"Nekünk nincsenek gyarmataink és hódítási szándékaink": Magyar részvétel a Monarchia gyarmatosítási törekvéseiben a Balkánon, 1867–1914 ["We have neither colonies nor intentions of conquest": Hungarian participation in the Monarchy's colonial ambitions in the Balkans, 1867–1914]. By Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics. Budapest: Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2022. 452 pp.

To treat the Habsburg Monarchy as a colonial power raises several problems. One might first point out that the Monarchy had practically no overseas colonies, which is an essential condition for most historians to consider a state a colonial power. Then, however, one also has to consider that the notion of "colony" did play a significant role in the Monarchy's political discourse, as well as in the "myths of national victimhood" of several of its successor states. Consequently, one might face the problem that Reinhart Koselleck has pointed out: representing historical processes based on the counter concepts that contemporaries created for their political effectiveness could make these dichotomies definitive. Given the problematic and complex nature of the subject, there is a need for a thorough historical analysis that is methodologically elaborated, an analysis the author of which can grasp the vast international literature, understands the main stakes of the debates surrounding the subject, and, with the wisdom of meticulous empirical research, takes a clear stand concerning the main questions and dilemmas. This is what the new book by Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics offers.

The central theme of the book is Hungary's participation in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy's colonizing adventure in the Balkans. Csaplár-Degovics examines his subject from a variety of perspectives, such as political, cultural, and economic history. He also takes into consideration methodological questions that the most significant Habsburg historians have urged, such as the need to approach his subject from a transnational point of view and treat the Hungarian Kingdom not in the habitual nation state framework, but as a potential empire. It is also commendable that the comparison with other colonial powers and the different methodological tools of the (post)colonial literature are never forced on the material, but only serve as reference points in the analysis.

The book opens with a sound presentation of the most important international and Hungarian works on the Habsburg colonial question. Csaplár-Degovics carefully ponders the different "empire" and "colony" definitions in the most current literature, arguing that both notions have legitimacy in Habsburg

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research, which is not at all evident, as scholars question not only the colonial aspect but also whether the Habsburg Monarchy can be considered an empire. A large portion of the book is devoted to Benjamin Kállay, common minister of finance of the dualist state (1882–1903) and, as such, governor of occupied Bosnia. Kállay was the person most closely and frequently associated with the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He was the first Hungarian translator of the works of John Stuart Mill, and he initially condemned colonialism, having lived through the Habsburg "civilizing mission" in the 1850s, though he later used the same ideology to legitimate the ambitions of Austria-Hungary in the foreign press, while in Hungary, he alluded to the country's alleged imperial past. Kállay managed a carefully crafted propaganda machine for which he used not only the press, but also professional historiography and scientific literature. One of the highpoints of Csaplár-Degovics's book is the part in which he analyses the popular author Mór Jókai's "colonial novel." He offers an exemplary "thick description" analysis, carefully mapping all metaphors alluding to Kállay and the Bosnian colonial case. The chapter in which Csaplár-Degovics ponders the question of which colonial practices served as examples for Austria-Hungary is similarly remarkable. He shows that, although some German influences can be detected, the Russian example of the colonization of Turkestan was a more important parallel. Csaplár-Degovics demonstrates the similarities and differences between the two iconic personalities behind these colonization processes, Kállay and Konstantin Kaufmann. He also shows that the Russian example, the country's unresolved dilemma of whether to become a multi-ethnic empire or a nation state, had a serious impact on Kállay's vision of Hungary's future, according to which the country ought to follow the path of western development, though it should not stay a nation state, but rather should develop into an empire.

In his discussion of the reception of Kállay's ideas in Hungary, Csaplár-Degovics uses the concept of "scandal of empire" developed by Nicholas B. Dirks. In the Hungarian context, the scandal consisted of Kállay's alleged "despotic" and "anti-constitutional" rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which the opposition compared to the Austrian absolutism of the 1850s. One might wonder however, why a very important assumption, according to which recently discovered archival sources prove that such claims were in fact well founded, ended up in the footnotes.

The following long section of the book deals with the concepts of "colony" and "colonization" that were used by Hungarian politicians in the House of

Representatives. This chapter is a weak point in the otherwise excellent book. The very positioning of this part is questionable: one might wonder why such a basic and important question is dealt with in the middle of the book instead of at the beginning. One might also wonder why the inquiry is limited to the members of the House of Representatives. While Csaplár-Degovics succeeds, as mentioned above, in presenting the prevailing interpretations of notions of colony and empire in the secondary literature, he devotes far less attention to the contemporary perceptions of these notions, though he himself mentions (but only mentions) that Kállay and foreign minister Alois Lexa von Aehrenthal had completely different understandings of the notion of colony. Though it may seem an unrealistic demand to place on an already voluminous work, I would still argue that the question would have merited a systematic analysis with the methodological tools of conceptual history.

The analysis shows that, in the vast majority of cases, members of the House used the notion of colony as a rhetorical element to describe the country's past and contemporary relations to Austria, though their knowledge of real colonial practices was limited. They were also reluctant to call Bosnia-Herzegovina a colony, which in Csaplár-Degovics's view can be explained by the liberal self-image of Hungarian politicians, which meant a conviction that a state should never rule another state and every nation has a right for constitutionality.

While the presentation of the Bosnian colonization is centered around Kállay, the Monarchy's Albanian policies were centered around Ferenc Nopcsa, the internationally renowned paleontologist and Albania expert, of whom Csaplár-Degovics presents a long-needed, exhaustive portrait. In the epilogue, he discusses the Hungarian plans for Serbia during World War I, which according to the Hungarian visions was to be a settler-type colony.

Csaplár-Degovics's conclusions (fortunately) are not at all prudent. He firmly and unambiguously expresses his views on the most important questions. He concludes that Austria-Hungary did have a colonizing agenda that, far from being only cultural, had serious political and economic interests behind it. Though it was not an overseas territory, Bosnia-Herzegovina fulfilled all the criteria of a colony. Furthermore, it posed serious challenges to the construct of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, as the creators of the *Ausgleich* did not foresee the acquisition of new land, which in the end forced the Monarchy to imagine itself and function as a common empire.

My critical remarks notwithstanding, I consider Csaplár-Degovics's new book a long awaited, admirable achievement which not only gives a compelling

account of Hungary's participation in the Monarchy's Balkan projects but also raises some very interesting questions which can enrich the debate on the late Habsburg Monarchy. A translation of the book (or a sensibly abridged version of it) is certainly desirable so that it can take its rightful place in Habsburg historiography.

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