II took in order to reshape the inner organization of his empire (bureaucratic reorganization, religious tolerance, creation of a state-dominated Church in Austria, relaxation of censorship and of serfdom, juridical and education reforms to name only the most influential parts of his agenda), apart from direct repercussions to the Habsburg state apparatus, were also responsible for a birth of a political culture in the Austrian long 19<sup>th</sup> century that favored the predominance of the state in social affairs, secularization and administrative centralization, constitutional rights and -after a certain point- superiority of the German culture against the Slavic ones.

This political culture -Josephinism<sup>3</sup>- was in the century followed Joseph's death connected mostly, but not exclusively, to Austrian Liberalism, for whom the idealized posthumous image of Joseph II became a patron and an early apostle of its ideas; shortly a powerful

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Karl Michael Kisler, “Joseph II. in der Literatur”, in *Österreich zur Zeit Josephs II.* ed. Karl Gutkas (Vienna: Niederöstr. Landesmuseum, 1980), 298-305, 302.

<sup>2</sup> There are many accurate biographies of Joseph II. See Paul von Mitrofanov, *Joseph II: Seine politische und kulturelle Tätigkeit*, 2 Vols. (Vienna-Leipzig: C.W. Stern, 1910); Derek Beales, *Joseph II, 1741-1790* 2 Vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987-2009).

<sup>3</sup> On Josephinism, see generally Fritz Valjavec, *Der Josephinismus: Zur geistigen Entwicklung Österreichs im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert* (München: Rudol M.Rohrer, 1945); Eduard Winter, *Der Josephinismus: Geschichte des österreichischen Reformkatholizismus, 1740-1848* (Berlin: Rütten & Loening, 1962); *Der Josephinismus: ausgewählte Quellen zur Geschichte der thesianisch-josephinischen Reformen*, ed. Harm Klüeting, (Darmstadt: Wiss. Buchges., 1995); Matthias Rettenwander, „Nachwirkungen des Josephinismus“, in *Josephinismus als Aufgeklärter Absolutismus*, ed. Helmut Reinalter (Vienna: Böhlau, 2008), 317-425.

instrument of policy legitimization. At the same time, the enemies of Liberalism and especially the Catholic Church and later the Czech and also the Magyar nationalism tended to despise Josephinism for the very same reasons that liberals adored it: subordination of the Church to secular control and administrative centralization. This means that the memory of Joseph II acquired in the 19<sup>th</sup> century a highly contested meaning, as Kralik passage suggests becoming a tool of political propaganda in favor or against various policies. As John Boyer has put it: “[...] when Austrians were uncertain how to justify their present expectations in terms of their present behavior, they simply summoned the mythical Joseph II, who became all things to all men.”<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, despite the lasting influence of Joseph’s memory in Austrian politics throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and under the conviction of a deeply-rooted historiographic tradition that saw in the era after 1848 the end (*Ausklang*) of Josephinism, research has focused so far overwhelmingly in the years 1780 to 1848 ignoring largely the subsequent era until 1918<sup>5</sup>. Although recently some steps have been taken towards the better understanding of Joseph II’s legacy after 1880<sup>6</sup>, it is a fact that the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century remains still a historiographic terra incognita.

This study aspires to contribute towards the filling of this lacuna thus adding another part in a long chain of scholarship. A key event in the history of Josephinism will be analyzed below, i.e. the centennial of Joseph II in 1880. This event is a first rate opportunity for the study of Joseph’s memory as centennials in general -themselves an invention of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup>- usually produce immense amounts of commemorative literature and symbols that allows by definition a deeper study of the commemorated event or person; in our case, Joseph

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in John Boyer, *Political Radicalism in late imperial Vienna: Origins of the Christian Social Movement, 1848-1897* (Chicago: Chicago Univ. Press, 1981), 5.

<sup>5</sup> See above all Valjavec, *Der Josephinismus*, 141-168; Winter, *Der Josephinismus*, 335-348.

<sup>6</sup> See Nancy Wingfield, “Statues of Emperor Joseph II as Sites of German Identity”, in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Maria Bucur, Nancy Wingfield (West Lafayette: Purdue Univ. Press, 2001), 178-205.

<sup>7</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914”, *The Invention of Tradition* eds. Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1983), 263-308, 281-282.

II. While earlier research tended to associate the memory of Joseph II with democratic liberalism until the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and increasingly with German nationalism from the 1880s onwards, an adequate explanation of how exactly and why Josephinism was transformed in the meantime is still lacking. In the following chapters it will be shown that: i) Josephinism met by no means its end after 1848; ii) the 1880 centennial was the crucial turning point for Josephinism's tradition from liberalism to nationalism based on the evidence provided by the contemporary political rhetoric and celebratory events. Additionally, in order for the full meaning of the centennial to be unveiled, a mapping of Joseph II's memory in its proceeding years, i.e. from 1848 onwards, is necessary so that the breaks and continuities between the pre-1880 realities and the centenary Josephinism to be brought forward. As a consequence to that and for the better understanding of both Joseph's centennial and the diachronic evolution of Josephinism a third research goal in addition to the past two will be put: iii) the construction of a typology of Josephinism from 1848 to 1880 and during 1880 in order to avoid arbitrary generalizations and simplifications and to obtain a detailed image of what exactly Joseph II meant to each social group in the Habsburg monarchy one hundred years after his rise to the throne. Finally, it should be noted that the contribution of this essay is not limited to the better comprehension of Josephinism in the diachronic level seeing thus the 1880 centennial as a long echo of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and Pre-march Josephinism. Much more importantly what Josephinism was in 1880 can offer elaborative information on the circumstances of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and how people perceived themselves and their past at this certain point in the light of contemporary political, social and cultural developments. John Burrow's formulation is particularly enlightening in matters of this usage of history: "one of the ways in which a society reveals itself and its assumptions and beliefs about its own character and destiny, is by its attitudes to and uses of its past"<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in John Burrow, *A Liberal Descent: Victorian Historians and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 1-2.

For the above state goals to be succeeded, the following structure will be adopted. The essay is divided into two great part, each of which contains its own sections and sub-chapters. The first part deals with the afterlife of Joseph II from 1848 to 1880 and discusses it during three different historical momenta: in the revolution of 1848; in the rise of confessional conflicts in the 1860s and in the last stages of these conflicts in the 1870s. In 1848 various perceptions of Joseph II are examined (liberal, conservative, clerical, dynastic) according to their interests and their background. In matters of the 1860s and the 1870s, the narration focuses on the relation between the memory of Joseph II and the struggle against the (anti-Josephinian) Concordat of 1855 and how Joseph II was used as a symbol or resistance against it or as a bleak figure that justified its existence. Regarding these decades, also another, non-confessional aspect of Josephinism is treated, that of Joseph's centennial in Slavikovice (Moravia) in 1869, a century after the enlightened monarch drove the plow there, and the political connotations that this event created. The second part of the essay is concerned directly with the 1880 centennial of Joseph II. After a brief introductory section related to previous dynastic celebrations (because after all the centennial was also a public celebration of dynastic content), the centenary celebrations are discussed in detail. More specifically, the German liberal political motivation behind the festivities in Vienna is unveiled along with the series of public events organized to honor Joseph II and the commemorative literature that was produced in this time. Next to these political actors, other groups, hostile to the centennial are also discussed (clergy, government, dynasty). Subsequently a glimpse to the respective celebrations in the Alpine lands, in Bohemia, Moravia and Galicia is given along with the attitude towards them of the Slavic nationalities of the empire (above all the Czechs and the Ruthenians). Finally, in the epilogue, after a short narration of the evolution of Josephinism after 1880, the evidence gathered in the previous chapters will be summarized in order for a persuasive answer to the initially mentioned research questions and issues to be provided.



## Part I: The Afterlife of Joseph II from 1848 to 1880

### 1. Joseph II in the Revolution of 1848: Political Symbol and Object of Contested Memories

#### 1.1. Patron of the revolution: The liberal version of Joseph II in 1848

From the late Pre-March years, the long dead Emperor Joseph II was already considered by various members of the liberal-minded middle class to be an early apostle of their own values concerning constitutional rights and, above all, the freedom of the Press against the oppressive regime in Vienna<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, the rejuvenation of the enlightened monarch's memory during the uprising of 1848 in the hands of the revolutionaries of the imperial capital should not constitute a surprise<sup>10</sup>. The very fact that the revolution broke out on the 13th March, Joseph II's birthday, was ideally suited to the liberal instrumentalisation of Josephinism. This imagined persona of Joseph II was thus used to legitimize the political agenda of the revolution, arguing that the latter was only an extension of the original Josephinian reforms. The revolutionaries used the equestrian statue of Joseph II in Josefsplatz as their rallying point in order to celebrate their early successes, above all the abolition of censorship<sup>11</sup>. This brown version of the late monarch was thus transformed both literally and metaphorically into a realm of memory (*Erinnerungsort*) a quality that was preserved in the coming years

In the midst of the popular euphoria regarding the breakdown of autocracy, Joseph II was imagined as a patron saint of the revolutionaries. Praises for the late ruler were composed

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<sup>9</sup> See above all the writing of Eduard Bauernfeld and of Anastasius Grün.

<sup>10</sup> On the afterlife of Joseph II in 1848, see Friedrich Engel-Janosi, "Kaiser Joseph II. in der Wiener Bewegung des Jahres 1848", *Mitteilungen des Vereines für Geschichte der Stadt Wien* 11 (1931): 53-72; R.J.W. Evans, „Josephinism, „Austrianness“ and the Revolution of 1848,“ in *The Austrian Enlightenment and its Aftermath*, eds. Edward Timms, Ritchie Robertson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1991), 145-160.

<sup>11</sup> The equestrian statue of Joseph II, a creation of the sculptor Anton Zauner, had been unveiled in 1807 so as to inspire the Habsburg peoples in the ongoing wars against France. On the political uses of the statue, see Wolfgang Häusler, "„Des Kaisers Bildsäule“: Entstehung und politischer Sinngehalt des Wiener Josephsdenkmals,“ in *Österreich zur Zeit Josephs II.*, ed. Karl Gutkas, (Vienna: Niederöstr. Landesmuseum, 1980), 288-290. On the gathering of the Viennese there in March 1848, see *Victor Franz Freiherr von Andrian-Werburg. Tagebücher*, ed. Franz Adlgasser, 3 Vols. (Vienna: Böhlau, 2011), Vol.2, 46.

in all genres of literary production. In mid-March, the poet Joseph Philibert von Lazarini wrote of Joseph II: “Great Emperor, // Savior of Light, // Apostle of truth and King! // We have reached the island of freedom, // have heard its marvelous song”<sup>12</sup> Nearly simultaneously, the author and historical popularizer Franz Gräffer took advantage of this pro-Josephinian enthusiasm and published a series of historical documents related to Joseph II. Gräffer claimed that this collection was: “a mirror of Joseph’s beautiful and pure soul, of his noble human-friend heart, of his magnificent, self-sacrificing spirit [...]”<sup>13</sup>. The memory of Joseph II was not only associated with liberal and constitutional principles, but also acquired nationalist connotations. At the beginning of April, student members of the Academic Legion marched to the statue of the “true German emperor Joseph” holding a large red, black and gold German flag and subsequently proceeded to the Hofburg to deliver it to Emperor Ferdinand<sup>14</sup>. Similar scenes were repeated on July 7, when legionaries were summoned again to Josefsplatz. In the speech that followed, an officer of the Legion, Johann Nepomuk Vogl, dressed Joseph II in the colors of German nationalism: “In your hands should the banner simmer [...] // in your hands should the banner of Germany simmer // you noble [ruler], whom the Crown suits”.<sup>15</sup> The liberal instrumentalisation of Joseph II reached such ahistorical levels that in October, slightly before the surrender of besieged Vienna by Field Marshal Windischgrätz, a brochure appeared that presented Joseph protecting the Academic Legion from the “enemy hordes”, who were no other than the Habsburg troops<sup>16</sup>. Given this political use of a monarch who despised revolutions from below, it seems logical that this

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Joseph Philibert von Lazarini, “Joseph II”, in *Zwölf Märzlieder, der Wiener Hochschule gewidmet* (Vienna: Schmidbauer & Holzwarth, 1848), 23.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Franz Gräffer, *Josephinische Curiosa; oder ganz besondere, theils nicht mehr, theils noch nicht bekannte Persönlichkeiten, Geheimnisse, Details, Actenstücke und Denkwürdigkeiten der Lebens- und Zeitperiode Kaiser Josephs II.* (Vienna: J. Klang, 1848), 143.

<sup>14</sup> See R. John Rath, *The Viennese Revolution of 1848* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1957), 133-134.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in R.A., „Kaiser Joseph und die deutsche Fahne“, *Wiener Sonntagsblätter*, July 9, 1848, 514. On Josephinism and German nationalism in 1848, Engel-Janosi, “Joseph II.”, 69; Evans, „Josephism“, 152-154.

<sup>16</sup> This anonymous booklet was titled *Kaiser Joseph auf seiner nächtlichen Wanderung um die Stadt*. On this aspect of Josephinian commemoration, see Lucia Olscher, „Das Bild der habsburgischen Dynastie im Lichte der Publizistik des Revolutionsjahres 1848“ (PhD diss., Univ. of Vienna, 1980).

final step of the 1848 liberal imagination has been characterized as: “the most extreme and paradoxical rise of the Josephinian cult of the Viennese revolution”<sup>17</sup>. As we shall see, similar statements were made by other political forces in 1848.

## **1.2. The response to the revolutionary challenge: The conservative bureaucrats’ vision of Joseph II in 1848**

The outburst of the revolution also affected the members of the imperial bureaucracy, the established administrative elite of the empire at least since the 1780s<sup>18</sup>. Soon after March 1848, leading Austrian officials began to seriously reflect on the causes of the revolution and systematically analyze its events. Baron Franz von Pillersdorf, the constitutionally-oriented Minister-President between April and July 1848, holds an eminent position among these bureaucrats. Tracing the roots of the uprising in the history of the monarchy of the previous century, Pillersdorf attempted a less sentimental and more balanced overview of Joseph’s deeds than the above mentioned paeans: while he flattered Joseph for his ecclesiastical, agrarian, fiscal and juridical reforms, which he called “indisputable evidences of a magnanimous and enlightened mind”, Pillersdorf was equally critical towards the abolishment of municipal autonomy and of “the representative system of the diets (sic)”<sup>19</sup>. The extreme centralism that had developed since then was, for Pillersdorf, one of the primary reasons of the revolution. His colleagues who had also watched closely the events did not hesitate to openly discredit the liberal use of Joseph’s name. The once all-mighty chancellor Metternich, who, like Pillersdorf, was an enemy of centralization, but also of the Josephinian ecclesiastical

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<sup>17</sup> Quoted in *Österreich zur Zeit Josephs II.* ed. Karl Gutkas, no.1691, 692.

<sup>18</sup> See Heindl Waltraud, *Gehorsame Rebellen: Bürokratie und Beamte in Österreich*, 2 Vols, Vol.1: 1780-1848 (Vienna: Böhlau, 1991); John David Deak, *Forging a Multinational State: State Making in Imperial Austria from the Enlightenment to the First World War* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2015), 19-64.

<sup>19</sup> See Franz von Pillersdorf, *Rückblicke auf die politische Bewegung in Oesterreich in den Jahren 1848 und 1849* (Vienna: Jasper, Hügel & Manz, 1849), 8-9. On his detailed views about the revolution see his *Handschriftlicher Nachlaß des Freiherrn von Pillersdorf* (Vienna: Wilhelm Braumüller, 1863), 84-185.

arrangements<sup>20</sup>, noted in his diary that: “[...] neither in his [Joseph’s] words, nor in his deeds, was he at all conscious of [friendly to] the essence of modern liberalism.”<sup>21</sup> Franz von Hartig, a former governor of Styria and Lombardy, a high-ranked financial administrator and Metternich’s regular associate, dared to be less laconic when judging the revolutionaries’ gatherings in Josefsplatz:

“After the days of March in Vienna, the mad joy of the mob at their success [...] induced them to proceed to the equestrian statue of Joseph, in order to place a crown on that emperor’s head. Must not every cool and well-informed spectator have asked himself at the moment, what would have been the answer of that highly-honored monarch to his joyous worshippers if his spirit could then but have animated his statue? Would not the ponderous weight of his brazen arm have crushed them in indignation at their achievements?”<sup>22</sup>

The above-mentioned spectators embraced a view fundamentally different than that of the protagonists of the revolution. They believed that social and state reforms had to be carried out from above, i.e. from the sovereign and his officialdom. In their way, they could be characterized as pro-Josephinian, if the authoritarian aspect of Josephinism and Joseph as a “friend of order” are taken into account<sup>23</sup>. Such approaches do not mean that wholly anti-Josephinian opinions did not also rise to the surface in 1848.

### 1.3. The oppressor of the Catholic Church: the clerical interpretation of Joseph II

In the turmoil of 1848, not only did the liberal bourgeoisie grasp the opportunity for emancipation from the absolutism of the Habsburg state, but members of the clergy also believed that the time had come to break state control over the Catholic Church, which had

<sup>20</sup> See Alan Sked, “Metternich and the Federalist Myth in Crisis and Controversy,” in *Crisis and Controversy: Essays in Honor of A.J.P. Taylor*, eds. Alan Sked, Chris Cook (London: Macmillan Press, 1976), 1-22; Ferdinand Maaß, *Der Josephinismus: Quellen zu seiner Geschichte in Österreich 1760-1850*, 5 Vols., Vol.5: *Lockerung und Aufhebung des Josephinismus: 1820-1850* (Vienna: Herold, 1961), 565.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in *Aus Metternich’s nachgelassenen Papieren*, eds. Richard von Metternich, Alfons von Kleinowström, 8 Vols. (Vienna: Braumüller, 1880-1884), Vol.8, 479 (June 26, 1849).

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Walter Keating Kelly, *History of the House of Austria from the accession of Francis I to the revolution of 1848 in continuation of the history written by Archdeacon Coxe to which is added Genesis; or details of the late Austrian revolution. By an officer of state. Trans. from the German* (London: Henry Bohn, 1853), 3-4.

<sup>23</sup> On the version of Joseph II as a “friend of order” see Eduard Beutner, “Joseph II. Die Geschichte seiner Mythisierung und Entmythisierung in der Literatur (1741-1848). Die Grundlagen und Bausteine der josephinischen Legende.“ (Habil. diss., University of Salzburg, 1992), 303-304.

its origins in the reign of Joseph II<sup>24</sup>. In 1848, bishops and clerical publicists had condemned en masse the so called Josephinian yoke upon the Church and struggled to regain its legal status under Canon Law. The devoted anti-Semite, Catholic author and journalist Sebastian Brunner was one of the most militant prosecutors against Josephinism, and through his *Wiener Kirchenzeitung* he systematically propagated the clerical positions: “Under all persecutions, subordinations and bailments, which came up under the name of the Church’s protection, none was so original and odd [...] as these in the era of the glorious Zopfblüthe in the end of the previous century, which the state tried to put in order with edicts the Church’s juridical conditions.”<sup>25</sup> This Josephinian Church led, according to Brunner, to a plethora of evils: “[to] indifference to lack of faith, to religious hatred, to the dilapidation of the people, to boisterousness in the empire [...]”<sup>26</sup> This untiring zealot continued his activity until the end of his life in 1893.

Brunner was not alone in his struggle. In December 1848, the distinguished German conservative lawyer and politician Karl Ernst Jarcke published an essay with the title *Austria and the Church*. Jarcke claimed that: “Austria has conducted for the past seventy years in the fields of legislation and of administration a silent but continuous war against the Church”<sup>27</sup>. The bureaucracy, which had experienced its heyday in the 1780s, “[...] wanted to render the Church an administrative department of the police state”<sup>28</sup>. The author fully disagreed with this scandalous misdirection of the Church’s true spiritual purpose and asked for the granting of complete autonomy regarding ecclesiastical associations, as well as the education of the clergy. Such loud requests were not in vain. A synod of bishops that took place in late 1848-

<sup>24</sup> See Erika Weinzierl, *Die österreichischen Konkordate von 1855 und 1933* (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 1960), 26ff; Scott Berg, “Empire of Faith: Toleration, Confessionalism and the Politics of Religious Pluralism in the Habsburg Empire, 1792-1867” (PhD diss, Louisiana State Univ., 2015), 357-449.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in *Wiener Kirchenzeitung*, April 15, 1848, 2.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in *Wiener Kirchenzeitung*, March 11, 1849, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in *Die Österreichische Zentralverwaltung, Part III: 1848-1867, 3 Vols., Vol.2: Akten. Die Geschichte der Ministerien Kolowrat, Ficquelmont, Pillersdorf, Wessenberg-Doblhoff und Schwarzenberg, 1848-1852*, ed. Friedrich Walter (Vienna: Böhlau, 1964), 41-47, 41.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in *Die Österreichische Zentralverwaltung*, ed. Walter, 42.

1849 in Würzburg repeated and extended Jarcke's demands, calling for the freedom and the independence of ecclesiastical administration<sup>29</sup>. This opened the way for the anti-Josephinian edicts of April 18 and 23, 1850<sup>30</sup> and for the Concordat of 1855 that meant the (temporary) demise of Josephinism in ecclesiastical affairs.

#### **1.4. The dynastic exploitation of Joseph's cult and the survival of Josephinism through Franz Joseph.**

The extreme popularity that the posthumous image of Joseph II experienced during the revolution mobilized his physical descendants, who attempted to take advantage of it in order to forward their own political ends. The Habsburg family, which through the Pre-March had exploited its dynastic myth as an instrument of imperial unity<sup>31</sup>, chose the name of the illustrious monarch as the second segment of the new ruler's name, Franz Joseph, so as to rally the Danubian peoples once again under the Habsburg banner: "Thus the name Franz Joseph was proposed, which immediately struck the best tone," Archduchess Sophie seems to have said<sup>32</sup>. Such a choice could only have awakened hopes for the revival of the Josephinian reformist tradition by the young sovereign in 1848-49, when complete reshaping of the state was badly needed. These expectations were expressed in, among other ways, a series of popular literary works directly connecting the two monarchs. The Bohemian historical popularizer J. Müller published such an apologia in 1849, in which he noted that Joseph II was still membered. This was expected phenomenon, since "The noble emperor's entire life and activity on earth was like a spring premonition of a beautiful time and

<sup>29</sup> See „Denkschrift der in Würzburg versammelten Erzbischöfe und Bischöfe“, Würzburg, November 14, 1848. Quoted in *Die Österreichische Zentralverwaltung*, ed. Walter, 37-41.

<sup>30</sup> The edicts are cited in Maaß, *Der Josephinismus*, 741-743. See also Josef Lonovics, *Der Josephinismus und die kaiserlichen Verordnungen vom 18. April 1850 in Bezug auf die Kirche* (Vienna: C. Hügel, 1851).

<sup>31</sup> On the Habsburg myth and the political uses of the dynasty's public image see Ernst Bruckmüller, "Die österreichische Revolution von 1848 und der Habsburgermythos des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Bewegung im Reich der Immobilität*, eds. Hubert Lengauer, P.-H. Kucher (Vienna: Böhlau, 2001), 1-33, 11-12 and more generally, Andrew Wheatcroft, *The Habsburgs: Embodying Empire* (London: Penguin, 1995), 251-255.

<sup>32</sup> Quoted in *Neue Freie Presse*, Nov. 18, 1893. Published upon the occasion of Alexander Bach's death.

development. [...] What Joseph's great spirit wished was fulfilled in the newer times; [...] That was Joseph, the sun of his contemporaries, the sweet memory of the peoples in the present."<sup>33</sup> Franz Joseph had to carry out this legacy and his duties with clemency and grace, "which was guaranteed by his heart, origins and the memory of the great emperor Joseph II!"<sup>34</sup> Such a view, no doubt politically biased, that saw in Franz Joseph's governance the culmination of the Josephinian agenda appeared also in the 1860s, along with the optimism that accompanied the emergence of constitutionalism. In this case, contemporary authors<sup>35</sup> identified, as the most outstanding similarities between the two men, their devotion to the welfare of their subjects and the administrative centralization efforts of the 1780s and the 1850s, which was presented as the sole way for Austria to progress. Signs of this kind of policy continuity would be still visible, as we shall observe, also in 1880.

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<sup>33</sup> Quoted in J. Müller, *Kaiser Joseph II. und Franz Joseph I. Kaiser des einigen Österreichs* (Prague: Verlag der lithographischen Anstalt von Anton Wachek's Witwe, 1849), 13, 15.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Müller, *Kaiser Joseph II. und Franz Joseph I.*, 19.

<sup>35</sup> See the work of the journalist Johann Faber, *Joseph II. und Franz Joseph I.: Eine Historische Parallele* (Stuttgart: J.G. Cotta, 1863), 7, 49-52.

## 2. Joseph II and the Concordat: Visions of the Austrian Past in the Political Rhetoric of the 1860s

### 2.1. Joseph II's memory in the first phase of confessional strife (early 1860s)

The widespread hopes regarding the continuation of the enlightened reform policy were only partially fulfilled in Neoabsolutism via the expansion of bureaucracy and a ruthless administrative centralism<sup>36</sup>. On the other hand, Franz Joseph broke with the Josephinian ecclesiastical tradition, and with the Concordat of 1855 he satisfied most of the clerical demands of 1848-49<sup>37</sup>. The abolition of secular patronage over the Church became understood as a violation of Joseph's memory by both its friends and enemies: the papal nuncio in Vienna, Viale-Prela, stated in a letter that with one battle the previous ecclesiastical establishment had been marginalized<sup>38</sup>. Seeing things differently, liberals and Josephinian officials were horrified by this perceived anachronism: "What would Emperor Joseph say to that?" complained the diplomat Johann von Wessenberg in late 1855<sup>39</sup>. Similarly, the politician Carl von Stremayr noted in his memoirs that "the work of our immortal Emperor Joseph II was exterminated with a stroke of the pen and the brand of the darkest reaction was put on the brow of the Austrian Monarchy"<sup>40</sup>.

Criticism of the Concordat could be openly expressed a few years later following the collapse of Neoabsolutism and the abolition of censorship. Joseph II's name regained its preeminent public position soon enough, because the confessional liberties that were granted through the Protestant Patent of 1861 were seen as the natural sequence of the Josephinian

<sup>36</sup> See Evans, "Josephism", 155f; on the reinvigoration of the bureaucracy in the 1850s, see Alexander Bach's *pastoral letter* to the civil service, *Die österreichische Zentralverwaltung* ed. Walter, 105-110.

<sup>37</sup> The Concordat is fully cited in Weinzierl, *Die österreichischen Konkordate*, 250-258.

<sup>38</sup> Viale-Prela to Geissel, August 24, 1856. See Gottlieb Mayer, *Österreich als Katholische Großmacht: Ein Traum zwischen Revolution und liberaler Ära* (Vienna: Österr. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1989), 208.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in *Briefe von Johann Philipp Freiherrn von Wessenberg aus den Jahren 1848 bis 1858 an Isfordink-Kostnitz*, 2 Vols. (Leipzig: F.A. Brockhaus, 1877), Vol.1, 326.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Carl von Stremayr, *Erinnerungen aus dem Leben* (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1899), 35.



toleration policy<sup>41</sup>. The Protestant Patent can be, at least indirectly, considered to be the first step against the highly unpopular Concordat. The enlargement of civil society in the early 1860s also meant the appearance of a barrage of historical works on Joseph II, who in those years was: “the subject of numerous lightweight studies, many of them positively misleading”<sup>42</sup>. To this genre belonged Joseph’s biography by the journalist Hermann Meynert. There, the late emperor’s juridical, agrarian and ecclesiastical policies (including the abolition of monasteries and the edict of tolerance) were praised<sup>43</sup> as successful and farsighted. Similar conclusions to Meynert’s were presented in the biography by Ernst Hellmuth. Hellmuth, another journalist, tended to see in Joseph II a pioneer of liberalism, who, influenced by the French enlightenment, planned to homogenize the administration, relax censorship and limit the power of the Church in Austria<sup>44</sup>. His reforms were crucial for the country’s future, as it was due to them that the crisis of the French Revolution was overcome<sup>45</sup>. Other authors proceeded even further, directly associating the memory of Joseph II with their contemporary political concerns. A typical example derives from an anonymous essayist, who underlined Joseph’s overwhelming popularity figure among literary circles, in contradistinction to the Concordat, which attracted only negative comments<sup>46</sup>. Finally, he argued for the similarity of the goals of the late emperor and the liberal political elite of the 1860s, thus raising the public prestige of the latter: “And do these deputies not want to achieve under the constitutional

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<sup>41</sup> See the language used in Georg Loesche, *Von der Duldung zur Gleichberechtigung: archivalische Bei-träge zur Geschichte des Protestantismus in Österreich 1781-1861; zur 50jährigen Erinnerung an den Protestantent-patent* (Vienna: Manz, 1911), vii; *Heftshrift zur dauernden Erinnerung an die fünfzigjahrfeier der Erlassung des Protestantentpatents vom 8. April 1861* (Vienna: Carl Fromme, 1911), 9-14.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Derek Beales, “Writing a Life of Joseph II”, *Biographie und Geschichtswissenschaft* 6 (1979): 183. On these popular works, see Franz A. Szabo, “Changing Perspectives on the ‘Revolutionary Emperor’: Joseph II. Biographies since 1790” *Journal of Modern History*, 83, no.1 (2011): 111-138, 124.

<sup>43</sup> See Hermann Meynert, *Kaiser Joseph II.: Ein Beitrag zur Würdigung des Geistes seiner Regierung* (Vienna: L.W. Seidel, 1862), 30-65, 119ff.

<sup>44</sup> See Ernst Hellmuth, *Kaiser Joseph II.: Ein Buch für’s Volk* (Prague: Kober, 1862), 40ff, 112, 166ff.

<sup>45</sup> See Hellmuth, *Kaiser Joseph II.*, 301ff, 338.

<sup>46</sup> See Anonymous, *Das österreichische Konkordat vor dem Richterstuhle im Reichsrathe von katholischen Standpunkte beleuchtet* (Vienna: Wallishäuser'sche, 1863), 53.

system the same goal that Emperor Joseph tried to reach, that is, the peoples' happiness in the Austrian Monarchy?"<sup>47</sup>

This increased liberal confidence did not immobilize the advocates of the 1855 pact, who used the clerical arguments of 1848 and constructed their own historical narratives to justify their actions. Among these advocates, the Tyrolese monk, historian and politician Albert Jäger is noteworthy, due to his prolific writing activity and his stubborn political campaign against Josephinism. In a brief, Jäger interpreted the 18<sup>th</sup> century as the age when state absolutism emerged in Austria, destroying the traditional autonomy of the Church<sup>48</sup>. The Josephinian abolition of monasteries, marriage legislation and general seminaries for the clergy were the main instruments of this policy<sup>49</sup>, creating "this status of the Church in Austria, which was forced and unnatural". The Concordat, according to Jäger, did nothing but reinstall the natural equilibrium and harmonious relationship between Church and state, and thus it had to be preserved<sup>50</sup>.

## **2.2. Joseph II in the highlight of the conflict: the confessional laws of May 1868.**

The liberal anti-clerical polemic and the Catholic resistance grew stronger and louder after the Austrian military defeat of 1866, as the demands for a constitution and for the annulment of the Concordat became more intense<sup>51</sup>. The liberals optimized their triumphalist historical narrative, in which they portrayed themselves as the final victors in an epic Manichean struggle against the powerful forces of ignorance represented by reactionary

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<sup>47</sup> Quoted in *Das österreichische Konkordat*, 54.

<sup>48</sup> See Albert Jäger, *Das Concordat und seine Gegner* (Innsbruck: Vereinsbuchdr., 1862), 10ff. His regional identity and political attitude were connected, as the Tyrol was a bastion of conservatism in Austria.

<sup>49</sup> See Jäger, *Das Concordat*, 17-24.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Jäger, *Das Concordat*, 27.

<sup>51</sup> See Weinzierl, *Die Österreichischen Konkordate*, 99-111; Karl Vocelka, *Verfassung oder Konkordat? Der publizistische und politische Kampf der österreichischen Liberalen um die Religionsgesetze des Jahres 1868* (Vienna: Österr. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1978), 51ff; Lawrence Cole, "The Counter-reformation's Last Stand: Austria," in *Culture Wars: Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth Century Europe*, eds. Christopher Clark, Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003), 285-312, 289-291.

“black Catholic” prelates<sup>52</sup>. Liberal publicists tended to see Joseph II as the first glimpse of their values in Austria and the initiator of an anti-clerical style of governance, which was bound to lead the empire to modernity, but had been violently interrupted by the Concordat. It was the sacred duty of the liberals to carry on the vision of Joseph via the withdrawal of the Concordat. Nostalgia towards an idealized Josephinian past flourished: “[...] state-confessional affairs were much better arranged with the Josephinian patents of tolerance” noted the columnist Theodor Fachmann, who wished for the abolition of clerical influence in educational and marital issues<sup>53</sup>. The same requests were also expressed by J.E. Mand, another essayist, who additionally mourned the loss of Austrian state sovereignty in favor of Rome and remarked that the Concordat had failed in its goals, causing moral confusion in Austria<sup>54</sup>. The clerical-conservatives of that time were rather by pessimism when confronting the liberal advance<sup>55</sup>. Some of them still dared to speak their minds openly, however. Albert Jäger grasped the opportunity to propagate his ideas in his biography of Joseph II, according to which the emperor was: “the full image of a church-hostile Catholic prince, whose governmental program of restriction and marginalization of ecclesiastical rights took the name of Josephinism”<sup>56</sup>. The Josephinian reform program was “a chaotic conglomerate of laws and regulations, which had nothing to do with each other”<sup>57</sup>. Nonetheless, Jäger was not completely biased against Joseph, recognizing his high ideals and benevolent intentions, despite the incorrect measures taken for the enactment of his agenda<sup>58</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> See Pieter Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A new history* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2016), 221

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Theodor Fachmann, *Freimüthige Worte gegen die Concordats-Verlästerung* (Vienna: L. Mayer, 1867), 6. See also *ibid*, 11, 17-18.

<sup>54</sup> See J.E. Mand, *Das Concordat ist kein Staatsvertrag und die Civilehe ein Postulat der Sittlichkeit* (Vienna: Pichler, 1868), 8-9.

<sup>55</sup> See for example the conservative statesman Ignaz von Giovanelli’s comments to his wife stated in *Briefe zur deutschen Politik in Österreich, 1848 bis 1918* ed. Paul Molisch (Vienna: Braumüller, 1934), 94f.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Albert Jäger, *Joseph II. und Leopold II.: Reform und Gegenreform, 1780-1792* (Vienna: August Prandel, 1867), 27.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Jäger, *Joseph II. und Leopold II.*, 63.

<sup>58</sup> See Jäger, *Joseph II. und Leopold II.*, 98-99.

The liberal campaign was culminated in late 1867 and 1868 especially after the establishment of the Burgher ministry in December, which was considered to represent bourgeois interests. The clash was presented as a mortal combat between two fundamentally different and irreconcilable systems of values, which would end only with the complete extermination of one of them<sup>59</sup>. The liberals planned to abolish the Concordat gradually, through a series of parliamentary laws. In October 1867, three drafts were discussed in the House of Deputies concerning the reinstallation of state control in marriage, education and interconfessional relations and passed with clear majorities<sup>60</sup>. The next act of the drama was to be written in the House of Lords in March 1868, where both liberal and conservative peers used the memory of Joseph II extensively to re-inforce their arguments. This tendency was particularly visible in the first debate regarding matrimonial legislation. The minister of education, Leopold von Hasner, characterized his government as Josephinian and claimed that Joseph II was “one of the most glorious and noble princes of Austria” and what he did “was nothing else than to endeavor to help the state authority reach its rightful status”<sup>61</sup>. Nevertheless, it was with Anton von Auersperg’s words that the Joseph-cult of the 1860s would reach its peak:

“[...] great Joseph [...] the great-uncle of our ruling Emperor, who here has experienced hostility. [...] It seems to me that his shadow walks through these halls and has shown his whole grandeur, his opponents even today tremble and gnash their teeth before his ideas. But I am happy that I was born on Austrian soil so as to understand and to know what Emperor Joseph even nowadays means to the people, to the farmer, to the citizen, to the entire population. Due to that, honor his ideas and his name!”<sup>62</sup>

The hostility towards Joseph II that Auersperg mentioned had its source in certain conservative peers, who did not hesitate to voice their strong objections to Joseph’s policies’ results. These included the Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal Friedrich von Schwarzenberg,

<sup>59</sup> See Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, 277-279.

<sup>60</sup> On the debate, see Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses des Reichsrates 1861-1918, IV. Session: 1867-1869 (Vienna: k.k. Staatsdruckerei, 1869), 1039-1253.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Stenographische Protokolle des Herrenhauses des Reichsrates 1861-1918, IV. Session, 1867-1869 (Vienna: k.k. Staatsdruckerei, 1869), 523. See also Gustav Kolmer, *Parlament und Verfassung in Österreich*, 8 Vols. (Vienna: k.u.k. Hofdruckerei, 1902), Vol.1: 1848-1869, 253ff; Georg Franz, *Kulturkampf. Staat und katholische Kirche in Mitteleuropa* (München: Callwey, 1954), 104-108.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Stenographische Protokolle: Herrenhaus, 568. This is the same person as the Pre-March poet.

who repeated how much Josephinism had damaged the established liberties of the Church, and the former minister of education, Leo von Thun, who described Josephinism as a remnant of Pre-March absolutism<sup>63</sup>. The most important critic of Joseph II was Gustav von Blome, a Danish-born, ultramontane ex-diplomat. In matters of the Austrian past, Blome said that Maria Theresa had left the state under flourishing conditions, only to be succeeded by Joseph II, who “allowed the Monarchy to reach the edge of the abyss”. Analogous views accompanied his vision of the future; he stated passionately that: “No, Austria is now not to be allowed to return to the steep path of Josephinism [...]”<sup>64</sup> Such desperate calls could not stop the draft’s passing, which was followed by the other two acts being passed. This liberal parliamentary success was celebrated in Vienna through the illumination of the city and a gathering of students at the statue of Joseph II, where impromptu speeches were given<sup>65</sup>. This provides clear evidence of how closely his memory was linked to the confessional struggle. Finally, all drafts were sanctioned on May 25 by a very reluctant Franz Joseph, who was personally fond of the Concordat and suspicious of such liberal initiatives<sup>66</sup>.

The May laws met with a fierce resistance from the clerical-conservatives. The pope openly condemned them and the militant ultramontane bishop of Linz Franz Joseph Rudigier urged publicly his flock not to follow them. For this reason he was brought to trial in 1869 but he did not attend the court and was sentenced to fourteenth days of imprisonment<sup>67</sup>. Yet, even this symbolic punishment was immediately pardoned by the emperor. In the liberal understanding this act signaled just: “how little his Majesty agrees with the new laws [...]”

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<sup>63</sup> See Stenographische Protokolle: Herrenhaus, 557-558 and 573-576 respectively.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Stenographische Protokolle: Herrenhaus, 533 and 534 respectively.

<sup>65</sup> See Macartney, *The Habsburg Empire*, 574; Alan France, “Kulturkampf in Austria: The Vaterland Circle and the Struggle over the Confessional Legislation of May 1868” (PhD diss., Rice Univ., 1975), 123.

<sup>66</sup> On the ideological differences and the uneasy relationship between Franz Joseph and his liberal cabinet, see Fritz Fellner, „Kaiser Franz Joseph und das Parlament. Materialien zur Geschichte der Innenpolitik Österreichs in den Jahren, 1867-1873”, *Mitteilungen des Österr. Staatsarchivs*, 9 (1956): 287-347.

<sup>67</sup> On Rudigier’s political position, see Vocelka, *Verfassung oder Konkordat?*, 162-166; Cole, “Austria”, 299-306; Max Voegler, “Religion, Liberalism and the Social Question in the Habsburg Hinterland: The Catholic Church in Upper Austria, 1850-1914” (PhD diss. Columbia University, 2006), 144-181.

and how little he actually sympathizes with the present government.”<sup>68</sup> The liberal victory and catholic reaction show how deep the conflict in Austria was and that by the late 1860s there were two mental universes, which constituted: “two imagined communities with increasingly homogenized ideological structures, separate spheres of schooling, associational life and print media -two quasi-‘nations’, existing side by side, but apart.”<sup>69</sup> This cultural gap survived into the following decades and influenced strongly the memory of Joseph as he meant something else for each side

### 2.3. A prelude to the 1880 anniversary: the centennial at Slavikovice in 1869

In August 1869, when Austria was still tormented by the political divisions originating in Concordat and trying to find its footing after the Compromise, Slavikovice, a village in south Moravia, had its own special reason to celebrate the memory of Joseph II. Exactly one hundred years earlier, on August 19, 1769, Joseph II, en route to meet Frederick II, visited the village, took the plough of a peasant named Andreas Trnka and drove it himself<sup>70</sup>. This act rendered Joseph immensely popular among the rural population (the plough was kept as a relic) and led to the unveiling of four monuments during and after his reign in the place where the Volkskaiser had performed this deed<sup>71</sup>. In 1869, local festivities were organized in honor

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Pieter Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal politics, social experience and national identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848-1914* (Ann Arbor: Michigan Univ. Press, 1996), 134.

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Max Voegler, “Similar Paths, Different Nations? Ultramontanisation and the Old Catholic Movement in Upper Austria, 1870-1871”, in: *Different Paths to the Nation: Regional and National Identities in Central Europe and Italy, 1830-1870* ed. Lawrence Cole (New York: Bergham Books, 2007), 180-199, 193.

<sup>70</sup> On the description of events, see Metoděj Zemek, “Joseph II. und Slavikovice”, in *Österreich zur Zeit Josephs II.* ed. Karl Gutkas (Vienna: Niederösterr. Landesmuseum, 1980), 291-292; D.E. Beales, *Joseph II: Vol. I: In the shadow of Maria Theresa, 1741-1780* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), 338.

<sup>71</sup> The local farmers placed a commemorative stone with an inscription in German as early as 1769. A year later, Prince Lichtenstein, the landlord of the village, erected a stone monument there. However, none of the two buildings were standing by 1800. In 1804, the Moravian estates ordered the construction of a new monument, a 17 m. high obelisk, which was unveiled in 1810. This impressive memorial had been brought down by 1831. In 1835, Count Hugo von Salm ordered a fourth construction, whose building was supervised by a professor from the Vienna Technical University, Josef Klieber. This final monument was widely depicted in 19<sup>th</sup>-century pictures and photos before collapsing in 1921.

of the still-commemorated event. On August 30, about 20,000 to 30,000 people, both Czech and German-speaking, gathers in the village in order to celebrate harmoniously the emancipator of the peasantry<sup>72</sup>. The authorities, who had planned and funded the festivities with the substantial sum of 5,000 fl.<sup>73</sup>, fully embraced the occasion for political purposes. The local liberal elites taking part in the ceremony intended to attract the traditionally clerically-oriented agrarian population by exploiting its pro-Josephinian sympathies<sup>74</sup>, while the central political actors had also their own agendas. The dynasty was represented by Archduke Karl Ludwig and the government by the ministers Carl Giskra, a German liberal, and Alfred Potocki, a conservative Polish loyalist, while other local notables, like the governor of Moravia and the mayor of Brünn, also attended the ceremony. In the speeches that took place, some of which were in German and some in Czech, Archduke Karl Ludwig underlined the dynastic nature of the event and its meaning for the unity of the state and the brotherhood of the Habsburg people, thus indirectly speaking against the rising national tensions in the Bohemian lands. The representatives of the Burgher ministry addressed the contribution of Joseph II to the improvement of Aus-trian agriculture and scientific progress in general, as well as his close relationship with his subjects, delicately avoiding any mention of different nations in order not to awaken potential tensions<sup>75</sup>. The centennial appeared to be a great success: brochures were published<sup>76</sup> underlining the affection of Joseph II for the Moravian people and the latter's respect for its monarchs, both dead and living, who had freed them from the bonds of serfdom. Moreover, historical studies were published examining in detail

<sup>72</sup> See Sigmund Berger, *Kaiser Josef II. Erinnerungsblätter zum 100jährigen Gedenktage seiner Thronbesteigung am 29. November 1780* (Brünn: Buschak & Co., 1880), 32-33 on a commentary of the events.

<sup>73</sup> See "Die Kaiser-Josephs-Feier", *Neue Freie Presse*, August 30, 1869, 1.

<sup>74</sup> See Karl Vocelka, "Das Nachleben Joseph II. im Zeitalter des Liberalismus," in *Österreich zur Zeit Josefs II.* ed. Karl Gutkas (Vienna: Niederösterreich. Landesmuseum, 1980), 293-298, 295.

<sup>75</sup> See the detailed reportage "Die Erinnerungsfeier an Kaiser Josef in Slavikowitz", *Die Presse*, August 30, 1869, 1-3, where the speeches that took place are cited and the proceedings of the day are recorded.

<sup>76</sup> See Eduard Deutsch, *Gedenkblätter an Kaiser Joseph II. gesammelt zum 29. August 1869* (Brünn: Brexa, Winiker, 1869), 6f, 11-22. This commemorative booklet was published both in German and in Czech. See also J. Bloch, *Der Unsterbliche. Ein Nachhall der Josefsfeier in Slavikowitz* (Prague: o.J., 1869).

the event of 1769, focusing on the relationship between the emperor and his subjects<sup>77</sup>, and commercial artifacts (e.g. medallions) were crafted to keep the memory of the centennial alive<sup>78</sup>. The anniversary of the plough-driving received such publicity that even the leading conservative Viennese newspaper *Vaterland* reported on it (although the paper to reduce its importance by claiming that it was overshadowed by the simultaneous opening of a nearby railway)<sup>79</sup>. Nonetheless, not all reports were pleasant. The liberal *Neue Freie Presse* had recommended a low-profile ceremony before the centennial, as a pompous one might provoke the Czech nationalists, who would interpret it as a manifestation of German superiority in the Bohemian lands<sup>80</sup>. In Galicia the Polish Press was commented ironically on the supposed civilizing mission of Joseph towards his Slavic peoples by arguing, if indirectly, that this was nothing but a pretext for his pro-gram of Germanisation of the Slavs<sup>81</sup>. This attitude would in later years form the main-stream Czech nationalist interpretation of Joseph II's policies.

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<sup>77</sup> See Christian von d'Elvert, "Joseph II. huldigt dem Ackerbaue", in *Notizen-Blatt der historisch-statistischen Sektion der k.k. Mährisch-schlesischen Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Ackerbaues, der Natur- und Landeskunde* (Brünn: Verlag der k.k. mährisch-schlesischen Gesellschaft, 1869), 62-65, 63-64.

<sup>78</sup> See the pictures of such items in Marcela Mechurova, "Der Aufgeklärte Despot Joseph II. und seine Spuren nicht nur bei Slawikowitz in Mähren" (Diploma diss., Univ. of Brno, 2007), 91.

<sup>79</sup> See *Das Vaterland*, August 30, 1869, 2.

<sup>80</sup> See *Neue Freie Presse*, August 19, 1869, 3-4.

<sup>81</sup> See Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2010), 228.



### 3. Joseph II in the Last Stages of the Confessional Struggle during the 1870s.

#### 3.1. The perception of Joseph II in the parliamentary debates on the 1874 laws

After the votes on the May laws and the imperial elementary school law in 1869, through which the state reaffirmed its control in the fields of marriage and education, the Concordat's complete annulment could be seen on the horizon. This came in July 1870, in the form of the Austrian response to the proclamation of papal infallibility<sup>82</sup>. As with the May laws, Franz Joseph regretted this development: "The abolition of the Concordat has been hard for me as well," he confessed to his mother, again acknowledging his anti-Josephinian sympathies<sup>83</sup>. Nevertheless, 1870 was not the end of Austrian confessional strife. The outbreak of the cultural struggle (*Kulturkampf*) in Germany remobilized the liberal party in Austria<sup>84</sup>. As the leading liberal politician Ernst Plener put it: "a true anticlerical mood ruled over certain parts of the liberal party; [...] here were some first-rate members like Sueß, Sturm, Kopp, who wanted to take up again the struggle of the year 1868."<sup>85</sup> This mood, along with the pragmatic need for regulation of State-Church relations in legal and financial affairs after the vacuum that the Concordat's abolition had left, led to the discussion of four drafts in the parliament in the spring of 1874<sup>86</sup>.

The debate in the House of Deputies on the draft concerning the external relations of the Church took place between March 5 and 10 and saw a wealth of references to Joseph II, comparable to those present in the 1868 discussions. Nostalgic sentiments were present, as in

<sup>82</sup> See Max von Hussarek, *Die Krise und die Lösung des Konkordats vom 18. August 1855. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des österreichischen Staatskirchenrechts* (Vienna: Holder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1932), 344f.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in *Briefe Kaiser Franz Josefs I. an seine Mutter: 1838-1872*, ed. Franz Schnürer (München: Kösel & Pustet, 1930), 377.

<sup>84</sup> See Stremayr, *Erinnerungen*, 56.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Ernst Plener, *Erinnerungen, 3 Vols Vol.2: 1873-1891* (Leipzig: Deutscher Verlag, 1921), 21

<sup>86</sup> On the 1874 laws, see Walter Rogge, *Oesterreich seit der Katastrophe Hohenwart-Beust, 2 Vols., Vol.1* (Leipzig: Brockhaus 1879), 138-327; Kolmer, *Parlament und Verfassung, Vol.2:1869-1879*, 313-339; Weinzierl, *Die Österreichischen Konkordate*, 112-122; Vöcelka, *Verfassung oder Konkordat?*, 170-176.

the case of the Upper Austrian liberal deputy August Göllerich, who noted the decisiveness of Joseph's policy planning in comparison to the timidity of contemporary politicians<sup>87</sup>. Slightly later, Eduard Sueß, another liberal representative and an eminent geologist, presented a more completed narrative, separating the history of Austria into three periods, beginning with the 17<sup>th</sup> century Baroque and ending with the period under the Concordat. The Josephinian era was sandwiched in the middle, a time when "the Church turned into an instrument of the State, as earlier the State was an instrument of the Church". Thereafter, Sueß noted the gravity of Joseph's reign and explained why his memory was important for the government and the people of Austria:

"Why, gentlemen! Why do the people remember this straightforward regent, who only ruled a too-short time; [...] I will tell you: because he was a man of power, because he was a man of clear, conscious goals, for whom there was self-confidence, from which arose the confidence of others; and also from our government [...] what we call for [...] is the Josephinian self-confidence; is that Josephinian motivational power that rallies friends, restrains enemies, stirs up both the general confidence and patriotism and those of the people who alone are in the position to supply this government with sympathy and support."<sup>88</sup>

Such pro-Josephinian panegyrics did not remained unanswered by the deputies of the opposite political bent. The conservative Lower Austrian deputy Friedrich Harant used a common conservative topos, contrasting the idealized reign of Maria Theresa mentioned with that of Joseph II, with devastating results for the latter<sup>89</sup>. He particularly the universal turmoil and disorganization that flooded Austria by 1790 and the half-cancelation of Joseph's reforms at the same time. Voices associating Joseph II with oppression and despotism were also heard, like the opinion of the Polish Count Georg Czartoryski, who commented that the emperor had essentially contributed to the formation of the police state<sup>90</sup>. Such arguments were similar to those expressed in the 1860s and even in 1848. However, as in the previous decade, they

<sup>87</sup> See Stenographische Protokolle des Abgeordnetenhauses des Reichsrates 1861-1918, VIII. Session, 1873-1879 (Vienna: k.k. Staatsdruckerei, 1879), 847.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Stenographische Protokolle: Abgeordnetenhaus, 884.

<sup>89</sup> See Stenographische Protokolle: Abgeordnetenhaus, 892.

<sup>90</sup> See Stenographische Protokolle: Abgeordnetenhaus, 852.

could not stop the conservative parliamentary defeat and the passing of the draft with an overwhelming majority, as was the case with the other three drafts from mid-March to mid-April.

A new round of discussion followed in the House of Lords with additional Joseph-related statements, an expected phenomenon since, as Anton Alexander von Auersperg remarked, “It is almost unavoidable to mention the name of Emperor Joseph in ecclesiastical-political debates.”<sup>91</sup> The much-respected liberal historian Alfred von Arneth expressed the view that Joseph II wished only to purify the Church of the abuses and the ills which had accumulated over the centuries. Arneth concluded that “It is mistaken, totally mistaken, when Emperor Joseph is pro-claimed as a fundamental enemy of the Catholic Church by those who want to spread outrage; by those who want to malign him.”<sup>92</sup> Those to whom Arneth seemed to refer attended the House, providing some attempts at criticizing the Josephinian ideals and reforms throughout the session. The Catholic Prince Władysław Czartoryski spoke harshly of the emperor’s effort to render the Church part of the state machinery<sup>93</sup>. At the same time, Count Leo von Thun let be known his strong doubts regarding the falsity or not of the Febronian ideas that allegedly influenced Joseph’s policy. Thun did try to close his speech on a somehow positive note, concluding that: “[...] in the last days of [Joseph’s] life he recognized himself the falsity of his [earlier] process and he took back to a great extent his orders.”<sup>94</sup> As in the previously proposed legislation, the drafts received the approval of the lords and in May were sanctioned by Franz Joseph. The latter had reached his limits in matters of the tolerance he could show towards laws that were, in his interpretation, hostile to the Church: “I promise that as far as it lies in my power and the circumstances allow I will protect the Church,” the sovereign told Cardinal Schwarzenberg<sup>95</sup>. His cooperation with his liberal

<sup>91</sup> See Stenographische Protokolle des Herrenhauses, V. Session, 1873-1879 (Vienna: k.k. Staatsdruckerei, 1879), 200.

<sup>92</sup> Quoted in Stenographische Protokolle: Herrenhaus, 164.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Stenographische Protokolle: Herrenhaus, 190.

<sup>94</sup> Quoted in Stenographische Protokolle: Herrenhaus, 201.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Kolmer, *Parlament und Verfassung*, 326; Weinzierl, *Die Österreichischen Konkordate*, 122.

ministers had already become increasingly difficult in the confessional field<sup>96</sup>. It comes as no surprise that the monarch vetoed all future attempts of the government to further regulate the position of the Church, making 1874 the end date of the confessional division in Austria.

### 3.2. Joseph II in the conservative historical argumentation against the 1874 laws

When the relationship between the Catholic Church and the rest of society was being decided within the parliamentary walls, the figure of Joseph II continued to provoke much interest in the broader civil society. The previously- established tradition of a liberal apotheosis of Joseph in the form of popular biographies continued into the mid-1870s<sup>97</sup>, as did the conservative political and scholarly production on the topic. Conservative-oriented local notables expressed their dissatisfaction with the new laws. In a conservative association's gathering in the conservative milieu of Graz in February 1874, the noble speaker Prince Aloys von Liechtenstein referred to the liberal drafts discussed above, among others, as<sup>98</sup>: “an unfortunate mixture of Josephinian court decrees [...]”, which were intended to restrict ecclesiastical rights. His party colleague of equally high social standing Count von Pergen added that the new laws had unfortunately awakened the Josephinian administrative practices of state supremacy over the Church: “the most dangerous persecution for the Church is above all, if I may put it that way, the administrative one,” he mourned, in a clearly anti-Josephinian fashion<sup>99</sup>. A similar attitude was expressed in another memorandum from Bohemia. The speaker argued that the attempted state supremacy over the Church was

<sup>96</sup> See Stremayr, *Erinnerungen*, 56-57; also see Fellner, „Franz Joseph und das Parlament“, 316-319.

<sup>97</sup> See *Kaiser Josef II. und seine Zeit, nach dem Urtheile seiner Freunde und Feinde von einem Geschichtsfreunde* (Amberg: Pustet, 1874); Ferdinand Schmidt, *Kaiser Joseph II.: ein Lebensbild* (Berlin: Kastner, 1875); Alfred von Reumont, *Giuseppe II., Pietro Leopoldo e la Toscana. Memorie* (Florence: Cellini, 1876); Gerson Wolf, *Kaiser Josef II.* (Vienna: Hölder's historische Bibliothek für die Jugend, 1877).

<sup>98</sup> Quoted in “Rede des Herrn Alois Fürsten von Liechtenstein”, in *Die konfessionellen Gesetzentwürfe* (Graz: Vereins-Buchdr., 1874), 5.

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in “Rede des Herrn Anton Graf Pergen”, in *Die konfessionellen Gesetzentwürfe*, 15.

practically possible but lacked justification and was only the result of brute force. The agenda of the current government could find its equivalent only in the Josephinian era, when priests functioned as state intermediaries and thus could not execute their divine missions<sup>100</sup>. Nonetheless, such calls were could not mobilize enough support to block the laws' enforcement.

Finally, the activities of the known clerical agitator, editor of the *Wiener Kirchenzeitung* and dilettante historian Sebastian Brunner deserve a special mention<sup>101</sup>. In an 1868 historical study of his concerning the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century Habsburg envoy to the Holy See, Count Herzan, Brunner presented a major methodological revision regarding the study of Joseph II that would have long-term consequences. More specifically, he unveiled the forgery of a well-known collection of letters supposedly written by Joseph II (the so called Constantinople letters), which made him seem much more liberal, tolerant and anti-clerical than he actually was<sup>102</sup>. This constituted a major break with the past, because virtually all previous historical treatises on Joseph II had seriously taken this material into serious consideration and were thus immediately rendered obsolete. "We can now put an end to this unhistorical deception for all future authors who possess conscience, honor and love of truth," remarked Brunner proudly<sup>103</sup>. In 1874, when confessional issues returned to the forefront of public affairs, Brunner published a disparaging biography of Joseph II. Apart from the established charges of the despotic style of Joseph's governance, he did not miss the opportunity to use his historiographical achievement against the liberals: "[...] these gentlemen [who praise Joseph II] must not know that Joseph held in very little esteem all the then-valid constitutions, and

<sup>100</sup>See *Adresse und Promemoria an Se. Majestät aus Anlaß der confessionellen Gesetzentwürfen überreicht vom kath.-polit. Vereine für das Königreich Böhmen* (Prague: Cyril.-Method'sche Buchdr., 1874), 10-16.

<sup>101</sup> See Ilse Treimer, "Sebastian Brunner als Historiker" (PhD diss. Univ. of Vienna, 1948), 11ff; Hans Novogoratz, "Sebastian Brunner und der Antisemitismus", (PhD diss. Univ. of Vienna, 1979), 32-46.

<sup>102</sup> See Sebastian Brunner, *Die theologische Dienerschaft am Hof Josephs II.: Geheime Correspondenzen und Enthüllungen* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1868). 7-8, 515-531. See D.E. Beales, "The false Joseph II", in *Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth century Europe* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 117-154, 121, 134, who refers to the letters' influence on the Josephinian historiography even after Brunner's discovery.

<sup>103</sup> Quoted in Brunner, *Die theologische Dienerschaft*, 517.

he showed his disapproval in all assemblies of that kind”<sup>104</sup>. Therefore, at a time when the Church was supposedly again under attack, Brunner tried to unmask the true face of Joseph, thus stripping the liberals of their main source of historical legitimization. This conservative interpretation of Joseph found willing ears even beyond Austria’s borders, for example in the brief treatise of the British tutor William Waters, who focused mostly on the negative aspects of Joseph’s reign, his encroachment on the traditional rights of his lands and the turmoil that this caused, particularly in Hungary and in Belgium<sup>105</sup>.

After the approval of the 1874 laws, which regulated the legal relations between Church and State until the end of the monarchy, confessional issues were largely removed from the forefront of public debate<sup>106</sup>; concurrently, the discussion of Joseph II as a patron (or oppressor) of the Catholic Church also declined in the late 1870s. Nevertheless, the truly great moment of Josephinian remembrance in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was yet to come: in November 1880, when the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Joseph II’s ascent to the throne coincided with major political developments in Cisleithania, a new and widespread public instrumentalisation of the late emperor’s name and legacy took place.

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<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Sebastian Brunner, *Joseph II.: Charakteristik seines Lebens, seiner Regierung und seiner Kirchenreform* (Freiburg i/B: Herder, 1874), 6-7.

<sup>105</sup> See William Waters, *Joseph II. The Stanhope Prize Essay* (Oxford: Thos. Shrimpton & Son, 1873), 14-23.

<sup>106</sup> See John Boyer, "Religion and Political Development in Central Europe around 1900: A View from Vienna." *Austrian History Yearbook*, 25 (1994): 13-57, 15ff.

## Part II: The Centennial of Joseph II's Rise to the Throne in 1880

### 1. The Processors of the Centennial: Dynastic Celebrations in Austria prior to 1880

Public celebrations of dynastic context were a common instrument for boosting the perception of the monarchy and the political goals of the sovereign in Habsburg Austria up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. From the Counter-Reformation era at least until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the emperor's public image was closely associated with Baroque splendor and religious piety<sup>107</sup>. The rationalist motivations of Joseph II led to a much more modest Court life, which was largely maintained by Franz I, who promoted himself as the bourgeois-dressed 'first bureaucrat' of his state<sup>108</sup>. This low-profile self-representation of the dynasty was drastically altered under Neoabsolutism. The *pietas austriaca* was revived, and the Court became the epicenter of magnificent celebrations (e.g. the Corpus Christi procession) that propagated Habsburg catholic values and imperial patriotism<sup>109</sup>.

The intense advertisement of this conservative agenda was relaxed in the constitutional era, but Habsburg ceremonies regarding important moments in Franz Joseph's life such as his birthday and wedding anniversaries continued to take place regularly. Festivities on the occasion of the emperor's birthday were organized throughout the monarchy annually, especially during his middle and later years. Their goal was to reinforce the centrality of the dynasty in Austrian public life and its vital function as the guarantor of state unity above national or political passions, while contributing to the formation of a supranational Habsburg

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<sup>107</sup> On the public image of the Habsburgs as a propaganda tool in the early modern era, see Marie Tanner, *The Last Descendent of Aeneas: the Habsburgs and the Mythic Image of the Emperor* (New Heaven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1992), 183-222; Anna Coreth, *Pietas Austriaca*, trans. William Bowman, Anna Maria Leitgeb (West Lafayette: Purdue Univ. Press, 2004), 37-66.

<sup>108</sup> On the increasingly "urbanized" character of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century European monarchy, see Heinz Dollinger, "Das Leitbild des Bürgerkönigtums in der europäische Monarchie des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Hof, Kultur und Politik im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Karl Ferdinand Werner (Bonn: L. Röhrscheid, 1985), 325-364.

<sup>109</sup> See Daniel Unowsky, "Reasserting Empire: Habsburg Imperial Celebrations after the Revolutions of 1848-1849," in *Staging the Past: The Politics of Commemoration in Habsburg Central Europe, 1848 to the Present*, eds. Maria Bucur, Nancy Wingfield (West Lafayette: Purdue Univ. Press, 2001), 13-45.

imagined community<sup>110</sup>. In Vienna, the Court, the Church, the army, the municipal authorities and a plethora of citizens and urban associations celebrated the monarch through public speeches, masses, parades of soldiers and students, commemorative editions, donations and the like<sup>111</sup>. In the provinces, where churches usually stood at the center of the celebrations<sup>112</sup>, the religious authorities and local notables were mainly responsible for paying the appropriate honor to the sovereign. At the same time, these celebrations were closely watched by the police as indicative of the people's mood towards the dynasty<sup>113</sup>. Even in ordinary times, the dynasty took care with its image and promoted an idyllic version of the imperial family for political reasons. The hugely popular figure of Empress Elizabeth played a crucial role in this area, as it decisively increased the popularity of the ruling House<sup>114</sup>.

Apart from these regularly ordained public festivities, there were also dynastic celebrations organized for exceptional occasions. The single most significant of these events in the 1870s was the imperial couple's silver wedding anniversary in April 1879. Franz Joseph was usually unwilling to perform public ceremonies apart from the regular year-ly ones, and he urged those who wanted to honor him to make charitable donations to the poor. He made an exception for the 1879 anniversary, however, and permitted the city of Vienna to hold a feast (though he did forbid the provinces to do so)<sup>115</sup>. The imperial family, in an attempt to

<sup>110</sup> See Hannes Stekl, „Öffentliche Gedenktage und gesellschaftliche Identitäten,“ and Andrea Blöchl, “Die Kaisergedenktage: Die Feste und Feiern zu den Regierungsjubiläen und runden Geburtstagen Kaiser Franz Josephs,“ in *Der Kampf um das Gedächtnis. Öffentliche Gedenktage in Mitteleuropa*, eds. Emil Brix, Hannes Stekl (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), 91-117, 91-93 and 117-144, esp.144 respectively.

<sup>111</sup> See Daniel Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism: Imperial Celebrations in Habsburg Austria, 1848-1916* (West Lafayette: Purdue Univ. Press, 2005), 25; Blöchl, “Die Kaisergedenktage“, 117, 120ff.

<sup>112</sup> Even after 1870, Franz Joseph kept close ties with the Church, and the latter was among his warmest public supporters. See James Shedel, “Emperor, Church, and People: Religion and Dynastic Loyalty during the Golden Jubilee of Franz Joseph,” *The Catholic Historical Review*, 76 no.1 (Jan.,1990): 71-92; Peter Urbanitsch, “Pluralist Myth and Nationalist Realities: The Dynastic Myth of the Habsburg Monarchy-a futile exercise in the creation of identity?” *Austrian History Yearbook*, 35 (2004):101-141, 106-107

<sup>113</sup> See Valdis Baidins, “Franz Joseph, Kaisertreue and Loyalty in the Late Habsburg Empire” (PhD diss. Univ. of Washington, 1999), 36-37.

<sup>114</sup> See Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, 236-237; in detail, Olivia Grudek Florek, “The modern monarch: Empress Elizabeth and the visual culture of femininity, 1850-1900” (PhD diss. Rutgers Univ., 2012), 43-82.

<sup>115</sup> See Helmuth Niederle, *Es war sehr schön. Es hat mich sehr qefreut: Kaiser Franz Joseph und seine Untertanen* (Vienna: Österreichische Bundesverlag, 1987), 144.



reinforce its bonds with the people, received commoners holding petitions in the Hofburg and showed itself to adoring crowds while riding out into the illuminated city and attending masses at the Votive Church<sup>116</sup>. Aside from this official consecration, the honoring parade was the anniversary's other major event<sup>117</sup>. Its artistic director was Hans Makart, an artistic celebrity of his time, who also designed the costumes; these costumes had the history of Austria as their theme and allegorically depicted the era of Maximilian I. Contemporary spectators referred to a splendid, colorful march that was accompanied by music and forty different floats, delighting the crowds<sup>118</sup>. The celebrations were organized and funded by private donations and the municipality of Vienna, then under liberal control<sup>119</sup>. Viennese liberalism, still confident of itself, manifested its political and intellectual advancement (and its progress against its conservative enemies) along with its dynastic loyalty by lavishly spending on a tribute to its monarchs. The municipal lords put forward these qualities and goals again in the much discussed centennial of Joseph II a year after the wedding anniversary.

## **2. A manifestation of progress, centralism, secularism and Germandom: the Centennial of Joseph II in Vienna and in the Alpine lands**

### **2.1. Austrian politics in 1880 and the liberal motivation behind the Centennial**

“To-day is the anniversary of a momentous event in Austrian history. It is just a hundred years since the Emperor Joseph II ascended to the throne. [...] the reforming emperor, the very spirit of restless change, is still remembered. The Liberals still regard him as their best and earliest friend; the clergy remember him as one of their worst enemies and the first to begin a series of changes, which have been to their disadvantage. It is in keeping with the traditions respecting him that, while the Communal Council of Vienna and other secular bodies are to take part to-day in the ceremony at the Josefsplatz, various bishops, including those of Linz and Gratz, have declined to join in the commemoration of a ruler who was no friend to the Church [...]”<sup>120</sup>

<sup>116</sup> See Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism*, 79.

<sup>117</sup> See Baidins, “Kaisertreue and Loyalty”, 41-43 and exhaustingly Martin Hecher, „Hans Makart und der Wiener Festzug von 1879” (PhD diss., Univ. of Vienna, 1986); also Renate Wagner, “Ein Zeitalter feiert sich selbst. Der Makart-Festzug zur kaiserlichen Silberhochzeit, Wien 27. April 1879,” in *Würde, Glanz und Freude. Vom festlichen Leben und Treiben in den Zeiten* (Graz: Styria Pichler, 1981), 156-175.

<sup>118</sup> The historian Alfred von Arneth gave an analytical depiction of the march in his memoirs. See Alfred von Arneth, *Aus meinem Leben*, 2 Vols., Vol.2: 1850-1890 (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1892), 509-514.

<sup>119</sup> See Elisabeth Grossegger, *Der Kaiser-Huldigungs-Festzug: Wien 1908* (Vienna: Österr. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), 225.

<sup>120</sup> Quoted in *The Times* (London), November 30, 1880, 9.

The centenary celebrations in honor of Joseph II, which were organized throughout Cisleithania in November 1880, should be seen through three different lenses: a) as an instrument in the hands of the political forces of 1880 to advertise their own agendas and goals in light of contemporary developments; b) as an extension of the existing views on Joseph II, as described in the previous chapters; c) as a dynastic celebration, taking into account its similarities and differences to the festivities related to Franz Joseph discussed above. In the months preceding the centennial, momentous political changes had come to pass in Austria. The long-standing liberal government under Prince Adolph von Auersperg (1871-1879), which stood for a secular state and a centralized empire with the German culture as its cohesive force, had fallen from power in February 1879 as a result of the military budget and the Bosnian crises<sup>121</sup>. After a brief transitional phase, the vacuum was filled by Count Edmund Taaffe, a conservative politician and a trusted friend of Franz Joseph, who formed the so called ‘Iron Ring’ government backed by clerical-conservative, Czech and Polish representatives. The liberals stood diametrically opposite to the Taaffe ministry due to his expectation to gradually undermine their centralized system of governance through regional amendments<sup>122</sup>. In the liberal public rhetoric, the secular, centralized and constitutional state was the only alternative for the modernization of Austria and any concession to the nationalities would constitute an unacceptable violation of these principles. Embodied by a spirit of optimism, the liberals believed that by mobilizing their popular base, they could effectively boycott the new government, usher in stagnation and collapse and finally return to power after only a parenthetical period under the opposition<sup>123</sup>. The necessity of the

<sup>121</sup> See Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries*, 143-192; Jonathan Kwan, *Liberalism and the Habsburg Monarchy, 1861-1895* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 65-87.

<sup>122</sup> See William Jenks, *Austria under the Iron Ring, 1879-1893* (Charlottesville: Virginia Univ. Press, 1965), 52-54; Kwan, *Liberalism*, 123.

<sup>123</sup> See the decisions taken by various liberal representatives in Linz in August 1879 regarding methods of opposition against the Taaffe regime, “Resolutions-Antrag der Linzer Konferenz Verfassungstreuer Abgeordneter am 31. August 1879”; Neue Freie Presse, September 1, 1879, 1; Plener, *Erinnerungen*, 168-169.

constitutional party to the governance of Cisleithania became publicly manifested in numerous occasions in 1879 and 1880 through a series of official party days like the one Vienna on November 14, 1880<sup>124</sup>, where about three thousand representatives from different local clubs and associations were participating. The centennial of Joseph II appeared exactly at the right time in order to be transformed into a spectacular public show of the liberal values.

Beyond the usual affiliation with Josephinism as they perceived it, the liberal Press, associations and party members exploited fully the momentum in order to use their perception of history as an argument against their opponents<sup>125</sup>. Therefore and unlike the dynastic celebrations discussed above, this centennial was rather the work of the liberal “civil society” instead of the government, the Court, the Church or the army<sup>126</sup>.

## 2.2. The centenary celebrations and the image of Joseph II in the liberal rhetoric of 1880

Apart from the political planning of the centennial, the event per se became the reason for a generalized boost of Joseph II-related publications, which was the outcome of a genuine public interest in the celebrated monarch<sup>127</sup>. The literary production of 1880 exceeded by far that of the previous decades and included short commemorative speeches, more detailed historical works (usually of a popular nature), poetic collections and works of fiction with

<sup>124</sup> On the meaning of party days in general, see *Briefe zur deutschen Politik in Österreich*, 252-253; on the Vienna party day, see Neue Freie Presse, November 16, 1880 (morning ed.); Plener, *Erinnerungen*, 200; William J. McGrath, *Dionysian Art and Populist Politics in Austria* (New Heaven: Yale Univ. Press, 1974), 169-170, who though commented on the limited success and the imperfect organization of the day.

<sup>125</sup> See briefly Nancy Wingfield, “Joseph II in the Austrian Imagination to 1914,” in *The Limits of Loyalty: Imperial symbolism, popular allegiances and state patriotism in the late Habsburg Monarchy*, eds. Daniel Unowsky, Lawrence Cole (New York: Bergham Books, 2007), 62-85, 76.

<sup>126</sup> On the rise of the civil society in Austria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, see Gary Cohen, “Nationalist Politics and the Dynamics of State and Civil Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1867-1914”, *Central European History*, 40, no.2 (Jun., 2007): 241-278; Hans Peter Hye, “Vereine, Verbände und Parteien als Zentren der politischen Öffentlichkeit in den Donau- und Alpenländern”, in *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918, Vol.8/1: Vereine, Parteien und Interessenverbände als Träger der Politischen Partizipation*, eds. Helmut Rumpler, Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna: Österr. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 145-226, esp.151-160.

<sup>127</sup> This density of centenary publications should not cause surprise. Centennials in encourage related literary production. See Michael Mitterauer, „Anniversarium und Jubiläum. Zur Entstehung und Entwicklung öffentlicher Gedenktage“, in *Der Kampf um das Gedächtnis. Öffentliche Gedenktage in Mitteleuropa*, eds. Emil Brix, Hannes Stekl (Vienna: Böhlau, 1997), 23-89, 83-84.

Joseph II as their protagonist. Like the works published in the 1860s and the 1870s, the centenary publications were stamped by a spirit of praise and non-critical acceptance of the emperor's deeds, and by no means can they be characterized as impartial<sup>128</sup>. The distinguished liberal historian Joseph Alexander von Helfert delivered a speech about Maria Theresa and Joseph II on November 18, 1880, at the Viennese Central Association of Political Economy. Helfert underlined Joseph's introduction of enlightened ideas in Austria and above all the transformation of his realm from a conglomerate of states into one unified entity with a common administration<sup>129</sup>. He concluded that what the monarchy was in 1880 was mostly owed to Joseph II, for which his memory enjoyed his peoples' gratitude<sup>130</sup>. The voices of Josephinian remembrance and his association with contemporary political reality turned louder in late November, as the anniversary on the 29th approached, overshadowing even the anniversary of his mother's death, which passed almost unnoticed<sup>131</sup>.

The flourishing of works on Joseph II in the previous years and the recent political developments equipped the Viennese liberal press with a rich ideological and verbal arsenal, which was put to use during the centennial<sup>132</sup>. The newspapers' columns were filled with praises for the achievements of Joseph II's government, underlining that for such a ruler festivities were necessary. They were particularly meaningful in "our days, when state unity is under attack, the administration is nationalized, the German language is no more the unique language of school instruction [...]". In these times, the memory of Joseph II would be a model and had to be honored, since "In Joseph's spirit, we struggle for the preservation of state unity

<sup>128</sup> See in general Mitterauer, „Anniversarium und Jubiläum“, 86.

<sup>129</sup> See Frh. von Helfert, *Maria Theresa und Joseph II. Vortrag gehalten am 18. November 1880 als dem Vorabend des Kaiserin-Elisabeth-Festes* (Vienna: Volkswirtschaftlicher Central-Verein, 1880), 15-16.

<sup>130</sup> See Helfert, *Maria Theresa und Joseph II.*, 17.

<sup>131</sup> There were some exceptions to this rule. See for example the article on the Theresian reorganization of the army in the journal for military affairs, *Die Vedette*, November 28, 2. On Maria Theresa's memory, see generally Werner Suppanz, "Maria Theresia," in *Memoria Austriae, 3 Vols., Vol. I: Menschen, Mythen, Zeiten*, ed. Emil Brix (Vienna: Verlag für Geschichte und Politik, 2004), 26-47.

<sup>132</sup> On the liberal Press, see Petronilla Ehrenpreis, "Die 'reichsweite' Presse in der Habsburgermonarchie" in *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918, Vol. 8/2: Die Presse als Faktor der politischen Mobilisierung*, eds. Helmut Rumpler, Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna: Österr. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 1716-1753.

and of Germandom in Austria”<sup>133</sup>, commented *Neue Freie Presse*, using the past in accordance with the present liberal political agenda. Other spectators did not hesitate to be more specific concerning what they considered their enemy: “The celebration of the emperor Joseph provides [...] a demonstration for the unity of the empire and a protest of the entire Austrian people against the currently ruling clerical-feudal tendencies that are favored by the government”, cried the radical democratic *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*<sup>134</sup>. The continued existence of Josephinism as an intellectual force guiding the constitutionally-minded politicians was recognized, together with the similarity of goals between Josephinism and Liberalism: “much that Joseph had tried in vain with the means of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and in the way of enlightened absolutism has succeeded in our times with the means of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the constitutional way.”<sup>135</sup> The liberal papers tended to follow this line of thought, though that does not mean that there were no variations among them. For example, the popular *Morgen-Post* used a more conciliatory tone, arguing that the legacy of Joseph could be a vessel of progress for all peoples of the monarchy<sup>136</sup>. At the same time, the nationalist-minded *Deutsche Zeitung* chose a more dogmatic expression, emphasizing the positive outcome of Joseph’s reign for the German population of Austria<sup>137</sup>.

These approaches consisted different aspects of the same ideological corps and did not disrupt the unity of the German-liberal voice throughout the centenary celebrations. The latter were largely utilized by the highly politicized student associations, usually of liberal and German national orientation<sup>138</sup>, which, along with the professional liberal politicians, were

<sup>133</sup> Quoted in *Neue Freie Presse*, November 28, 2.

<sup>134</sup> Quoted in *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* (morning ed.), November 29, 1.

<sup>135</sup> Quoted in *Fremden-Blatt* (morning ed.), November 28, 1. This kind of imagined continuity between Joseph II and the 19<sup>th</sup> century statesmen, which we have already clearly observed in the early 1860s, was a commonplace in the 1880 liberal rhetoric. See e.g. *Constitutionelle Bozner Zeitung*, November 30, 1.

<sup>136</sup> See *Morgen-Post*, November 29, 1.

<sup>137</sup> See *Deutsche Zeitung*, November 28, 1; November 29, 3.

<sup>138</sup> See Alexander Graf, “*Los von Rom*” und “*heim ins Reich*”: *Das deutschnationale Akademikermilieu an den cisleithanischen Hochschulen der Habsburgermonarchie 1859-1914* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2015), 95-106.

the basic moving force behind the Joseph II festivities<sup>139</sup>. On November 25, shortly before the anniversary itself, members of the Vienna city council, accompanied by representatives of the city's choral association, went to the Habsburg crypt in the Capuchin Church to lay a wreath on the emperor's sarcophagus, while afterwards the choral association sang a hymn in Latin<sup>140</sup>. On the morning of November 28, committees from the two most important liberal parliamentary groups, the constitutional part and the progressive club deposited a wreath at the Josefsplatz statue<sup>141</sup>, whilst students were also present, carrying banners with the words 'light' and 'enlightenment' written on them. Acts of commemoration took place throughout the city. The same day, the well-known liberal historian Adolph Beer presented a speech on Joseph's life in the ceremonial hall of the Vienna Technical University, attended by some three hundred students. There the speaker underlined above all the significance of the administrative, educational and ecclesiastical reforms of Joseph II to the modernization of Austria<sup>142</sup>.

That evening, the liberal press covered in great detail the march of some two thousand students, carrying torches and cheered by the Viennese populace, from the Ringstrasse and via the State Opera Building and the Pallavicini Palace, which had been decorated with gold-and-black flags, to the equestrian statue of Joseph II. The procession was designed so as to underline the strength of the liberal and German ideas against their enemies, even when their bearers were hopefully temporarily in opposition<sup>143</sup>. The large procession was headed by a civilian band, followed by the torch-carrying students and representatives of the municipal authorities and of a variety of public and academic associations. The rearguard was comprised by students of the academy of visual arts. The march was watched by numerous policemen

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<sup>139</sup> There was a portion of students though, who could be described as moderate clericals, who declined to participate to the centennial, giving the excuse that they would honor Joseph II on the occasion of the edict of tolerance's anniversary in 1881. See *Morgen-Post*, November 28, 2.

<sup>140</sup> See *Wiener Zeitung*, November 26, 2.

<sup>141</sup> See *Fremden-Blatt* (morning ed.), November 28, 2.

<sup>142</sup> Beer's speech was widely covered. See *Neue Freie Presse*, November 29, 3; *Die Presse*, November 29, 2-3; *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 29, 2; *Deutsche Zeitung*, November 29, 2.

<sup>143</sup> See the remarks of *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* (morning ed.), November 29, 2.

and firefighters so that trouble and potential accidents could be avoided<sup>144</sup>. In the Josefsplatz, two gigantic obelisks reading “Out of love and gratitude” and “To the esteemer of humanity” were erected on each side of Joseph’s statue, which had been decorated with wreaths, gold-and-black banners and Habsburg eagles for the occasion<sup>145</sup>. The gathered crowd, upon its arrival at the square, sang patriotic songs like “Honor, Freedom, Fatherland”. Despite such widespread enthusiasm, the ceremony did not culminate in an official speech honoring the emperor, because the police had asked to see the text of the talk in advance. The students who organized the event, considered this request an act of censorship and preferred not to submit a paper at all than to put under such restrictions a speech dedicated to the monarch who first allowed free expression to his subjects<sup>146</sup>. The result was “for the ceremony to lose its appropriate closing.”<sup>147</sup> The procession ended thereafter, but masses of Joseph fans, mostly parliamentary delegates and urban associations, but common people also continued to visit the statue to leave wreaths.<sup>148</sup>

The next day, November 29, a great gathering took place at the hall of the music association of Vienna<sup>149</sup>. Leading figures of the Viennese bourgeois society attended the event, like the rector of the University of Vienna Ottokar Lorenz along with preeminent liberal politicians, including Joseph Kopp, Ernst Sturm, Eduard Sueß, Ernst von Plener, Eduard Herbst and Leopold von Hasner, who in their parliamentary speeches had once and again shown their admiration of Joseph II. In addition, several politicians and intellectuals from Germany and Switzerland were invited and attended the ceremony, showing that the

<sup>144</sup> See Neue Freie Presse, November 29, 2-3; Die Presse, November 29, 2; Morgen-Post, November 29, 1-2. Even the foreign press commented on the event, see the Times, November 29, 6. The Deutsche Zeitung, November 28, 5 mentioned that the choreography of the procession was the work of Hans Makart.

<sup>145</sup> Sketches of the decorated Josefsplatz are given in Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt, December 1, 1. Their verbal description is given in the same issue, November 28, 2.

<sup>146</sup> See Neue Freie Presse, November 29, 3.

<sup>147</sup> Quoted in Neue Freie Presse, November 29, 3.

<sup>148</sup> See Fremden-Blatt (morning ed.), November 28, 8-9; Deutsche Zeitung, November 29, 2.

<sup>149</sup> See Neue Freie Presse, November 30, 4-5.

remembrance of Joseph II was a broader Germanic affair<sup>150</sup>. In his speech, Eduard Sueß noted that the figure of Joseph II had to be a source of inspiration for the Austrian youth, while Leopold von Hasner proceeded to more concrete remarks concerning the role of Josephinism in the development of the monarchy. The former education minister commented emphatically that he spoke as “a Josephinian, as a listener to a man to whom the freedom of spirit was the highest life duty.” He concluded his panegyric talk praising “the immortality of the Josephinian spirit in the academic youth!”<sup>151</sup> Joseph Kopp followed with equally laudatory phrases, connecting Joseph II both with the 1848 revolution and with the German nation. Plener and Herbst, among other figures of public life, subsequently expressed similar opinions on Joseph II. In the same tone, additional pro-Josephinian academically-related initiatives took place on the same day. At noon, Wenzel Lustkandl, a jurist and politician, delivered a speech in the aula of the University of Vienna under the title *The Josephinian Ideas and their Success*<sup>152</sup>. According to Lustkandl, the highest motivation behind Joseph’s plans was the independence of the state against any external factors<sup>153</sup>. He deemed the abolition of serfdom to be Joseph’s greatest achievement, which was “not only the most meaningful for the Austrian people”, but at the same time “the most useful for the Austrian state” as well<sup>154</sup>. A fundamentally important aspect of the Josephinian reforms was the implementation of German as the universal administrative language of the Monarchy, which aimed to strengthen its cohesion<sup>155</sup>. Despite his excellent intentions, Joseph’s reforms met with fierce opposition<sup>156</sup>, and

<sup>150</sup> See *Deutsche Zeitung*, November 30, 3.

<sup>151</sup> Quoted in *Neue Freie Presse*, November 30, 5. See also *Deutsche Zeitung*, November 30, 2.

<sup>152</sup> See Wenzel Lustkandl, *Die josephinischen Ideen und ihr Erfolg. Festrede zur hundertjährigen Gedenkfeier des Regierungsantritts Kaiser Joseph des Zweiten, gehalten in der Aula der Universität zu Wien am 29.11.1880* (Vienna: Konegen, 1881). See *Die Presse*, November 30, 10; *Morgen-Post*, November 30, 2.

<sup>153</sup> See Lustkandl, *Die josephinischen Ideen*, 8-12.

<sup>154</sup> Quoted in Lustkandl, *Die josephinischen Ideen*, 38.

<sup>155</sup> See Lustkandl, *Die josephinischen Ideen*, 79.

<sup>156</sup> See Lustkandl, *Die josephinischen Ideen*, 87.



yet his vision and legacy survived long after his death. Lustkandl was persuaded that the spirit of Joseph II was still alive: “He still conducted the struggle and he fought along with us”<sup>157</sup>.

These extended celebrations were concluded on November 30<sup>158</sup>. The euphoric climate in Vienna that day was so widespread that even foreign spectators were influenced by it. The English physician J. Plimsoll dedicated a short poem to the Viennese populace, noting its duty to honor the deceased late monarch: “Well then, may Austrians celebrate, this day, // With blessed homage, sorrow, joy and pride, // The centenary of a Prince whose name // And memory ever will be dear to them // - Joseph the Second - their erst Sovereign Liege”<sup>159</sup>. In the morning of November 30, the city council held a ceremonial session, when the liberal mayor Julius von Newald lauded the key points of Joseph’s reign: standardization of administration, elevation of German to the state language, improvement of finances, care for the poor, religious tolerance and promotion of German culture were but a few of the measures that Joseph II, which radically transformed the empire in the best way. The speech closed with the expression of the continuous love of the Viennese people for the dead monarch and their loyalty to his worthy successor Franz Joseph<sup>160</sup>. Immediately after this speech, the city fathers, accompanied by dense crowds proceeded to the Capuchin crypt<sup>161</sup>. In the crypt, four Capuchin monks participated in the festivities. The community council deposited the first wreath, followed by those of the teachers’ association named *Volksschule*, those of several lower Austrian towns, those of democratic associations and of the Viennese male choral association. A Ruthenian delegation was there to pay tribute to the “emperor liberator”, who freed them from the bonds of serfdom<sup>162</sup>. While wreaths were being placed next to Joseph’s

<sup>157</sup> Quoted in Lustkandl, *Die josephinischen Ideen*, 91.

<sup>158</sup> See *Neue Freie Presse*, December, 1, 5-6 for a description of the city in the last centennial day.

<sup>159</sup> Quoted in J. Plimsoll, *The Centenary of the Emperor Joseph the Second of Austria, celebrated in Vienna, November 30, 1880* (Vienna: o.J., 1880), 4.

<sup>160</sup> See *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 30, 2; *Morgen-Post*, December, 1, 2; *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* (evening ed.), November 30, 2.

<sup>161</sup> See the vivid description of the *Times*, November 30, 5.

<sup>162</sup> See *Deutsche Zeitung*, November 30, 3.

sarcophagus, members of the choral association sang the song “*Beati Mortui*”<sup>163</sup>. After the end of the procession, the gathered crowd moved to Josefsplatz for the final part of the celebration<sup>164</sup>. There, additional wreaths and flowers were put at the base of the equestrian statue from, among others, the Neubauer electoral association and deputations from Leopoldstadt, Wahlenbergerdorf and Simmering<sup>165</sup>. These were further supplemented by tokens from the teachers’ association of Josephstadt, from the inner city association of friends of progress and the journalists’ association ‘Concordia’, to name only a few. Mayor Newald addressed briefly the people in the square: “We deeply apprehend and thank the image of the illustrious thinker, of the noble philanthropist, of the protector spirit of Austria. [...] Hopefully the blessing, the spirit of freedom, the spirit of philanthropy and of justice, the spirit of progress and of freedom will never wane in our fatherland!”<sup>166</sup> On the last centennial night, Vienna, and especially the first district, was illuminated to show its respect for the enlightened monarch<sup>167</sup>.

### 2.3. Historical and literary commemorative publications during the Centennial

These impressive proofs of the viability of Josephinian memory were accompanied by numerous other festivities in other districts of Vienna<sup>168</sup>. Various groups remembered the acts of Joseph II that best fitted their interests and experiences. The religious minorities of Vienna, including the Jews, Protestants and Greek Orthodox Christians honored the “emperor of tolerance” in their own synagogues and churches<sup>169</sup>. The opening of the Prater and the Augarten to the Viennese populace had also left particularly strong memories. As a result, huge crowds visited the parks during the commemoration to pay their respects to the Volkskaiser,

<sup>163</sup> See *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 30, 2; *Morgen-Post*, December 1, 2.

<sup>164</sup> See *Morgen-Post*, December 1, 3.

<sup>165</sup> These were all districts of Vienna or lower Austrian towns and villages.

<sup>166</sup> Quoted in *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 30, 2.

<sup>167</sup> See *Neue Freie Presse*, December 1, 5. Parts of Vienna were also illuminated on previous days; see *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, November 28, 2.

<sup>168</sup> See the examples in *Morgen-Post*, November 29, 2 and *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 29, 2.

<sup>169</sup> See *Die Presse*, November 29, 3; *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt* (evening ed.), November 29, 2; *Die Neuzeit*, December 3, 1-2; *Fremden-Blatt* (morning ed.), November 30, 9.

about whom poems were published: “And then came the emperor - no! the father! // for him each Vienna dweller was a child // he gave to the Viennese people the Prater // thus the Viennese are sincerely [grateful] to him [...]”<sup>170</sup>.

The flood of commemorative publications, both in lyrics and in prose, related to Joseph II, as noted above, culminated in the last days of November together with the mentioned festivities. The individuals behind these initiatives provide a fine example of how Joseph’s centennial became an ode to Liberalism. The supporters of the constitutional party published a collection of poems titled *Joseph II. Poetical Festschrift of the German-Austrian Reading Association of Viennese Universities*<sup>171</sup>, dedicated to its honorary member Anton von Schmerling. Out of its forty-four contributions, thirty were original, composed especially for the centennial. Their authors counted among the cream of the German liberal intellectual sphere: Ludwig Anzengruber, Eduard von Bauernfeld, Adolf Fischhof, Karl Emil Franzos, Ferdinand Gregorovius, Hieronymus Lorm, Adolf Pichler, Hermann Rollett and Josef Weilen. The volume also included older works from acknowledged apologists of the reformist emperor, like Ludwig August Frankl, Franz Grillparzer, Anastasius Grün and Joseph Christian von Zedlitz, completing this intergenerational apotheosis of Josephinism<sup>172</sup>.

Although poetry was a common way of expressing Josephinian sentiments in 1880<sup>173</sup>, there were also prose contributions. The Vienna city council, which, as seen, was heavily engaged

<sup>170</sup> Quoted in “Kaiser Joseph und das Wiener Leben“, Wiener Leben, November 28, 1. See other examples in Hans Jörgel von Gumpoldskirchen, November 29, 1. Also see Eduard Mautner, *Im Augarten. Scenischer Epilog zur Säcularfeier Kaiser Josef II.* (Vienna: L. Rosner, 1880).

<sup>171</sup> See *Joseph II.: Poetische Festgabe des Deutsch-österreichischen Lesevereines der Wiener Hochschulen* (Vienna: Konegen, 1880). The German-Austrian Reading Association was a student union promoting German liberal ideas and dynastic loyalty. By 1880 it was the largest association of Viennese students.

<sup>172</sup> See Adam Wandruszka, “Die Historiographie der Theresianisch-Josephinischen Reformzeit,” in: *Un-garn und Österreich unter Maria Theresia und Joseph II. Neue Aspekte im Verhältnis der beiden Länder, Texte des 2. Österreichisch-ungarischen Historikertreffens Wien 1980*, eds. Anna Drabek, Richard Plaschka, Adam Wandruszka (Vienna: Österr. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1982), 14-27, 19-20.

<sup>173</sup> In addition to the collection mentioned, see: Franz Karger, *Kaiser Josef II.: eine poetische Festschrift zur hundertjährigen Erinnerung an die Regierung dieses erhabenen Monarchen* (Troppau: Volprecht, 1884); also poems in Jörgel Briefe, November 27, 1; Neue Illustrierte Zeitung, November 28, 1.

in the festivities, published at its own expense a booklet epitomizing the liberal understanding of the 18<sup>th</sup> century ruler. According to that the booklet, Joseph “strove above all to reshape the lands of Austria into one strong, cohesive totum, give it liberal laws and stimulate his people with the power of the German spirit.”<sup>174</sup> The vehicles of these changes were, among others, religious tolerance, abolition of serfdom, juridical reforms and establishment of welfare institutions like the Vienna general hospital<sup>175</sup>. Despite setbacks in the enforcement of his policies, concluded the booklet, Joseph’s reforms outlived him, and his spirit became rooted in the Austrian people in every aspect of life<sup>176</sup>. The tradition of short commemorative brochures bore additional fruits<sup>177</sup>. One such came from the journalist and pedagogue Leo Smolle, who claimed that the situation in Austria was much better than a century ago, due to the seeds of Joseph II’s reforms<sup>178</sup>. His brochure’s structure and argumentation were not essentially different from other books of the same kind. Smolle pays attention to the Theresian background of the Josephinian reforms, which he enumerated in a clearly positive light<sup>179</sup>. Gratifying remarks on Joseph’s idealism and paradigmatic work ethos enrich his narration before he concludes that the Josephinian memory was still alive and suggests the Josefsplatz statue as the proof of his assertion<sup>180</sup>. A similar contribution was that of the school instructor Asmus Christian Jessen, who was inspired by his will to teach and to propagate the superiority of the liberal German culture and of the Habsburg unitary state<sup>181</sup>. The author praised Joseph’s reforms as a whole, and regarding those the emperor was forced to withdraw, Jessen blamed

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<sup>174</sup> Quoted in *Zur Erinnerung an die Thron-Besteigung Josef II. 29. November 1780* (Vienna: Verlag des Wiener Gemeinderathes, 1880), 17.

<sup>175</sup> See *Zur Erinnerung*, 17-21.

<sup>176</sup> See *Zur Erinnerung*, 25-26.

<sup>177</sup> For a summary of these Joseph-related publications in 1880 see Johanna Schmid, „Der Wandel des Bildes Josephs II. in der österreichischen Historiographie: von den Zeitgenossen bis zum Ende der Monarchie“ (PhD diss. Univ. of Vienna, 1972), 197-213.

<sup>178</sup> See Leo Smolle, *Kaiser Josef II. Gedenkschrift zur Feier seiner 100-jährigen Thronbesteigung 29. November 1880. Für das Volk und Jugend Österreichs* (Vienna: Graeser, 1880), 6.

<sup>179</sup> See Smolle, *Kaiser Josef II.*, 9-28. Naturally this enumeration covered the bulk of his booklet.

<sup>180</sup> See Smolle, *Kaiser Josef II.*, 29, 32.

<sup>181</sup> See Asmus Christian Jessen, *Zur Erinnerung an die Thronbegeisterung Josephs II. am 29. November 1880* (Vienna: Wiener Vereins-Buchdr., 1880), 17.

“the intellectual immaturity of the people”<sup>182</sup>. For him, the shadow of Joseph II still existed, as the beneficial outcome of religious tolerance and the improvement of peasants’ conditions were still visible in the empire a century later<sup>183</sup>. The above-stated ingredients of Joseph’s myth were, through systematic repetition, digested by the Viennese intellectual circles. They continued to be reproduced in instances like the lecture on Joseph II delivered by the judge and ministerial secretary Franz von Haymerle at the Viennese merchant association in mid-December 1880, which was one of the last commemorative initiatives for the Viennese centennial of Joseph II<sup>184</sup>.

Apart from these concise studies, more detailed ones of greater length also appeared in Viennese bookshops. These aspired to be exhaustive historical treatises of the Josephinian era, albeit in their essence they were not much different from the material analyzed above in that they largely adopted an attitude of uncritical admiration towards Joseph II. An example of that species comes from the Joseph biography of Johann Wendrinsky, another historical popularizer<sup>185</sup>. The book was far from politically innocent, since it appeared at the moment when the Austrian unitary state needed protection “against federalist and national pretensions”, a clear allusion to the Taaffe ministry<sup>186</sup>. An analytical catalogue and description of Joseph’s reforms, including the creation of the modern bureaucracy, the abolition of monasteries and his ecclesiastical and juridical reforms that had largely survived after a century<sup>187</sup>. In the last part of the book, Wendrinsky tried to offer a more balanced account by stating some negative aspects of Joseph’s reign, which he found in the Josephinian tax system and in his

<sup>182</sup> Quoted in Jessen, *Zur Erinnerung an die Thronbegeisterung Josephs II.*, 25.

<sup>183</sup> See Jessen, *Zur Erinnerung an die Thronbegeisterung Josephs II.*, 26.

<sup>184</sup> See Franz Ritter von Haymerle, *Josef II. und sein Zeitalter. Vortrag gehalten am 13. December 1880 im “Wiener kaufmännischen Vereine”* (Vienna: Wiener kaufmänn. Zeitschrift, 1881).

<sup>185</sup> See Johann Wendrinsky, *Kaiser Joseph II. Ein Lebens- und Charakterbild zur hundertjährigen Gedenkfeier seiner Thronbesteigerung* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1880).

<sup>186</sup> Quoted in Wendrinsky, *Kaiser Joseph II.*, 8.

<sup>187</sup> See Wendrinsky, *Kaiser Joseph II.*, 10-11, 166, 209, 252, 258 respectively for each reform.

stubborn, uncompromising style of rule, which eventually led to political isolation<sup>188</sup>. Similar in structure and in argumentation was the even lengthier biography by the author and historian of Vienna Moritz Bermann. After a comprehensive narration lauding the emperor's reform activity, the book concluded triumphally, arguing that the Josephinian ideas were still present. That was because, despite their temporary, partial cancelation in 1790, they had later been restored, and in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century a substantial part of the state executive policy and legislation were based on them<sup>189</sup>.

Next to these quasi-scholarly products, we should add a number of books of pure fiction with Joseph II as their protagonist. The *Volkskaiser* legend was promoted, presenting the emperor as a *deus ex machina*, aiding his subjects in need through his miraculous intervention. These popular publications were by their nature ephemeral and of low literary value, but they nonetheless strengthened the Joseph cult<sup>190</sup>. Finally, another material incidental of the centennial was a series of paintings, commemorative medallions and other popular products with Joseph II as their theme, which aspired to keep the memory of the centenary celebration alive for posterity<sup>191</sup>.

## 2.4. The groups hostile to the Viennese Centennial: clergy, government and dynasty

Literature on public rituals has argued that such performances are able to promote unity and harmony between members of certain groups, but they can also be responsible for

<sup>188</sup> See Wendlinsky, *Kaiser Joseph II.*, 346, 304.

<sup>189</sup> See Moritz Bermann, *Maria Theresa und Kaiser Joseph II. in ihrem Leben und Wirken* (Vienna: Hartleben's Verlag, 1881), 957-960.

<sup>190</sup> See for instance *Geschichten vom Kaiser Josef und aus dem alten Wien* (Vienna: J.Neidl, 1876); Moriz Bermann, *Kaiser Josef und das Nähkätchen. Historische Novelle* (Vienna: Zeitvertreib, 1878); Josef August Lang, *Kaiser Joseph II. und Schriftsetzer Josef Wagner, oder: Seelengröße und Undank. Geschichtliche Volks-Novelle mit Illustrationen in XII Capiteln* (Vienna: Huppmann, 1880); *Geschichten, Anekdoten und Züge aus dem Leben Kaiser Josef II. Eine Festschrift für das Volk* (Vienna: Czaki, 1880).

<sup>191</sup> See Vocelka, "Das Nachleben Josephs II. im Zeitalter des Liberalismus", 297.

emphasizing conflict and difference<sup>192</sup>. The latter part of this claim is particularly fitting to the reality of the 1880 centennial. Then the German liberal praise of Joseph II was certainly the louder voice. Yet, it was not the only one. As seen in the previous chapters, the Catholic prelates had plenty of reasons to dislike Joseph II and what his legacy stood for the Church. In sequence of this, in 1880 the clergy was fiercely opposite to the festivities that honored its supposed oppressor and it tried to boycott them in every possible way. No priest accompanied the visit of the city council in the Capuchin crypt on November 25<sup>193</sup>, while when the archbishopric of Vienna was asked permission to perform a ritual in Josefsplatz, the response was that: “with all decisiveness this is not allowed and forbidden”<sup>194</sup>. Similarly, on November 30 no clergymen were present either next to Joseph’s tomb or under his statue and no religious ceremony was held<sup>195</sup>.

Of course this attitude did not escape the attention of the liberal papers. The *Deutsche Zeitung* commented that it was a pity that the clergy had made such an option but nevertheless the festivities would be in any case magnificent as they enjoyed the support of the overwhelming social majority<sup>196</sup>. The *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* chose a more bellicose tone claiming that this attitude was a sign that the clerical predominance was coming to an end<sup>197</sup>. A clever answer to the clerical stance came from the liberal satirical papers *Der Floh* and *Die Bombe*<sup>198</sup>. They made their target Bishop Rudigier of Linz, who in his known militant tone had expressed himself explicitly against the centennial (see next chapter). In humorous poems, these weeklies represented Joseph II and Rudigier in bipolar Manichean terms, where the first stood for progress and the second for ignorance and superstition. They were also

<sup>192</sup> See Clifford Geertz, “Ritual and Social Change: A Javanese Example”, in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 142-145; Raymond Firth, *Symbols: Public and Private* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1973), 191.

<sup>193</sup> See *Wiener Zeitung*, November 26, 2.

<sup>194</sup> Quoted in *Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt*, November 27, 2.

<sup>195</sup> Even the foreign Press made explicit references on that fact. See *The Times*, December 1, 5.

<sup>196</sup> See *Deutsche Zeitung*, December 1, 3.

<sup>197</sup> See *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 29, 1.

<sup>198</sup> See *Der Floh*, November 28, 3; *Die Bombe*, November 28, 3; December 5, 2.

very keen to remind the Bishop of Linz that it was Joseph II, who had found his parish underlining thus the former's ingratitude<sup>199</sup>. Apart from Rudigier and his violent rhetoric, the Catholic clergy and interests chose to keep a rather defensive position towards the centennial. The leading clerical daily *Das Vaterland* had no mention to the celebration in its front page in the days, when all the other Viennese papers were filled with it. Instead it contained only a brief passage in its inner pages in regards to the torch carrying procession, where the event was down-played also by noting the dangers to public safety due to the torch fire<sup>200</sup>. Additionally, not even one Catholic association in Vienna organized a Joseph-related activity, delivered a wreath to his equestrian statue or published a relevant book, in accordance to the archiepiscopal boycott and simply seemed to stoically wait for the centennial to pass.

The position of the young Taaffe ministry on the centennial needed a more delicate approach than the stubborn refusal of the clericals. The utilization of a former emperor by the liberals made it difficult for the government to criticize them even if the use of Joseph II in 1880 had acquired explicitly anti-governmental characteristics<sup>201</sup>. Therefore the state authorities followed a strategy of relative inertia and waiting until the centennial was over. It is characteristic for the mood of the authorities that, like the clergy, not even one government delegate officially attended the multiple ceremonies or visited the Josefsplatz statue. The widespread Joseph festivities were allowed on the one hand, albeit the police was obviously alert. The intended censorship of the student speech at Josefsplatz on November 28 has already been noted and it was not unique. When, for example, a café owner in Leopoldstadt near Augarten posted a banner reading "Will a means never be found to overcome the enemy without so many peoples losing their lives? -Joseph II", the police forced him to put it down<sup>202</sup>. This phrase, which carried meanings of armed strife, unveils also how much was still

<sup>199</sup> See *Der Floh*, December 5, 2; *Die Bombe*, November 28, 2.

<sup>200</sup> See *Das Vaterland*, November 29, 3.

<sup>201</sup> See Wingfield, "Joseph II", 70.

<sup>202</sup> On the incident see *Neue Freie Presse*, November 29, 3.



the memory of Joseph II associated with the 1848 revolution. Although in the past decades there had been positive comments on the work of Joseph II by “enlightened civil servants”<sup>203</sup>, this was rather the exception. In 1880 the imperial bureaucracy, like the authorities in most other European states<sup>204</sup>, remained conservative and against initiatives “from below” facing with fear and suspicion the rise of such revolutionary symbols<sup>205</sup>. In any case, this puzzled attitude of the official authorities became the object of contemporary commentaries. The Press noted: “[...] the passive behavior [of] the supreme authorities of the state”<sup>206</sup>. The leader of the German liberals, Ernst von Plener remarked in a parliamentary speech in December that: “the memory of Emperor Joseph was celebrated with nervous restraint in official circles [...]”<sup>207</sup>. This restraint, which could be even described as hostility, marked in a seemingly paradoxical way also the view of the dynasty on the centennial.

Scholars have argued that dynastic celebrations in the late Habsburg Empire could be classified as “cool celebrations”, while national ones were “warm”, in terms of the public support they received<sup>208</sup>. According to this classification, the Joseph centennial was definitely warm, given the public approval it gained. This was because, by 1880, the iconic understanding of Joseph had largely lost its original dynastic, supranational meaning and had been transformed into a divisive liberal and German national symbol. Even if the liberal media and public spokesmen regularly underlined the continuation of Josephi-nian policies in the era of Franz Joseph (i.e. full agrarian and religious emancipation), the Court was not willing

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<sup>203</sup> See for instance the praising comments of the police minister in the 1850s Franz Johann von Kempen for the founding of the General Hospital by Joseph II: *Das Tagebuch des Polizeiministers Kempen von 1848-1859*, ed. Joseph Karl Mayr (Vienna-Leipzig: Österr. Bundesverlag, 1931), 380 (November 25, 1855).

<sup>204</sup> See Philip Nord, “Introduction,” in *Civil Society before Democracy: Lessons from Nineteenth-century Europe*, eds. Philip Nord et al. (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), xv.

<sup>205</sup> Note the similarity between the 1848 statements by Hartig and the attitude of the state authorities in 1880.

<sup>206</sup> Quoted in *Montags-Revue aus Böhmen*, November 29, 1.

<sup>207</sup> Quoted in *Reden von Ernst Freiherr von Plener, 1873-1911* (Stuttgart: Deutsches-Anstalt Verlag, 1911), 202.

<sup>208</sup> See Ernst Hanisch, Peter Urbanitsch, “Die Prägung der politischen Öffentlichkeit durch die politische Strömungen,” in *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848-1918, Vol.8/1: Vereine, Parteien und Interessenverbände als Träger der politischen Partizipation* eds. Helmut Rumpler, Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna: Österr. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2006), 15-111, 107.

to show mutually positive feelings. The dynasty faced the centennial with great suspicion due to the highly polarizing culture surrounding Joseph's memory. While at Slavikovice in 1869, when Joseph could still be instrumentalized as a dynastic symbol promoting unity, the dynasty supported the local festivities and was represented by an archduke, but in 1880 things were different. The conflicts that the memory of Joseph II produced were too great to be ignored, and the Court would unavoidably lose its valuable position above everyday politics if it became affiliated with one side or the other. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that neither a single representative of the Court nor an imperial family member attended the centenary festivities or sent a supportive message to honor the great-grand-uncle of the ruling emperor.

Apart from these opportunist calculations that defined the behavior of the Court, there was also a deeper reason for this reticent attitude of the Habsburgs towards their celebrated ancestor: a genuine hostility through which certain Court circles dealt with the memory of Joseph II. The allegedly radical emperor was the ideological opposite of traditional Court conservatism. One could include even Franz Joseph among these traditional Court conservatives, since his ecclesiastical policy in the 1850s stood against the Josephinian Church system. It is thus quite telling that during the 1880 centennial, Franz Joseph was not in Vienna, where the heart of the celebrations beat, but in Budapest<sup>209</sup>. According to the Court Chamberlain's archives, there was no memorial ritual in honor of Joseph II, not even within the Court walls, for his descendants alone<sup>210</sup>. Beyond this indirect evidence, we can obtain more concrete indications of this hostility, since in the years before the centennial highly-ranked Habsburgs had explicitly spoken against Joseph II. Archduke Karl, the victor over Napoleon at Aspern in 1809, noted in a memorandum that "Joseph wanted to be reformer, law maker, military leader. [...] He gave new laws without paying attention whether his subjects were fit and ready

<sup>209</sup> See *Deutsche Zeitung*, November 30, 1.

<sup>210</sup> It is also meaningful in matters of the Court's attitude that annual rituals in the memory of Joseph II took place from 1791 until 1835 (a protocol followed for every dead emperor), while those in memory of Maria Theresa, which started earlier, in 1781, continued well into the 1840s and almost until the 1848 revolution.

for them. He fought without power and decisiveness the least dangerous of his neighbors [i.e. the Ottoman Empire] in order to satisfy [his] lust for power [...] and the only result was sorrow, victimization and weakening of the population [of Austria].”<sup>211</sup> Therefore, it was expected that Karl’s children would acquire a similarly negative attitude towards the enlightened monarch<sup>212</sup>. His son, the well-known con-servative Archduke Albrecht praised Maria Theresa in a letter in 1861, but on Joseph II he wrote that when passed away, he left “the empire in turmoil, partly in dissolution. His view that he was to be seen as the first bureaucrat of the state meant an even greater disadvantage to many fields.”<sup>213</sup> Albrecht was later trusted with the education of Crown Prince Rudolf, and when he observed that his young apprentice had started to develop liberal sympathies and to admire Joseph II, he moved to reverse these trends. In 1876, only a few years before the centennial, Albrecht wrote a memorandum for Prince Rudolf titled “My opinion of Joseph II”. There he repeated his earlier views, expressing admiration for Maria Theresa because she respected the old traditions and institutions, as every ruler should do. Joseph did not follow this path, and his actions were inspired by “bad enlightened books”. Albrecht pitied Joseph’s ideologi-cal motivation and reforms as he did the “progressive party” (a word for the liberal and constitutional-minded politicians), which had elevated Joseph II posthumously into its hero<sup>214</sup>. Such opinions coming from highly-ranked persons in the close milieu of Franz Joseph could easily influence him against his ancestor and define the entire Court’s view on the centennial. The hostility of the dynasty against this specific celebration of Joseph II is further unveiled by the fact that members of

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<sup>211</sup> See Archduke Karl’s, *Rückblick auf die Lage Europas beim Ausbruch der französischen Revolution*, March 15, without year (certainly after 1796). Quoted in Waltraud Heindl, „Von schwierigen Umfang mit (Helden-)Ahnen in der Zeit des Nationalismus. Bürgerliche Tugenden, christliche Frömmigkeit und Herrscheridole in der Repräsentanz des Hauses Habsburg“ in *Nation und Nationalismus in Europa: Kulturelle Konstruktionen von Identitäten. Festschrift für Urs Altermatt* eds. Catherine Bosshart et al. (Vienna: Böhlau, 2002), 395-418, 409.

<sup>212</sup> See Urbanitsch, “The Dynastic Myth of the Habsburg Monarchy”, 109.

<sup>213</sup> Archduke Albrecht to the General Adjutant Count Crenneville, Verona, February 10, 1861. Quoted in Heinrich von Srbik, *Aus Österreichs Vergangenheit. Von Prinz Eugen zu Franz Joseph* (Salzburg: O.Mueller, 1949), 134-135.

<sup>214</sup> On Albrecht’s memorandum, see Matthias Stickler, *Erzherzog Albrecht von Österreich. Selbstverständnis und Politik eines konservativen Habsburgers im Zeitalter Franz Josefs* (Husum: Styria Verlag, 1997), 73-75.

the imperial family were eager to honor with their presence other large scale popular celebrations, even if they were nationally contested, like the 1891 Jubilee Exhibition in Bohemia, which was visited by two archdukes and Franz Joseph himself<sup>215</sup>.

## 2.5. Beyond Vienna: The centenary festivities in memory of Joseph II in the Alpine lands

The center of the centennial was without doubt Vienna, and the other provincial capitals, towns and villages followed its lead in their attempt to honor Joseph. The columns of the metropolitan Viennese papers were filled with telegrams regarding the celebrations in major and minor Austrian cities and villages<sup>216</sup>: “The festivities in connection with the Emperor Joseph celebration continue to-day [November 30] in all the German towns of Austria, the people everywhere joining in them with the utmost spirit.” noted the *Times* correspondent in Vienna, describing the widespread pro-Josephinian sentiment<sup>217</sup>. The pattern of those regional festivities was the same as in Vienna: the celebrations were organized by the local liberal unions and notables in the absence of the Catholic clergy, while members of religious minorities (like the Jews) also willingly gave their support through memorial rituals in their own houses of worship<sup>218</sup>.

More specifically, in Lower Austria near Vienna, the liberal publisher and industrialist of Jewish origin Theodor Hertzka gave a lengthy lecture on November 26 at the Lower Austrian merchant association, where, unlike other similar initiatives, he focused mostly on Joseph’s economic policy<sup>219</sup>. Hertzka noticed the break with the past that Joseph’s reign symbolized, since he established the basic ingredients of the modern state in Austria: stability of the state

<sup>215</sup> See Catherine Albrecht, „Pride in Production: The Jubilee Exhibition of 1891 and the Economic Competition between Czechs and Germans in Bohemia,” *Austrian History Yearbook*, 24 (Jan. 1993), 101-118, 114.

<sup>216</sup> See for instance, *Neue Freie Press*, November 28, 4; November 29, 5; *Die Presse*, November 28; 3; *Morgen-Post*, November 28, 2; November 30, 4; *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 29, 2-3; November 30, 2; December 1, 3; *Deutsche Zeitung*, November 28, 7; November 29, 3.

<sup>217</sup> Quoted in the *Times*, December 1, 5.

<sup>218</sup> See e.g. the rituals by the Jewish communities of Fünfhaus (L. Austria). *Deutsche Zeitung*, November 28, 5.

<sup>219</sup> See „Joseph II.“, *Wochenschrift der niederösterreichischen Gewerbe-Vereines*, December 2, 479-483.

unit, of the population and of the constitution (he actually meant the civil administration). Although the scientific quality of the lecture was somewhat undermined by the fact that Hertzka extensively used material from the fake Constantinople letters<sup>220</sup>, he carefully analyzed Joseph's financial agenda. He thus deemed the 18<sup>th</sup>-century protectionist policy as the most appropriate for Austria's then-nascent industry and praised the emperor for his effort to expand the Habsburg commercial interests eastwards into the territories of the Ottoman Empire<sup>221</sup>.

In discussing the development of Josephinian memory in Lower Austria during these years, one should also consider its geographical position near the Czech-inhabited Bohemian lands in the north. As a result, the local German communities felt nationally threatened, a feeling nonexistent in Vienna, and followed with particular warmth the German nationalist interpretation of Joseph schematically depicted in the key term *Joseph the German*. The origin in Lower Austria (from Rosenau) of the ferocious nationalist politician Georg von Schönerer surely pushed opinions in this direction. In the early stages of his career in the late 1870s, Schönerer took advantage of the peasant-friendly, national and anti-clerical connotations of Joseph's memory to increase his own popularity, erecting seven plaques in various villages of his electoral district, showing Joseph at Slavikovice with his hand on the plow<sup>222</sup>. As we shall see, this nationalist version of Joseph II would become dominant in the coming years.

The Joseph festivities acquired a specific color in each Austrian province according to its peculiar political or national circumstances, and this could not have been truer for the celebrations in Upper Austria<sup>223</sup>. There, in Rudigier's archbishopric, the situation was

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<sup>220</sup> See "Joseph II.", 480.

<sup>221</sup> See "Joseph II.", 482-483.

<sup>222</sup> See Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siecle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), 125; Carl Richter, *Geschichte der Kaiser Joseph-Denkmäler in Böhmen, Mähren, Niederösterreich und Schlesien* (Tetschen: Selbstverlag, 1883), 209; Wandruszka, "Die Historiographie der thesian.-joseph. Reformzeit", 19.

<sup>223</sup> Since the late 1860s, liberals and Catholics had founded in Linz their own rival political associations and newspapers that presented daily events through fundamentally different prisms, and the 1880 centennial was no exception. See Judson, *Habsburg Empire*, 288.

expected to be explosive. Needless to say, the high prelate refused to hold any kind of religious ceremony honoring the supposed enemy of the Church, and indeed he was rumored to have had his church in Linz closed, locking out “the jubilant masses, the loyal and true people who were celebrating their best emperor.”<sup>224</sup> Apart from mere gossip, Rudigier was the only leading cleric who dared give an openly negative statement on Joseph II in 1880:

“Emperor Joseph was undoubtedly a great monarch and he was inspired by good intentions, but liberal he was not, according to my persuasion, because he respected neither the freedom of the Church nor the freedom of the lands. The Josephinian system was never endorsed by the Church, and that means now that one should force an official cancelation [of the refusal against Josephinism] if one wants to ask for a religious ceremony in memory of the emperor [...]”<sup>225</sup>

Motivated by his harsh remarks, other local conservative spectators came out and made similar comments: “both friend and foe knew that Joseph II had gravely damaged the Roman Catholic Church in Austria.”<sup>226</sup> This militant rhetoric was a part of a wider conservative argumentation that had been developed since the 1870s. It posited that religion was in danger and brought forward the lessons supposed learned in Joseph II’s reign, when the so called ‘Enlightenment’ was followed by revolution<sup>227</sup>.

The liberal press and political actors of Linz did not leave this provocation unanswered. Their *Linzer Tages-Post* contained caustic remarks concerning the bishop and his political views, while emphasizing that it was the duty of the liberals to defend Austria from the political and social forces of federalism, nationalism and clericalism that threatened everything that Joseph II had achieved. Above all, the status of the peasants as free citizens had to be protected, along with the German character of Austria<sup>228</sup>. Given this divided backdrop, clashes during the memorial celebrations in Linz were expected. Minor festivities honoring Joseph II as the friend of the peasants were organized in the countryside from

<sup>224</sup> On Rudigier’s attitude in regards to the centennial, see *Leitmeritzer Zeitung*, November 24, 1037; *Neue Tiroler Stimmen*, November 26; *Reichenberger Zeitung*, November 23, 1.

<sup>225</sup> Quoted in *Prager Tagblatt*, November 28, 2.

<sup>226</sup> Quoted in *Linzer Volksblatt*, December 5, 1.

<sup>227</sup> See their arguments in the brochure *Die Religion ist in Gefahr* (Linz, 1873); see also Cole, “Austria”, 305.

<sup>228</sup> See *Linzer Tages-Post*, November 30, 1-3.

November 25/26<sup>229</sup>, but their culmination was planned by the liberal municipality of Linz between November 28 and 30. On November 28, members of liberal and clerical groups verbally attacked one another outside the town hall<sup>230</sup>, while later during the night persons of unknown identity (clerical minions?) secretly stole the celebratory placards, which were replaced the following day<sup>231</sup>. The mayor of Linz clearly stood in favor of the celebrations, since in his speech he described the basic qualities of Josephinism as enlightenment, freedom and industriousness, which still survived in the country, along with the spirit of Joseph II himself. At the height of tensions came the demonstration of liberal agitators (who had obtained police permission) in front of the archiepiscopal palace of Linz on November 30, obviously to protest against Rudigier's attitude<sup>232</sup>. In the following years, Joseph's memory remained in the forefront as a political weapon in Upper Austrian politics: in 1884 the liberal association of Wels decided to erect a statue of Joseph II in order to advertise its values and rally supporters for the upcoming municipal elections<sup>233</sup>, albeit with no success, because their clerical competitors managed to win the majority in the Linzer diet slightly afterwards.

In the mostly rural land of Styria, where the conservative forces were strong, the centennial found a hostile welcome. As had his peers, the bishop of Graz had forbidden memorial celebrations in his parishes<sup>234</sup>. The clerical press, in a theoretical text about the essence of Josephinism, commented that it was actually greatly different from modern Liberalism, since the former was against the freedom of the Church and also in favor of censorship. Therefore, concluded the journalist, there was nothing worthy of celebration<sup>235</sup>. Referring to the torch-carrying procession, the Grazer spectator noted, like his colleagues at the *Vaterland*, the

<sup>229</sup> See the celebrations in the spa town of St. Wolfgang, Linzer Tages-Post, November 27, 2.

<sup>230</sup> See Deutsche Zeitung, November 28, 7; Fremden-Blatt (morning ed.), November 28, 6.

<sup>231</sup> See Linzer Tages-Post, November 30, 4; Illustriertes Wiener Extrablatt (evening ed.), November 29, 2.

<sup>232</sup> See Linzer Tages-Post, December 1, 2-3.

<sup>233</sup> See Harry Slapnicka, "Das Welser Kaiser-Joseph-Denkmal und die Frühgeschichte des Parteiwesens in Oberösterreich", *Mitteilungen des Oberöstr. Landesarchivs* 14 (1984): 449-464. Wels was a minor industrial town.

<sup>234</sup> See the Times, November 29, 5.

<sup>235</sup> See Grazer Volksblatt, November 28, 1.

dangers coming from the fire in the streets. He concluded that, while festivities were being conducted throughout Austria, they “have left cool” a substantial part of the population<sup>236</sup>. The accusations against the centennial continued in the following days and targeted the audience of the festivities. The celebrations, the paper argued, were organized predominantly by the educated, upper-bourgeois members of society, and therefore they left out the rural masses, which were supposedly represented by the Grazer press<sup>237</sup>.

Centenary celebrations took place even in Salzburg, even though this was an independent polity outside of Habsburg rule in the time of Joseph II. The liberal union of Salzburg organized a commemorative lecture, at which the beneficial measures of Joseph’s reign (state unity, religious toleration, abolition of serfdom etc.) were praised as bearers of progress and as still exerting a positive influence on the Austria of 1880<sup>238</sup>. On the other end of the political spectrum, the conservative Salzburger press chose a more conciliatory approach by hosting a two-part historical article on Maria Theresa with limited references to Joseph II<sup>239</sup>. The aura of Josephinian remembrance reached even the southernmost Austrian territories, with the Triestine press publishing words of gratitude for Joseph II’s state-building program and his lasting achievements<sup>240</sup>.

Finally, in the far western crownlands of Tirol and Vorarlberg, the local conservatives did not put up much resistance against the centenary initiatives, as the pro-clerical past of these provinces might have suggested. Instead, the liberal-oriented civil society of Innsbruck and even of relatively minor places like Feldkirch were mobilized to honor the supposed progenitor of Liberalism, also in light of contemporary developments. The press of Feldkirch could not have been more straightforward on the matter: “Unfortunately, it is not the spirit of

<sup>236</sup> See Grazer Volksblatt, November 30, 4.

<sup>237</sup> See Grazer Volksblatt, December 2, 3.

<sup>238</sup> See Salzburger Volksblatt: unabh. Tageszeitung f. Stadt u. Land Salzburg, November 30, 1-3.

<sup>239</sup> See Salzburger Chronik, November 30, 1-2; December 2, 1.

<sup>240</sup> See Triester Zeitung, November 30, 2.



the illustrious monarch that inspires the current majority of the House of Deputies and so we encounter there once and again only deadly efforts, which are destined to harm the unity of the empire and against the liberal achievements of the last decades.”<sup>241</sup> The local press focused, above all, on Joseph II’s religious reforms and tolerance, peasant emancipation and, given its Habsburg loyalism, on the completion of the Josephinian project by Franz Joseph<sup>242</sup>. On November 29, Professor Alphons Huber, one of the most important 19<sup>th</sup>-century Austrian historians, gave a lecture on Joseph II at the University of Innsbruck in a hall full of students<sup>243</sup>. The celebrations continued the following day, when the Innsbruck academic music union held a feast to honor the occasion<sup>244</sup> and the constitutional association organized a simultaneous meeting, where an additional historical lecture was delivered by Professor Johann Thaner<sup>245</sup>.

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<sup>241</sup> Quoted in *Feldkircher Zeitung*, Stimme der Verfassungsfreunde in Vorarlberg, December 1, 2.

<sup>242</sup> See *Bote für Tirol und Vorarlberg*, November 29, 1; *Feldkircher Zeitung*, December 1, 1-2.

<sup>243</sup> See *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, November 29, 3789-3790; *Bote für Tirol und Vorarlberg*, November 29, 2.

<sup>244</sup> See *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, November 29, 3790.

<sup>245</sup> See *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, November 29, 3791.

### 3. Germans and Slavs: The centenary celebrations in Bohemia, Moravia and Galicia

#### 3.1. Joseph the German: the celebrations of the German communities

In the Bohemian lands, the festivities in memory of Joseph II took the form of the defence of German linguistic and political privileges against Czech-speakers. The Joseph cult as cultivated by the Bohemian and Moravian Germans in the 1880s represented an association between Joseph II and German nationalism far closer and more aggressive than the German democratic spirit of 1848 or the stance of the Viennese liberals, of which preservation of German culture was but one of their demands in 1880. After Taaffe's rise to power in 1879, the position of the Bohemian Germans, who were numerically far fewer than the Czechs, turned increasingly sensitive. The Czech-backed Taaffe government intended to gradually deprive German liberals of their provincial and municipal posts in favour of their Slav and clerical foes<sup>246</sup>. The first traumas that Bohemian Germans suffered were the Stremayr Ordinances in April 1880. Named after Minister of Justice Stremayr, the ordinances elevated the Czech language to the level of a state language equal to German in the public administration of the ethnically mixed Bohemian territories<sup>247</sup>. This decision terrified and infuriated the Germans because their established superior status was undermined, and the bilingual Czech speaker would now gain a significant advantage given that very few Germans knew Czech. In what they deemed to be the real spirit of Joseph II, the Germans reacted fiercely and turned the centennial celebrations into a loud manifestation of the predominance of German culture.

<sup>246</sup> Especially for the anti-German alliance between Czechs and Taaffe in Bohemia, see Gary Cohen, *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861-1914* (West Lafayette: Purdue Univ. Press, 2006), 105-106.

<sup>247</sup> On the Stremayr Ordinances, see Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries*, 196-198; Cohen, *Politics of Ethnic Survival*, 107; Helmut Rumpler, *Eine Chance für Mitteleuropa. Bürgerliche Emanzipation und Staatsverfall in der Habsburgermonarchie, 1804-1914* (Vienna: Ueberreuter, 1997), 504-505; Jeremy King, *Budweisers into Czechs and Germans: A Local History of Bohemian Politics, 1848-1948* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2002), 56.

Therefore, in November 1880, the German Bohemian papers were, like those in Vienna, filled with references to Joseph II. Sigmund Berger, a high school teacher at the Jewish school in Raußnitz, Moravia, analysed the by-then commonplace reasons for remembering Joseph II:

“And I am sure that with the call of this name [Joseph II] each true friend of the fatherland will be seized by a holy reverence, a great admiration and a sincere love for his deeds and ideas. He was a ruler equally to a fighter and a champion for truth, justice and light; he had a heart as well, which bet and felt generously and fatherly for his people. [...] For this reason all areas of Austria are ready with enthusiasm to celebrate with dignity the one-hundred jubilee of the accession to the throne of emperor Joseph II. [...] The illustrious monarch still lives in the mouth of the people. [...] What glorifies for us the coming celebration is the pleasant thought is that the ideas of emperor Joseph have gradually come into reality until our days; [...]”<sup>248</sup>

The Bohemian attitude toward Joseph in 1880, apart from a stronger affiliation with German national principles, did not differ essentially from the Viennese one. Adolph Promber, a liberal parliamentary, in his own Joseph biography recognised the monarch for his reforms, but he did not forget to mention that these measures had as their effect the further development of German culture in Austria and that November 29, 1880, was a holiday for the German people of the empire, excepting the Slavs or the Magyars<sup>249</sup>. Subsequently, he became more concrete, arguing that “Joseph was a German prince and [...] he wanted to build from his lands a German state [...] his mission, which was of great significance for world history, was [...] to unite all the small nationalities, which lived in his edges, under one crown, to one great whole, to one shelter and bulwark of German morals and German culture”<sup>250</sup>. Closing Promber said that even if Joseph II was dead, his legacy was by no means dated because it survived in the laws of tolerance and of agrarian emancipation he had enacted as well as in the hearts of all Germans of the empire<sup>251</sup>. Next to these general contributions appeared more specific ones that dealt with a certain aspect of Joseph II’s reign. On those, the

<sup>248</sup> Quoted in Sigmund Berger, *Kaiser Joseph II. Sein Leben und Wirken. Erinnerungsblätter zum 100jährigen Gedenktag seiner Thronbegeisterung am 29. November 1880* (Brünn: Buschak & Irrgang, 1880), v-vi.

<sup>249</sup> See Adolph Promber, *Des großen Kaiser Josefs II. Leben und Wirken. Aus Anlaß der hundertjährigen Gedächtnißfeier seines Regierungsantrittes dem Volke geschildert* (Prague: Sammlung gemeinnützliche Vorträge, 61, 1880), 1-2. Promber’s booklet commented also on the *Tagesbote aus Mähren und Schlesien*, November 30, 1.

<sup>250</sup> Quoted in Promber, *Des großen Kaiser Josefs II. Leben und Wirken*, 37.

<sup>251</sup> See Promber, *Des großen Kaiser Josefs II. Leben und Wirken*, 37-38.

short study by Friedrich Rulf, law professor at the University of Prague regarding the Josephinian reforms in punitive law, deserves to be mentioned. After noting Joseph's ideological motivation, Rulf praised particularly the abolition of torture and the death penalty and concluded, as in the above cases, that these legal reforms had lasting consequences since all the subsequent Austrian legal codes were based largely to Joseph II's initiatives in that field<sup>252</sup>.

In matters of actual celebratory initiatives, the German students of Prague organized in their reading hall on November 29 a Joseph-feast accompanied by a commemorative lecture delivered by Alfred Klar<sup>253</sup>. The speaker stressed particularly the issue of state unity as one of the biggest challenges of Joseph's reign, the role of the German language as guarantee of this unity and the people's happiness as a product of this drastic state reorganization<sup>254</sup>. The reinforcement of the Austrian state idea, continued Klar, was mainly a repercussion of the Josephinian reforms and ideas that had benefited the empire greatly in the past century and thus remained present and strong in the current time<sup>255</sup>. Among the numerous other events that took place in memory of Joseph II, the festivity in the German Casino, the main German liberal association of Prague, on December 1 drew the most publicity. In the ceremonial hall of the Casino, attended by a large audience, key speaker Dr. Schmenkal delivered his commemorative speech on Joseph II. Following the usual pattern of politicized history, Schmenkal praised the Josephinian reforms and the liberals who were their worthy successors and warned of the vulnerability of the Josephinian legacy by the new government and the liberals' duty to protect their rights and the achievements of the previous hundred

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<sup>252</sup> See Friedrich Rulf, *Kaiser Josef II. der Reformator des Strafrechtes in Oesterreich* (Prague: Sammlung gemeinnütziger Vorträge. 73, 1882), 7-8, 10-11, 17-18.

<sup>253</sup> See Prager Tagblatt, November 29, 2.

<sup>254</sup> See Alfred Klar, *Josef II. Festrede gesprochen auf dem Kaiser Joseph-Commerz der Lese- und Redehalle der Deutschen Studenten in Prag, 29. November 1880* (Prague: Hasse, 1880), 7-11.

<sup>255</sup> See Klar, *Josef II.*, 24-30.

years<sup>256</sup>. A telling fact for the veneration of Joseph's public icon is that the Prager celebrations were attended not only by members of the local German communities, but also by representatives—above all, students—from imperial German cities like Jena and Leipzig who pledged their allegiance to the German emperor Joseph<sup>257</sup>. At the same time, the press of these German cities reported on the centennial in a praising manner<sup>258</sup>.

Similar festivities were held not only in Prague but also in many other Bohemian and Moravian cities like Beraun, Brünn, Trautenau, Karlsbad, and Joachimsthal<sup>259</sup>. The festivities were particularly warm in certain places where Joseph II was supposed to have travelled and stayed for a while, mainly in the period of his coregency. One such example is Hohenelbe, a village in north-eastern Bohemia, where Joseph had been in 1778. The local German reading association had held since the 1870s annual festivities on March 13, the day of Joseph's birthday, and also wider celebrations in 1878 and in 1880, when the contributions of the emperor to the improvement of the lives of the local rural population were vividly remembered<sup>260</sup>.

The most representative example of the changing nature of Josephinian commemoration along with contemporary political developments comes from the 1880 festivities in Slavikovice and in Olmütz. In 1869, the government and the dynasty along with local municipal lords accompanied by large masses of Czech- and German-speakers were present to honour the emperor, who drove the plow. Eleven year later, the government, the dynasty and the Czech-speaking people were completely absent from the same scene, and only local German notables were there to commemorate the Volkskaiser, who was

<sup>256</sup> See Prager Tagblatt, December 1, 3-4.

<sup>257</sup> See Deutsche Zeitung, November 30, 3.

<sup>258</sup> See Leipziger Tageblatt und Anzeiger, November 29, 1.

<sup>259</sup> See Prager Tagblatt, Dec. 1, 4-5; Montags-Revue aus Böhmen, Nov. 29; 7; Karlsbader Anzeiger, Dec. 1, 2-3.

<sup>260</sup> See Emil Weiss, Anton Stumpf, *Festgedicht und Festrede aus der Doppelfeier des ... Geburtsfestes Sr. Majestät des Kaisers Franz Josefs I. und der 100. Wiederkehr des Tages der Anwesenheit Kaiser Josef II. in Hohenelbe* (Trautenau: Hoser, 1878). See also Wingfield, "Joseph II", 69.

increasingly turning to the more nationally aggressive Joseph the German. In the speeches in Slavikovice and in Olmütz, German liberals declared their devotion to the Habsburg dynasty, but they also condemned harshly the current government for having abandoned the Josephinian values of

Enlightenment and of the unitary state, the true bearer of which was the constitutional party<sup>261</sup>.

After all, the only unaltered element in the mental map of Josephinism throughout the past decades seemed to be the dogmatic hostility of the Catholic Church toward Joseph II. This became more than clear in 1880, with the Viennese and Linzer clergy. Their Bohemian colleagues kept a similar attitude. The bishop of the ethnically mixed town of Budweis Johann Valerian Jirsik had stubbornly declared, “every religious action on the occasion of Emperor Joseph festivities is forbidden in the entire diocese”<sup>262</sup>. The German liberal city council of Budweis became frustrated by the decision, and as a sign of reaction, it called for a meeting of the German and Czech associations of the city in front of the city cathedral on November 30. In the ceremony that followed, both Germans and Czechs expressed their loyalty to the memory of Joseph II and to Franz Joseph<sup>263</sup>.

### **3.2. Centralizer or Liberator? The Czech and Ruthenian approaches to the Centennial**

The Catholic Church was the traditional enemy of Josephinism, although from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the rising nationalism of the empire did not see it positively either. In the German press, it was regularly noted that only the Germans celebrated Joseph II, while the other nationalities were absent. Non-German nationalists, condemned Joseph II for the same reasons that German liberals praised him: centralization and Germanisation. The Czech case is typical. The organ of the more polemic Young Czech

<sup>261</sup> See Mährisches Tagblatt, November 29, 1-6.

<sup>262</sup> Quoted in Prager Tagblatt, November 29, 2.

<sup>263</sup> See Wingfield, “Joseph II”, 71-72.

nationalists, *Narodni listy*, charged Joseph II with the trespass of the Bohemian established liberties and rights in his effort to create a unitary state. The centennial offered them no reason for joy because it represented only the “newest centralist machinations”. The German liberals were described by those Czechs as “centralist gentlemen” who would stop to nothing before they managed to centralize the entire empire and all its Slavic nations<sup>264</sup>.

Nevertheless, not all nationalities saw eye to eye with the Czechs on the matter. The Ruthenians were the single Habsburg nation that celebrated the Joseph II centennial along with the Germans. As a minor nationality, having the majority of their compatriots under much harsher Russian rule, the Ruthenians were pleased to be under Habsburg control as long as they were free to develop their language and culture<sup>265</sup>. At the same time, the Ruthenians were struggling to cultivate a distinct identity from the Poles, who after 1868 dominated Galicia. This opportunity was offered to them through the memory of Joseph II, who, having favoured the Greek-Catholic Church and moderated serfdom, was particularly commmorable to the Ruthenians<sup>266</sup>. It is telling that in the Pre-march, there were messianic narrations in the Galician countryside that depicted Joseph as still alive and caring for his subjects<sup>267</sup>. After 1848, the Ruthenians saw in Franz Joseph the carrier of the Josephinian agenda of toleration and peasant emancipation, thus legitimizing his rule<sup>268</sup>. In the parliamentary era, Ruthenian deputies mentioned respectfully Joseph II’s contributions to the welfare of their people<sup>269</sup>.

<sup>264</sup> See Bohemia, November 26, 1; Wingfield, “Joseph II”, 70-71. On the Young Czechs, see Bruce Garver, *The Young Czech Party 1874-1901 and the emergence of a multi-party system* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1978).

<sup>265</sup> See the arguments of the Ruthenian politician Alexander Barwinski, “Die Bedeutung des Ruthenischen Volkstums für Österreich-Ungarn”, *Österreichische Rundschau*, 31, no. 3 (1912), 167-169.

<sup>266</sup> See Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia*, 258-261.

<sup>267</sup> See the poetry of Ivan Franko: Leonid Rudnytsky, “The Image of Austria in the works of Ivan Franko” in *Nation-building and the Politics of Nationalism: Essays on Austrian Galicia*, eds. Andrei Markovits, Frank Sysyn (Cambridge MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1982), 239-254, esp. 243-246.

<sup>268</sup> See Unowsky, *The Pomp and Politics of Patriotism*, 70.

<sup>269</sup> See the speech of Jan Naumowicz in *Stenographische Protokolle: Abgeordnetenhaus*, VIII. Session, 989-990.

Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the Ruthenians participated to the 1880 centennial with great warmth. In Lemberg, a Ruthenian “Committee to Celebrate Joseph II” was formed in October that represented Joseph not as a centralizer, but as the friend of the peasants. A series of festivities took place on November 29 and 30 at the Greek Catholic Cathedral of St. George and at the National Institute, where the Poles were openly denounced as oppressors and loyalty to the Habsburgs was proclaimed on the basis of Joseph’s benefactions to the Ruthenians. At the same time, a Ruthenian delegation was sent to deliver a wreath to the emperor’s crypt in Vienna<sup>270</sup>. Additionally, booklets were published in Ukrainian, advertising the positive outcome of Joseph’s rule for the Ruthenian nation and the empire in general<sup>271</sup>. The Polish media described very critically the Ruthenian celebration as a fiasco since its message was directed against the Poles. Yet, this view was far from true because thousands of people attended the festivities. Besides, via the commemoration of Joseph II, the Ruthenians managed to make their conditions in Galicia known to the German liberals, thus gaining a strong ally<sup>272</sup>.

<sup>270</sup> See *Deutsche Zeitung*, December 1, 3. The wreath read “Galician Ruthenians-to Emperor Joseph II-1880”.

<sup>271</sup> See Jevgenij Jakovlic Zgarskij, *Josif II. stoletnuju pamjat vstuplenija na avstrijskij presto* [For the one hundred year commemoration from his rise to the throne] (Lemberg: Stavropigiandr., 1880); Teofil Gruskevic, *Pamjatka obchodu stoletnych rokovin vstuplenja na prestol Cesarja Josifa II. [Reflections on the festivities for the centenary rise to the throne of Emperor Joseph II. Lecture]* (Kolomea: M. Belous, 1881).

<sup>272</sup> The Ruthenian festivities are analytically described in Daniel Unowsky, “Celebrating Two Emperors and a Revolution: The Public Contest to Represent the Polish and Ruthenian Nations in 1880”, in *The Limits of Loyalty*, eds. Lawrence Cole, Daniel Unowsky (New York: Bergham Books, 2007), 113-137, 124-131.



## Epilogue

The centennial honoring the memory of Joseph II in 1880 was by no means the end of an era in Josephinian commemoration, but rather the beginning of a new one. From the 1880s onwards numerous German or ethnically mixed towns in Bohemia and Moravia began to unveil statues of Joseph II, where his version as a German nationalist symbol was promoted<sup>273</sup> in an attempt to conquer the public space<sup>274</sup>. These statues constituted an open challenge to Czech nationalists, who considered them signs of Germanisation and even Habsburg autocracy<sup>275</sup>. Thus it is not surprising that the squares in front of these statues turned frequently into battlefields between German and Czech nationalist agitators and after 1918 many of those browse artifacts experienced Czech assaults resulting to the demolition of many of those<sup>276</sup>. Next to these statue wars in Bohemia, the 1880s knew a number of minor Joseph II centennials that followed the major one of 1880. In 1881 the edict of tolerance and the abolition of serfdom became joyfully remembered through a series of commemorative publications, very similar in nature and in their attitude towards Joseph II with the material appeared in 1880<sup>277</sup>. Like the 1880 literature, these overwhelmingly praising contributions targeted into preserving the memory of the emperor, who had benefited so much his peoples. Commemorative booklets appeared also in 1890 upon the occasion of Joseph's death. However, at least some of the

<sup>273</sup> See the vocabulary used in the statue unveiling ceremonies, where German national connotations enjoyed a dominant place. See for instance Franz Schwedt, *Das Poyzdorfer Kaiser Josef-Büchlein* (Wien: Seidel, 1882).

<sup>274</sup> See Wingfield, "Statues of Emperor Joseph II"; Werner Telesko, *Geschichtsraum Österreich: Die Habsburger und ihre Geschichte in der bildenden Kunst des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Vienna: Böhlau, 2006), 130-136.

<sup>275</sup> See Zdeněk Hojda, Jiří Pokorný, "Denkmalkonflikte zwischen Tschechen und Deutschböhmen", *Bürgerliche Selbstdarstellung: Städtebau, Architektur, Denkmäler*, eds. Hanns Haas, Hannes Stekl (Vienna: Böhlau, 1995), 241-251, esp. 244.

<sup>276</sup> See Nancy Wingfield, "Conflicting Constructions of Memory: Attacks on Statues of Joseph II in the Bohemian Lands after the Great War", *Austrian History Yearbook*, 28 (1997): 147-171.

<sup>277</sup> On the edict of tolerance see: Gustav Frank, *Das Toleranz-Patent Kaiser Joseph II. Urkundliche Geschichte seiner Entstehung und seiner Folgen. Säcular-Festschrift des k.k. evangelischen Oberkirchenrathes in Wien* (Vienna: Köhler, 1881); Samuel Koenigsberg, *Josefs II. Heilbotschaft. Predigt zur Secular-Feier des Toleranz-Edictes am 15. Okt. 1881 gehalten zu Beneschau* (Prague: Schmelkes, 1881). On the abolition of serfdom, see: Fr. von Neuberg, *Kaiser Josef II. der Wohlthäter seines Volkes, oder getreue Darstellung seines Lebens und seiner Reformbestrebungen* (Vienna: Winkler, 1882); Moritz Bermann, *Das Illustrierte Geschichtenbuch vom Kaiser Joseph. Gedenkbuch zur hundertjährigen Jubelfeier der Aufhebung der Leibeigenschaft* (Vienna, 1882).

1890 publications embraced an approach slightly different from that of 1880<sup>278</sup>. In 1890 the optimist point of view of the previous decade, when the liberals thought that they could still regain power had given its place to disillusionment and self-victimization. The self-confidence, through which Joseph II had begun his reign, according to the liberal narrative, had been replaced with lengthy descriptions of the sad last years of Joseph's life, when he, by then ill, saw a good part of his reformist efforts to be in vain. The liberals found similarities in this heroic failure since by 1890 they observed their centralized state and ideals to be severely undermined by the Taaffe ministry and the national conflicts, while they had essentially no hope in returning to power. Joseph II's end was presented as a missed opportunity, as it was the fin-de-siècle liberal inability of reshaping the empire (again) according to their principles.

From the evidence provided above for the years 1848 to 1890 it can be understood that Josephinism met by no means its end in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as earlier literature had suggested. The remembrance of Joseph II continued to evolve in a lively manner throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in direct association with the contemporary political and social dilemmas. Additionally, it was proven to be particularly flexible as it was successfully adopted by various and competitive to one another groups for the promotion of their own interests. The image of Joseph II became widely popular and politically used in 1848 and in the 1860s as the contemporary public issues (emancipation from autocracy, State supremacy over the Church) were well fitted with the legacy of the emperor as his advocates imagined it. And while in those moments the influence of Joseph II's icon in the mainstream political dialogue was surely visible, its gravity and public radiation could not be compared with the one of his centennial. In 1880 there has been greater literary production and sentimental commitment to the cult of Joseph II than at any moment in the long 19<sup>th</sup> century, when literally tens comme-

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<sup>278</sup> See *Kaiser Joseph II. Gedenkblätter zur hundertjährigen Trauerfeier seines Todes* (Vienna: Fritz, 1890), 8-9, 28-40. See also: Adolf Kohut, *Kaiser Joseph II.: Sein Wirken als Mensch* (Dresden: Hönsch & Tiesler, 1890).

morative brochures, books and newspaper articles across the entire Cisleithania were written to commemorate the emperor. This sheer volume is pointing the 1880 centennial as the single most important moment of the posthumous image of Joseph II. Apart from the genuine affection for their emperor, this alertness to honor properly the Volkskaiser in 1880 stemmed also from the political developments in Austria of that time. The rise of Taaffe ministry in 1879 marks the turn from German liberal centralism to conservative tendencies towards federalism, which was an adequate change to provoke a reshape of Joseph's memory: the confessional hero of the 1860s began to move to the direction of a German centralist, an interpretation that turned dominant in the coming years. The organizers of the centennial were anxious to point out their affiliation with the centralist state held together through the German culture and hence the change of gravity in Joseph's memory from confessional to administrative and national issues. This transformation of memory was expressed through the centenary celebration, which thus can be characterized as a major turning point of 19<sup>th</sup> century Josephinism.

Dealing more closely with the main actors of 1880 and also taking into account what had taken place in the decades since 1848, one can proceed to a classification of Josephinism (and of anti-Josephinism) according to the persons and groups that supported its tendency:

**A)** The main admirers of Josephinian memory were certainly the German liberals. It was they, who in 1848 instrumentalized Joseph II as a symbol against oppression; they, who claimed him as their predecessor in their struggle for secular predominance over the Church and they, who used him again as a German liberal centralist against the Taaffe ministry in 1880.

**B)** The imperial bureaucracy and the dynasty expressed occasionally a pro-Josephinian attitude, but only under their own terms. Civil servants like Metternich and Hartig were embracing Joseph II in 1848 only since they believed that his true nature would be against the rebels. This inherent hostility against revolution from below would remain a core element in the bureaucracy's world view and would justify why the supreme state authorities remained

passive in 1880 towards the centennial, since the public image of Joseph II was by then fully associated with potential agitators that would disrupt public safety bringing back the terrible days of 1848. The dynasty chose a clearly opportunist approach towards the legacy of its imperial ancestor. On the one hand the young emperor in 1848 used the name of Joseph as his own creating widespread hopes for the continuation of the Josephinian legacy and also in 1869 the dynasty approved the Joseph II festivities in Slavikovice. However, when it seemed that its interests were better settled outside the Josephinian orbit as with the Concordat, the Habsburgs didn't hesitate to abandon their much celebrated ruler. Through this prism the abstinence of the dynasty from the 1880 celebrations should be perceived. Especially, if the negative feelings of certain family members like arch-dukes Karl and Albrecht against Joseph II are also taken into account, then the distancing of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Habsburgs from the enlightened monarch becomes easily explained.

**C)** The Catholic Church and especially the ultramontane prelates presented a solid anti-Josephinian front throughout the period under examination (quite the contrary to Jews, Protestants and Greek-orthodoxs, who were warmly pro-Josephinian). In 1848 the Church eagerly condemned the supposed Josephinian yoke, while in 1855 the clergymen and conservatives praised its fall due to the Concordat and subsequently used Joseph II as a symbol of oppression that justified the Concordat. As a repercussion to this uncompromising approach, the Church boycotted universally the centennial in 1880 and even its most militant members like Bishop Rudigier made openly anti-Josephinian statements, underlining thus once more how contested remained the memory of Emperor Joseph.

**D)** Finally the non-German nationalities cannot be all included into a single category. Major nations like the Czechs were initially willing to accept Joseph II as the Volkskaiser, who tendered all his nationalities, as the Czech participation in the 1869 Slavikovice celebrations pointed out. Nonetheless, as Joseph II acquired more emphatically German nationalist chara-

cteristics in addition to his quality as a centralist, the younger Czech nationalists became hostile towards him seeing him as an early German oppressor, who violated the rights of the Bohemian Crown. Minor nations though like the Ruthenians, who under Joseph II had seen the first signs of moral and material improvement, remembered Joseph II positively throughout the decades, an attitude closely connected to their wider Habsburg loyalism.

Conclusively, it becomes clear that the memory of Joseph II enjoyed in the one or the other form a vital position within the 19<sup>th</sup> century Austrian intellectual sphere, which continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even after the dismemberment of the monarchy proving so its resilience in the passing of time<sup>279</sup>.

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<sup>279</sup> See Eduard Beutner, „Historische Perspektiven: Kaiser Joseph II. in der österreichischen Literatur der Zwischenkriegszeit“ in *Polnisch-Österreichisches Germanisten-Symposion 1983* eds. Walter Weiss, Eduard Beutner (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1985), 171-181.

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